

Inaugural Address  
by  
Dr Sushil Kumar

WORLD PEACE CONGRESS  
Bangalore, India: 27 February 2009

World Peace, for Mankind, has always been the most pursued mirage. Ironically, in this pursuit many a war has been fought. Mankind has suffered much bloodshed for the mistakes of man.

Between the interludes of war and peace Mankind hasn't yet given up the quest for Peace. One day, the seekers of World Peace shall find it and we are the seekers who have got together here today at this hour.

Not that before today there haven't been serious efforts to reach at Peace but something has certainly been amiss or may be, what Dorothy Thompson says "*They have not wanted Peace at all; they have wanted to be spared war -- as though the absence of war was the same as peace.*"

Despite the efforts of Peace thinkers wars and conflicts have been erupting one after the other, in which all sorts of weapons from bullets to bombs, from the weapons of mass destruction to chemical and biological ones; have all

been increasingly deployed to cause the most gruesome damage.

History offers evidence that the nations use military force to impose their will upon their enemy to render it so helpless so that he accepts the dictated terms. Over a period of time the fighting of War has progressively been dehumanized and War needs to be banished in whatever way it is possible. But will it bring Peace?

Many scholars and thinkers, in order to end war and the armed conflicts have come up with many ideas like the signing of intercessory treaties, setting up of International Courts to resolve disputes, entering in to treaties for no use of Force, advocacy for disarmament and for overall arms' reductions, collective security umbrella , one world government, non alignment, and non-cooperation with the military regimes.

But in reality these ideas have proved futile. The countries when in a position to strike with a certain advantage have gone on record terming the treaties as mere pieces of paper. They openly flouted the rulings of the international Courts that were not considered to be in their favour.

The theory of disarmament also does not hold good because even if we were to destroy all or transport all the weapons to a different planet, people here would still have enough reasons to fight on wars and they soon would develop new weapons, new bombs and new arsenals.

Even if we were to reduce or destroy the modern lethal weapons it would not guarantee the absence of war. History reveals that that most bloody and cruel wars were fought even before the advent of modern weapons of mass destruction.

With the advancements in science and technology the wars have become more and more dehumanized.

But why wars? What leads to conflicts? The scholars and thinkers have advanced many theories and their corresponding formulas for Peace. One often relied theory is that of maintenance of balance of power for stability. It states that when ever there is imbalance in the power equations between the nations, the war is started by those who think they have military advantage over the other and thus they can gain by starting the war. The prescription for peace, herein, is to continue to develop more and more weapons of war to have an edge over the other so that no one dares a misadventure of war.

The risks of war, Robert Jervis holds, increase when offensive forces of a country grow stronger, when it is felt by the policy makers that the conquest would be easy. When the conquest is perceived to be easy the policy makers are tempted to attack for easy gains. The solution advanced for Peace is to keep your offensive forces armed to the teeth.

There are many other offensive and defensive military doctrines built upon from the analysis of the causes that led to the Wars and conflicts and these promise security guarantees and means to preserve peace.

The thinkers and strategists have also advanced certain suggestions like replacing balance of power and competitive alliances with collective security systems. And it is advocated that there should be reduction of armaments to the minimum level that is just required for national safety.

In the dehumanized wars and conflicts irreparable losses have been caused. The wars and conflicts have adversely affected our progress and you all know in the wars neither the hospitals nor schools of our children nor the places of worship are spared from military attacks.

There aren't any values or ethics that are left any more in the waging of a war. From traditional and conventional battle fields the war has entered our homes and it knocks down our hearths. From soldiers' it has traversed to the civil populace. There aren't any announcements and forewarnings it erupts some time here and sometime there. I see no difference between warrior and a terrorist. Must we endure this all?

Nuclear weapons of mass destructions, weapons of biological and chemical warfare, weapons for ground, air and sea warfare, weapons of selective human kill have all the potency to cause the most grievous losses. What are we all up to?

It appears that the two world wars, nuclear holocausts over Hiroshima and Nagasaki and many other major wars and conflicts resulting in large scale loss of human life and property has had no effect upon our heartless leaders.

Peace activists, scholars, religious leaders, philosophers and even certain politicians have been finding answers as to what causes wars and conflicts and how do we get to the Peace. War is a nuisance.

All of us, part of a family, haven't really been pleased at the discords looming around our hearths, streets, communities and countries. For discord isn't natural to humanity, harmony is. We want harmony all around us and by getting together today in this Congress we all are at it.

Harmony is a moldering process, a synthesis, a synergy, akin to a beautiful rainbow of ideas emanating from the sparkles of our minds. Our minds have the power to herald the change. The change that we seek is that of peace and prosperity pervading all around us and we will certainly have it.

For Peace we have to begin from our own minds. The mind is both a gazer and in itself a crystal ball that tells all. In our minds are the seeds and the saplings of conflict and conflict -resolutions. In our minds bloom the buds and blossoms of War and Peace. In our minds alone are the wombs and tombs of all arsenals.

Our minds have the power to conceive good, bad or evil. With the positive powers of our minds mankind must not be made to reap the harvest of death, destruction and anarchy. We want Peace at whatever price it may be as any war, however glorified, isn't good enough.

As it is, in our minds, thoughts battle on incessantly unless there descends a calm by a realization, counsel or a preaching. When we are at Peace with ourselves we are at peace with the World. Let us introspect as Mahatma Gandhi says: -

*Whenever there is any feeling of tension or discord, I discovered that if I looked within myself for the fault and did not blame the other person, then tension and discord ceased.*

Let us offer peace to each other and work together as Mahatma Gandhi says:

*I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love.*

Our minds and the matters around us constitute the everyday World which we behold – a world that is transient yet permanent, turbulent yet calm; a world that needs Peace so that there aren't any more wars, so that there aren't any Hiroshima and Nagasaki, so that there aren't any 9/11s or 11/26 or colossal tragedies of the kind.

In a World wherein the apostles of Peace like Mahatma Gandhi are venerated, in a World where war might have been an option but Peace an imperative we want Peace nothing but World Peace.

Despite there being the apostles of Peace the World still has had to face countless conflicts, two major World Wars and the nuclear holocausts. Why? We, along with the apostles of Peace and their teachings, are not able to check the spread of conflicts, discords and wars? Haven't the haughty and the armed been directing the course of conflicts and consigning us all, the majority of the populace to the pains and miseries of War?

Do we not have a duty towards humanity to teach the values of Peace to our children and brethren or is that we will let them grow as militants and terrorists?

While we can not ignore the fact that Peace can't be had in a day, while we can not ignore the fact that there may be real causes that led to ongoing strife, current angers, vindictive and senseless attacks and inherited conflicts but it ought to be understood that causing injuries is no cure.

There is no reason why the causes of conflicts can not be analyzed, addressed and obliterated in peaceful manner.

If some of the most obstinate evils of the society have disappeared from our World there is no reason why the warring between the nations is not soon outmoded.

The History reveals that most of the causes of wars were petty, negotiable and wars and conflicts could have been avoided but these erupted and continued because of lack of communications, lack of understanding, lack of friendship and for there being lack of two way dialogue.

Those who care for Peace and tranquillity have time and again been putting their heads together to work out a plan for World Peace. The mission and zeal with which this World Peace Congress began in 2007, the World Peace may soon be around.

Thus whatever wasn't considered possible once would soon be possible. We have begun with "baby steps" our journeys to achieve Peace. Many of you, some here, and some there have already contributed by the power of your ideas to the various panels. With further endeavors we are sure to find the means and measures for a lasting World Peace.

We all are ruefully aware that Wars and Conflicts have progressively been dehumanized. The conflict and war mongers are totally insensitive to the sensibilities, pains,

and pangs of their adversaries. That is all the reason why we must put in our best for heralding World Peace in a World full of Conflicts. There ought to be World Peace that isn't pieced up by temporary interests and which cannot easily fall apart.

Has there been anything in this world which we humans have not been able to achieve? What ever we have imagined and whatever we have set ourselves to achieve we have achieved.

The goal of World Peace shall no longer be an exception. There is always a way and when we are on that way we shall be within the reach of our cherished goal of World Peace. All those on the side lines now shall join our caravan of Peace.

How could we have had Peace in the World so far as those who were required to build found it profitable to destroy, those who were tasked to join found it gratifying to rend apart ? A simple *simile* comes to my mind.

*When iron was created, the trees began to tremble. The iron thereupon said to them, Wherefore do ye tremble? Let none of your wood enter into me, and not one of you shall be hurt.*

If those who are charged with maintaining peace and order in the world do not themselves enter in to conflicts or engineer these overtly or covertly it would not be possible to hurtle Peace.

To my mind no man or woman was ever made to cause conflicts in this World. It's only that the chroniclers and Historians added glory to the conflicts and wars singing the songs of those who won while downing the travails and tribulations of those who got vanquished and trounced. But when we shall put our heads together and formulate the paths of peace that are close to our hearts there shall reign around World Peace.

We all are from the lands of the protagonists of Peace. The protagonists who beckon us to emulate their ideals of Love- in the same spirit and the same fire that they carried in their bosoms so that we may also lit many more candles of Peace. In such candle-lights the shadows would still follow us, would revolve around us, veering on our sides but surely we shall trample the darkness under our very feet and walk over to the enlightened arenas of World Peace.

In our quest for Peace, measures for World Peace we have to be perfect activists who belong to each other who protect each other, who are charged by the ideals to eliminate conflict from the face of the earth and whose mind is serene and composed. Even Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, and a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, opined:

*Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people.*

We need to liberate our minds from the shackles of ego, shackles of race and religion, shackles of region and from the shackles of regional patriotism because we have a responsibility towards one another of bringing home peace. In the words of Mrs Indira Gandhi:

*"Peace we want because there is another war to fight against poverty, disease and ignorance"*

On this day we have come together from all parts of the world because in our choices we have chosen hope over hopelessness, action over inaction, calm over turmoil, help

over helplessness, understanding over misunderstanding and Peace over war.

*"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten",* what Mother Teresa reminds us, *"that we belong to each other."* Let us belong to each other in as many ways as we can, away from contradictions and conflicts away from vendettas and retaliations because blood can not be washed out with blood.

In place of Clash, we must have a dialogue. I think the only solution is to hold dialogue with all your friends and adversaries. Let there be no communication gap, let there be no misunderstanding.

We are facing major issues like climate change, energy crisis, water crises, food security and now the economic meltdown. We cannot afford any war under such circumstances. And it is an open secret that no country can change the geographical lines with force. We are living in the 21 century and it demands *modus vivendia*. Let's live together despite our differences. We must have a spirit of live and let live. We can not cut each other's cultural roots and talk of peace and friendship. If I love you, I must love in entirety.

Peace and understanding and not conflicts and War are the needs of our Times. In our World for better prospects , for prosperity of one and all , for serenity of human minds, stability of political states and for World Peace *"We must be the change, as Mahatma Gandhi says, "we wish to see."* For *"We are the World", "Let's Connect" , "Joy Ho..."*

I wish the delegates a great success.

Thank you.