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India's Security Environment and Apparatus

(Speaking Notes)
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S.Menon

Air Marshal PK Roy, Commandant, NDC,
Directing Staff and Students.

Thank you for asking me to speak to you today. It is a pleasure to be back at the NDC and to speak to this knowledgeable audience of professionals concerned with the nation's security. As we are among ourselves, I will speak frankly, confident that what I say will stay among us.

The subject suggested to me was "India's security environment and apparatus". That is a tall order. I thought I would speak briefly about the situation we face, the main challenges that it throws up for our security, our responses and the apparatus that we do this with.

1. Our situation

We live today in a globalised world of interdependence, which is increasingly tending towards multi-polarity, where power is more evenly distributed within and among states than in the last century. Both globally and in our region the environment of 2011 is no longer as supportive as the world of the nineties was of India's transformation into a modern developed state with a high level of strategic autonomy. The world economy has deteriorated since the global financial and economic crisis of 2007-8. Pakistan and areas west of her have declined into chronic instability. West Asia is in turmoil. Over the longer term technology has empowered small groups of radicals, extremists, hackers, pirates and terrorists, shifting the balance of power within and between states. The rise of China has been magnified by a matching loss of Western will and economic confidence. We are today in a one-and-a-half superpower world, at least in

perception, even if not yet in terms of absolute power. India is located at the epicentre of geopolitical change.

Internally, where our main security challenges lie, we are faced with an overriding imperative, to transform the lives of our people. For the first time in several centuries we have the possibility that India can become a reasonably prosperous and equitable society. We need at least 15 years of 9-10% GDP growth if we are to abolish mass poverty in India. Apart from China, no other country has undergone change of the pace and scale that India has experienced in the last sixty years. We both need rapid change and have to manage the consequences for our security of that change. While the pace of India's development has given us additional tools and capabilities, it has also created new vulnerabilities and threats. It is our task as professionals in the security community to provide the peaceful enabling environment for India to be transformed, and to create the capabilities that India needs to manage the threats and vulnerabilities that result from that change, to defend herself and her interests.

Many of the internal security issues that face us are the result of the pace of change and the inability of our institutions and systems to cope with the consequences of this rapid change and the social and other effects of rapid but uneven growth. This is true of Naxalism or Left Wing Extremism, and of local separatism and insurgencies among the dispossessed or those who feel that they are not equal beneficiaries of the undoubted progress that is occurring in India. The same causes also explain the fact that we now have to worry about home grown terrorist organisations, inspired and aided though they may be from abroad. Today, India is communally more peaceful than she has been for a long time, and the North-East has not seen the sort of attacks on security forces that were common a few years ago. However, there is no gainsaying that the writ of the state is weaker in the North-East and large parts of Central India than it has been for a long time. The same is true of social cohesion.

2. Our Challenges

The first challenge for us is therefore the internal one of our internal cohesion and coherence, namely, our success in meeting the formidable internal challenges that we face and will face in the foreseeable future.

Left Wing Extremism or Naxalism is only one such challenge to our development strategy and to our state institutions. The other is terrorism, both cross-border and home grown. Today thanks to the changes in India we have available to our agencies and police new technologies and tools, and are attempting to harness them through new institutions such as NATGRID. We also have resources available to fill the development gap that exists between the Naxal affected areas and other parts of the country. But what remains is the harder task of learning new methods of policing in the new situation, of real and fundamental police reform.

We cannot say that we know all the answers. What we do know is that neither the application of force alone nor a single-minded focus on development can solve these problems, particularly LWE.

Equally we now face new challenges of policing megacities and a population of which over 50% will soon be urban not rural.

The defence of porous borders requires us to learn new rules for the use and combination of force, suasion and deterrence, alongside other more benign means of persuasion. Trans-border ethnicities and connectivity become an opportunity to extend our defence, if we so choose.

Equally we must build up the capacities essential for India's transformation into a modern state. Talk of strategic autonomy or of increasing degrees of independence has little meaning unless our defence production and innovation capabilities undergo a quantum improvement. A country that does not develop and produce its own major weapons platforms has a major strategic weakness, and cannot claim true strategic autonomy. This is a real challenge for us all.

The second challenge is a clutch of energy and technology related issues --- energy security, climate change, renewable energy and so on. These are issues

that require both internal and external responses. Externally, they cannot be solved by Indian actions alone. We need international partners, coalitions where possible, to deal with major economic or political issues. Consider inflation in India, which concerns each of us, and which saps our ability to meet our challenges. Much of the inflation that we see in India is caused by the massive injection of liquidity in the international economy by the USA, China and developed economies to promote their own recovery after the economic crisis of 2008, and the consequent rise in oil and commodity prices. This effect has been compounded by events in the Middle East and the uncertainty that this has caused, particularly about future energy prices. In another ten years India is likely to be a net importer of coal. Without a revolution in agricultural productivity, India will also soon become net importer of food.

Technology challenges include the new domains of space and cyber space and nuclear proliferation. These are new domains of contention where the old rules of engagement and war no longer apply. Just as the world had to learn new rules and ways of thinking about nuclear weapons, we are beginning to do so for outer space and cyber space, both of which are increasingly critical to our daily lives, economies and futures. It actually seems that deterrence in the classical sense will be ineffective in cyber-space. The nature of these domains also seems to place a premium on offense rather than defence. The challenge for us is less the familiarity with the technology than the ability to organise our effort. It is only in the last few years that we have begun to think of defending our critical cyber infrastructure and begun building up our other necessary capabilities. Fortunately we have the skilled manpower and the industry, and the question is more of how we put these to work together and in an organised way. As our experience with the Commonwealth Games showed, we can do this when we set our minds to it.

In the immediate neighbourhood, despite the amount of Indian media space and mental effort that Pakistan seems to occupy, our primary security challenge is the rapidly growing power of China and the uses that this could be put to in the future. It is the strategic cover that Pakistan thinks that she has due to her relationships with the USA and China, and her nuclear weapons, (also given to her

by China), that have emboldened Pakistan to use terrorism and other asymmetric strategies against India.

Pakistan also poses us with the dilemma of dealing with an unfinished state with multiple centres of power. Today the situation in Pakistan has been further complicated by the fact that the religious right has now, like the Pakistan Army, become another extra-Constitutional authority which has an effective veto over Pakistan's policy and mores, without the concomitant responsibilities that come with power in a normal state.

We need to work for a peaceful periphery. We have an interest in the peaceful development of our smaller neighbours, removing extremism and threats from their soil, as we are doing successfully with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

"Even Pakistan after Mumbai?" you may ask. Reacting in anger to the 26/11 Mumbai attacks by attacking Pakistan was a tactical choice that would have confirmed Pakistan in its decline into the hands of the *jehadis* inside and outside the Pakistan Army. It would also have meant a fundamental diversion from our primary task with long term consequences. In terms of outcomes, Pakistan has only a very limited ability to affect our transformation. It can do very little positively to assist our transformation. Negatively speaking, it has waged a campaign of terrorism and war in Kargil, J&K and elsewhere in India, and has thrown everything she can at us since 1989. That Pakistani campaign coincided with the period when India grew, changed, and accumulated power at a rate never before achieved in our history. And today Pakistan is doing more to destroy herself than anyone else could. Looked at in this way, Pakistan becomes a subset of a much larger issue.

In Afghanistan ISAF is cutting back on its presence and role, attempting to cover its withdrawal by handing over to Afghan forces and arranging a form of power sharing with the Taliban to ensure as smooth a departure as possible. This outcome is not necessarily to our detriment, or not necessarily more to our detriment than Pakistan's. In some ways a US withdrawal from Afghanistan simplifies our calculus and increases the options available to us *vis a vis* Pakistan. What is more worrying for us is the fact that the longer term strategic effect of

ten years of ISAF in Afghanistan may just have been to make Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan safe for and even more dependent upon China.

Whether it is our Pakistan policy, our influence in SAARC, or maritime security in the Indian Ocean, the China factor enters into our security calculus at each stage. Increasingly, we need to think of these issues in a holistic, inter-services and inter-ministerial fashion. A simple example is the potential military uses of the extensive "civilian" infrastructure that China is building in POK, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. This includes ports, airfields and connectivity in various forms.

At the same time we must recognise that our position in our neighbourhood is today better than it has been ever since independence. In none of our immediate neighbours is India the issue in their domestic politics, as it was twenty years ago. Outside military presences and alliances, and the role of extra-regional powers in day-to-day politics are a thing of the past. Today our neighbours' economies are much more linked to ours than twenty years ago, giving us new leverage. If Sri Lanka survived twenty-three years of civil war with a positive rate of growth of its economy, and if life goes on in Nepal after fifteen years of no governance and widespread anarchy, it is because their economies have been linked to India through free trade arrangements. The other side of this coin is that their internal security issues also become ours, crossing the open or porous borders along with goods and services, as we saw with the LTTE and Maoists in Nepal and our insurgents in Bangladesh.

The next logical step is for us to become a net provider of security in our neighbourhood, building military and defence links with our neighbours, and working with partners throughout the Indian subcontinent and the greater Indian Ocean area.

But this transition would require us to answer a new set of questions about our purposes and our willingness to use power. It would also require us to configure our forces to the new purposes of providing security within our neighbourhood. This would be a major and qualitative change from our thinking so far as separate services, un-integrated into the nation's comprehensive power, whose role is only

to defend India's territory, airspace or territorial waters. It will also mean a reorientation in our thinking away from the land borders with Pakistan and China towards our maritime domain and neighbours in the south, east and west, turning the map that we carry in our heads around. That is where our geostrategic opportunities lie now that Pakistan's creation has cut us off from our Central Asian hinterland and China has occupied Tibet. Now that both Chinese power and ours have changed so much in the last fifty years, we need to think of a China strategy that leverages our strengths (such as our location astride sea lanes that carry China's energy and our maritime strengths). This would suggest a strategy of: "Hold in the North; Concentrate on the South".

China

I have said before that the overwhelming geopolitical fact of our times is the rise of China. The facts are well known. What China achieved in the last thirty years is phenomenal. In thirty years China's economy has grown by a factor of very nearly ten. The IMF recently projected that it will be the largest economy in the world in just five years time. By 2035 China will use one fifth of all global energy. China, which used to be dependent on direct foreign investment, is now herself the investor with three trillion dollars of international reserves and a sovereign wealth fund with 200 billion dollars. She is about to overtake Germany in terms of new patents granted each year.

The world worries whether the powerful China that is emerging so rapidly will be a hegemon, as she has been for most of her history, or whether she will be one of several powerful cooperative states in the international order. Will she reorder international structures to suit herself, as the US did after WWII, and as all previous hegemons have done in history? Or will she continue to rely on existing security and other structures that have worked so well for her, enabling her rise so far?

Some others think that China will never become the dominant power of this century. They point to her internal fragilities, to the reactions that her rise

provokes in the crowded neighbourhood around her, and to the continued gap between her military power and that of the US. China has been described as a country in perpetual internal political crisis. Many feel China will grow old before she grows rich and powerful and that she cannot sustain her present growth rates.

Their opponents say the opposite. They point to the rapid accretion of military power in China and say that it is only a matter of time for China to be the dominant power in a world where the West has lost its nerve and economic future.

There are no agreed answers to these questions, in India or abroad.

India's interest is clearly in an inclusive world order, with China as one of its cooperative members. That is clearly the best outcome that we need to work towards, along with other friends like Japan, Vietnam, Korea and others in ASEAN. Politically speaking the rise of China is not just an Indian concern and cannot be dealt with alone by any one country, no matter how powerful. Our approach to China has therefore to be a combination of engagement, of building our own strengths, (some of them asymmetric), and of working with others, or, in academic jargon, of internal and external balancing. But no state is willing to bet everything on which of the two possible trajectories for China's rise will come true. So we all follow hedging strategies.

Bilaterally, India-China relations today have elements of cooperation and competition at the same time. We have a boundary dispute, overlapping peripheries, and we rub up against one another in our extended neighbourhood, which is also China's extended neighbourhood. So long as both of us continue to be primarily concerned with our internal transformations, and we do not see the other affecting our core interests, we can expect the present relationship to continue as it is. But this will require much better communication between India and China, and no misunderstanding of each other's actions and motives.

This also requires that some of our media and commentators, whose unquestioned brilliance is regularly on display lambasting other countries for their

politics and policies, learn the virtues of moderation. The Chinese cannot believe that these media and commentators do not speak authoritatively for the country, as do their controlled media and academia. We must recognise that other countries too could have similar imperatives as ours and their own reasons for what they do. And why create self-fulfilling prophesies of conflict with powerful neighbours like China?

[There is a curious symmetry of illogic in expressed Chinese views of India and Indian views of China as published in the media. Indian media commentary often says that China is the greatest threat to India and simultaneously alleges that we are incapable of meeting this threat. If so why shout about a threat and make it real? Chinese media allege that India is inconsequential and internally fragmented and weak, and simultaneously speak of India as an important part of a US encirclement and containment of China. We cannot be both at the same time!]

Our Extended Periphery

Perhaps the most significant set of developments in the recent past, after the world economic crisis which began in 2008 and is still continuing, is the turmoil in the Gulf, West Asia and North Africa that we are witnessing. India has a major interest in peace and stability in this region. Over 6 million Indians work in the region, sending back over 35 billion USD of remittances to India last year. We do about 93 billion USD of trade with the region and rely upon it for about 64% of our crude oil imports. So stability in the area is critical to our ability to achieve the prosperity that is a necessary condition for our strength.

However, what we have seen in the first half of this year is a sharpened rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia and between Shia and Sunni; the fall or possible fall of the last two secular regimes in the region (in Syria and Libya); and a rise in oil prices that is unlikely to be reversed soon. Each of these developments has major effects on our security. Our energy security is at risk. An unsettled *ummah* will have resonance in India and South Asia.

One further consequence of Western intervention in Libya to enforce regime change is the emergence of a nuclear armed Iran. This now seems almost a certainty to me in the short term future.

Nuclear Issues

Let me also say a few words about our nuclear situation and deterrence. We live in the most heavily nuclearised neighbourhood in the world. Pakistan has explicitly threatened to use her nuclear weapons against us in the past, and is now attempting "nuclear enabled terror" by threatening to lower the threshold for nuclear use, claiming to be working on tactical nuclear weapons and a major increase in her arsenal.

For India, from the start the purpose of nuclear weapons was to deter nuclear attack and to prevent the sort of nuclear coercion or threat that we faced twice in the eighties and nineties. It was therefore logical for our nuclear doctrine to promise "no-first-use" against others, and to threaten assured and massive retaliation if attacked with nuclear weapons. In other words, it assumed a secure second-strike capability for deterrence through assured retaliation. In order to assure retaliation, the force had to be reliable and have survivability.

The no-first-use and assured retaliation concepts naturally had significant direct implications for our nuclear strategy and posture:

- For one, it became essential that we develop a genuine delivery triad as soon as possible, not only to ensure survivability of our second strike capability but to assure retaliation.
- Matching the number of warheads and missiles that our adversaries hold became less important than the reliability and survivability of our own weapons. (This is relevant today when, by all accounts Pakistan is building two new Plutonium producing reactors and a large reprocessing plant, and is increasing the rate of manufacture of nuclear warheads.) While first-use equals aggression, no-first-use equals deterrence. And deterrence requires a minimum number of weapons to make the threat of retaliation credible --

- in other words, credible minimum deterrence. We can thus escape an expensive arms race in nuclear weapons while safeguarding our security.

- As these were weapons of deterrence rather than war-fighting weapons, it became crucial that our adversaries believed that they would be used if certain thresholds would be crossed.
- For the same reason, calibrated deterrence was ruled out. Instead counter value targeting rather than counter-force targeting was the logical posture. It is for this reason that our nuclear armed Prithvis with their limited range are effective deterrents, since the only real targets for them are the cities of the Pakistani Punjab.
- If you rule out first use of nuclear weapons, you need to possess other means to deal with non-nuclear threats and challenges.

Interestingly, as expressed, our doctrine is closest to the Chinese declared doctrine. Like us China had declared a (somewhat more hedged) no-first-use policy. After toying in the late eighties with a shift to tactical nuclear weapons, she reversed that decision in the mid-nineties. For a very long period, since 1964, she has accepted a huge asymmetry in the numbers of her nuclear weapons compared to those of her main potential adversaries the USA and the Soviet Union/Russia. She concentrated instead on the survivability of her arsenal to assure retaliation. China has so far not made a direct nuclear threat against India, as one would expect from a country who does not regard its nuclear arsenal as a war-fighting weapon. In recent years China has concentrated on technical improvements in her nuclear arsenal (such as MIRVing and MARVing her warheads) and in producing nuclear class missiles in vast numbers and equipping them with PGMs as well, so as to confuse the adversary and maximise strategic deception.

There is, however, a clear difference between our doctrine and Pakistan's. In the red lines that Lt.-Gen Naqvi made known, for instance, Pakistan clearly wants us to believe that she will use her nuclear weapons for tactical uses if certain thresholds are crossed. During her last Azm-i-Nau exercises in 2010 she signalled

to us that she was preparing to use nuclear weapons against Indian forces if they were on Pakistani territory, (a counter to what they think "Cold Start" means).

The decision to go overtly nuclear in 1998 has been vindicated by our experience since then. As these weapons were meant to prevent nuclear coercion and blackmail, they have actually done so. The only direct threat since 1998 was by Pakistan in May 2002, during Operation Parakram when they were convinced that India was on the verge of launching military action against them. As it was not our intent to do so, the threat was meaningless and did not affect our behaviour. Not having been deterred by nuclear threats in 1971, 1987 or 1990 from following our course when we were in a much weaker position, our overt nuclear weapons status makes us much less vulnerable to them today.

India-China deterrence is stable and will remain so despite its reaching equilibrium at progressively higher technological levels as both programmes develop increasing sophistication.

However, there are issues about India-Pakistan deterrence post-1998, and particularly after operation Parakram, that merit continuing examination and that we need to think through. Pakistan has consistently sought to use nuclear deterrence to permit her to undertake adventurist actions against India, in J&K or elsewhere. Her Kargil misadventure in 1999 was an attempt to use the threat of nuclear escalation to prevent an Indian escalation and response to her conventional attempt to seize and hold territory in J&K. The attempt backfired, leading the world and US to intervene to push Pakistan to withdraw her troops. However, that it resulted in military and diplomatic failure for Pakistan is not widely understood in the Pakistan Army. In fact the Pakistan Army seems to have drawn the lesson that India's decision to respect the LOC, (born out of a desire to legitimise the LOC), was a result of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence working to prevent an Indian riposte elsewhere or an escalation to full-scale conventional hostilities, thus limiting the conflict to Pakistan's advantage.

It is also high time that we developed our own vocabulary and theory to think about the complexity of the multiplayer nuclear weapons game that India is now a participant in. With Pakistan, China and Iran, (to say nothing about North

Korea), our situation, doctrine and posture cannot be based on Cold War bipolar concepts that may or may not have been true of the Soviet Union and USA.

3. The Apparatus

To cope with these multifarious challenges we have steadily expanded and developed our national security apparat. You are familiar with the higher defence organisation which manages our capacity to wage conventional war. The Nuclear Command Authority has been put in place since 1998 to command and control use of our nuclear deterrent. Over time several improvements in the organisation, tasking and mandates of our national security structures have resulted from previous reviews of these structures, particularly the Kargil Review Committee and the subsequent Report of the Group of Ministers in 2001. The National Security Council in its present form is a little over ten years old. To cope with the new technological challenges of cyber security, missile monitoring and imagery intelligence the National Technical Research Organisation was set up in 2004. Several improvements were made in intelligence tasking and mandates. These were all changes in the security apparat suggested by the GoM. The record of implementing the defence related GoM recommendations is more mixed. While some of the joint institutions were set up, such as the CISC and the DIA, and the joint command in the Andamans, in the absence of the CDS, their efficacy and utility can be questioned.

After 26/11 Government reviewed the counter-terrorism apparatus and strengthened the NSG to respond to terrorist attacks, set up the NIA to investigate them, established the NATGRID to ensure that crucial links between pieces of intelligence are not ignored because data is held by separate agencies and organisations, and set up the central and state MACs to share operational intelligence rapidly. We also intend to set up a National Counter Terrorism Centre.

Earlier this year, Cabinet set up a Task Force under Shri Naresh Chandra to review the efficiency and working of our national security structures and suggest improvements and changes. There have been five reviews since independence,

but each of those was in response to an event such as the 1962 war or the Kargil conflict. This is the first stand alone review, not occasioned by an external event, ten years after the seminal report of the Group of Ministers was accepted by Cabinet and began to be implemented. They have been given until February 2012 to report.

There are several issues that need consideration today. Among these are our ability as a state to deal with the spectrum of conflict short of full fledged conventional war, the demands on intelligence at a time like this, our capacity to use the new technologies for our security, and the nature of the threats that we anticipate. It is our expectation that the Task Force will collect ideas and experiences from a wide array of people, including many of you in this hall, and make recommendations to Government about the gaps and improvements and changes in our national security structures and working. I am sure that they would welcome your ideas.

4. Conclusions

My apologies for imposing upon you this long and impressionistic listing of our strategic concerns and security challenges. But I did so with an ulterior motive and for three reasons.

At any moment, there will always be a plethora of threats and concerns which face us in India. This is true irrespective of the level of our development or of what the global strategic environment is. The art of strategy lies in prioritising among them. At heart, strategy is an ends and means problem. For us in India, for a long time to come our primary, I would even say our only goal must be the transformation of India by abolishing the mass poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy that we see around us. This requires a peaceful environment to the extent that we are able to ensure it. Where we cannot do so, we need to find ways of addressing our security issues and providing security in a manner most consistent or at the least cost to that goal of transforming India. This is an exercise that we must do now and constantly.

As long as the means and capabilities available to us were limited, our choices were limited. But now that we are a nuclear weapon state with economic and other interests to defend, our strategic choices have multiplied. That is one change that we will have to be prepared for. In other words, national priorities will have to take precedence over our traditional silos of ministries and services in which we consider national security problems. National security is no longer the exclusive province of so-called specialists.

Secondly, I see a great deal of commentary, even from think tanks that the services support, echoing Western thinkers like Tanham to the effect that India has no strategic thinking. I can understand Westerners saying so for they only recognise as strategic thinkers those who follow their modes of thought or are useful to them. The easiest way to neuter a rising power is to convince them that they cannot think. But for Indians to say so amazes me, what with the Mahabharata and its Shantiparva, Kautilya's Arthashastra and a host of other works to choose from, and a three thousand year old tradition of statecraft in practice.

In fact India has shown great strategic foresight and boldness in the last sixty years, even when she was weak and lacked the traditional means of power or force projection. As a nation state India has consistently shown tactical caution and strategic initiative, sometimes simultaneously. The record bears this out. Non-alignment itself, when everyone else was aligning, was an act of strategic courage. We kept our nuclear option alive despite the NPT and international sanctions, and exercised it in 1974 and 1998 when far stronger countries like Japan and Germany could not. Since Rajiv Gandhi's courageous 1988 visit we have got China to centre its South Asia policy more. The India-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987, the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement of 2000, the India-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement, the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the annexation of Sikkim, and so on. The list of our previous strategic initiatives is impressive.

But equally, initiative and risk taking must be strategic, not tactical, if we are to avoid the fate of a *rentier* state like Pakistan. That is why it is important to peg our goals and use of power to our immediate and overriding interest in our domestic

transformation. In other words, our condition and the state of the world require us not to seek hegemony, or domination, or expansion, or strategic depth. None of these serve our basic interest, even in a defensive sense. Being a bridging power, or a swing state might, in certain circumstances.

What would this mean in practice? It means, for example, that faced with piracy from Somalia, which threatens sea-lanes vital to our energy security, we would seek to build an international coalition to deal with the problem at its roots, working with others and dividing labour. Today the African Union has peacekeeping troops on the ground in Somalia. We could work with others to blockade the coast while the AU troops act against pirate sanctuaries on land, and the world through the Security Council would cut their financial lifelines, build the legal framework to punish pirates and their sponsors, and develop Somalia to the point where piracy would not be the preferred career choice of young Somali males. This is just one example of what such a policy could mean in practice.

My third conclusion is about India's role in today's world. To deal with the challenges i have listed, we must be ready to contribute within our capacity to the global public goods that are increasingly important to our well being, such as freedom of the seas. Are we ready to shape outcomes on critical issues such as energy security and in areas such as West Asia? Not yet. We have internal hesitations due to what I would call the Partition syndrome and our fear of the communalisation of discourse. But more than that, our capacities, though growing, are still limited in certain fields critical to national security.

As a result of sixty years of non-entanglement or non-alignment and of our economic growth we have built a country whose influence is considerable in our immediate neighbourhood. Our recent economic record ensures that we are heard with respect and consulted in global economic councils. The new central role of the G-20 is tribute to the shift in global economic power and interdependence. But political and military power is the core, and is something that existing power holders do not share voluntarily or easily. On the larger political issues of the day we are consulted and have views that matter, but cannot yet be said to determine outcomes. India's independence of action (or

independent agency) has grown over time. In 1948 we went to the UN seeking help against Pakistani aggression in J&K. In 1971 we helped the people of Bangladesh to create a new state, using force in the service of a clear and legitimate political goal. And in 2008, helped by the USA and major powers, we got the international community to rewrite the rules for nuclear cooperation with India making an exception in our favour in the NSG. That is progress.

With time, our positive interests will grow and our horizons expand, as a responsible member of the international community.

I would like to end on a note of caution.

For a considerable time to come India will be a major power with several poor people. We must always therefore be conscious of the difference between weight, influence and power. Power is the ability to create and sustain outcomes. Weight we have, our influence is growing, but our power remains limited and constrained and should first be used for our domestic transformation.

History is replete with examples of rising powers who prematurely thought that their time had come, who mistook their influence and weight for real power. Their rise, as that of Wilhelmine Germany or militarist Japan, was cut short prematurely.

So at the risk of disappointing those who call on India to be a “responsible” power, (meaning that they want us to do what they wish), and at the risk of disappointing some of you who like to think of India as a superpower, I would only say, as Mrs Indira Gandhi used to say: “India will be a different power”. India will walk her own path in the world. That is the only way for us.