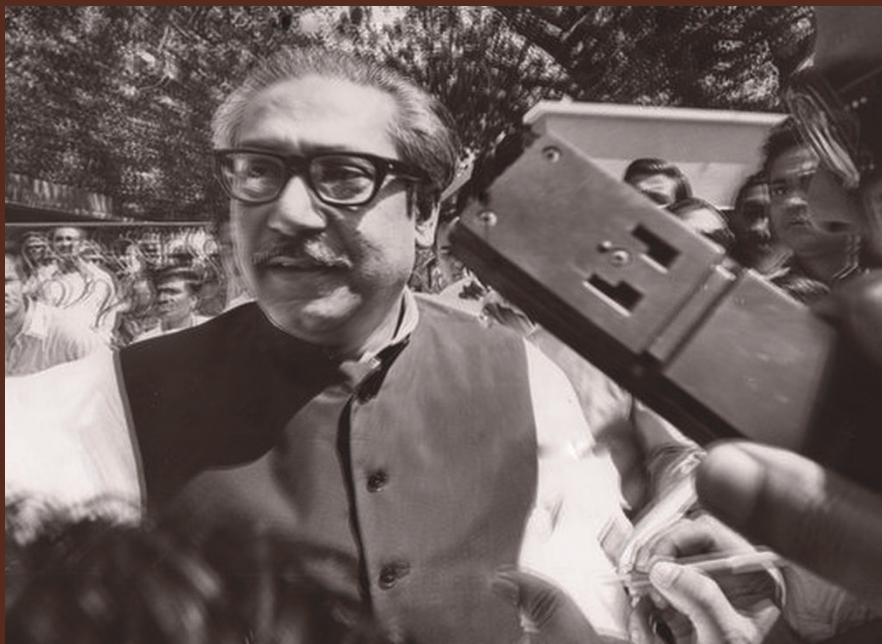


MUJIB

**Building Bangladesh
and a Better World**





Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MUJIB

Building Bangladesh and a Better World



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's
100 quotes on world affairs



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman briefs media in London
(8 January, 1972)

ON READING THE BOOK

Mujib Birth Centenary in 2020 is concurred with an unprecedented global crisis that only reinforces, more than ever, the foreign policy framework of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that calls for justice and co-operation; and that is both responsive and responsible.

Like any book of quotes, this collection of statements, sentences and remarks by Mujib ran the risk of simplification and generalisation of complex ideas that would have required elaborate annotations. However, it was Mujib who was of great eloquence made the task easier. His words are bold and very often self-explanatory.

The 100 quotes are clustered around some key-words for the sake of convenience; they overlap. The quotes too transcend any limits that may have been assigned to them by those provisional key-words. The book aims to draw a rough outline of Sheikh Mujib's foreign policy doctrine that is yet to receive much deserved academic attention.

VALUES

- 9 THE EARTH**
'BECAUSE CLIMATE IS CHANGING'
OUR FUTURE: 'CRITICAL CHOICES'
- 27 THE PEOPLE**
'TERMINATE ARMS RACE'
- 49 INTERNATIONAL
JUSTICE**
- 61 TOLERANCE AND
NON-VIOLENCE**
'THEIR PHILOSOPHY IS ROTTEN'
- 71 DIPLOMACY FOR PEACE**
'THE FOCUS OF MAN'S HOPE'

APPROACHES

SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL INTEREST	85
FAIR GLOBALISATION	99
MULTI-ALIGNMENT	107
SOLIDARITY AND MORAL DIPLOMACY	117
RECIPROCAL GRATITUDE	127
REGIONAL PEACE AND RECONCILIATION	139



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman looks at Mount Fujiama through
the train window during his Japan tour
(1973)

THE EARTH OUR RESOURCES

*one earth. environmental ethics.
mutual co-dependency. technology
sharing. knowledge-based economy.
wealth concentration. distributive justice.
global warming. climate change.*

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's critical perspective and emphasis on ethical utilisation of world resources equipped him with an extensive understanding and foresight regarding the trajectory of global economy for days to come. His distinctive comments and suggestions reflects the obtuse disparity in the contemporary global economy – along with his dedication to the cause of repelling the stagnance on the basis of mutual co-operation among nations.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the United Nations General
Assembly
(25 September, 1973)

1 **Mountains and oceans no longer erect a
barrier as they did in the past.**

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

- 2 Our total commitment to peace is born of the realisation that only an environment of peace would enable us to enjoy the fruits of our hard-won national independence, and to mobilise and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

-
-
- 3 Urgent measures to control the present arms race assume special importance; not only for the creation of such an environment, but also to release massive resources currently being wasted on armaments, for the common good of mankind.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

- 4 I wish to refer to the problem of developing nations and their struggle against poverty, disease and ignorance. Few people seem to realise the magnitude of the problem and its urgency. The future of mankind all depends on how the world community responds to this massive problem affecting vast mass of humanity in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

- 5 It is my earnest hope that there will at last be peace and stability in the sub-continent. Let there be an end, once for all, to the sterile policy of confrontation between neighbours. Let us not fritter away our national resources, but use them to lift the standard of living of our people.

at a dinner organised by Indian Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi
Kolkata, India
6 February, 1972



' BECAUSE CLIMATE IS CHANGING '

- 6 The Sundarbans was naturally formed without human association, with the purpose of protecting Bangladesh. It stands as a barrier along the shore of the Bay of Bengal. If the Sundarbans is not preserved, Khulna, Barishal, Patuakhali, a portion of Comilla and Dhaka will go into the sea and turn into islands like Hatia and Sandwip. If the Sundarbans is no more, nothing can save us from the erosion of land into the sea. Therefore, please be considerate just enough not to bring this disaster upon Bangladesh for a mere revenue of fifteen million.

You know what percentage of forestland a country needs to survive. But what do I have now? The forestland is being diminished by the day. We have such fertile soil; a sapling only needs protection from cattle to grow into a tree. Why can we not afford this minimal care? Bangladesh is perpetually hit by storms, cyclones and typhoons; and we need to understand that the destruction of forestland is liable for this. That is why we have initiated a special programme.

We tend to be inconsiderate about trees while planning for accommodation. We need to change this mindset, or the country will not prosper. My request to you is — the embankment you are building, it alone cannot protect you from the sea. It may get destroyed. But if you plant trees on the embankment, it will be strengthened, and the people will be safe.

Trees do not provide us solely with fruits and flowers, rather changes the climate for the better. The climate change we are facing right now comes as the repercussion of the deforestation done by the western rulers. Bangladesh has not seen storms at such an ominous rate even 24/25 years ago. The last time there was a flood was 50 years ago. Now the situation has changed, because climate is changing. There are other things around the world that also contribute to the effect, I know. But we have the responsibility to do our part in order to protect the world.

at the inauguration of Tree Plantation Week
Dhaka, Bangladesh
16 July, 1972

7 As a country which has repeatedly been exposed to the ravages of natural calamities, Bangladesh has a special stake in the creation of an institutional arrangement by which the international community can move effectively to meet and prevent such calamities.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

8 At present the towering misery and strife suffered by innumerable people contrasting the unconceivable magnitude of material prosperity and privileges enjoyed by a few is quite unprecedented in history. The revival of humane solidarity and fraternity among ourselves can change the situation. A rational solution to the current problems can be achieved through the recognition of our mutual co-dependency.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

9 The intellectual resources of countries
must be pooled together.

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973

10 International co-operation and sharing of resources and technology could no doubt make our task less onerous, and reduce the cost in human suffering. But for us in the emerging world, ultimately we must have faith in ourselves, in our capacity through the united and concerted efforts of our people to fulfill our destiny, and to build a better future for ourselves.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974



OUR FUTURE :

' CRITICAL CHOICES '

11

While the legacy of injustice from the past has to be liquidated, we are faced with the challenges of the future. Today the nations of the world are faced with critical choices. Upon the wisdom of our choice will depend whether we will move towards a world haunted by fear of total destruction, threatened by nuclear war, faced with the aggravation of human suffering on a horrendous scale marked by mass starvation, unemployment and wretchedness of deepening poverty —



or whether we can look forward to a world where human creativity, and the great achievements of our age in science and technology will be able to shape a better future – free from the threat of nuclear warfare, and based upon sharing of technology and resources on a global scale, so that people everywhere can enjoy the minimum conditions of a decent life.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman remains as the face of Bangladesh, and a voice of the oppressed all over the world

THE PEOPLE

*global harmony. humanism. equality.
anti-colonialism. anti-imperialism.
anti-apartheid. anti-war. peace dividend.
disarmament. nuclear disarmament.*

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman marked the security of human life and livelihood as the principal prerequisite for ensuring stability and prosperity. His commitment to peace, security and stability superseded all borders and boundaries regardless of time and place. At the advent of a new era of freedom and technological advancement, his philosophy was simple: a step towards global harmony is a step towards development and progress.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Fidel Castro, the President of
Cuba

12 I consider it important to offer, the term ‘Third World’ tends to obscure the basic reality: the world is divided between those who are the oppressors, and those who are the oppressed; those who support and aid the oppressors, and those who support and aid the oppressed. I am with the oppressed.

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973

13 **As a human, what concerns humankind
concerns me.**

an excerpt from *Unfinished Memoirs* by Sheikh
Mujibur Rahman

14 This century has suffered from the grovels of the cruelest, most destructive wars in the history. It is also the century which has witnessed the emergence of the toiling masses – the people – on the stage of history.

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973

15 Apartheid, which this Assembly has repeatedly declared to be a crime against humanity, continues to outrage the conscience of man.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

16 Vital issues such as disarmament and control of nuclear weapons are matters in which we are deeply interested along with the rest of humanity; and our co-operation shall always be forthcoming in finding solutions to these pressing problems.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

17 Never before have the people of the world stood on the threshold, on the one hand, of awesome dangers, and the other, vast creative possibilities for the improvement of their quality of life.

at a dinner organised by Indian Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi
Kolkata, India
6 February, 1972

18 Man has acquired greater material power than he has ever enjoyed before. He has acquired the capacity to destroy the world. We have seen in our times how much power has been used to make war, to oppress people, to deny them their legitimate rights, and to inflict untold sufferings as exemplified by the agonies of our Palestine brothers.

at a dinner organised by Indian Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi
Kolkata, India
6 February, 1972

'TERMINATE ARMS RACE'

19

Peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. Peace to endure must, however, be peace based upon justice.



Some countries spend sixty to eighty percent of their income for arms race. They need to understand that a country cannot be occupied, cannot be kept under occupation under the threat of weapons. The people of Bangla have proved it. Pakistan, with the support of imperialistic superpowers, brought the force of arms upon the soil of Bangla. But the unarmed people of Bangla have triumphed over them, and has proved that anything can be achieved by the people united. Neither I, nor the people of Bangladesh believe that power resides in the barrel of a gun. The people are the source of power. This is the difference between us and many others. I believe that the people of Bangladesh, who have struggled for peace, are honoured and proud. The Joliot-Curie reward is offered to me, I will happily accept it not as my own achievement, but on behalf of the people that deserve it. I am one of them; I want to work alongside them and die for them as one of their own.



Today I will make an earnest request on behalf of the people in misery, sufferings and hunger, to the powerful countries of the world that spend billions for weapons – please stop the arms race. Terminate imperialistic policy. Support us in the fight against apartheid; bring about sustainable peace in the world. Instead of gloating over the arms race, save the resources and spend them for the countries in peril – which you in your own time deceived or coerced into giving up their own resources. Then not a single person will die from hunger, suffer from lack of clothes or stay uneducated. For the sake of humanity, I request you to terminate arms race, testing lethal weapons and atomic bombs. Spend the resources for the less solvent countries of the world. Then you will see — the world will be peaceful, and will never fall into chaos again.

at the reception ceremony of Bangladesh Awami League
on the occasion of receiving Joliot-Curie Award
Dhaka, Bangladesh
20 November, 1972

20 The Bangalee have fought over centuries so that they may secure for themselves the right to live with freedom and dignity, as free citizens of a free country. They have aspired to live in peace and friendship with all nations of the world.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

21 We have only recently suffered the ravages of the war, and have experienced the horrors which result from the use of brute force to suppress the legitimate rights of people. Our commitment to peace is, therefore, total. This is why we have spared no effort to work for normalisation of relations between the countries of the sub-continent, so that durable peace may be established. Despite the wounds which had been left by the atrocities of 1971, my effort has been to create conditions in which these wounds might heal.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

22 I am returning to my country not with hatred for anybody in my heart; rather with the mental peace and satisfaction of experiencing the triumph of truth over falsehood and cowardice, of bringing justice upon injustice, and good upon evil.

at New Delhi, India
1972

23 We welcome the emergence of a new international environment, where confrontation and conflict may be replaced by mutual accommodation and co-operation.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

24 We welcome the detente that has taken place in certain regions of the world. There remains, however, areas of the world which should be a source of concern for us. Until there is strict implementation of the Paris Peace Accords on Vietnam, and stoppage of bombing in Cambodia, prospects of peace in Southeast Asia will remain bleak.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

25 We believe that the nations of the emerging world assembled in the Non-aligned Conference provide powerful support to the cause of peace.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

26 We believe that our aspiration to establish Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean as zones of peace is widely shared by the people of the region.

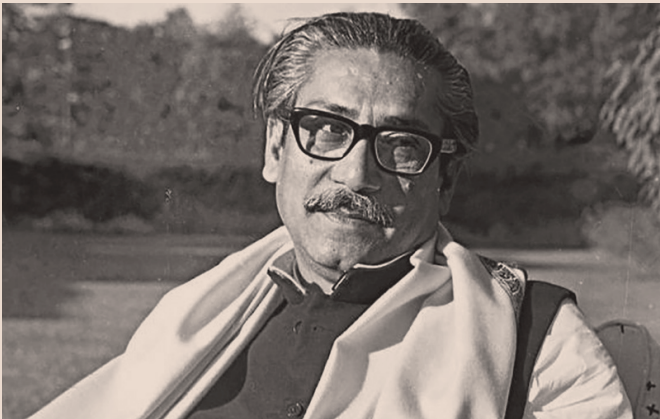
at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

27 As an independent nation, we are today proud to be able to associate ourselves with these endeavours for the promotion of world peace, stability and prosperity.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

28 I would like to conclude by re-affirming my faith in the indomitable spirit of man – in the capacity of the people to act even the impossible and to overcome insurmountable odds. This is the faith which sustains nations like us which have emerged through struggle and sacrifice. Our nations may suffer, but they can never die. In facing the challenge of survival, the resilience and determination of the people is an ultimate strength.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman incorporated the concept of international crime in the national legislation before many countries

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

*post-war rehabilitation. prisoners of war.
refugee crisis. crimes against humanity.
international crimes.*

Aside from holding a persistent non-violent sentiment, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman consistently placed the utmost importance on post-war reparation and rehabilitation process of affected nations. His powerful stance on the side of the oppressed flourished with his personal experience of the liberation struggle of Bangladesh, and his service as the President of a country faced with one of the most worst precedents of human rights violation.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indira Gandhi signing the
India–Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace,
a 25-year treaty
(19 March, 1972)

29 The very struggle of Bangladesh symbolised the universal struggle for peace and justice.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

30 It is but natural that those who have suffered from the cruelties of the Pakistan forces and their local collaborators are at the moment overwhelmed with bitterness. Despite this, they have acted with commendable restraint.

at the Prime Minister's Press Conference
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 January, 1972

31 I would like to assure our people that those who are responsible for committing genocide will not go unpunished. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that one of the fundamental aims of our national liberation struggle was to establish the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights. The culprits will be duly punished in accordance with due process of law.

at the Prime Minister's Press Conference
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 January, 1972

32 Unfortunately, the rulers of Pakistan seem still unable to accept the reality of Bangladesh. They are holding back 500,000 innocent Bangalees in fear and distress... This issue must not be equated with the prisoners of war. Because among the prisoners of war there are people charged with the century's most barbarous crimes against humanity... It would be an affront to the conscience of the world and the victims of these barbarous crimes to allow such criminals to escape trial.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

33 The plight of the 63,000 Pakistani families who have reaffirmed their allegiance to Pakistan and have registered themselves with the International Committee of the Red Cross for repatriation to their country, remains a pressing humanitarian problem. Not only it is their right to be repatriated to the country to which they retain allegiance – based on the strongest foundations of law and international agreement, but also the dictates of humanity call for an urgent solution of their problem.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

34 Putting aside the question of recognition, we declare our readiness to implement a scheme for simultaneous repatriation of all Bangalees in Pakistan, all Pakistanis in Bangladesh and all 92,000 prisoners of war and civilian internees, minus only 195 POWs against whom there was evidence of having committed the most heinous crimes. The world welcomed the Joint Declaration. I must also take this opportunity to thank all members of the Commonwealth who have supported this declaration.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

35 The just division of the assets of former Pakistan is the other problem which awaits urgent solution. Bangladesh on its part was, and remains, ready to move forward towards reconciliation. We expect that in the over-riding interest of the welfare of the people of the sub-continent, Pakistan will reciprocate by coming forward to resolve these outstanding problems in a spirit of fair play and mutual accommodation, so that the process of normalisation can be carried to a successful conclusion.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

36 I think there should be another trial by the United Nations against these people. I have no objection to giving them the chance to see and give them a trial, an inquiry. Not trial, but inquiry and show to the world. I always believe in 'forgive and forget', but it is impossible on my part to forgive and forget, because these are cold-blooded murders in a planned way, genocide to kill my people. Do you think any human being can tolerate these things?

with David Frost, BBC Journalist; at Sunday morning interview programme *Breakfast with Frost*
18 January, 1972

37 A critical juncture in history has been reached, but a concerted and well-planned action on our part can remove the historic injustices which have been inflicted on our brethren.

at the OIC Summit
Lahore, Pakistan
23 February, 1974



A banner reading 'Joi Mujibbad' lit. victory of Mujibism, a combination of four principles: Nationalism, Socialism, Democracy, and Secularism

TOLERANCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

*non-violence. tolerance. secularism.
religious freedom. combatting violent
extremism. militancy. security.*

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman witnessed how lack of mutual respect and intolerance could hinder peace and stability. Much of his political programmes from the pre-independence British India to the emergence of Bangladesh was to combat religious fanaticism, bigotry and hatred. An admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. and others on the path of non-violence, Mujib rose as one of the luminaries himself.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Ne Win,
the President of Myanmar
(April 28, 1974)

38 Religion is sacred – using it as a political tool is not acceptable.

on drafting a constitution at the Parliament
Dhaka, Bangladesh
4 November, 1972



'THEIR PHILOSOPHY IS ROTTEN'

39

How successful we have been to ensure the sustenance of socialism requires extensive discussion... The people of Bangla know to protest against any attempts for chaos backed with foreign money and arms; and they will continue to prove it in future. I do not know what the philosophy of those people is based on. No revolution in the world has ever resorted to this sort of philosophy... This is not revolution; this is colonialism. They are delusional; their philosophy is rotten... Those of you that know history, those who have seen it happen, you know what is to be done for a revolution. Revolution cannot be achieved by trespassing with weapons and murdering people under the cover of the night.

There is no point in practising sectarianism. Leave that path; that path is evil. Sectarrians are narrow-minded and despicable. They do not believe in any entity. That is why we have to wipe sectarianism off the soil of Bangladesh, because we do not promote that. When we say 'we are secular', we mean it; we mean our country is not biased to any religion. We say that every person has the right to practise religious rituals. We will not interrupt them. The Muslim, the Hindu, the Christian, the Buddhist – they will practise their own religious rituals. Nobody can interrupt them. Nobody can interfere with another person's religion.

at the second congress of Bangladesh Communist
Party
Dhaka, Bangladesh
4 December, 1974

40 No 'ism' can be hired or imported, and then successfully executed. This is a fact not just for this country, but for any.

at the first meeting of the Central Committee of Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BaKSAL)
Dhaka, Bangladesh
19 June, 1975

41 Bangladesh is achieved through the sacrifice of people regardless of religion. Bangladesh will strive not as an Islamic republic, but as a people's republic – with its secular viewpoint and heritage intact.

in response to Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi
on the sideline of the Commonwealth Summit
Lahore, Pakistan
23 February, 1974

42 Secularism does not refer to exclusion of religion. The seventy five million people of Bangla will have every right to perform religious rituals... The only objection is against using religion as a political tool. For 25 years, on the very soil of Bangladesh we have suffered corruption, oppression, deception, murder and immorality in the name of religion.

on drafting a constitution at the Parliament
Dhaka, Bangladesh
4 November, 1972

43 **What we need is self-criticism, self-control
and self-purification.**

at the Parliament
Dhaka, Bangladesh
25 January, 1975



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman giving his historic speech
in Bangla at United Nations General Assembly
(25 September, 1974)

DIPLOMACY FOR PEACE

*majority voices. Commonwealth.
developing world. United Nations. global
order. Middle-East peace process.
preventive diplomacy. humanitarian
assistance.*

The post-independence Bangladesh Government had to overcome numerous immediate domestic crises in a short window of time. Alongside its efforts to re-establish peace and order in such scenario, however, Bangladesh under Mujib's leadership advocated for peace as a core foreign policy aim, the United Nations being the central arena.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim

44 Today the basic problems which face us are those we share with the majority of the world's countries, the poor countries, which constitute the 'developing world'.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

- 45 The rich nations of the world have to realise that this rising expectation can become a source of great tension, and may lead to instability in different parts of the world, if generous assistance coupled with self-help is not forthcoming for a radical modernisation of these ancient societies in the Third World.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

46 They (developed world) should recognise that they have a common interest in reversing the process which threatens to turn the world into one where a few islands of prosperity are surrounded by oceans of misery.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

47 The Commonwealth must remain a forum through which opinion may be mobilised, and action may be concerted against racial discrimination and violation of human rights.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

48 **Peace, freedom and emancipation from
exploitation have to be won.**

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973



' THE FOCUS OF MAN'S HOPE '

49

The noble ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter are the very ideals for which millions of our people made the supreme sacrifice. I know that the souls of our martyrs join us in pledging that the Bangalee nation fully commit itself to the building of a world order in which the aspiration of all people for peace and justice will be realised.

No greater challenge has been faced by the United Nations than that of marshalling the forces of reason to bring about a just international economic order. This order must not only ensure sovereignty of each state over its natural resources, but should also seek to establish a framework of international co-operation based upon recognition of the over-riding common interest of the countries of the world in a stable and just economic system.

This is the moment when we must reaffirm in unequivocal terms that there is an international responsibility to ensure that everyone everywhere should enjoy the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity, and the free development of his personality as guaranteed to him by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This responsibility, according to the Universal Declaration, should extend to ensuring for everyone the right to a standard of living – adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family.

In a world that is marked by strife and human misery, the United Nations remains the focus of man's hope for the future. Despite many difficulties and obstacles placed in its way, the United Nations, during more than a quarter century of its existence, has significantly contributed towards human progress in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. There are few countries in the world that have a better realisation than Bangladesh of the concrete achievements and the potential for good of this organization.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

50 My Government and people are also concerned about the situation in the Middle-East – an area with which we have long-standing historical and cultural associations. We believe that the Middle-East problem must be resolved in accordance with the charter of the United Nations through peaceful means; and my Government will support all measures towards this end.

at a dinner organised by Indian Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi
Kolkata, India
6 February, 1972

51 The right of self-determination which the United Nations Charter promised could only be redeemed through the supreme sacrifice of millions of valiant fighters for freedom in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The struggle still continues against the illegal occupation of territory by aggression against use of force to negate the legitimate rights of people against the practice of racial discrimination and apartheid. Great victories have been won in Algeria, in Vietnam, in Bangladesh and in Guinea-Bissau. Such victories prove that history is on the side of the people and that justice ultimately triumphs.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman attending a television interview
during his tour in Japan
(1973)

SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL INTEREST

*peaceful co-existence. neighbourly
relationship. reconciliation. sovereignty.
self-determination.*

The value of sovereignty and apperception in a nation as a signifier of its core identity, was evident to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the leader of a nation that has come to see the light of freedom through the ultimate suffering and sacrifice. As a proclamation of self-identity of Bangladesh, he clearly outlined the features of its international relations and operations.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with US Senator Edward Kennedy
(Dhaka 1972)

52 I re-assert that the existence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is an unchallengeable reality, and that her future relations with any other states must be based on this fundamental reality.

at the Claridge Hotel, on his way to Bangladesh
London, United Kingdom
8 January, 1972

53 Bangladesh has become independent and will remain so; the people of Bangla will be the citizens of a free country. Whoever fails to give recognition to Bangladesh will regret the decision in the future. Bangladesh must be recognised – there is no other way.

to journalists after a meeting with US Senator
Edward Kennedy
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 February, 1972

54 Bangladesh will continue to strive for good neighbourly relations with all its neighbours based on the principles of peaceful co-existence, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

at a public meeting, after returning from Lahore
Daudkandi, Comilla
4 March, 1974

55 Mine is an independent country. As long as I am alive, no power – say India, America, Russia or Great Britain – can interfere with the domestic issues of my country. But there should not be any hesitation in calling an ally as a friend.

at Suhrawardi Udyan
Dhaka, Bangladesh
7 June, 1972

56 Help from any country which wanted to help us would be accepted. But such help must be unconditional and must be extended on the basis of respect for the principles of sovereignty and equality of states, and on the basis of non-interference in our internal affairs.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

57 We need today to get our wisdom than ever before to harness [our] power, not to destroy, but to create; not to make war but to build peace; not to aggravate human sufferings, but to advance human welfare.

at the OIC Summit
Lahore, Pakistan
23 February, 1974

58 The Indian military forces came to Bangladesh as our allies. They accomplished their mission in the most admirable manner. During my last meeting with Your Excellency in Kolkata, we agreed to the withdrawal of the Indian forces from Bangladesh by 25th March, 1972. However, the Indian forces completely withdrew from our country last week – even a few days earlier than the agreed date. We will always remain very grateful for the splendid work that they have done during their brief stay on our soil.

at a dinner organised in honour of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
Dhaka, Bangladesh
17 March, 1972

59 Pakistan army killed three and a half million of my countrymen, dishonored our mothers and sisters, burnt numerous houses and drove ten million people to India. Still, I do not harbor any hatred against you. You have your independence, Let us have ours.

at the Ramna Race Course post-return from Pakistan
Dhaka, Bangladesh
11 January, 1972

60 I expect that the People's Republic of China, which itself had attained liberation by armed struggle against warlords, feudal and colonial exploiters, should recognise the heroic success of our national liberation struggle. I hope that the People's Republic of China will now come forward to recognise the reality of the independent sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh, so that a basis may be established for mutual co-operation.

at the Prime Minister's Press Conference
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 January, 1972

61 The US government should stay notified
that Asian countries will determine their
own destiny and goal.

at a meeting in Paikgacha
Khulna, Bangladesh
23 February, 1972

62 Mr. President, you are right. If we had remained in Pakistan, it would be a strong country. Now, if India had not been portioned in 1947, it would be an even stronger country... Similarly, if Asia was one whole or the world had not been segmented into different nations, we would all be strong as members of one human race. But, Excellency, do we get what we want out of life?

in response to Nigerian President Yakubu Gowon on
the sideline of the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
1973



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman attending an interview
(15 January, 1972)

FAIR GLOBALISATION

*trade policies, unfair trade practices,
donor conditionality, tariff-barriers,
global economic reform, food security*

The trade policies of the Mujib Government were consistent with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's vision to convert a war-ravaged country into a modern welfare state. He denounced unfair trade practices affecting post-colonial nations, and was critical of donor conditionality and tariff-barriers. The early inclusion of Bangladesh into the world economy was aimed to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Gerald Ford, the US President

63 Let our deliberations contribute to an awareness of the need for developed countries to alter policies, which are compounding the problems of the policies which worsen the terms of trade of the developing countries, restrict their access to the markets of developed countries, deplete their foreign exchange reserves, and impose intolerable debt burden on them.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

64 The constant price hike has driven the price of food beyond the reach of poor countries. On the other hand, the rich and developed countries stand as the main exporters of food. Excessive price of agricultural tools and materials is obstructing the poor countries' attempts for collecting food.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

65 Global inflation has multiplied the expense for the development programmes undertaken by developing countries. Minor development schemes of the countries already submerged in unemployment problem had to be trimmed down. If those schemes were to be of success, there was a possibility of an increase of five to six percent in the rate of income. If all the nations do not face the situation in unison, the misery and strife of the people will reach a height unparalleled in history.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

66 The export market for Bangladesh is expanding. If we can boost production, I can affirm unequivocally that the pattern of our economic dependency on import will change, and price hike can be controlled.

address to the nation on the occasion of the Victory
Day of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
15 December, 1973

67 I myself is not a communist. But I believe in socialism, not in capitalism. As long as a system that promotes capitalism exists in the world, oppression on people will not stop.

an excerpt from *Unfinished Memoirs* by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
(1973)

MULTI - ALIGNMENT

*non-violence, neutralism, exculpation,
non-alignment, non-interference,
pragmatism*

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's personal philosophy of non-violence, neutralism and exculpation is not only integrated into the Constitution of Bangladesh, but also motivated his support for the Non-alignment movement on a global scale. On the other hand, he delivers a powerful message about the duality of humans – as his warning to the unjust reverberates his readiness to pay necessary price, even in the language of violence, for the preservation of the peace and prosperity he committed himself to.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman among OIC leaders
Lahore, Pakistan
(1974)

68 The principles of non-alignment, as we understand them, reflect the most basic aspirations of the common people by the world over. This is why we have embodied those principles in our Constitution, and are committed by the Constitution to support the just struggle of oppressed people against colonialism, imperialism and racialism throughout the world.

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973

69 Bangladesh will scrupulously pursue a policy of non-alignment in international relations, and avoid being drawn in the vortex of great power rivalries and ideological confrontation.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the
Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

70 Our foreign policy is based on non-alignment and is one of positive neutralism.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

71 In international relations my Government will pursue a policy of non-alignment, and develop bilateral relations with foreign countries on the basis of mutual interest.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

72 But non-alignment that we have in mind does not mean an inactive or passive policy. We propose to play a positive role in the community of nations for the promotion of world peace and security.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

73 We think that our foreign policy has been a great success. Today, we are with the NAM, with the Islamic Summit, we are at the Commonwealth, we are at the UN. We believe in the UN Charter. We want peace with everyone. We are not bothered by international politics. We don't have any interest there. We can and will continue to extend moral support to the oppressed people, wherever they are.

at the first meeting of the Central Committee of Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League(BaKSAL)
Dhaka, Bangladesh
19 June, 1975

74 It is important for us to emphasise that this conference can be useful not only to consolidate our unity in support of the cause of Arab brethren, but also we can at the same time declare our solidarity with the forces of peace and progress throughout the world with the non-aligned nations, with the oppressed people of the world struggling against colonialism, imperialism, racialism, and all those people who are struggling against domination and exploitation in all its forms.

at the OIC Summit
Lahore, Pakistan
23 February, 1974



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman receiving Juliot-Curie Peace Medal,
(May 23, 1973)

Notable names to receive the prize:
Nelson Mandela, Valentina Tereshkova, Pablo Neruda,
Jawaharlal Neheru, Martin Luther King Jr.,
Fidel Castro, Yasser Arafat

SOLIDARITY AND MORAL DIPLOMACY

*colonial exploitation, imperialist
extortion, solidarity, moral diplomacy,
decolonisation, self-determination*

Almost all of his life Sheikh Mujibur Rahman fought against various forms of colonial exploitation; years of his political career passed being imprisoned. His support, based on solidarity and moral diplomacy, extended to any nation fighting for freedom from colonial and imperialist extortion, is reflected in his words delivered at several platforms. His repulsive attitude towards imperialistic powers was a bold move for the leader of a war-ravaged, newly-liberated country.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Leopold Sedar Senghor, the
President of Senegal
(May, 1974)

75 The process of decolonisation, though greatly advanced, has yet to reach its ultimate goal. This is particularly true in Africa, where the heroic people of Zimbabwe and Namibia are still engaged in a grim struggle for freedom and national liberation.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

76 The process of decolonisation will be truly complete when the mental attitude, outlook and values, which are the legacies of colonialism are eliminated and are replaced by such revolutionary values and outlook which are needed to usher in a social revolution in our societies.

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973

77 The region of South Asia is at present at the cross-road of imperialist domination and colonialist exploitation coming to an end. The progressive forces of socialism and the urge for creating a just society free of exploitation of man by man can no longer be thwarted in South Asia.

at a dinner organised in honour of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
Dhaka, Bangladesh
17 March, 1972

78 I pay homage to the valiant martyrs of Algeria, of Vietnam and indeed all martyrs in every part of the world, including those in Bangladesh, who laid down their lives in the struggle for the vindication of the rights of man. I pledge in the name of those martyrs that Bangladesh will always stand behind all those who are struggling for the national liberation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

at the 4th NAM Summit
Algiers, Algeria
6 September, 1973

79

Here I refer to the continuing tragedy in Vietnam. My Government firmly believes that this tragedy must come to an end, because we know from our experience what sufferings people of this region must be going through. Peace can be achieved only if all foreign forces are withdrawn, leaving the people of Vietnam to decide their own destiny.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

80 Those who even today are struggling to vindicate their right of self-determination and their basic human rights in South Africa – Rhodesia, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and other parts of Africa – against the forces of colonialism and racialism have support of all those who value human freedom.

at the Commonwealth Summit
Ottawa, Canada
2 August, 1973

81 The continued occupation of Arab territories, and the denial of this legitimate right of the Arab people, and the people of Palestine, pose a threat to peace and urgently demand just solution.

at a dinner organised by Indian Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi
Kolkata, India
6 February, 1972



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman being received by Indian President
Indira Gandhi
(1973)

RECIPROCAL GRATITUDE

*gratitude, indebtedness, humility,
friendship*

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was one of the most generous leaders of all time to acknowledge with gratitude any assistance a country ever received from any entity. Amid the responsibility of rebuilding a country from the scratch daunting innumerable obstacles, nations supporting the liberation struggle of Bangladesh remained very special to his heart. In his speeches, interviews and personal thoughts recorded in his autobiography, expression of humble gratitude finds a recurring presence.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Edward Heath, the British President

82 I express our deep sense of gratitude to all those nations and people who supported Bangladesh in its struggle. We would also like to thank all those who have been rendering valuable assistance to Bangladesh in consolidating our independence, in re-constructing our war-ravaged land, and in meeting the formidable challenge of building a better future for our people. To all those who have welcomed us into the United Nations, I offer the most sincere thanks of the people of Bangladesh.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

83 I would like to record our special debt of gratitude to India, to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and her Government, and her great people for the total support extended by them to our struggle. I would similarly like to specially thank the Soviet Union, and its great people for the consistent support extended by them to our cause, and for the invaluable role played by her in the United Nations.

Prime Minister's Press Conference
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 January, 1972

84 I would also like to express gratitude to Poland, Bulgaria and other East European countries, France and the United Kingdom. I would also like to thank the freedom loving people, journalists and leaders of thought and opinion throughout the world, including those of the United States of America who supported our cause.

Prime Minister's Press Conference
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 January, 1972

85 I thank those states that have accorded recognition to us – India, Bhutan, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Poland, Mongolia and Burma. The Bangalee people have consistently supported freedom struggles throughout the world in Asia, Africa and Latin America. I, therefore, expect states all over the world, especially those who have had to struggle for their independence, to extend recognition to the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, and to support its membership in the United Nations.

Prime Minister’s Press Conference
Dhaka, Bangladesh
14 January, 1972

86 I recall with gratitude the support and helping hand extended by socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Australia, Canada, Japan, Scandinavian countries, and other friendly countries.

at a dinner organised by Soviet Premier Alexei
Kosygin
Moscow, Soviet Union
1 March, 1972

87 I express my heart-felt gratitude and thanks to the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the people of India, and the armed forces for their role in extending help to us, giving shelter to the uprooted people of Bangladesh, and by imparting training to the Mukti Bahini during the war of liberation.

farewell address to Indian Army at Dhaka Stadium
Dhaka, Bangladesh
12 March, 1972

88 The Soviet Union stood by us in the difficult days of our independence struggle. I have visited the Soviet Union and have been impressed by the spontaneous hospitality shown me there. The Soviet leaders have extended assurances that they will give all-out help and support for the reconstruction of devastated Bangladesh.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

89 It was under the inspired leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim and his able and dedicated colleagues that the United Nations mounted a major relief and reconstruction programme in our country to heal the wounds of war, to restore the productive capacity of our war-ravaged economy, and to rehabilitate millions of refugees who had to take shelter in India during our struggle for liberation. To the Secretary General, members of his staff, and the various humanitarian agencies who have contributed to the success of this gigantic operation.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

90 We are grateful to the United Nations for the efforts in mobilising assistance in aid of the victims of the current catastrophic floods in Bangladesh.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman receiving Zulfikar Ali Bhutto,
the Prime Minister of Pakistan, arriving on a helicopter of
Bangladesh Air Force
(29 June, 1974)

REGIONAL PEACE RECONCILIATION

*South Asia. Bay of Bengal. Indian Ocean.
avoidance of conflict. reconciliation.
regional peace and security. global south.
south-south co-operation.*

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's lifelong cause of peaceful co-existence based on mutual respect among nations sets him apart from many statespersons in the bipolar world in the 1970s. In order to co-ordinate with the rest of the world, he concentrated his efforts on improving and stabilizing the relations with the neighbouring countries. His contribution to forums of developing nations brought fresh insight into the discourse of co-operation in the Global South.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with OIC Leaders
(1974)

91 I am willing to resolve outstanding issues with Pakistan through negotiations. We in the sub-continent, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri-Lanka want to live together in peace... We want to live as an independent and sovereign state with self-respect in brotherly relations with everybody.

at a public meeting, after returning from Lahore
Daudkandi, Comilla
4 March, 1974

92 I believe that if there has to be a peaceful settlement of the problems to the sub-continent, it must be brought about by the people and governments of the sub-continent themselves. Tensions will not diminish if a spirit of vengeance is artificially fostered, and help of outside powers is sought to build a new balance of military power to follow a sterile policy of confrontation.

at a dinner organised in honour of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
Dhaka, Bangladesh
17 March, 1972

93 It was our firm belief that the emergence of Bangladesh would materially contribute towards creating a structure of peace and stability in our sub-continent, and that the confrontation and strife of the past could be replaced by relations of friendship and co-operation for the welfare of all our people. We have not only developed good neighbourly relations with our immediate neighbours – India, Burma and Nepal, but have striven to turn away from the past, and open a new chapter of relations with Pakistan.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

94 We have spared no effort towards liquidating the legacies of the past, and made our ultimate contribution by granting clemency even to those 195 prisoners of war, against whom there was overwhelming evidence of having committed grave crimes, including crimes against humanity. In doing this, we insisted on no pre-conditions nor did we seek to strike any bargain; for we were influenced only by the vision of a better future for all our people.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

95 We welcome every effort aimed at advancing the process of detente, relaxation of tension, limitation of armaments, and the promotion of peaceful co-existence in every part of the world – whether it is in Asia, Africa, Europe or in Latin America.

at the United Nations General Assembly
New York, USA
25 September, 1974

96 We are opposed to the efforts of some big countries to chalk out their spheres of influence and aggravate tension and instability in the region, by encouraging divisive elements and reviving old bogies.

at a dinner organised in honour of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
Dhaka, Bangladesh
17 March, 1972

97 Both of our countries [Bangladesh and India] harbor the ideal of secularism, nationalism, democracy and socialism. Our uncorrodable alliance is built upon this principle.

at the Brigade Parade Ground
Kolkata, India
7 February, 1972

98 Geography also dictates that our two countries should co-operate in all possible fields and particularly in the economic field in the interests of our two peoples. Geography also offers a unique opportunity for co-operation between our two countries in the fields of construction of barrage, flood control, and taming the mighty rivers of Brahmaputra and Ganges.

at a dinner organised by Indian Prime Minister
Indira Gandhi
Kolkata, India
6 February, 1972

99 My appeal to the common people of Pakistan is that they should not look upon these criminals who are guilty of more heinous crimes than the war criminals of Nuremberg as their own people.

address to the nation on the first anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
26 March, 1972

100 We would like to see a zone of peace in the sub-continent and the Indian Ocean region. This can be achieved only when our part of the world ceases to be a cockpit of contending powers from outside of this region.

at a dinner organised in honour of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
Dhaka, Bangladesh
17 March, 1972

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of our nation, was born on 17 March, 1920.

In 1953, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected the General Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League, a post that he retained until he became the President of the party in 1966. He led Bangladesh to independence, and built the fundamentals of the country and the constitution – serving as the first President, and then as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 17 April, 1971.

Sheikh Mujib was assassinated along with his family members on one of the darkest days in modern history – 15 August, 1975.

The UNESCO added the 7 March, 1971 speech of Sheikh Mujib in the Memory of the World Register as a documentary heritage.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering
the historic 7 March speech
Dhaka (1971)

Under Sheikh Mujib's leadership, Bangladesh became member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation.

Mujib delivered his historic speech – the first ever in Bangla on that platform – in the session of the UN General Assembly on 25 September, 1974.

Two volumes of his autobiography were published posthumously with the initiative of his daughter Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.