

LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE
21ST CENTURY

speeches and articles

by

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1980-1987

"As I look to the next century, I am more and more convinced that it will be the capacity to learn - and, in particular, to learn from each other, individually and collectively - which, more than any other single factor, will determine the viability, autonomy and integrity of all societies."

CHAPTER A - INTRODUCTION

Soedjatmoko was appointed Rector of the United Nations University, based in Tokyo, Japan, in September 1980 and held the office until August 1987. During those seven years, in addition to undertaking the heavy responsibilities of leading a relatively new and complex international organisation, he accepted invitations to give speeches from organisations in countries.

As an individual, Soedjatmoko had established his reputation as a deep and original thinker well before he was appointed to the United Nations University but this new position, as head of an organisation devoted to mobilising world scholarship to help solve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare, gave him status and a platform which he had previously lacked.

During a period when, in some quarters at least, the United Nations as a whole was not well-regarded, Soedjatmoko's independent, humane and balanced views were heard as providing the kind of objective, rational, and constructive analysis which should ideally inform the approach of the United Nations to its very difficult problems.

Soedjatmoko would be the last person to dismiss the significance of the political pressures at the UN which often make the rational approach difficult to take. He has always seen very clearly that UN politics are the ultimate exercise in "the art of the possible". Nonetheless his analyses and his visions go beyond the immediate and the short-term and therefore should not be lost with the end of his term of service with the United Nations University.

As Editor of this collection my principal difficulty has been Soedjatmoko's consistent and rigorous analysis of the state of the world as being affected by a number of inter-locking and self-reinforcing problems; thus, whatever his nominal topic, he has invariably found it necessary to place this topic in the general setting of the complex, competitive and highly dangerous world which an ever-increasing number of us are obliged to share, for better or worse.

Although this approach was obviously necessary for the audience present at each speech, it poses the problem of unnecessary repetition in a collection. Therefore under each broad subject heading, I have selected one or two major speeches for reproduction in full and added extracts from other speeches on the same or a related subject which seemed to me to offer additional insight or illumination.

The inviting body, location and date are given for each speech but most references to the occasion and to the work of the United Nations University have been deleted from the texts.

B - BIO-DATA ON SOEDJATMOKO

C - NOTE ON UN UNIVERSITY (or as appendix)

CHAPTER I - LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

"We have reached a point, here on the doorstep of the next century, where the inadequacies of our present instruments for managing our lives and our destinies are chillingly apparent."

"One of the most important things we must learn, if we are to survive and progress in this increasingly insecure, perilous and fragile world, is the art of existing in a continuing state of rapid social change accompanied by great common vulnerability."

"The world of the 21st century will not be determined by any economic or technological projections that we make, but by moral choices."

- Man in the 21st Century, February, 1982 (12)
- Global Crossroads: Which Way to the 21st Century, May 1984 (113)

CHAPTER II - LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

"As Barbara Ward put the point: either we learn to love one another or we will all perish. But learning to love one another will mean, first, learning to understand one another and each others' legitimate interests, and the forces that are shaping our destinies, individually and collectively."

- An Ethical Framework for Human Solidarity, May 1986
- Personal and Social Responsibility in the Search for Mental Health, July 1983 (85)
- Sacred Heart Commencement Exercises, June 1984 (114)

CHAPTER III - THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

"The most severe constraints on the possibility of a more secure existence for humankind are not physical limits, but limits of imagination, co-operation, adaptability and determination."

"All signs seem to point to one inescapable fact: no one is in control and no one nation or group of nations can any longer shape the course of the world."

- Human Values in a Pluralistic World, October 1980 (7)
- Creativity and Change, March 1981 (18)
- Power and Morality in Global Transformation, 1981 (24)
- The Social Sciences and Global Transformation, May 1983 (78)
- Global Possible Conference, May 1984 (110)

value transition

CHAPTER IV - INTERDEPENDENCE - AN EVERYDAY REALITY

"If we can't make the international system work then we will have lost the supreme challenge of our time."

"To put it bluntly, we don't really know enough about a great many things at a moment when swift transformation in the framework of global interdependence asks for more hard and relevant knowledge and much more finely tuned and morally perceptive views of the world around us."

- Universalism in a Pluralistic World - The Need for New Development Ideals, January 1982 (40)
- The Management of Interdependence, November 1982 (67)
- Complexity and the Management of Interdependence, May 1984 (112)

CHAPTER V - DOES DEVELOPMENT WORK?

"We cannot in good conscience assess the accomplishments and failures of two and a half development decades without taking into account the overall historical setting of war, revolution and social change which has characterised the period within which the development effort has taken place."

"Development succeeds when a society as a whole and at all levels learns to make optimal use of its resources through the application of science and technology towards improving the daily lives of its citizens in ways which are consonant with their basic views and aspirations."

- The Human and Cultural Dimensions of Development - Accomplishments and Neglects, July 1982 (53)
- Development Reconsidered - The Human Dimension, October 1982 (61)
- Development and Interdependence, September 1984 (119)
- Development as Learning, January 1985 (131/2)

CHAPTER VI - POVERTY; HUNGER AND ENERGY

"We do not know enough about the social structures and the cultures of absolute poverty to enable us to break the pattern of powerlessness, exploitation and permanent indebtedness."

"Hunger and poverty are inextricably linked and malnutrition is patently the disease of the poor. It is the intractable character of poverty in the low-income and densely-populous countries of the Third World that is the single greatest impediment to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition."

"We are talking about the needs of some half of all humanity, living in poverty and hunger, whose daily lives are largely untouched by oil and other commercial energy sources and most of whom rely on fuel wood and organic wastes for their basic household energy."

- Turning Point in Development - The Food-Energy Pivot, February 1981
(14)
- Energy, Culture and History, August 1981 (25)
- The Challenge of World Hunger, August 1981 (27)
- Food and Energy Demands on the Global Research Agenda, February 1982
(43)
- Will Mankind be Able to Secure Food in the 21st Century?, March 1985
(137)

CHAPTER VII - VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE -
THE IMPERATIVE OF PEACE

"What kind of a world have we created, and what - if anything - can be done to restore, or achieve, a greater measure of civility in our relations as individuals, as communities, as states?"

"It is not enough to deplore the fact that so much scientific talent is devoted to military research and development. We must ask why the political and civil constituencies for peaceful and constructive uses of science are so weak in comparison with the constituencies for aggressive and destructive uses."

- Global Peace and Regional Security, October 1982 (64)
- Disarmament and Development, March 1984 (105)
- Nuclear War and the Fate of the Earth - The Role of the Scientist, February 1985 (133)
- Patterns of Armed Conflict in the Third World, June 1985 (142)
- Cities in the Nuclear Age, August 1985 (148)
- Regional Security Arrangements in the Third World, January 1986 (158)
- Violence in the Third World, 1986 (161)
- The Challenge of Non-Violence, May 1986

CHAPTER VIII - THE GLOBAL COMMONS

"The survival of the world will not only depend on the elite and the expert. It will depend as much or more on whether we can get poor peasants not to cut down another tree and to find alternative ways of meeting their basic needs."

"The most important 'break through' in the environmental front would be the creation of innovative new management tools for the policy-planner - ways to respond more flexibly, to adapt to the unexpected, to cope with the uncertain, and to break down bureaucratic rigidities."

- Managing the Global Commons, May 1982 (47)

- Towards Institutions of Unity for the Global Commons, 1984 (101)

CHAPTER IX - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - SERVANT OR MASTER?

"One great paradox of our age is that, although we have never before seen such an accumulation of scientific and technological power, at the same time there has never been so strong a feeling of powerlessness in the face of on-rushing events."

"The morality we bring to technological choices will decide whether the future will be a totalitarian one or one in which technology will serve to enhance human freedom, decentralise power and humanise anew those large structures which have so depersonalised and dehumanised existence."

- Technology for the 21st Century, August 1981 (28)
- Eurocentrism in the Global Context, December 1982 (69)
- Nobel Foundation Lecture Response, April 1983 (76)
- Science and Technology for Peace and Development, April 1984 (107)

CHAPTER X - UNIVERSITIES AND LEARNING: CHANGE IN NORTH AND SOUTH

"I am speaking of a new kind of learning - one which will enable us to survive, in humane fashion, in a world undergoing profound transformation."

"What is needed in preparing for the twenty-first century is not just more education but also different kinds of education. The challenge to learning is really the challenge of a rapidly changing set of circumstances that touches every facet of society. It goes far beyond the field of education proper, demanding an expansion of the learning capacity of the nation as a whole."

- Three Challenges Facing Universities in the Third World, July 1982 (55)
- The Future Outlook of the Arabian Gulf University, May 1983 (79)
- Educational and Cultural Implications of the Information Revolution, March 1984 (102)
- The 21st Century Challenge to Learning, March 1984 (104)
- The International Dimension of Universities in an Interdependent World, August 1985 (149)
- Social Sciences, Government and Youth, September 1985 (150)

CHAPTER XI - SCENARIO FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

"Why is it that in the scenarios developed by futureologists, the implicit assumption often seems to be the inevitability of authoritarian form of government? Is a democratic scenario of the future not possible?"

"When I speak about development and democracy I speak primarily about the two possibly most fundamental drives in today's world: the drive to escape from poverty and for the material improvement of life on the one hand, and the drive for freedom on the other."

"Too often, in past decades, we have let a purely economic outlook bypass the notion that the human being is, in fact, the ultimate goal of development, its very basis and sole means."

- Theory and Reality in Political Development, March 1982 (45)
- The Contemporary Challenge to Democratic Leadership, October 1982 (59)
- The New International Human Order - The Moral Aspects of Development, April 1983 (75)
- Democracy and Development, July 1984 (115)
- The Search for Freedom - Lessons for the 21st Century, October 1984 (123)

CHAPTER XII - ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS

" 'Thou shalt not kill' loses much of its meaning in a world where violence has become not only the last, but increasingly the first recourse when confronted with seemingly intractable problems."

"At the core of our efforts should be the recognition of religions and religious people that the survival of the human race has now become a very central part of their responsibilities, a responsibility requiring loyalties that reach across the boundaries of faiths to the ethic of human solidarity and the brotherhood of man."

- Education for Peace - The Role of Religion, November 1981 (34)
- The Ethics of Human Survival - Some personal Reflections, February 1984 (100)
- Religious Perspectives of Desirable Societies - Islamic Perspectives and Responses, March 1984 (103)
- Coming Together in the Cause of Peace - The Role of Religions, August 1984 (117)