**Remarks by the Vice President to the UN Security Council**

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U.S. Vice President Pence

At the UN Security Council

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, Chairperson Faki, President Ramos-Horta, distinguished members of the Security Council, it’s a great honor to be with you today in the midst of the 72nd United Nations General Assembly.

As we gather at this historic assembly, I know all of our hearts are with the people of Puerto Rico as they face Hurricane Maria and its aftermath -- and with the people of Mexico City, even now as first responders and families seek to save the lost and find those that are injured in the midst of the earthquake that's now claimed more than 200 lives. Our hearts and our prayers are with the people of Puerto Rico and the people of Mexico, as we gather.

We are here today to discuss what I believe is the most important mission of the United Nations: keeping the peace.

Let me begin by thanking Ethiopia for introducing today’s resolution on peacekeeping reform. It was my honor, as Vice President of the United States, to cast a vote in favor of this resolution.

As President Trump said yesterday in his historic address to this General Assembly, just as each of you, in his words, “should always put your country first, we will always put America first.”

But as his words and I hope our presence here attest, America First does not mean America alone. As the President said, we “will forever be a great friend to the world.”

And it’s because of that commitment that he sent me here today to this Security Counsel, to reiterate our call for fundamental reforms of U.N. peacekeeping and our determination to see this institution do even more to keep the peace across the wider world.

President Trump and I firmly believe that the U.N. must act to make its peacekeeping operations more efficient, more effective, more accountable, and more credible.

Ambassador Haley has previously laid out the United States’ principles for peacekeeping reform and we're all familiar with them.

Peacekeeping missions must support a political solution; have the consent of the host country; its mandates must be realistic and achievable; every mission must have an exit strategy; and the United Nations peacekeeping missions must adjust to progress and failure.

In short, when a mission succeeds, we should not prolong it. When a mission underperforms, we should restructure it. And when a mission consistently fails to fulfill the mandates of this council, we should end it.

We urge the United Nations to analyze all peacekeeping operations in light of these principles, so that these missions most effectively advance peace across the wider world.

After all, keeping the peace is at the heart of the United Nations’ mission. The very first words of the U.N.’s charter are “to maintain international peace.” And just yesterday, President Trump challenged this great body to rededicate itself to this noble goal, and I do so today on behalf of our nation before this Security Council.

History records that the United Nations was forged in the fading embers of the Second World War; the most destructive conflict in the history of the world.

The United States of America, with our allies, emerged victorious. But in that victory, we vowed to come together to prevent dictators and demagogues from ever threatening the peace that we had won through our shared sacrifice.

As President Harry Truman told us then, it was not sufficient to, in his words, “merely check madmen who would plan world domination,” but rather to bring together again, and I quote, “a mighty combination of nations founded upon justice and peace.” And so we founded this great body -- the United Nations.

That was the rallying cry of the United Nations in the 20th century, and so must it be again in the 21st century.

But keeping the peace requires more than peacekeeping, it requires action and the unwavering resolve of every country gathered here today.

For as President Trump observed yesterday, we are once again confronted, in his words, by those who threaten us with chaos, with turmoil, and terror, who seek to undermine the sovereignty, prosperity, and security -- all of which the President called the “pillars of peace.”

In Eastern Europe, Russia continues to compromise the sovereignty of its neighbors as it seeks to redraw international borders by force.

Radical Islamic terrorism continues to beset nations with barbarous attacks in Barcelona, Paris, London.

In the Middle East, the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism continues to flout the spirit of the Iran Deal, destabilizing the region and brazenly threatening the security of sovereign nations.

And as the world has seen in just the past few days, a depraved regime in North Korea is relentlessly pursuing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. And now, as the President said, “threatens the entire world with unthinkable loss of human life.”

The United States is grateful to see this Security Council unanimously adopt two resolutions imposing tough new sanctions on the North Korean regime.

But to be clear: The United States of America will continue to bring the full range of American power to bear on the regime in Pyongyang. We will continue to marshal economic and diplomatic pressure -- ours and from countries across the world -- to demand that North Korea abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

As the President said yesterday, the United States has “great strength and patience,” but all options are on the table. And if we are forced to defend ourselves and our allies, we will do so with military power that is effective and overwhelming.

We call on the United Nations and this Security Council to do more to keep the peace -- much more -- to confront the threat posed by North Korea.

Finally, to keep the peace most effectively, this body must have the credibility to pursue peace by advancing the cause of human rights.

It’s no coincidence that some of the most dangerous regimes in the world are also some of the worst abusers of human rights.

In Iran, North Korea, and other despotic regimes, we see a truth of history borne out once again -- those who subvert freedom of their people at home undermine sovereignty and security abroad.

The United Nations is bound by its charter to foster “International cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all.”

That was the purpose under which the U.N. Human Rights Council was formed. But the truth is, the Human Rights Council doesn’t deserve its name.

As we look at the membership of the council today, we see nations that betray these timeless principles upon which this institution was founded. Today, the United Nations Human Rights Council actually attracts and welcomes many of the worst human rights violators in the world. A clear majority of the Human Rights Council’s members fail to meet even the most basic human rights standards.

Cuba sits on the Human Rights Council, an oppressive regime that has repressed its people and jailed political opponents for more than half a century.

Venezuela sits on the Human Rights Council, a dictatorship that undermines democracy at every turn, imprisons political opponents, and as we speak is advancing policies that worsen deprivation and poverty that’s costing the lives of innocent men, women, and children.

This body must reform the Human Rights Council’s membership and its operation. As to its operation, I think of what President John F. Kennedy warned more than 50 years ago, that the United Nations must not become in his words a “forum for invective.” Unfortunately, today, the Human Rights Council has become exactly that, and particularly the Human Rights Council has become a forum for anti-Semitism and invective against Israel.

The council’s agenda item seven actually singles out Israel for discussion at every single meeting, something no other country must endure. As evidence, the Human Rights Council has passed more than 70 resolutions condemning Israel, while largely ignoring the world’s worst human rights abusers.

It is, as President Trump said yesterday, “a massive source of embarrassment.” And we call on the Security Council and this entire body to immediately embrace reforms of the membership and practices of the Human Rights Council and end the Human Rights Council’s blatant bias against our cherished ally Israel.

Under President Trump, the United States of America is firmly committed to the cause of human rights -- because we are committed to keeping the peace.

Keeping the peace requires more than peacekeeping. It requires action, reform. And lastly, it also requires a willingness to call out senseless attacks on innocent people around the world.

At this very moment in Southeast Asia, we see heartbreak and assaults on human rights and innocent civilians that's ultimately endangering the sovereignty and security of the entire region.

In recent weeks, the people of my country and the wider world have witnessed a great tragedy unfolding in Burma with the Rohingya people.

Recently, Burmese security forces responded to militant attacks on government outposts with terrible savagery -- burning villages, driving the Rohingya from their homes. The images of the violence and its victims have shocked the American people and decent people all over the world.

And now we’re witnessing a historic exodus. Over 400,000 Rohingya -- including tens of thousands of children -- have now been forced to flee from Burma to Bangladesh, with more following every day.

Yesterday, Secretary of State Tillerson discussed Rohingya refugees with Aung San Suu Kyi and urged the Burmese government and military to facilitate humanitarian aid and confront the allegations of human rights abuses.

And while we welcome Suu Kyi’s comments that returning refugees have nothing to fear, the United States renews our call on Burma’s security forces to end their violence immediately and support diplomatic efforts for a long-term solution.

President Trump and I also call on this Security Council and the United Nations to take strong and swift action to bring this crisis to an end and give hope and help to the Rohingya people in their hour of need.

Unless this violence is stopped, which justice demands, it will only get worse. And it will sow seeds of hatred and chaos that may well consume the region for generations to come and threaten the peace of us all.

As I said, keeping the peace requires more than peacekeeping -- it requires action, courage, conviction. And so the United Nations must be prepared to do more.

For as President Trump said yesterday, “If the righteous many do not confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph. When decent people and nations become bystanders to history, the forces of destruction only gather power and strength.”

So let us rededicate ourselves to the mission upon which this body was founded -- the first words of the U.N. Charter, “to maintain international peace,” must again be our lodestar, our ideal, and our aspiration.

Through reform of our efforts and reform of this institution, through renewed courage to speak and act whenever and wherever the unalienable rights of innocent people, or the peace of the world, is at risk we will create, as our President said, a more safe and peaceful future for all mankind.

As the world witnessed yesterday, our President is a man of deep conviction and faith -- faith in God and faith in the boundless capacity of peoples and nations founded on peace and justice to improve the world.

My prayer today is that this institution might mirror that conviction in renewed ways -- with the faith that as we “make every effort to pursue peace,” that the God of peace will guide us and bless us -- today, tomorrow, and always -- for this generation and our posterity.

Thank you, Mr. President, for the honor of addressing today and may God bless you all.