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ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AT JOHNS HOPKINS

UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

At this time of great ideological conflicts and violent clashes of interests, technological and economic developments have, as never before, brought us together as members of one human family, unified beyond race or creed on a shrinking globe, in face of dangers of our own making. In such a situation many ethical problems take on a new significance and our need to give sense to our lives exceeds the inherited standards. True, our duties to our families, our neighbors, our countries, our creeds have not changed. But something has been added. This is a duty to what I shall call international service, with a claim on our lives equal to that of the duty to serve within those smaller units whose walls are now breaking down. The international service of which I speak is not the special obligation, nor the privilege, of those working in international economic corporations, in the field of diplomacy, or in international political organizations. It has become today the obligation, as well as the privilege, of all.

Is it not, you might ask, paradoxical to strive for truly international service in a divided world? Is it not even more than paradoxical -- is it not impossible? It is said that nobody can serve two masters. How is it then possible that anybody can serve -- or even should serve -- a world community that is split in fractions, demanding loyalty to divergent ideas and warring interests? In such a situation, will not international service require abject self-surrender, leaving us empty of personal convictions? Will it not emasculate our will and strength to fight for ideals and interests which we hold dear and to which we are bounden?

My reply to these sceptical questions is a "no." International service requires of all of first and foremost the courage to be ourselves. In other words, requires that we should be true to none other than our ideals and interests -- these should be such as we can fully endorse after having opened our minds,

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with great honesty, to the many voices of the world. The greatest contribution to international life that any one can render -- be it as a private citizen or as one professionally engaged in international work -- is to represent frankly and consistently what survives or emerges as one's own after such a test. Far from demanding that we abandon or desert ideals and interests basic to our personality, international service thus puts us under the obligation to let those ideals and interests reach maturity and fruition in a universal climate.

If this is the essence of international service, such service will expose us to conflicts. It will not permit us to live lazily under the protection of inherited and conventional ideas. Intellectually and morally, international service therefore requires courage to admit that you, and those you represent, are wrong, when you find them to be wrong, even in the face of a weaker adversary, and courage to defend what is your conviction even when you are facing the threats of powerful opponents. But while such an outlook exposes us to conflicts, it also provides us with a source of inner security; for it will give us "self-respect for our shelter." This is, as you may remember, the privileged position which Epictetus grants to the Cynic when he, true to his ideals, sacrifices all outward protection.

In the flourishing literature on the art of life there is much talk about that rare quality: maturity of mind. It is easy to circumscribe such maturity in negative terms. In positive terms it is difficult to define it, although we all recognize it when we have the privilege of seeing its fruits. It is reflected in an absence of fear, in recognition of the fact that fate is what we make it. It finds expression in an absence of attempts to be anything more than we are, or different from what we are, in recognition of the fact that we are on solid ground only when we accept giving to our fellow men neither more nor less than what is really ours. You yourselves can complete the picture. Maturity of mind seems to me to be the very basis for that attitude which I have described here as the essence of international service. It is by striving for such maturity that we may grow into good international servants.

We are now ready to return to the question whether international service is possible without split loyalties in a divided world. The problem as posed here is to my mind unreal. We are true to this or that ideal, and this or that interest, because we have in openness and responsibility recognized it as an ideal and an interest true to us. We embrace ideals and interests in their own right,

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not because they are those of our environment or of this or that group. Our relations to our fellow men do not determine our attitude to ideals, but are determined by our ideals. If our attitude is consistent, we shall be consistent in our loyalties. If our attitude is confused, then our loyalties will also be divided.

In the world of today there is an urge to conformism which sometimes makes people complain of a lack of loyalty in those who criticize the attitudes prevalent in their environment. May I ask: who shows true loyalty to that environment, one who before his conscience has arrived at the conclusion that something is wrong and in all sincerity gives voice to his criticism, or the one who in self-protection closes his eyes to what is objectionable and shuts his lips on his criticism? The concept of loyalty is distorted when it is understood to mean blind acceptance. It is correctly interpreted when it is assumed to cover honest criticism.

The question to which I have just referred has attracted special attention in discussions concerning the attitude of those who work in international organizations, the policies in which in some cases may conflict with that of their home countries. Again I would say that the problem is unreal. The international civil servant who works for an organization with members of different ideologies and interests remains under the obligation that applies to all of us -- to be faithful to truth as he understands it. In doing so he is loyal -- both in relation to the organization and to his country. In doing so, he must, of course, subordinate himself to rules of good order, as all of us should do. Nobody should use his position in an international organization for attacks on his own country or its policies, however strongly he may feel that he is right. Nor should anybody, as a national, attack the international organization for which he is working, and thereby place himself outside the discipline and the procedure established for the maintenance of that organization. But it is equally true that nobody should suffer, either as a national, or in his position in the international organization, for faithfulness to ideals of truth and justice, provided he observes the laws of his country as well as of the organization which he serves. There cannot be, and there should not be, any real conflict between international service and international civil service, between the way of life we have been considering and the duties of someone engaged in professional work for the international community.

It may seem to you that this problem of loyalties is one of limited interest, relevant only to those who have chosen an international career. That is not so.

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I have brought it up here in relation to international organizations because those organizations present the problem in a clear-cut form which has attracted some public attention. However, the problem is common to us all in all walks of life and of significance especially to those who, like you, are engaged in intellectual activities or are planning for a future which will bring you in contact with the civilizations, traditions and interests of many countries. In fact, it is a national problem, and a problem within whatever group of friends and associates you may be working, just as much as it is an international problem. The essence of international service, and the problem of loyalty as it presents itself in the light of such service, is the essence of all service to fellow men, and it is the problem of loyalty as we face it everywhere.

The attitude and the way of life which I have tried to describe as being the very essence of international service is more than a mere pattern of behavior. Implied in it is a positive ideal. We hear much about freedom and the blessings of freedom. We hear less about the obligations of freedom and the ideals by which freedom must be guided. Every individual prefers freedom from constraint and freedom from intervention in his personal pursuit of happiness. But, as we all recognize, such freedom is possible in a world of order only when the individual replaces outward limitations on his freedom of action by self-imposed laws which may, and frequently are, no less severe. An individualism carried to the extreme where you neither accept restraint imposed on you by society, or by your fellow men, nor submit yourself to the laws of a mature conscience, would lead to anarchy. This is true no less of international life than of life within your own country.

The attitude basic to international service places the pursuit of happiness under laws of conscience which alone can justify freedom. In accepting such a way of life we recognize the moral sovereignty of the responsible individual. In the fight for freedom which puts its stamp so strongly on present-day life, the final issue is what dignity we are willing to give to man. It is part of the American creed, part of the inherited ideology of all Western civilization, that each man is an end in himself, of infinite value as an individual. To pay lip-service to this view or to invoke it in favor of our actions is easy. But what is in fact the central tenet of this ideology becomes a reality only when we, ourselves, follow a way of life, individually and as members of a group, which entitles us personally to the freedom of a mature individual, living under the rules of his conscience. And it becomes the key to our dealings with others only when inspired by a faith which in truth and spirit gives to them the value which is theirs according to what we profess to be our creed. (more)

In a stirring and provocative book recently published in this country its author, a man of intelligence and great moral integrity, raises the question whether we can justify our faith in freedom in a world of materialistic thinking unless we are willing to depart from standards of value which measure success primarily in terms of outward achievement. He never got a chance to elaborate his reply, as his work was interrupted by death. But from what he had already written, it is apparent what he wanted to say: that the dignity of man, as a justification for our faith in freedom, can be part of our living creed only if we revert to a view of life where maturity of mind counts for more than outward success and where happiness is no longer to be measured in quantitative terms. I doubt whether the author, had he been given the chance to complete his work, would ever have found it possible to go far beyond this point, because the final reply is not one that can be given in writing, but only in terms of life. There is no formula to teach us how to arrive at maturity and there is no grammar for the language of inner life. His study, like the effort of every single individual, finally led him to the doorstep where the rest is silence because the rest is something that has to be resolved between a man and himself. The rest is silence -- but the results of the inner dialogue are evident to all, evident as independence, courage and fairness in dealing with others, evident in true international service.

You may be surprised by an approach to international service and to the problems raised by present-day developments in international life which, like mine today, is concerned mainly with problems of personal ethics. The so-called realists may regard what I have tried to say as just so many fine words, only tenuously related to everyday life and political action. I would challenge this criticism. The thoughts I have shared with you about international service are conclusions from a most practical experience. Politics and diplomacy are no play of will and skill where results are independent of the character of those engaging in the game. Results are determined not by superficial ability but by the consistency of the actors in their efforts and by the validity of their ideals. Contrary to what seems to be popular belief there is no intellectual activity which more ruthlessly tests the solidity of a man than politics. Apparently easy successes with the public are possible for a juggler, but lasting results are achieved only by the patient builder.

What is true in a life of action, like that of a politician or a diplomat, is true also in intellectual activities. Even a genius never achieves a lasting result in science without patience and hard work, just as in politics the results of the work of the most brilliant mind will ultimately find their value determined by character. Those who are called to be teachers or leaders may profit from intelligence but can only justify their position by integrity.