

Remarks by Ambassador Bhagwant S. Bishnoi, Deputy Permanent Representative on “Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War : Special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War”, General Assembly, on May 05, 2015

Madam President,

World War II was the most devastating and destructive global conflict in human history. The world witnessed horrific bloodshed and violence which led to the mass deaths of millions of civilians and soldiers. We need to remember the victims. We also need to pay tribute to the millions of soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice so that future generations may live a safer world.

We are grateful to you Mr. President for convening this meeting to commemorate all victims of the War. We also thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for having piloted the resolution which called for this meeting. We salute the valiant young women and men and people of all the countries who fought to ensure that we may live in a world free of fascism.

Madam President,

It is important to take note and to remember the huge contributions and sacrifices made by people from all parts of the world.

The Indian Army suffered nearly 87,000 fatalities and over a hundred thousand injured during the Second World War. At the start of World War II, the Indian Army was a mere 200,000 men. This swelled to 2.5 million men, the largest volunteer force ever raised in history. It participated in some of the most crucial battle fronts

For millennia in India, it has been the philosophy of upholding the values of good over evil that has guided the code of the warrior. It is with this perspective that Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, supported Indian participation in the two World wars despite our then ongoing struggle against colonial rule. Our participation contributed immensely to Allied war efforts during war.

Madam President,

I would particularly like to underline the sacrifices of brave Indian women, many of them served as nurses in civil and military hospitals or as members of the Women's Auxiliary Corps performing vital tasks for the war effort just behind the front lines. They drove army vehicles, operated switchboards and worked as mechanics. During the evacuation of Myanmar- then called Burma-Indian women often stayed at their posts and continued to send vital messages over the telegraph lines to help ensure the escape of as many civilians as possible. Many died and many were captured to endure terrible hardship and deprivation in prisoner-of-war camps.

Madam President,

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, it is also an occasion to objectively consider the lessons of the past, and ways to meet the challenges of the future.

Despite the progress humankind has recorded, war is far from being eliminated. While instances of war and armed conflict may have reduced over time, the actual impact on people has expanded. Estimates suggest that mortality caused by conflict has increased dramatically, from 1.6 million in the sixteenth century to nearly 110 million in the twentieth century.

Today, terrorism has emerged as one of the greatest threats to humankind. It threatens to expand its reach and engulf the world in carnage similar to what we witnessed during the two World Wars. Terrorism is a global phenomenon and can only be defeated by global action. We need to ensure that we are not found wanting in our efforts.

Madam President,

As we commemorate the end of the Second World War, we also need to take stock of the health of the institutions of global governance that were established in its wake. President Museveni of Uganda, speaking in the UN yesterday, noted that most of the fundamental structures created after World War II by the victorious powers remain unchanged. He pointed out that when the UN was created, there were only two sovereign countries in Africa. This meeting, therefore, also presents a useful opportunity to underline the need to address what President Museveni referred to as "the structural deficiency in the architecture for global security".

Madam President,

India participated in the San Francisco Conference and, as a founding member of the United Nations remains fully committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It is our hope that the organization will take concrete steps, as it celebrates its 70th anniversary, to be 'fit for purpose' and reflective of contemporary realities.

Thank you.
