Syed Haider Ali Shah

Aqila Zaman

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“My Country Beacons Me”

“My Country Beacons Me” is a speech delivered by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in United Nations Security Council at New York on 15, December 1971. The speech was delivered just a day before the separation of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) by then foreign minister of Pakistan. After 1970 elections, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto won with majority in West Pakistan while Mujib Ur Rehman won in the East Pakistan. Tensions arose on determining which party will sit in Government and later these tensions led to a war between two wings of Pakistan which further rose due to the involvement of India. Also, the subject matter is very much of current interest because tensions are rising again between India and Pakistan. Bhutto’s main audience were the members of Security Council, but his intended audience were people of Pakistan and people of world. Bhutto was an excellent public speaker and he was able to question UNSC for the role they played (particularly USSR) in separating East Pakistan and further deteriorating situation in 1971 rather than solving it. Although, in his speech Bhutto misrepresented some facts but he was able to convey his message through the effective use of pathos, imagery and sarcastic aggression.

Bhutto condemned the biased role of Security Council in the fall of East Pakistan in harsh and offensive words that international community assisted the creation of Bangladesh. United Nation Security Council has not set a good example by giving biased decisions in favor of India. Bhutto gives thanks to United States, China and third world countries for supporting Pakistan’s stance on merit basis while he humiliated USSR for supporting India just for its own strategic sake. And at the end he walked out from Security Council after tearing the speech paper, with tears in his eyes.

Bhutto’s frequent use of pathos throughout his speech begins with discussing his son’s call that “Yesterday my eleven year old son telephoned me from Karachi and said ‘Do not come back with a document of surrender. We do not want to see you back in Pakistan if you do that.’ I will not take back a document of surrender from the Security Council. I will not be a party to the legalisation of aggression” (3). By iterating his eleven year old son’s call in the Security Council he affirmed to the members that he has something very special to say in that day’s speech. He narrated that story in the start of his speech which shows how much passionate regarding his stand point. Moreover, after giving examples of other nations who recovered from bad times to new heights, he tried to evoke a sense of patriotism and nationalism in his people to keep them united in hard times and tried to give a message to world that Pakistanis will not lose hope by saying “So what if Dacca falls? So what if the whole of East Pakistan falls? So what if the whole of West Pakistan falls? So what if our state is obliterated? We will build a new Pakistan. We will build a better Pakistan. We will build a greater Pakistan” (2). Also, he mentioned the words of one of the greatest British generals that “the best infantry fighters in the world are the Pakistanis” and again he focused in his speech on building a sense of hope among his people that “We will fight. We will fight for a thousand years, if it comes to that ... People who want to be free and who want to maintain their personality will fight and will continue to fight for principles” (3).Through these statements Bhutto seek to raise self esteem of his nation and to leave a message to international community, particularly to India and USSR, that we will rise again, and it is not something impossible there are examples of nations like France and China which build themselves after the days of occupation to great nations. Although he overly depended on pathos, but it was necessary to leave a strong mark on the international community regarding their role that they played in the fall of east Pakistan and to keep his nation motivated for the coming years.

Bhutto’s use of imagery and sarcastic aggression is equally persuasive when compared to his use of pathos in his speech. He attacked the foreign minister of India on his stance by stating that the “aggression he is trying to justify. How is he distinguished when his hands are full of blood, when his heart is full of venom?” (7) By using powerful phrases Bhutto criticized India’s point of defending their attack on Pakistan that they have no vision and after slaughtering Bhutto’s people, their foreign minister is still standing in UNSC. Bhutto’s use of “venom” and “blood” makes his point about the Indian aggression even stronger. Additionally, he adds power to his speech that his “heart is bleeding. We want to be friends, but this is not the way be friends when my country is decimated, sought to be destroyed, wiped out” (19). Bhutto spoke about his condition that he was in too much mental pain at that time because of the hard time that his nation was facing, while Russian foreign minister was laughing on his speech. This statement with excellent use of imagery marked a deep appeal to UNSC members to take the fall of East Pakistan seriously because his nation is suffering from a political and economic crisis. By using vivid imagery in his words, Mr. Bhutto was able to make his audience to realize the brutal face of India and sufferings of his people.

Lastly, Bhutto bolsters the persuasive power of his speech by using sarcastic aggression against some members of international community. He criticized Great Britain, France and especially USSR by calling them “superpowers—the super-duper-powers, the razzling-dazzling powers—” (16) because they imposed their own will rather than supporting for the right cause in the fall of East Pakistan’s context. Also, he strikes USSR’s foreign minister who was laughing on Bhutto’s speech by calling him “Mr. Permanent Representative of Soviet Union” and “Czar Malik” compared to “Comrade Malik” with him. By comparing two totally opposite historical figures and attaching bad one with Russian foreign minister and mocking on his foreign minister’s position, Bhutto tried to make him feel ashamed for his laughing that he can not talk like great people, he can just laugh. In addition, he expressed his frustration on the veto power of Security Council by using which USSR was able to reject Pakistan’s stance even it was on merit and was supported by most of the nations. He tried to embarrass them by speaking “we have been frustrated by a veto. Let us build a monument to the veto, a big monument to the veto. Let us build a monument to the impotence and incapacity of the Security Council and the General Assembly”. His statement to build monument on Veto power and on the impotence and incapacity of UNSC and General Assembly raised serious questions on the misuse of power of Security Council. Although, his use of sarcasm was a bit offending, but it strengthens his stance because at that time when his country was going through one of the brutal times in its history, sarcastic aggression is justified, also it was clear that East Pakistan will be separated from the West wing.

Although Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was able to raise question on the Security Council in its role in peace making and he was much successful in making them feel ashamed but his misrepresentation of some facts about the elections of 1970s lessens the impact of his speech because in such a string speech with solid facts, misrepresentation of facts which are well known to audience, decreases the effectiveness of speech. For example, he said “the people of West Pakistan who elected me at the polls in a more impressive victory than the victory that Mujibur Rahman received in East Pakistan.” Audience were well known about the victory and number of seats that Mujibur Rahman won in East Pakistan was more than his victory in the West Pakistan and they had the right to form the government. Audience might raise questions about his misrepresentation of facts and his not accepting his own mistakes regarding elections in his speech.

In his speech on a day before the creation of Bangladesh, he raised questions about the biased role of UNSC in making peace agreements. After his speech, it was cleared to world that East Pakistan will now separate from the West Pakistan. But in his speech, he raised a hope in the people of West Pakistan about their future and tried to develop a sense of unitedness in his nation. In conclusion, his use of pathos, imagery and sarcasm makes his words powerful and left a strong message for world about the biased role of UNSC in important matters.

Words Cited

“Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s farewell speech to the United Nations Security Council” *Wikipedia*, EncycloPetey, <https://en.m.wikisource.org/wiki/Zulfiqar\_Ali\_Bhutto%27s\_farewell\_speech\_to\_the\_United\_Nations\_Security\_Council>