



THE VICE PRESIDENT WASHINGTON

Vice President Hurricane Observes United Nations Day

October 26, 2019

For the occasion of United Nations Day on Thursday, Vice President Hurricane addressed a forum of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA) at Georgetown University in the nation's capital.

As part of the forum, the Vice President met with current and former United States officials involved in work at the UN, international NGO and humanitarian leaders, and local college students involved with UNA-USA.



A transcript of his remarks are reproduced below.

“The United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.”

Those, of course, were the famous words of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld as he spoke against the backdrop of the Cold War, the Suez Crisis and the emergency in Congo.

On this 74th anniversary of the United Nations, there is much to celebrate. The world is seeing meaningful action towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Climate action is increasingly on the agenda of countries around the globe. Genuine progress is being made towards the alleviation of global poverty and malnutrition.

(Applause)

And, of course, we are on the cusp of welcoming a 194th member to the global community of nations.

(Sustained applause)

That being said, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels—nor can we forget that the performative assemblies at the United Nations are no substitute for genuine, multilateral engagement on the most pressing issues that face our planet.

At this critical junction in history, the United States cannot afford to turn back onto itself—we must assume the mantle of global climate and diplomatic leadership and rededicate ourselves to cooperating with and through the United Nations.

What we also need, however, is the modernization of the pillars of global cooperation. While the Security Council's structure made sense in 1945, that is no longer self-evident in 2019. Emerging global players such as India remain without a voice on the key security organ of the community of nations, and we must ensure that their input is heard and valued.

(Applause)

As our international order enters its second century, we must remain cognizant of the challenges that we face and continue to strive for a world of laws, peace and cooperation. We are being tested by resurgent militarism in parts of the world and an unstable global security situation, but through the force of our alliances, our values and our dauntless pursuit of peace and justice, we must strengthen our international institutions to meet these challenges.

These stakes are not merely theoretical.

Whether we rise to this high task will determine whether we are able to respond to the climate emergency in time to protect the prosperity of our children. Whether we can, as a global community of nations, continue effectively responding to crises and preventing atrocities. Whether, in Dag Hammarskjöld's words, we can save humanity from hell.

As an internationalist, I believe we can. But it is only by strengthening and promoting the important work of institutions like the United Nations that we can truly get to solving the big problems that we face—as nations, as peoples and as a species.

America needs a strong voice for the UN and for internationalism. That is why your work here is so important, and why I am extraordinarily humbled to speak here today.

Thank you so much, and have a good evening.

Vice President Hurricane also met with the director of the Smithsonian Institution and National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices this week. For his last scheduled event of the week, the Vice President will be in Portland, Sierra on Saturday, for a public speaking engagement at Pioneer Courthouse Square.