

## Source Material: Extracts from an Open Letter to the United Nations by Niels Bohr (1950)

[...] As there can hardly be question for humanity of renouncing the prospects of improving the material conditions for civilization by atomic energy sources, a radical adjustment of international relationship is evidently indispensable if civilization shall survive. [...]

The situation calls for the most unprejudiced attitude towards all questions of international relations. Indeed, proper appreciation of the duties and responsibilities implied in world citizenship is in our time more necessary than ever before. On the one hand, the progress of science and technology has tied the fate of all nations inseparably together, on the other hand, it is on a most different cultural background that vigorous endeavours for national self-assertion and social development are being made in the various parts of our globe.

An open world where each nation can assert itself solely by the extent to which it can contribute to the common culture and is able to help others with experience and resources must be the goal to be put above everything else. Still, example in such respects can be effective only if isolation is abandoned and free discussion of cultural and social developments permitted across all boundaries.

Within any community it is only possible for the citizens to strive together for common welfare on a basis of public knowledge of the general conditions in the country. Likewise, real co-operation between nations on problems of common concern presupposes free access to all information of importance for their relations. Any argument for upholding barriers for information and intercourse, based on concern for national ideals or interests, must be weighed against the beneficial effects of common enlightenment and the relieved tension resulting from openness. [...]

The very fact that knowledge is in itself the basis for civilization points directly to openness as the way to overcome the present crisis. Whatever judicial and administrative international authorities may eventually have to be created in order to stabilize world affairs, it must be realized that full mutual openness, only, can effectively promote confidence and guarantee common security. [...]

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