

Welcome Remarks

by

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at

ICWA-SIS Dialogue

on

**“India in the Emerging Global Order:
Political, Strategic and Economic Dynamics”**

at

Sapru House, New Delhi

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all for the second edition of the initiative which was undertaken last year. School of International studies, part of a prominent academic university JNU working on International relations and area studies along with Indian Council of World Affairs, an important think tank on foreign policy and international affairs came together and signed a MoU last year to organise annual conferences on topics of academic and policy relevance. This is the unique exercise of its kind with a promising future and has become an important calendar event for both the institutions. In 2013, the ICWA-SIS dialogue discussed “India’s Foreign Policy: Diplomatic Breakthroughs and Critical Gaps” which was well attended and the discussions were of high quality. This year the two-day National Conference is on “**India in the Emerging Global Order: Political, Strategic and Economic Dynamics**”, jointly organised by ICWA and the School of International Studies of JNU (SIS). As the best diplomats, academics and research scholars from different institutes come together, I believe that it would be an academic churning which would bring out the best of both worlds.

2. Now coming to the more substantial part of the conference which would be a two day affair, November 11-12, 2014 and would bring retired diplomats, academics and scholars from JNU, NIAS, TERI, Manipal University, ICWA, and IDSA to discuss the important issue of India’s role in the emerging world order. I believe there would be close scrutiny of the policy through the last six decades and the deliberations would give useful suggestions on matters pertaining to India’s relations with its neighbours, major powers, its role in multilateral institutions and how it can position itself under the new global dynamics.

3. Ladies and Gentlemen, the new emerging global order has become a matter of debate and discussion given the new alternatives that have started emerging. It started with the proposal of Asian Monetary Fund, expansion of UN, and the incremental evolution of BRICS. In the present context, the evolving global order reflects a struggle between the aspirations of the new rising powers and the dominance of the western powers. The gradual shift of economic weight from West to East is also contributing to this discourse. Further, the unipolar world concept is getting eroded while the multipolar configuration is emerging. For India, multipolar dynamics would

serve its interests better than a unipolar order. This multipolar dynamics has created a natural urge to build coalitions as well as create a sustainable geopolitical equilibrium. However, in this transitional phase, the trajectory of the new world order is not very clear but zero-sum game based on power is also not an option. This argument can be made on the very fact that non-traditional security threats which were not seen as an important factor till 1990s, have become a strong independent variable affecting all nations and influencing interstate relations.

4. In the global affairs, Non Traditional Security threats (NTS) such as water, energy, terrorism, piracy, transnational crime, pandemics, food security etc. have forced major powers to cooperate and work towards building consensus. This compulsion to cooperate reflected during the unfortunate incident of missing of the MH-370 Malaysian airlines aircraft. This one incident exposed the limitations of all major powers and provided food for thought for global search and rescue cooperation. To my mind, the three major issues of food, water and human security would dominate the international discourse in the coming years. India has highlighted these issues in forums such as UN, WTO and also worked towards garnering support among developed and developing nations.

5. Allow me to highlight the major transitions which are happening at the global level both in terms of India's bilateral engagements with its neighbours and major powers as well as its proactive role in multilateral institutions. Under the previous governments and also the new government, India has always proposed better relations with its neighbours and as a result we have relatively better relations with our neighbours, given the wonderful initiative under taken by our new Prime Minister. New proactive engagements with the SAARC nations have borne fruits and the SAARC Summit which will be held later this month would highlight new areas of cooperation. I believe that the visionary leadership that the new government has shown will give India the leadership position in global affairs. In the last few months, India's interactions at international and regional level have clearly shown that the world is giving attention to India. This might augur a proactive and decisive phase in India's role in global affairs.

6. With regard to multilateral institutions, the evolving global dynamics have forced exclusive institutions to open up and expand their membership while at the same time new

selective institutions such as BRICS and G-20 have gained traction in the international discourse. Most importantly, institutions like UN needs further strengthening so that unilateral decisions and the sanctions regime can be moderated. India is a prominent player in most of the regional and trans-regional organisations in which it is a member and has actively played an important role. The usual critique that one often hears that India is a passive player in these organisations but given the resources and inherent national interest; I personally believe that its role is carefully calibrated under any given circumstances. For India, international peace and development which also trickles down to its sovereign borders is the priority.

7. India's engagement with major powers is also bearing fruits in the form of investment, defence ties and increased trade. India, to my mind, is the most acceptable actor at the global stage and is the one country which is an example for new democracies as well as authoritarian regimes. Its youth capital and its knowledge base are well accepted facts and these two would be the catalysts for India's emergence at the global stage. India is poised to play a significant role in international matters and the time is ripe for India to assert its place in the emerging global order.

8. Now to highlight India's priorities, we have three eminent panellists for the inaugural session and a scientist to calibrate the scales. We have with us Vice Chancellor of JNU, Professor S K Sopory, Shri Sitaram Yechury, Vice President of the Council and Rajya Sabha MP, Shri B P Singh, former Governor of Sikkim and Professor C Raja Mohan, an eminent strategic thinker. We could not have a better panel for the inaugural session as these eminent personalities and scholars would trigger the discourse on this important topic.

9. I am hopeful that the platform of ICWA-SIS dialogue will enable purposeful deliberations and great insights. I am also positive that these valuable inputs would highlight the priorities of the youth, academics and diplomats. It is a unique confluence which would provide myriad dimensions of discourse and a possible synthesis reflective of the present day demands, which would be given attention in policy circles.

10. I thank you all for attending this very important dialogue and for your patience.
