

NON PROLIFERATION AND PEACE BUILDING

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It is a great pleasure and a privilege being here with you today. My heartfelt thanks to the Konrad Adenauer Fdn, the Hans Seidel Fdn and the European Institute for Asian Studies for hosting this important conference at this critical juncture. The Konrad Adenauer Fdn has in recent years taken a number of original initiatives to bring India and Europe together. It is especially satisfying that this time it includes the US as well.

By any account the conference is a unique event. Coming as we do from three separate continents, with our different perspectives, yet to share our common concerns and find constructive solutions. What brings us together is the realization that only through a frank exchange of views that the challenges of our times can effectively be addressed.

The world today is at the cusp of change.

- Three years after the horrendous attack on the World Trade Centre, the War against terror is facing a crisis. The initial coming together of the free world in spontaneous support of the US in its hour of tragedy, has largely dissipated. This has made this necessary war, a very complex and a divisive one, whose end is not in sight.
- The War against terrorism has indeed begun to acquire the characteristics of a war between civilizations. If it indeed develops in to one, its duration will be measured in decades and not years.
- The modified objective of the war in Iraq, to end a brutal dictatorship and bring peace and democracy in a troubled part of the world, may well have an opposite outcome at least in the short term.
- The policy of targeting rogue regimes has made some of them turn towards developing weapons of mass destruction in the hope of acquiring a deterrence against attack.
- The ultimate horror of our times, the possibility of the mating of terror and weapons of mass destruction seems to be more likely than ever. This fusion may already have taken place a short distance to the west of my country. Its consequences are likely to be felt around the world.
- Meanwhile poverty, destitution and disease proceeds apace around the globe. This state itself is the cause of many other instabilities and conflicts that threaten large parts of the world. The UN Millennium Goals announced so hopefully just a few years ago have floundered and in the absence of resources, their fulfillment seem a distant dream..

Yet, there are positive developments as well and opportunities for change perhaps in the horizon.

- Impending elections in major countries of the world may provide opportunities for introspection and reflection and perhaps an opportunity for course correction.
- Winds of democracy are indeed beginning to flow in many regions of the world, particularly in the Islamic world; though there remain major exceptions and the pace of progress, where they are taking place, remains far too slow.
- Even though the global disarmament scene is dismal, with no forward movement anywhere, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty is due for review in May next year. Does it provide an opportunity?
- Finally, is the work of the UN High Level Panel of sixteen independent eminent persons appointed by the Secretary General in September last year. Tasked to analyze new threats confronting the world today and recommend measures for collective international action to counter them, it will submit its report on Dec 1 this year. The Report is expected to make major recommendations, which after further deliberations around the world can provide the basis for substantive changes in the international system as well as identify measures that are necessary to implement.

I have been asked to address briefly two issues; the question of preventing weapons proliferation and peace building and try to identify areas for cooperation.

Non-Proliferation

The global non-proliferation process is in effect on hold with virtually no progress anywhere. The Conference on Disarmament is unable to agree on a Decalogue and its deliberations remain on hold. An adhoc committee was established on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, in Sep 2001 but no progress has been made. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remain without an effective verification clause. There is no agreement on beginning a dialogue on cutting off fissile material production. The United Nations Disarmament Commission at New York addressed two issues recently; one on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and the other on confidence building measures in the area of conventional arms. On both questions it failed to arrive at any consensus. The First Committee of the UN General Assembly deliberated on a number of issues and passed some resolutions, but as it is bereft of any executive authority, could produce no substantive action. Finally, on the NPT Review Conference due in May 2005. In the last PrepCom held this May, there was no agreement even on a common Chairman's draft. The prospect of any constructive development is remote. Several review conferences in the past could also not come out with an agreed statement. Will this be different next year?

Before proceeding further, let me identify what I consider the three most pressing proliferation challenges facing the world.

- First, is the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, through universal, non-discriminate global action incorporating effective verification procedures.
- Next, prevent deployment of weapons in outer space, which can in turn only lead to an extremely costly arms race in the future.
- Address questions of conventional force reductions through transparent confidence building measures. In this regard, the prevention of proliferation of small arms and light weapons need to be given a high priority.

Before proceeding further let me narrate very briefly Indian views on non-proliferation:

- India is the only country with nuclear weapons which genuinely believes that its security interests will be best served in a nuclear weapons free world. Hence it has without hesitation consistently supported efforts towards a nuclear free world.
- It was India that first proposed an end to nuclear testing as far back as 1954. The principles for a nuclear non-proliferation treaty were first proposed by India in 1965.
- In 1982 India proposed a convention to ban nuclear weapons. This was followed up at the third UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1988 by Rajiv Gandhi's call for a world without nuclear weapons.
- On fissile material cut-off, India has supported an early conclusion of a non-discriminatory treaty that will tackle the issue of future production of all fissile material in its totality. This should also be within the wider context of nuclear disarmament.

May I briefly suggest a common approach which we might pursue together?

- First, is concerted action to delegitimize weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, through collective international action by governments and civil society. The idea that nuclear weapons is necessary for security of some and that new uses should be found for their use and then ask the rest of the world to give up acquiring them, is immoral and unrealistic. It will simply not happen.
- Call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention to seriously address a time bound plan of action for their elimination. The time frame need not be near term. A small number may be held under international control. Accepting the notion that these weapons are really not necessary, may allow their eventual elimination.
- Finally, on a near term basis speedily address non-proliferation measures as adopted by the Security Council on April 28 this year under Chapter VII provisions. Effective collective action should continue to be a high priority for the international community.

Peace Making and Peace Building

The decade and a half after the Cold War has witnessed many armed conflicts both within

and outside states. The challenges to the world are numerous. Some have been addressed effectively while many others have not. What has emerged in recent years is a clear demonstration of the centrality of the UN in establishing global peace.

It is not my intention to discuss the mechanics and the modalities of international peacekeeping or peace building. Our concern is with issues of policy and how to strengthen the United Nations and keep it relevant in order to fulfill this important role. While decisions for peace making often rests with the developed nations, troops are provided by the developing countries, particularly those from South Asia. Often their views are not sufficiently heard. Even where capabilities exist, cooperation suffers. Even in cases of urgent humanitarian aid quite often there is a fear that decisions may be made more because of major power interests rather than genuine desire to ameliorate suffering.

Today, the UN has the authority and legitimacy for maintaining international peace. Again today, the US is the sole super power with overwhelming military capability to win wars across continents. It is vital that these capabilities merge and reinforce each other to ensure global order. When it comes to establishing peace, the UN enjoys a clear advantage. This is because it is still seen as a representative world body, though this image too is fraying and its representative nature is under question.

This is where the constitution of the UN Security Council become vital. To be effective and ensure that its authority has global support, its composition has to be more representative of the global power equation of today rather than of the immediate era of the post World War II. It must also represent the global poor. Existing norms of democracy and representation must be respected. So should a nation's contribution to international peacekeeping.

Once such a restructuring is undertaken the UN will have greater relevance, legitimacy and effectiveness.

In conclusion Mr Chairman, may I suggest that the extra ordinary circumstances facing all of us today, call for exceptional measures. We need to think beyond existing norms and develop new responses, based on current realities and the challenges all of us face. A genuine cooperation across continents alone will help meet these challenges.