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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 27 May 1964, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. CORNER

(New Zealand)

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister
of India

Note:

The Official Record of this meeting, i.e. the summary record, will appear in provisional mimeographed form under the symbol T/SR.1229, and will be subject to representatives' corrections. It will appear in final form in a printed volume.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MR. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

The President: The sad task falls upon me as President of the Trusteeship Council to express the grief of all members at the death of the great Jawaharlal Nehru, and to convey our heartfelt but all too inadequate sympathy to his family and to the sorrowing Government and people of India.

Not often does a leader emerge who personifies the highest qualities of a whole nation. Pandit Nehru was such a leader: beautiful in mind as in person, courageous, magnanimous, wise, and above all, humane. More -- this man of luminous intelligence fused the experience, the moral values and the insights of East and West and thus transcended the limits of a single nation, even one so great as India. He changed the very world we live in and changed us with it. As Pericles said in the famous eulogy that Mr. Nehru himself quoted:

"For the whole earth is a sepulchre of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives."

We of the Trusteeship Council have special cause to know how much the course of history was changed by his life. The independence of India, in the achievement of which he played a key part, was the decisive event in the movement towards the independence of all colonial peoples. And so, because it applies to him as to few other men, I end by quoting a passage to which Pandit Nehru attached enough importance to use as the conclusion of his deeply felt book, The Discovery of India:

"Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past, so live as not to be tortured for years without purpose, so live that dying he can say: 'All my life and strength were given to the first cause in the world -- the liberation of mankind.'"

May I request the members of the Council to observe one minute of silence.

The representatives stood in silence.

Mr. BARNES (Liberia): The death of Mr. Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, has bowed the world with grief. It is with a sense of deep loss that the delegation of Liberia associates itself with the very fitting expressions of sympathy which you, Mr. President, have made on behalf of the Trusteeship Council for this irreparable loss to all mankind.

Prime Minister Nehru was the architect of India. He toiled unceasingly and assiduously for the independence of his country from colonial rule, and was richly rewarded to see India take its rightful place in the community of nations and play a distinguished, responsible and significant role in the quest for world peace and international co-operation.

Prime Minister Nehru served the cause of the United Nations well. He saw this world Organization as an instrument for peace and laboured in helping to shape and mould it as a truly effective organization to fulfil its noble objectives. It was he who aroused the conscience of the world to the dangers of nuclear tests and initiated in the United Nations efforts at marshalling the conscience of mankind to remove this danger. The International Co-operation Year, which will be observed by the United Nations at its twentieth anniversary in 1965, was also upon his initiative, and this occasion will certainly stand out as a fitting memorial to this great man.

Prime Minister Nehru manifested a deep and abiding interest for the needs and aspirations of the rising peoples and nations of Africa, and devoted himself to their political advancement and economic development.

Mr. Nehru was a truly great man upon whom nature impressed the stamp of greatness. He lived a noble life.

The delegation of Liberia extends its heartfelt sympathy to the Government of India, the bereaved family and the peoples of his country whom he loved and served so well.

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): On this day as this world leader lies dead, my delegation would like to express its feelings in his words. He said here in the General Assembly of the United Nations the following:

"I am no man of wisdom. I am only a person who has dabbled in public affairs for nearly half a century and learned something from them, and mostly what I have learned is, how wise men often behave in a very foolish manner; and that thought makes me often doubt my own wisdom, or

(Mr. McCarthy, Australia)

whatever you wish to call it. I question myself: 'Am I right?'

I may have doubts about many things, but I have no doubt at all about some things, because I have been conditioned in that way; I have grown up in that way during long years of guidance from my old leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who taught that hatred and violence are essentially bad and evil, and anything that promotes hatred, therefore, is bad."

We recall also his words when his own great leader, Mahatma Gandhi himself, lay dead. We take these words now into our own mouths in tribute to him, and this is what we believe of him:

"Not only we but succeeding generations will bear the imprint in our hearts of this son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courageous humility. We shall never allow the torch of freedom to be blown out however high the wind or stormy the tempest. It is a fateful moment for India, for Asia, and for all the world."

And then again his words, which we know are the words this day in the mouth of the whole of India:

"The father of the nation is no more. Now that the light has gone out of our lives, I do not quite know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader is no more. We who have seen him for these many years cannot turn to him any more for advice or seek solace from him."

That was the expression of his grief when his leader lay dead, and that we know is the expression of his nation's grief as he in his turn lies dead. But this we would say, that we know that the solace of his life and work will remain not only for India but for the whole world.

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The world has learned the grievous news of the passing of the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. On behalf of the Soviet delegation to the Trusteeship Council, allow me to express our deep sympathy and our condolences on the passing of this great leader of the Indian people. We should like to express our deepest sympathy to the people and Government of India on this grievous loss.

All people on this planet who cherish peace are afflicted by this great loss that has come to the people of India and the peoples of the entire world. Mr. Nehru was an outstanding statesman and political leader of modern Asia and of the world. He did a great deal for his country in helping it to attain independence. He did a great deal to strengthen peace and peaceful coexistence.

The Soviet people and the Soviet Government have deeply appreciated the efforts and endeavours of Mr. Nehru to strengthen friendship and co-operation between the people of the Soviet Union and the people of India. We bow our heads in reverence before the shining memory of this great man, this great champion of peace, who fought for these high principles. We are convinced that these great principles will continue to inspire all champions of peace and peaceful coexistence.

Mr. YATES (United States of America): My country has learned with profound sadness of the death of Prime Minister Nehru. The world has lost one of its great leaders; it has lost a statesman of the highest rank. The voice of Prime Minister Nehru was the voice of wisdom, the voice of reason, of moderation and of the utmost compassion for his fellow man. His counsels at this critical time in the history of the world will be sadly missed. Truly, the Prime Minister was the living embodiment of the theme of the poem we all know so well -- a poem written centuries ago by John Donne, in which he said:

"No man is an island entire of itself;
Every man is a part of the continent, a piece of the main.
For every clod that is washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
Every man's death diminishes me,
For I am a part of mankind.
Therefore never ask to know for whom the bell tolls.
It tolls for thee."

(Mr. Yates, United States)

May I express the profound sympathy of the United States of America to the great nation of India and to the Prime Minister's family.

Mr. DOISE (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to associate the French delegation with the tributes which are now being paid in the Trusteeship Council to that great national personality who has just departed, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. His tragic death has caused very great grief in France, where we recall the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Paris in November 1962. We recall, too, the friendly ties which linked France with his great country.

Prime Minister Nehru played a very outstanding role in the history of India and on the world scene. His love of peace, his great wisdom and the universal veneration which surrounded him will cause his name to go down in the history of humanity as a great person.

To his family, who have been so bitterly tried, and to the Indian people, who are so deeply afflicted, we would like to express our great sympathy and our great sadness.

Mr. KING (United Kingdom): It is not for me to repeat the words spoken this morning by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Sir Patrick Dean, in the Security Council. I would only say that Prime Minister Nehru was the successor of Gandhi, that great leader of the people of India -- who, I am proud to say, are members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. He led his country in the first years of its independence and brought it very rapidly to a first place in the councils of the world, so that, even while India was grappling with innumerable problems of its own, it was able to make a valuable and significant contribution to the sum of the world's wisdom. That India was able to do this was due in great part to the sagacity and the greatness of Prime Minister Nehru himself.

India's loss is the world's loss, and particularly the loss of this Organization. I know that his death will be greatly mourned in my own country as well as in his.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Narendra Singh, representative of India, took a place at the Trusteeship Council table.

Mr. NARENDRA SINGH (India): The Indian delegation thanks you, Mr. President, and other members of the Trusteeship Council for the words of sympathy and sorrow at the passing of Prime Minister Nehru. Our grief cannot be easily measured, but the blow is somewhat softened by the knowledge that our sorrow is shared by so many from all parts of the world. I shall convey to my Government and people the very sincere and fraternal condolences that have been expressed by you in this Council.

The PRESIDENT: I believe it is the wish of members of the Council that we suspend the work of the Council this afternoon in tribute to the sorrow of the Government and people of India on the loss of their great leader.

The Council will take up its work again tomorrow afternoon, and I suggest that, in the hope of completing our general debate on conditions in New Guinea and also hearing the opening statement on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, we start at 2.30 instead of 3 o'clock.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.