

## **Address by External Affairs Minister on the occasion of National launch of Global India Foundation - "India and the Global Balance of Power"**

16/01/2007

It is with a feeling of expectation and pleasure that I am here today to participate in the national launch of the Global India Foundation, an initiative which is conceptualized and premised on promoting national resilience, economic prosperity and liberal values and the principal of social commitment in national life. That the Foundation would exemplify these values in its policies, priorities and programmes is important in today's age of globalization, closer interaction between Governments and non-government bodies and institutions. The inputs that we receive from such initiatives to complement those taken by official and government channels are welcome.

2. Think tanks for policy formulation draw upon experience of specialists from diverse fields and provide for long-term perspective planning and research. It is with such expectation that I endorse the objectives and scope of the Global India Foundation and it is my hope that the Foundation will undertake activities ranging from analytical research to informal bridge-building among diverse views as well as provide a platform for informal debate.

3. Friends, the international landscape today is significantly different from what existed even 15 years ago. How do we look at India's vision for the future? Our foreign policy since the time of independence has essentially been to expand India's strategic space. Our policy of non-alignment is our ability to judge and to act on our own judgment on the basis of enlightened self-interest. We do not wish to be passive observers and recipients of the actions of others, but would like to be one of the powers contributing to the shape of a global order which emerges and which allows us to pursue our vital interests. It also encompasses the policy of nurturing and increasing our activism in traditional constituencies in the developing world.

4. As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of our independence, India's international prospects have never looked better. The new optimism about India's future, within the nation and the wider world, is not necessarily an irrational exuberance. It is based on sustained high economic growth rates that have touched eight per cent and more per annum in recent years. It recognises that for the first time in the last sixty years, India's relations with all the major powers are improving simultaneously. Our engagement with our extended neighbourhood -- from South East Asia to Southern Africa -- has become at once intense and broad ranging. India's ties with countries as far apart as Latin America and East Asia are rapidly expanding. Our relations with our neighbours, including China and Pakistan, are poised for a positive transformation.

5. Today I wish to share with you my assessment of the international situation and the many foreign policy opportunities that beckon India. Any survey of the global situation today must deal with a simple fact. More than sixty years after the Second World War, the structure of international power bears no resemblance to that which obtained amidst the Yalta settlement. The defeated powers, Germany and Japan, which had to accept many imposed conditions on them are today fully integrated into the international system. The once warring European states have integrated

themselves into an economically powerful Union. The victorious powers of the Second World War, America and Russia, which went through a Cold War for 40 years, now confront a vastly altered global landscape, which has multiple power centres.

6. Much of the developing world has liberated itself from colonial rule and imperial oppression. Many developing nations have turned in an impressive economic performance in the last few decades. And some of them, especially China and India, are now poised to break the old paradigms that animated us so much in the past: developed versus developing countries, North versus the South, and East versus the West. The new wave of globalisation has begun to accelerate the redistribution of power in the international system. The unfolding rise of China and India has resulted in more than a resurgence of Asia. The consequences of rapid growth in China and India are being felt in Africa and Latin America.

7. Yet, the global institutions -- for the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of economic prosperity -- designed at the end of the Second World War continue to dominate our thinking. Resistance to change is natural in all institutions. But change is inevitable. In the current debate on reforming the United Nations, India has repeatedly underlined the urgency of restructuring global institutions -- both political and economic -- to reflect the new power realities on the ground. The potential for failed states, terrorism and religious extremism, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction demand a new global consensus on a number of issues. These include when and where to use force against new security threats, the norms for international legitimacy, and the relationship between national sovereignty and external intervention. For now, there is no international agreement on the very definition of new threats, let alone on the means to deal with them.

8. Where does India stand in the unfolding global order? And what should be our foreign policy priorities in a world that is changing in so many different ways? The biggest challenge for our foreign policy, however, lies in changing our own mindsets. The Indian strategic community must come to terms with our increasing weight in the international system. Today's India is not a bystander to the actions of other powers. The choices India makes today have the potential to change outcomes on issues ranging from global environment to multiple balances.

9. From a practical reading of the current world situation, it is not impossible to see that balance of power politics of the kind seen in 19th century Europe makes little sense in today's globalising world. Today, there is unprecedented engagement and cooperation among major powers. The prospect of a war -- either cold or hot -- between the great powers is rather remote. Their economies are ever more intertwined and there is unprecedented political cooperation among great powers that were once rivals.

10. What the world needs, then, is not old style balance of power but a well-crafted system to promote a "balance of interests" among the major powers. No structure of international security will endure if it does not take into account the interests of all the major powers. That is also true of regional security arrangements. To be credible, such a structure must also ensure a balance of interest among states in different regions. Above all, amidst the breakdown of traditional territorial barriers and the growing impact of the information revolution, diplomacy is no longer limited to states.

To be successful in the modern age, we need a balanced approach to the interests of the rich and poor, privileged and under-privileged cutting across national boundaries.

11. In our immediate neighbourhood, Indian policy has often been misconstrued as a search for hegemony. We have also often been accused of treating South Asia as an Indian sphere of influence. India's primacy in South Asia is based on demography and geography. We have borders with all the other South Asian countries, while only Pakistan and Afghanistan among the SAARC states share a frontier with each other. That reality will not change. India's commitment to develop political relations with its South Asian neighbours on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual respect is underlined by our recent decision to upgrade the 1949 friendship treaty with Bhutan and our willingness to review the 1950 treaty with Nepal. Amidst the increasing globalisation of South Asian economies and polities, there is no question of India pursuing the outdated idea of an exclusive sphere of influence. India's strong support to the entry of China and Japan into the SAARC as observers underlines India's commitment to open regionalism in the Subcontinent.

12. The real opportunity in South Asia today is the prospect for shared prosperity between India and her neighbours. For too long we in South Asia had little to share but poverty. Today, amidst high growth rates across the Subcontinent, we are in a position to advance together through free trade, open borders, and regional economic integration. Trans-border transport and energy corridors would not only link the Subcontinent within itself but also with the abutting regions of South East Asia, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. On its part, India is determined to open its markets to the neighbours. India is conscious that no South Asian nation can succeed on its own. We must create a stake for every nation in the economic success of the other. As we prepare to host the next SAARC summit in New Delhi, India will take the initiative in accelerating regional economic and political cooperation. We will also play a positive role in the deepening Asian economic integration as well as the establishment of new trans-border transport networks and energy pipelines with our eastern neighbours. In this context, the "Look East" policy has become central to our new strategy to intensify the development of our North Eastern region.

13. We hope to replicate our success in the east with a similar diplomatic thrust towards our western neighbours. Developing liberal trading regimes, better connectivity and economic integration with our north-western neighbours, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Central Asia, West Asia, and Africa are now high priorities for my government. Africa has always enjoyed a special place in our foreign policy since independence. India is determined to become a long-term partner in African growth and is ready to contribute to more enduring capacity building on the continent.

14. As West Asia confronts dangerous turbulence and political fragmentation, India is prepared to contribute fully to the peaceful resolution of various conflicts in the region. Finding a balance between divergent interests of regional forces has become more urgent than ever in West Asia. We know from our own experience that stability and prosperity to our west accelerates our own economic growth. India has a long record of contributing to peacekeeping missions in this region. We would like to build on this record and help structure a cooperative security order with our many friends and partners in this region.

15. The end of the Cold War has liberated India to simultaneously deepen our relations with all the major power centres. We are no longer bound by the Cold War

paradigm where good relations with one power automatically entailed negative consequences with its rivals. No great power today pursues exclusive cooperation with others. Nor is any one great power asking us to limit ties with others. India has learnt that increased cooperation with one power opens the doors further with others. For the first time in India's independent history, it is now on an upward spiral of improving relations with all the great powers. For all the gains we have made in recent years, our relations with the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, and Europe are all way below their full potential. It is our task in the coming years to deepen cooperation with them all. We will endeavour to inject real political content into the strategic partnerships that we now have with all the major powers.

16. As a confluence of many civilisations, it is only natural that India has consistently rejected the notion of a "clash of civilisations". Unfortunately, the idea of a "civilisational war" has, however, gained some salience in recent years. India, on its part, is ready to join the various international efforts to promote a more intensive engagement among different civil societies, religions and civilisations. Located at the cross-roads of different civilisations, India has for centuries been home to many religions and cultures. We are ready to share our experience with others to promote diversity and tolerance in the world.

17. We are in the middle of an extraordinary technological revolution that promises to radically improve the human condition and accelerate the redistribution of power among states. States that are capable of adapting to the new technological revolution and are in a position to contribute to the new knowledge economy will prosper in the new age. India, with its favourable demographic profile and recognised strengths in the emerging knowledge industries, must take full advantage of the new opportunities to reposition itself in the global order. Our efforts, impressive as they have been so far, have run into a whole range of high technology sanctions imposed on India collectively by the advanced countries since the mid 1970s. Removing these restrictions, set up in the name of non-proliferation, and the associated "catch-all" provisions barring the sale of most advanced technologies in the areas of space, computing, communication, etc., has been a major objective of Indian foreign policy for decades. Success is finally at hand with the on-going implementation of our nuclear agreement with the United States signed in July 2005. We are now on the verge of liberating ourselves from this high technology blockade. The prolonged scientific isolation coupled with political scare-mongering has whipped up much confusion on the provisions of the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal. The initiative of the U.S., backed by other major powers including Russia, France, Great Britain, as well as our partners in the developing world, including Brazil and South Africa, acknowledges the importance of resuming civilian nuclear cooperation with India and the centrality of India in the construction of a credible non-proliferation system. Our track record on this issue has been accepted and vindicated.

18. As the world comes to terms with a rising India, we must, in turn, bear the burdens that come with being an important power. I would like to assure this august gathering that our government will not fall short of the expectations from our own nation as well as the world. Whether it is in addressing the new global challenges -- from trade to environment to international security -- or in the new regional opportunities for peace and prosperity, India is ready to fulfill its obligations.

Jai Hind

