

Statement on the Death of Warren Burger *June 25, 1995*

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of Justice Burger's passing. Today the Nation mourns the loss of a great public servant.

Justice Burger was a strong, powerful, and visionary Chief Justice who opened the doors of opportunity. As Chief Justice, he was concerned with the administration of the Court, serving with enthusiasm and always making sure it was above reproach.

He also presided over the most important anniversary of our Nation by serving as Chair of the Bicentennial Commission on the Constitution.

His expansive view of the Constitution and his tireless service will leave a lasting imprint on the Court and our Nation. Our prayers are with his family and friends during this time.

Remarks on the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco, California *June 26, 1995*

Thank you very much. Secretary Christopher, Mr. Secretary-General, Ambassador Albright, Bishop Tutu. My good friend Maya Angelou, thank you for your magnificent poem. Delegates to the Charter Conference, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, the President of Poland, Members of Congress, honored guests, Mayor Jordan, Mr. Shorenstein, people of San Francisco, and friends of the United Nations: The 800 delegates from 50 nations who came here 50 years ago to lift the world from the ashes of war and bring life to the dreams of peacemakers included both giants of diplomacy and untested leaders of infant nations. They were separated by tradition, race, and language, sharing only a vision of a better, safer future. On this day 50 years ago, the dream President Roosevelt did not live to see of a democratic organization of the world was launched.

The charter the delegates signed reflected the harsh lessons of their experience, the experience of the thirties in which the world watched and reacted too slowly to fascist aggression, bringing millions sacrificed on the battlefields and millions more murdered in the death chambers. Those who had gone through this and the Second World War knew that celebrating victory was not enough, that merely punishing the enemy was self-defeating, that instead the world needed an effective and permanent system to promote peace and freedom for everyone.

Some of those who worked at that historic conference are still here today, including our own Senator Claiborne Pell, who to this very day, every day, carries a copy of the U.N. Charter in his pocket. I would last like to ask all of the delegates to the original conference who are here today to rise and be recognized. Would you please stand? [*Applause*]

San Francisco gave the world renewed confidence and hope for the future. On that day President Truman said, "This is proof that nations, like men, can state their differences, can face them, and then can find common ground on which to stand." Five decades later, we see how very much the world has changed. The cold war has given way to freedom and cooperation. On this very day, a Russian spacecraft and an American spacecraft are preparing to link in orbit some 240 miles above the Earth. From Jericho to Belfast, ancient enemies are searching together for peace. On every continent, nations are struggling to embrace democracy, freedom, and prosperity. New technologies move people and ideas around the world, creating vast new reservoirs of opportunity.

Yet we know that these new forces of integration also carry within them the seeds of disintegration and destruction. New technologies and greater openness make all our borders more vulnerable to terrorists, to dangerous weapons, to drug traffickers. Newly independent nations offer ripe targets for international criminals and

nuclear smugglers. Fluid capital markets make it easier for nations to build up their economies but also make it much easier for one nation's troubles first to be exaggerated, then to spread to other nations.

Today, to be sure, we face no Hitler, no Stalin, but we do have enemies, enemies who share their contempt for human life and human dignity and the rule of law, enemies who put lethal technology to lethal use, who seek personal gains in age-old conflicts and new divisions.

Our generation's enemies are the terrorists and their outlaw nation sponsors, people who kill children or turn them into orphans, people who target innocent people in order to prevent peace, people who attack peacemakers, as our friend President Mubarak was attacked just a few hours ago, people who in the name of nationalism slaughter those of different faiths or tribes and drive their survivors from their own homelands. Their reach is increased by technology. Their communication is abetted by global media. Their actions reveal the age-old lack of conscience, scruples, and morality which have characterized the forces of destruction throughout history.

Today, the threat to our security is not in an enemy silo but in the briefcase or the car bomb of a terrorist. Our enemies are also international criminals and drug traffickers who threaten the stability of new democracies and the future of our children. Our enemies are the forces of natural destruction, encroaching deserts that threaten the Earth's balance, famines that test the human spirit, deadly new diseases that endanger whole societies.

So, my friends, in this increasingly interdependent world, we have more common opportunities and more common enemies than ever before. It is, therefore, in our interest to face them together as partners, sharing the burdens and costs and increasing our chances of success.

Just months before his death, President Roosevelt said, "We have learned that we cannot live alone at peace, that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away." Today, more than ever, those words ring true. Yet some here in our own country, where the United Nations was founded, dismissed Roosevelt's wisdom. Some of them acknowledge that the United States must play a strong role overseas but refuse to supply the nonmilitary resources our Nation needs to carry

on its responsibilities. Others believe that outside our border America should only act alone.

Well, of course the United States must be prepared to act alone when necessary, but we dare not ignore the benefits that coalitions bring to this Nation. We dare not reject decades of bipartisan wisdom. We dare not reject decades of bipartisan support for international cooperation. Those who would do so, these new isolationists, dismiss 50 years of hard evidence.

In those years we've seen the United Nations compile a remarkable record of progress that advances our Nation's interest and, indeed, the interest of people everywhere. From President Truman in Korea to President Bush in the Persian Gulf, America has built United Nations military coalitions to contain aggressors. U.N. forces also often pick up where United States troops have taken the lead.

As the Secretary of State said, we saw it just yesterday, when Haiti held parliamentary and local elections with the help of U.N. personnel. We saw the U.N. work in partnership with the United States and the people of Haiti, as they labor to create a democracy. And they have now been given a second chance to renew that promise.

On every continent, the United Nations has played a vital role in making people more free and more secure. For decades, the U.N. fought to isolate South Africa, as that regime perpetuated apartheid. Last year, under the watchful eyes of U.N. observers, millions of South Africans who had been disenfranchised for life cast their first votes for freedom.

In Namibia, Mozambique, and soon we hope in Angola, the United Nations is helping people to bury decades of civil strife and turn their energies into building new democratic nations. In Cambodia, where a brutal regime left more than one million dead in the killing fields, the U.N. helped hundreds of thousands of refugees return to their native land and stood watch over democratic elections that brought 90 percent of the people to the polls. In El Salvador, the U.N. brokered an end to 12 years of bloody civil war and stayed on to help reform the army, bring justice to the citizens, and open the doors of democracy.

From the Persian Gulf to the Caribbean, U.N. economic and political sanctions have proved to be a valuable means short of military action to isolate regimes and to make aggressors and terrorists pay at least a price for their actions:

in Iraq, to help stop that nation from developing weapons of mass destruction or threatening its neighbors again; in the Balkans, to isolate aggressors; in North Africa, to pressure Libya to turn over for trial those indicted in the bombing of Pan Am flight 103.

The record of the United Nations includes a proud battle for child survival and against human suffering and disease of all kinds. Every year, UNICEF oral vaccines save the lives of 3 million children. Last year alone the World Food Program, using the contributions of many governments including our own, fed 57 million hungry people. The World Health Organization has eliminated smallpox from the face of the Earth and is making great strides in its campaign to eliminate polio by the year 2000. It has helped to contain fatal diseases like the Ebola virus that could have threatened an entire continent.

To millions around the world, the United Nations is not what we see on our news programs at night. Instead it's the meal that keeps a child from going to bed hungry, the knowledge that helps a farmer coax strong crops from hard land, the shelter that keeps a family together when they're displaced by war or natural disasters.

In the last 50 years, these remarkable stories have been too obscured and the capacity of the United Nations to act too limited by the cold war. As colonial rule broke down, differences between developing and industrialized nations and regional rivalries added new tensions to the United Nations so that too often there was too much invective and too little debate in the General Assembly.

But now the end of the cold war, the strong trend toward democratic ideals among all nations, the emergence of so many problems that can best be met by collective action, all these things enable the United Nations at this 50-year point finally to fulfill the promise of its founders.

But if we want the U.N. to do so, we must face the fact that for all its successes and all its possibilities, it does not work as well as it should. The United Nations must be reformed. In this age of relentless change, successful governments and corporations are constantly reducing their bureaucracies, setting clearer priorities, focusing on targeted results. In the United States we have eliminated hundreds of programs, thousands of regulations. We're reducing our Government to its smallest size since Presi-

dent Kennedy served here, while increasing our efforts in areas most critical to our future. The U.N. must take similar steps.

Over the years it has grown too bloated, too often encouraging duplication, and spending resources on meetings rather than results. As its board of directors, all of us, we, the member states, must create a U.N. that is more flexible, that operates more rapidly, that wastes less and produces more, and most importantly, that inspires confidence among our governments and our people. In the last few years we have seen some good reforms: a new oversight office to hold down costs, a new system to review personnel, a start toward modernization and privatization. But we must do more.

The United Nations supports the proposal of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Essy, who spoke so eloquently here earlier this morning, to prepare a blueprint for renewing the U.N. and to approve it before the 50th General Assembly finishes its work next fall.

We must consider major structural changes. The United Nations simply does not need a separate agency with its own acronym, stationery, and bureaucracy for every problem. The new U.N. must peel off what doesn't work and get behind what will.

We must also realize, in particular, the limits to peacekeeping and not ask the Blue Helmets to undertake missions they cannot be expected to handle. Peacekeeping can only succeed when the parties to a conflict understand they cannot profit from war. We have too often asked our peacekeepers to work miracles while denying them the military and political support required and the modern command-and-control systems they need to do their job as safely and effectively as possible. Today's U.N. must be ready to handle tomorrow's challenges. Those of us who most respect the U.N. must lead the charge of reform.

Not all the critics of today's United Nations are isolationists. Many are supporters who gladly would pay for the U.N.'s essential work if they were convinced their money was being well-spent. But I pledge to all of you, as we work together to improve the United Nations, I will continue to work to see that the United States takes the lead in paying its fair share of our common load.

Meanwhile, we must all remember that the United Nations is a reflection of the world it represents. Therefore, it will remain far from

perfect. It will not be able to solve all problems. But even those it cannot solve, it may well be able to limit in terms of the scope and reach of the problem, and it may well be able to limit the loss of human life until the time for solution comes.

So just as withdrawing from the world is impossible, turning our backs on the U.N. is no solution. It would be shortsighted and self-destructive. It would strengthen the forces of global disintegration. It would threaten the security, the interest, and the values of the American people. So I say especially to the opponents of the United Nations here in the United States, turning our back on the U.N. and going it alone will lead to far more economic, political, and military burdens on our people in the future and would ignore the lessons of our own history.

Instead, on this 50th anniversary of the charter signing, let us renew our vow to live together as good neighbors. And let us agree on a new United Nations agenda to increase confidence and ensure support for the United Nations, and to advance peace and prosperity for the next 50 years.

First and foremost, the U.N. must strengthen its efforts to isolate states and people who traffic in terror and support those who continue to take risks for peace in the face of violence. The bombing in Oklahoma City, the deadly gas attack in Tokyo, the struggles to establish peace in the Middle East and in Northern Ireland, all of these things remind us that we must stand against terror and support those who move away from it. Recent discoveries of laboratories working to produce biological weapons for terrorists demonstrate the dangerous link between terrorism and the weapons of mass destruction.

In 1937, President Roosevelt called for a quarantine against aggressions, to keep the infection of fascism from seeping into the bloodstream of humanity. Today, we should quarantine the terrorists, the terrorist groups, and the nations that support terrorism. Where nations and groups honestly seek to reform, to change, to move away from the killing of innocents, we should support them. But when they are unrepentant in the delivery of death, we should stand tall against them. My friends, there is no easy way around the hard question: If nations and groups are not willing to move away from the delivery of death, we should put aside short-term profits for the people in our countries to stop, stop, stop their conduct.

Second, the U.N. must continue our efforts to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. There are some things nations can do on their own. The U.S. and Russia today are destroying our nuclear arsenals rapidly, but the U.N. must also play a role. We were honored to help secure an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty under U.N. auspices. We rely on U.N. agencies to monitor nations bent on acquiring nuclear capabilities. We must work together on the Chemical Weapons Convention. We must strengthen our common efforts to fight biological weapons. We must do everything we can to limit the spread of fissile materials. We must work on conventional weapons like the land mines that are the curse of children the world over. And we must complete a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Third, we must support through the United Nations the fight against manmade and natural forces of disintegration, from crime syndicates and drug cartels to new diseases and disappearing forests. These enemies are elusive; they cross borders at will. Nations can and must oppose them alone. But we know, and the Cairo conference reaffirmed, that the most effective opposition requires strong international cooperation and mutual support.

Fourth, we must reaffirm our commitment to strengthen U.N. peacekeeping as an important tool for deterring, containing, and ending violent conflict. The U.N. can never be an absolute guarantor of peace, but it can reduce human suffering and advance the odds of peace.

Fifth—you may clap for that. [*Applause*] Fifth, we must continue what is too often the least noticed of the U.N.'s missions, its unmatched efforts on the frontlines of the battle for child survival and against disease and human suffering.

And finally, let us vow to make the United Nations an increasing strong voice for the protection of fundamental human dignity and human rights. After all, they were at the core of the founding of this great organization.

Today we honor the men and women who gave shape to the United Nations. We celebrate 50 years of achievement. We commit ourselves to real reforms. We reject the siren song of the new isolationists. We set a clear agenda worthy of the vision of our founders. The measure of our generation will be whether we give up

because we cannot achieve a perfect world or strive on to build a better world.

Fifty years ago today, President Truman reminded the delegates that history had not ended with Hitler's defeat. He said, it is easier to remove tyrants and destroy concentration camps than it is to kill the ideas which give them birth. Victory on the battlefield was essential, but it is not good enough for a lasting, good peace.

Today we know that history has not ended with the cold war. We know, and we have learned from painful evidence, that as long as there are people on the face of the Earth, imperfection and evil will be a part of human nature; there will be killing, cruelty, self-destructive abuse of our natural environment, denial of the problems that face us all. But we also know that here today, in this historic chamber, the challenge of building a good and lasting peace is in our hands and success is within our reach.

Let us not forget that each child saved, each refugee housed, each disease prevented, each

barrier to justice brought down, each sword turned into a plowshare, brings us closer to the vision of our founders, closer to peace, closer to freedom, closer to dignity.

So my fellow citizens of the world, let us not lose heart. Let us gain renewed strength and energy and vigor from the progress which has been made and the opportunities which are plainly before us. Let us say no to isolation; yes to reform; yes to a brave, ambitious new agenda; most of all, yes to the dream of the United Nations.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. in the War Memorial Opera House. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali; Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa; poet Maya Angelou; President Lech Walesa of Poland; Mayor Frank Jordan of San Francisco; Walter H. Shorenstein, chairman, U.N. 50 National Committee; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in San Francisco June 26, 1995

Q. Mr. Secretary-General, will you accept the President's suggestions for reforms of the United Nations?

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali. Yes, certainly.

Q. Do you think he has a point?

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali. Yes.

Q. Mr. President, you referred to the new isolationists in your speech. Could you be more specific about who you might mean?

President Clinton. What I've been saying for months now. I think you all know what I mean.

Q. Could you be specific, name who exactly you mean?

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—the RTC report has vindicated you and the First Lady in Whitewater?

The President. No, I haven't.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:03 p.m. in the Herbst Auditorium at the War Memorial Veterans Building. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.