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NEHRU: A GREAT INDIAN STATESMAN

Remarks of Vice President

Hubert H. Humphrey

New York, New York

January 27, 1965

It is a privilege for me to join with you in honoring a great man of our time, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

The opening of this exhibit in the United States would have the approval of the man we are honoring tonight. Twenty five years ago, in April 1940, he wrote of America that more and more of India's thoughts were attuned to "this great democratic country which seems almost alone to keep the torch of democratic freedom alight in a world

given over to violence and aggression and opportunism of the worst kind."

In the past twenty five years America's thoughts have turned more and more to India and to the man who did so much to keep the "torch of democratic freedom alight" on the vast continent of Asia.

But now Nehru is gone. The eulogies have been read. The editorials have been written. His ashes are now a part of the waters and the soil of India, the land to which he gave himself unsparingly.

For this audience -- which includes so many of his friends and colleagues -- I need not dwell on his achievements. You know them better than I. In the United States he was and is widely esteemed as the George Washington of country -- the man who guided his nation through its difficult founding years. In these formative years he won

great admiration and respect because he led in freedom and left a working democracy, an example for the community of new independent nations to follow. Long before he became Prime Minister he wrote that the test of a nation's heritage is the kind of leaders to which it has given its allegiance. In his own lifetime he demonstrated once again the ancient truth that in governing a nation -- whether new or old -- political leadership is most important of all. He succeeded in molding a nation of continental proportions, of varied linguistic and religious groups -- in the face of formidable economic obstacles.

But he is remembered today because he not only looked inward to the problems of his country -- but outward to the problems of the world. In playing a world role, he charted a course of non-alignment for India between East and West.

Though the paths of non-alignment can sometimes lead to pitfalls, he never abandoned his belief in the necessity of preserving freedom.

In playing a world role, Prime Minister Nehru always attached special importance to the United Nations -- and it is especially fitting that this exhibit be opened in New York, the seat of the United Nations -- and in the year 1965, International Cooperation Year.

The International Cooperation Year I might remind you was first proposed by Prime Minister Nehru to the UN General Assembly in 1961.

Under his leadership India established itself as a major voice in the United Nations. When the history of our times is finally written, the role played by Indian forces in United Nations peace-keeping operations -- in the Congo, Gaza, Cyprus, Korea and elsewhere -- will merit special commendation.

President Johnson said at the time of Mr. Nehru's death: "For so long we had counted on his influence for good..." The period of his influence was long; it included the tenures of four of our Presidents: Lyndon B. Johnson, John F. Kennedy, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Harry S. Truman.

Each of these Presidents knew him well and two of them visited him in New Delhi -- President Johnson in 1961 while Vice President and President Eisenhower in 1959. Mr. Nehru besides his 1949 visit with President Truman, came to Washington in 1956 to meet President Eisenhower and again in 1961 to talk with John F. Kennedy. There is a charming photograph, which may be in this exhibit, of the Prime Minister walking arm-in-arm with Mrs. Kennedy on the White House lawn. It was a short time later that Jacqueline Kennedy made the journey to

India and the welcome given to this lovely woman by Prime Minister Nehru and his countrymen warmed the hearts of all of us here at home. It is a privilege for us to welcome here tonight another lovely lady, the late Prime Minister's daughter, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who is widely known and admired in our country.

The connection between the United States and Mr. Nehru goes back to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Nehru's faith in the U.S. ^{was} matched by Roosevelt's wartime encouragement of post-war freedom for India.

From Franklin Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson, American interest in India's development has continued. I recall with satisfaction that in 1951 I joined with some of my colleagues in supporting legislation which enabled India to obtain American wheat to alleviate the severe food shortage of that time.

Since those days, relations between our countries have grown close. The late Prime Minister's vision of a new India in which the common man would be free from the age-old shackles of poverty, disease and social discrimination -- a new India to be created by hard work, self-help and democratic planning and methods -- has attracted the support and assistance of my country. I believe that this assistance should continue and will continue.

In the later years of his tenure an unprovoked attack by China in India's territory invoked an immediate sympathetic American response. At Prime Minister Nehru's request, President Kennedy rushed emergency military assistance to India's embattled armed forces. We are continuing to help India's defenses in a common resolve that free men can and must defend themselves and their

liberty when challenged by outside totalitarian aggressors.

Nehru was among the first to perceive that a new era had come with the splitting of the atom. His profound grasp of the realities of the nuclear age led him to resist the temptation to develop an independent nuclear capability. As one who understood the perils of nuclear proliferation, Nehru would rejoice that his successors have heeded his advice and resisted the call to join in a nuclear arms race which could only bring peril to Asia and to the world.

There should be no surprise that the United States stood with India in its hour of need. For we share so much: the rule of law, free elections, an operating democratic system, the checks and balances of a written constitution, a belief in the integrity of the individual, a desire for extending the benefits of modern society to all.

The exhibit we are to open tonight depicts the Nehru about whom I have spoken, his growth, the growth of India and his connections with the United States. I am pleased that the Government of India has put it together so that we and hundreds of thousands of Americans can see it.

I hope that this exhibit will give those who view it something of the vision of the man it depicts, a visionary who felt that India would only advance if it could dream dreams, draw strength from its great past, and put vision and dreams into action. And that vision was well expressed in a statement by Mr. Nehru made in 1939:

"And yet, and yet, the sands run out and this mad world rushes on, and problems multiply and if we do not keep pace with them we perish.

The world of today is not for the complacent
or the slow of foot or those who are the
slaves of events..."

If we are to honor his vision, we must use time as
a tool and not as a couch. As heirs of Nehru I am con-
fident you will heed his prophecy and honor his vision.
As friends of India we in the United States will rejoice
in your success in achieving these aims.

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