VISION OF PEACE IN 2020

- Jasjit Singh[*]

"Ours is the great design of promoting peace and progress all over the world."
                                                                  - Jawaharlal Nehru[*]

       Peace is a fundamental pre-condition for human development. There has been a view that human development will lead to peace. But the weight of historical evidence confirms that it is the state of peace and an assured sense of security that allows human development to be effectively nurtured and sustained. The vision for 2020, therefore, must seek to establish durable peace, both internally as well as in the external environment. The new millennium offers unprecedented opportunities to put in place concepts and policies which would ensure durable peace and security so that human development can be pursued unhindered by violence and the threat of violence. At the same time new, as well as many of the old inherited challenges face us. The most critical of these is the challenge of the mindset and belief systems of the past. The strong tendency to interpret the future in terms of the past needs to change although within the context of the lessons learnt from the past experiences. We need to remember that **to prepare for peace is the most effectual means of preserving peace**.

       Challenges to peace are numerous. For example, society has always been involved in violence, war preparedness and contributing the means and manpower for war. War, however, had been historically treated as an exclusive undertaking of the military. But during the past 200 years, society has been made increasingly inclusive to war (and conflict). Society became the target in war under the Clausewitzian concept of targeting and destroying the "will of the nation." Strategic bombing and nuclear weapons have added an apocalyptic dimension to the (indiscriminate) targeting of population centres and innocent human beings. At the same time, the proportion of civilian casualties in wars has increased dramatically. Equally disturbing but more debilitating is the expansion of violence inside society for political ends, with or without external linkages. This is one of the most serious problems of peace and security since it not only undermines national and international security, but also threatens social peace. It is against this general background that we need to look at the issues of peace and stability in the coming decades. Before we embark on an assessment of the future needs it is important to make a quick review of the past.

---

[*] Air Commodore **Jasjit Singh**, AVSM, VrC, VM, IAF (ret) is Director, Centre for Strategic & International Studies (CSS) New Delhi, and a former Director of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi (1987-2001). Author and editor of more than three dozen books including *Air Power in Modern Warfare (1985); Non-provocative Defence (1989); Security of Third World Countries (1993); Nuclear India (1998); Kargil 1999: Pakistan's Fourth War for Kashmir (1999)*; and *India's Defence Spending (2000)*, he has published extensively on strategic and security issues. Visiting lecturer at defence and war colleges in India and abroad. Former Convenor of the Task Force to set up National Security Council and member of the National Security Advisory Board, he is currently also the Editorial Adviser (Defence & Strategic Affairs) to *Indian Express* Group of newspapers.
[*] During the Inaugural address at the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March 23, 1947.

The Great Experiment

Taken in its totality the progress of independent India can be described as the "great experiment" and perhaps the most ambitious one in human history. India had been predominantly an agrarian society. However at the time of its independence it could not feed itself. For the next twenty years we existed in circumstances that at one time came to be known as a "ship-to-mouth existence" symbolising our dependence on food assistance from foreign countries, especially the United States. Indian society had become rigidly stratified over the centuries with deep fissures and discrimination being practiced. The people as such had no say in the their governance, and poverty characterised the general condition of the population. Population was essentially rural-based with a life expectancy even by 1950-51 of a mere 32 years. The literacy rate was a shade above 18 % for the country at that time (with female literacy below 9%). India generated a lordly amount of 6.6 GW of domestic electricity which was to rise to 331.6 GW by 1992-93. There was virtually no industry of consequence in the country in spite of valiant attempts made by a few Indian entrepreneurs and the transfer of what had become "sunset" industries in the UK like the textile mills in mid-20th century. Some industry perforce had to be located in India after World War II started. The importance of this has to be judged not so much comparing ourselves with some other country although there would be many lessons in that approach. But the real significance rests with examining the historical context in which we had reached where we were by the time of independence.

Fig. 1:   **World Manufacturing Output**
(in %)
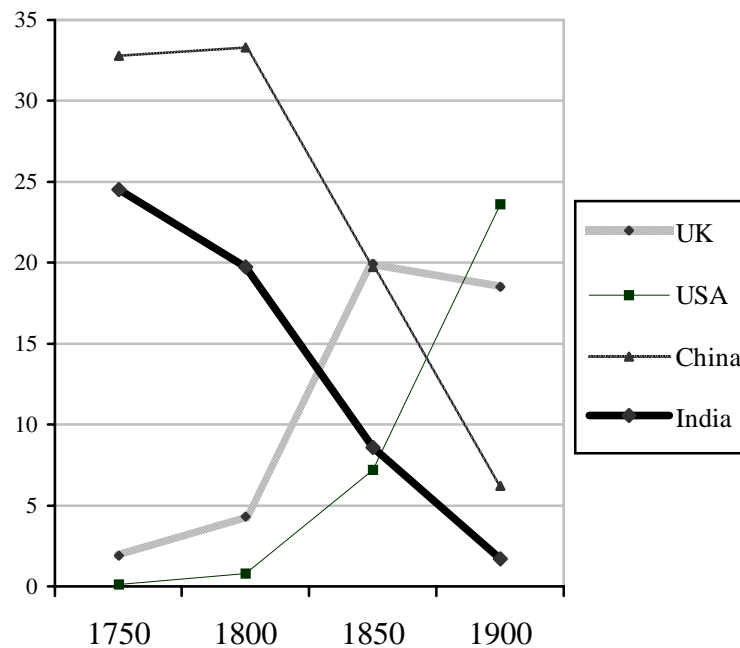
The two centuries prior to our independence constituted the period in human history when the Industrial Revolution transformed the world and equations between major countries. At the beginning of the 18th century India accounted for nearly a quarter of the world's manufacturing output. Only China had a higher share of the world output. (See Fig. 1). It was this sustained capability over the previous centuries that attracted foreign invaders to India. And the British (or for

that matter the Portuguese and the French) were no different. The combination of Industrial Revolution and the expansion of colonialism led to the bulk of the world losing out on the benefits of industrialisation which were mostly limited to the metropolitan powers of Europe. This basic equation has not changed except that the colonising powers are broadly grouped as `developed' while the colonised regions are the present world's `developing" countries. India stood out because of the comparatively much higher level of economic base of production and international trade. Traditional methods of manufacturing started to become obsolete and India, like many other countries regressed into becoming a provider of raw materials. The process led to the **de-industrialisation of India** during the two centuries under colonial rule. The secondary impact was the virtual decimation of the middle class and the trading communities except for small-scale `kirana' traders. This only intensified the gap between the rulers and the ruled.

The impact of this de-industrialisation has not been adequately assessed or understood especially by the younger generations who have no personal memories of the earlier years. For example one major impact of this process was to denude Indian society of an industrial base and narrowing of the trading capacities from the earlier international levels to mostly localised village level trading capacity. The industry started to come up around the time of independence but had to remain confined to small-scale sectors. It was only by the 1980s that industry started to grow into medium and large-scale sectors outside the public sector which of necessity had to establish the larger industrial units. With a gross domestic saving rate of less than 10% and an economy which rested on food shortages, there was little scope for market principles to operate during the early years.

It is the process of change that India has been going through during the past half-century that constitutes this great experiment, that of transforming a weak agrarian economy into a modern multi-dimensional economic enterprise, to transform a traditional stratified society into an egalitarian society, above all to manage the great transformation and people's empowerment through consultative politics. It is inevitable that a billion people on the move in social, economic, technological and political terms would also generate turbulence. Domestically it is this turbulence that has to be managed in such a way that it does not retard the forward movement. In addition the external dimension of challenges to peace and security have to be addressed. Domestic peace, however, by itself is a necessary component of broader peace both because it provides the confidence as well as the internal strength and ability to deal with external challenges successfully. This is the meaning of peace and this gives an indication of the challenges to peace and stability in future.

Great Expectations

The greatest global challenge that faces the international community in general and our country today is that of the current transnational **revolution of rising expectations**. The future international order, peace, and security will substantively depend on the progress of this revolution and the way international community, states, and societies inter-relate to it. If we look at major departure points in intra-state balance of power and societal equations, we find that the present revolution, in fact, is the fifth such revolution related to the structures of society and state in modern world dominated by western civilisation.

The *first* revolution, of which the Thirty Years War was the manifestation, and which finally came to an end at the Peace of Westphalia (1648 AD) was, in a way the struggle between the aristocracy against the clergy. The struggle was finally resolved by the separation of the State and Church (in the Occidental Civilisation). The *second* revolution manifested in the French Revolution, resulted from the socio-economic mobility (as a result of the fruits of the Industrial Revolution) seeking to alter the intra-state and societal balance of power. The upwardly mobile segments of society- the merchants, industrialists, capitalists --- the bourgeoisie, sought a greater role in the distribution of power and status. While the first revolution altered the basis of the state, this second sought to alter the basis of state as well as transform the society. The *third* revolution manifested in

the shape of a violent implosion following the halting of imperial expansion and resulted in the totality of First World War. The third revolution, as we know, was proletarian versus the bourgeoisie to bring about distributive justice in the socio-economic field. Ironically it was the capitalist system that started to provide the welfare state that Marxism had held out at the prime hope for mankind. The *fourth*, the revolution of decolonisation, sought political equality in a struggle between the colonised and the imperial metropolitan powers, and a concurrent struggle for redistribution of (of economic and political) power within these states and societies took place, often with violence and repression. The Second World War had given this struggle a great boost because the war itself altered the power equations of the dominant international order.

All the four revolutions were identifiable struggles and closely connected with restructuring of state power, society and international political architecture in association with violent upheavals and major, general wars involving all significant actors. The alteration of the inter-state balance of power after the Peace of Westphalia, Congress of Vienna, Paris Conference, and Yalta meeting was also contemporaneous with the intra-state balance of politico-economic power.

We need to recognise that the world has been in the middle of a *fifth* revolution for nearly two decades now. This is the revolution of rising expectations, propelled by an impetus for upward socio-economic mobility and an increasing gap between expectations and satisfaction. A second revolution, that of information and communications has concurrently intensified the revolution of rising expectations by raising aspirations of people world-wide of the potential and desirability of a quality of life which otherwise may not be (and in developing countries lagging behind in human development is not) available in real life. Four decades ago formal education was a pre-requisite for awareness and hence of the understanding of the possibilities of what may be available. The information-communications revolution, especially with the spread of satellite-based audio-visual information has completely altered this equation between awareness and formal education. Like the earlier revolutions, its manifestation also happens to coincide with the culmination of another great international conflict -- the Cold War. In fact the revolution received a marked boost as the Cold War ended. Not the least amongst the reasons was the expectation of the global "peace dividends" and a sense of release and freedom from existing tensions and confrontations.

Human expectations inevitably keep growing with human progress. In fact, a divergence between expectations and actuality is necessary to provide the driving force for human endeavour. The rate of growth not only defines the productivity, but the gap in the rates of growth has a powerful influence on human responses. But if the expectations start rising at a rate far exceeding the rate at which achievement and satisfaction of those expectations rises, social turbulence would start to increase. (See Figure 2). Any further increase in the expectations-actuality gap would correspondingly increase instability in the socio-political order with a deleterious effect on the economic activities. At some point a pattern of dynamic instability could set in which, then, results in a socio-political upheaval.

In essence, this is a global phenomenon and challenge. Hence, this is not a problem that can be addressed at the national level alone. Globalisation of trade, information flows, especially through satellite communication systems have not only shrunk the globe, but has rapidly increased the awareness and aspirations of people. There are structural and situational limits to the rate of growth of achievements, especially in the developing world. And the real problem may be that we have yet to achieve adequate consciousness of the ongoing revolution. So far, attention has been focused essentially on the effects of this revolution rather than its true dimensions. But increasing ethno-nationalism, religio-political radicalism, erosion of state control over economic, social, and even political-administrative activities of a modern state (Cambodia and Somalia stand out as stark examples), corruption, societal violence and conflicts, erection of trade and tariff barriers, and other forms of protectionism and cartel building are only symptoms of the real problem.

It may be hypothesised that the rate of growth of expectations can be kept depressed through tight control over information flows (and/or authoritarian suppression) on one side and an ideological rationalisation on the other. This was the case with the Soviet Union of Stalin and

Brezhnev. However, as information flows increased rapidly increasing the levels of awareness, expectations shot up almost in an exponential growth pattern. The actuality inevitably lagged behind. It was this phenomenon that Mikhail Gorbachev tried to manage through a harmonisation of ideology and policy to keep the expectations-actuality gap within manageable limits. It is also this rapidly increasing gap that resulted in the continuing politico-economic and social crises and turbulence that has far outlived the Soviet Union and the Communist party.

In some respects, the fifth revolution was spawned by the fourth revolution which had created strong expectancies. It was felt that with decolonisation, national governments would
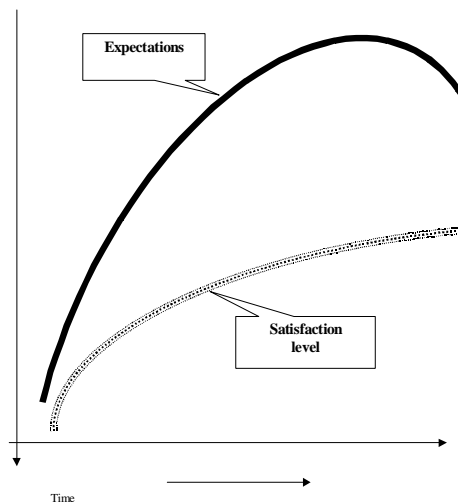
automatically bring equality, social justice, and economic prosperity. Jawaharlal Nehru's famous speech on the theme of "tryst with destiny" when India became independent on August 15, 1947 is symptomatic. The spread of education and communications has rapidly increased awareness. Given diverse inherent problems, national governments in developing countries would have found it extremely difficult to meet the aspirations of people even if expectations had not begun to rise so dramatically under the influence of the information revolution since the 1970s. At the same time rising prosperity (or reducing poverty) also led to rising inequities among the people while newly found prosperity also created new sense of vulnerability. As people moved out of abject poverty, they started to have something to lose. The big differences between the India at the turn of the century and that of five decades earlier is that the people are no longer willing to accept poverty. And means are getting compromised for the expected ends.

The problem is of the ***rapidly widening gap between expectations and satisfaction levels***, especially when the latter has been loosing its historical roots of family life, spiritual solace, and traditional cultural moral/ethical values. In most cases, particularly in developing countries without participatory political systems, this gap is at the root of contemporary turbulence. Iran in the 1970s was typical. The inability of the state system to narrow and control the increasing achievement-expectation, fulfilment-aspiration gap is rapidly leading to action for change. The thrust towards democracy (and participatory politics), the return of religion in politics, ethno-nationalism representing the disillusionment fault-line with existing state nationalism, are all symptomatic of the new revolution, high levels of disillusionment and frustrations. Nearly two-thirds of India's population is below the age of 35 years; and this may be treated as representative. With such high concentration of youth, expectation-achievement equation assumes another dimension. The transition from disillusionment and frustration to violence for the youth comes early and quickly. All the militants/terrorists in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam, Sri Lanka, and other places are

young, mostly between 15-25 years of age, and educated to varying degrees. The two hundred thousand 'kar-sevaks' who demolished the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 belonged to the same age group. While secular liberal democratic systems are better equipped to vector this revolution, it nevertheless poses special challenges to them. That is why the need for "renewal" is felt even within the United States and Japan.

The most serious challenge for (international and national/societal) peace and security in future is the management of the revolution of rising expectations. This is essentially a socio-economic **human developmental** (including that of gainful employment) problem to which politics must provide the direction. On the other hand, democracy (which more often than not manifests itself in competitive if not combative politics) and free market economy (relying on competitive activity) will need to address this issue. The challenge will be how to maintain competitiveness for efficiency and selectivity while maintaining co-operation for social and distributive justice. In the overall analysis, it needs to be remembered that revolutions are highly destructive without appropriate ideological vectoring and a goal. The present revolution is being hijacked by ethno-religious ideologies. **Political leadership and statesmanship will have to define the vision and ideology to provide direction to this revolution.** These would have to continuously reviewed and sustained.

Conceptual Framework for Peace and Security

Conventional wisdom in most parts of the world has tended to treat national security as synonymous with national defence. The reality, which is being increasingly appreciated, is that the former covers a much broader spectrum of challenges, threats and responses as compared to the latter, which being a sub-set of national security in its comprehensive framework, relates to military security essentially from external threats. At the same time it has to be noted that military capability also constitutes the ultimate instrument in application of force when and where required in the pursuit of national security. In India, the broader concept of national security may be seen to have its roots in the struggle for independence itself, and well articulated and operationalised in the early years of India's history as an independent nation-state. Nehru's concept of an "area of peace" extending all around India, the pursuit of the policy of non-alignment in a global system that was characterised by adversarial bloc confrontation with the resultant cold-war politics, and the emphasis on development even at the cost of defence throughout the 1950s are representative of the comprehensive approach to national security. The basic approach also emphasised that India's security issues cannot be isolated from the geo-strategic environment and geo-political realities of the international system.

National Security

In this context, therefore, it would be useful to attempt a definition of national security' so as to formulate the framework of national strategy to achieve it. According to Morton Berkowitz and P.G. Bock, "national security can be most fruitfully defined as the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats". However this definition falls short of a comprehensive approach to national security. Views on exact definitions will no doubt differ, but we may adopt a broad concept of national security as the **protection and preservation of the core values and vital interests critical to the nation-state from external and internal challenges and threats**. The framework of strategy, therefore, must seek to identify the core values as the very foundations of the state and society as it is sought to be sustained. Secondly it is important to define the vital national interests that require to be protected. The former starts to constitute the national ideology while the latter start to define the goals and objectives so essential to the well being and sustenance of the state and its ideology.

At the same time it is necessary to note that although external and internal security issues are substantially different in nature, they often interact or are interrelated. Many issues affecting internal security may stem from external political, economic or military pressures. Similarly

domestic insecurity and, perhaps, what is even more relevant, perceptions of domestic vulnerabilities would influence our ability to deal with external challenges while providing incentive to inimical powers to apply pressures. As it is, a nation bedevilled with internal unrest facing chronic economic crises, or political turmoil cannot deal effectively with external threats. Objective and reasonably accurate assessments of security threats are not easily achieved; and the balancing of priorities between the external and internal dimensions of security poses the greatest dilemma and challenge. An underestimation of an external threat with a correspondingly lower military preparedness to permit greater resources to be allocated to development in order to enhance domestic security could lead to the erosion of national security if an attack does take place. This indeed, was the experience of India in the first 15 years of its independent existence culminating in the 1962 debacle. On the other hand, the exaggeration of an external threat and the correspondingly higher military preparedness could, at one level, lead to countermeasures by the potential adversary thus escalating the threat environment to a higher plane, and at another, demand excessive resources eroding the developmental processes within the State and possibly creating conditions inimical to domestic security. The history of Iran during the 1970s under the Shah's rule and thereafter is representative of this phenomenon. The answer lies in viewing **defence and development as concurrent goals** to be sought in an objective balance rather than in a mutually exclusive paradigm.

Internal security problems, especially in a newly emerged independent but developing country like India essentially grow out of the laborious processes of nation-state building. At the root of the problem lies the issue of **economic disparities and social inequities**. The dynamics of development, industrialisation and modernisation promise on the one side, to reduce the scope and extent of these disparities and inequities. On the other side, they also tend to generate turbulence in society which, if not contained within manageable proportions, could start serious erosion of internal security. Use of force remains an essential instrument to manage turbulence and challenges to territorial integrity. But force must remain the last and ultimate instrument of the state to be used with great care. Its highest utility arises from its value as a deterrent. And the success of deterrence lies in the military capabilities not having to be used. A developing nation like India, by definition, is a society in transition, and a nation on the move. And like any object in transition, it should be expected to create waves of turbulence. Expansion of education, civic amenities and communications tends to raise aspirations. These aspirations can mostly be met only through socio-economic development and empowerment. However, a significant differential between economic growth and population growth is required to be achieved if these aspirations are to be fulfilled to at least some reasonable degree. Failure to meet these aspirations rapidly leads to disillusionment and cynicism.

Economic disparities tend to generate pressures for sub-national, linguistic and communal groups to seek betterment of their lot through search for advancement of their own lot, at times at the cost of other groups in society. Ethnicity is grasped more tenaciously in a society in transition towards modernisation especially where centuries-old traditional value systems (like joint family system) rapidly give way to more nuclear families and impersonal relationships. While at the personal plane ethnicity may provide a reassuring anchor in a climate of turbulence and uncertainty, at the community and societal level it tends to encourage divisive tendencies. Against the background of inherited social inequities, cohesion in society becomes vulnerable to conflicting pressures. While the essential means to resolve the socio-economic contradictions is a political system with a wide decision-making base, the stability of that political system becomes a crucial element in the paradigm for national security. The erosion of social cohesion tends to get reflected in partisan politics. The inevitable existence of external pressures tends to have a further debilitating effect on political stability. In a nascent nation-state, the maturity of the political institutions is crucial to political stability. The alternative is the shift towards over-centralisation of power, narrowing the decision-making base to an ever-reducing select elite till the system turns authoritarian and then totalitarian.

A notional representation of national security is depicted at Figure 3. The innermost ring represents the core values and vital interests that a state seeks to protect, preserve and promote. Beyond the outermost ring are the multi-dimensional multifarious challenges and threats that impinge ultimately on this core through more visible components represented in the figure in terms of the middle ring. The core values are derived from the vision and ideology that a nation defines/chooses for itself. Geopolitical and other factors also define the vital interests of states. Often these values and interests are in competition and conflict with those of another state as indeed is the case between India and Pakistan. For example, India set about establishing its nation-state on the idea that every human being is equal. Hence democracy, adult franchise, secularism, social justice, etc. as the main components of the Constitution. Pakistan, on the other hand, set about creating a state on the basis of religion and discrimination where women would have different rights, and non-Muslims would be denied an equal status. At its simplest level the innermost core would require a protective ring of capabilities related to the maintenance of social cohesion and building up of techno-economic strength. These cannot be achieved except through the creation and strengthening the institutional fabric of the society and state. Crucial in this paradigm is also the factor of military capabilities although they must be kept at the minimum sufficient level to provide credible deterrence against challenges/treats to the innermost core.

The turbulence and erosion of the political institutions, especially if they tend to over-centralise political power, permeates into the institutional and administrative (including diplomatic and judicial) infrastructure with a deleterious effect on socio-economic growth. The negative trends in all the key elements discussed above tend to create a vicious circle of ever-increasing insecurities. A positive growth in the key elements of the security paradigm would tend to enhance national security in its comprehensive form; negative trends would tend to increase the vulnerabilities. The key fundamental constituent of a framework for national strategy, therefore, is to impart a positive impetus to the national security paradigm. Within this paradigm each of the segments of national security plays a stabilising role and provides for State security. But national security can be provided for only by a dynamic and positive paradigm as a whole.
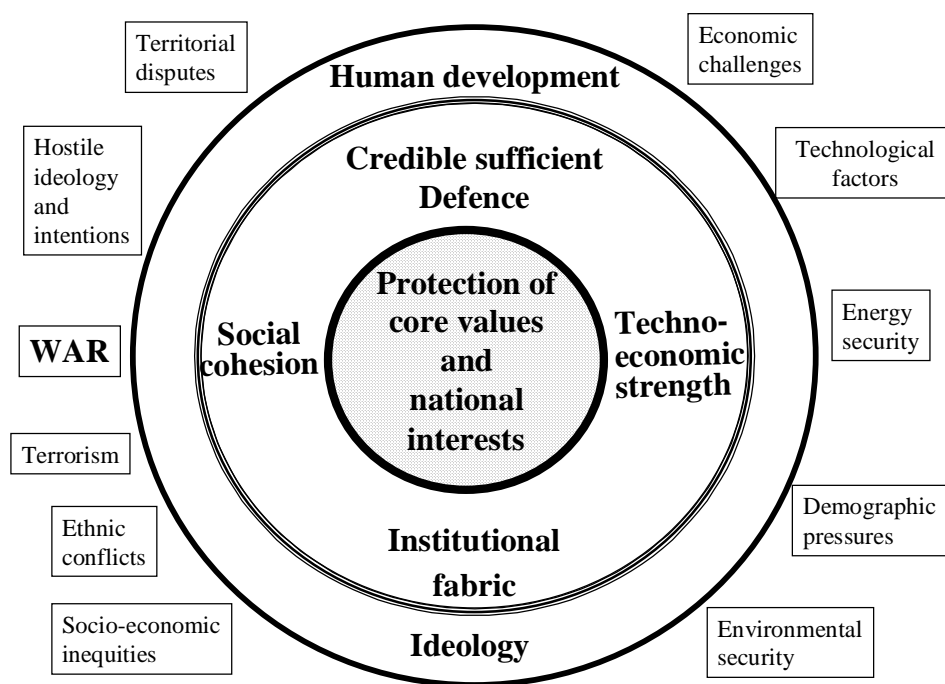
Conceptual Framework

      The prime objective of a national security doctrine is the preservation of the core values of the nation. In very general terms these values may be interpreted as the 'way of life'; but more substantive identification is needed. The core values of' the Indian nation derive their strength from its culture and civilisation. But their greatest manifestation, perhaps, is seen in the fundamentals of the struggle for freedom which led to the establishment of the Indian nation state. The very existence, legitimacy and consolidation of the Indian nation-state has its foundations in the values and principles on which the struggle to create the nation-state was based. Any weakening of these values endangers the legitimacy of the nation-state; and every reinforcement of' these values strengthens national security in its comprehensive sense. The importance of some of these values becomes even greater when seen in the historical sense. The struggle for independence in India may be seen to have ultimately bifurcated along two separate, disparate and conflictual lines: one which led to the establishment of the Indian nation-state, and the other to the creation of Pakistan. This, incidentally, is also substantially responsible for the sense of mutual insecurity, distrust and threat between the two countries.

      The Indian struggle for freedom recognised the realities of the contradictions, stresses and strains that inhere in a plural and heterogeneous society. The only way to reduce the centrifugal and conflictual pressures was to accommodate them in an essentially egalitarian, liberal democracy, and a secular society. The fact that democratic values and secularism had been an integral part of indigenous Indian culture and civilisation was an additional reinforcing factor. Given India's regional diversity, the only logical approach to unity and strength lay in a federal polity. It was, therefore, logical for the pioneers of the struggle for freedom to work for a sovereign State on the basis of democracy, secularism and federalism. And when a section of the people and their political leaders insisted on denying these values as the basis of the new nation-state, and instead substituted religion as the foundation of one, the Indian political

leadership reluctantly agreed to the partition of India and creation of Pakistan rather than compromise these basic values.

A single fundamental idea defines the conceptual framework for India's security, that is, the **idea of equality of human beings**. This is derived from the vision of a classless caste-less egalitarian society and in turn leads to a number of core values the most prominent being that of democracy, secularism and federalism. Erosion of any or all of these values in any form for whatever reason erodes the legitimacy of the Indian nation-state and hence poses threats to its security. It was for this reason that these values were so carefully enshrined in the Constitution of the young nation by its founding fathers. Strengthening of these values and upholding the Constitution which gives form and substance to these values, thus, becomes the primary component of the strategy for national security.

Conceptually, the framework of India's security requires it to be structured on two more fundamental criteria: that of optimum freedom of action to protect and advance national interests, and secondly, that of a paradigm of national power. It is also apparent that these two are deeply interlinked and interrelated. The problem perhaps lies in the fact that the first, having been practised as an article of faith in dealing with international issues, is better understood by most in terms of non-alignment in a world of alliance systems and bipolar power blocs, but the latter is not well understood.

Non-alignment is a strategy to preserve national freedom of action and response in the prevailing international order so as to nurture and enhance national interest and power. Non-alignment is a vital prerequisite for nation-state building especially for a country with tremendous power potential resources like India. It is instructive to remember that the spectacular growth of the USA and Russia in terms of the (traditional) denominators of relative power of the States took place mainly outside the prevailing zones of influence in the fields of international power.

Freedom of action to select policy options is not only necessary to safeguard national interests, but in a bipolar world order which was inherently unstable, it became an essential catalyst to help move the international world order towards a stable multipolar or balance-of-power system. Attempts to achieve this in India so far have been based more on reactive responses rather than on a coherent concept of national power. It is thus the last of the five fundamentals of the framework of security --- that of national power ---- which the Indian nation has probably found most difficult to comprehend.

Comprehensive national power (especially intellectual power) is a critical constituent for building and conducting international relations. And while moral force is an integral component, the spectrum of total national power goes far beyond it. Also, in international relations it is not so much a question of what we believe; but perhaps more relevant are the belief systems of all the other actors in the conduct of international relations which have to be taken into account. The developed industrialised nations firmly believe in the concept of national power as a major instrument in the framework of security and in dealing with international issues. Power basically provides the means to create and safeguard an environment for the development and growth of the individual and the society constituting the State. Power is more than capability to act: it provides refuge from the inequities and uncertainties of the ordinary world and society; and its relationship with ideology, to a large extent, can be one of mutual reinforcement.

Change and transformation in the world are brought about essentially by the exercise of power. Mahatma Gandhi looked at national freedom as the means of providing the power to do things for the nation. Thus if the national objective of a developing country is to remove poverty, power to make the changes to achieve this becomes essential to removal of poverty. Toward this end structural changes need to be brought about not only at the national level, but also at the international level. **National comprehensive power is necessary if the country is to ensure an environment of peace in which to pursue human development unhindered by negative impulses.** The structural relationship of specific local changes to the larger framework is

important and power provides not only the means but also the linkages between the various levels of change. For example, if land reforms have to be introduced and implemented successfully at the village level, some structural changes at the state and national level become necessary; and power becomes important and relevant in bringing about the requisite structural changes. Similarly it becomes an essential instrument in bringing about changes in the international system in order to further the national interests.

Power has also been defined in international relations as "the capacity of a nation to use its tangible and intangible resources in such a way as to affect the behaviour of other nations". Therefore, the developing countries essentially need to increase their relative power to 6btain a tilt in favour of the developing world. National power thus must be seen not from the antiquated concept of power in the 19th century Europe, but in its proper perspective at the turn of the century century. In a world order of increasing interdependencies the relative power of nations will increasingly govern and direct the terms of the interdependencies, and therefore, the future of nations as well as the global order.

However, two points need emphasis here: the anatomy of national power must be seen in its totality (not merely in relation to military power) in comprehensive terms, and the relational aspects of power. While military power is a critical component a nation's capabilities to pursue its policy options, it is no longer the only or even the main element among the many constituents of national power. In fact, throughout history, it is the intellectual power of the state that knits all elements of national power into a comprehensive whole.

In sum and substance, therefore, the conceptual framework for a strategy for India's security must rest on five fundamentals: democracy, secularism, federalism, freedom of action, and national (intellectual, economic, social, political and military) power.

Structural Trends

There are a number of structural trends spanning the coming two decades that India's security (at its most comprehensive level) will have to take into account. These could be clubbed together as those where a degree of certainty prevails regarding their persistence and those which are more extensively affected by uncertainty and hence have a higher quantum of variables. The following list is neither exhaustive nor definitive and should be viewed a representative with regard to the factors that we need to influence/manage in order to ensure a durable and predictable environment of peace and security.

There are many factors that are likely to consistently influence our environment during the next 20-25 years:

(i)   The twin revolutions (of rising expectations and information-communication) would continue to persist.

(ii)   The basic territorial disputes are unlikely to be resolved during this time frame.[*] We must continue our efforts to resolve the territorial disputes at an early date. However, our medium term objective should be to ensure stability and peace and tranquillity on the frontiers with adequate insurance measures for possible reversal.

(iii)   The fundamental ideological conflict between Pakistan and India is unlikely to be resolved without a major social-political change in Pakistan. Such change would create its own dynamics and possibly unprecedented challenges especially if that change is accompanied by instability.

(iv)   Religious extremism and radical politics would continue to have an adverse impact on our core values.

---

[*] While normally referred to as "border disputes" most of the disputes concerning our frontiers in reality are *territorial disputes*. Since territorial integrity and sovereignty are involved in such cases they are more complex and difficult to resolve than purely border disputes.

(v)   Transnational terrorism as a form of war through other means for political and strategic goals is likely to dominate for the coming decades as a major threat to peace and security.

(vi)   The challenge of economic security will increase in scope and complexity. For example competition for energy could generate serious tensions along the energy fault-lines (between the demand heartland of Japan, China and India and the resource periphery around this heartland). Most estimates indicate that the output of crude oil would peak around 2030 AD. The coming decade therefore is likely to witness intensification of geopolitics of energy and significant changes in the equations between producers and consumers as well as among major consumers.

(vii)   Public information would play increasing influence in shaping beliefs and hence would be a major factor affecting prospects of peace and peaceful change.

Strategic Uncertainties

Compared to the more identifiable trends there are a large number of strategic uncertainties that Indian policy will have to contend with in future. The most important factor in this process would be the need for long-term perspective in assessments, planning and strategy formulation so that short-term decisions can be situated in long-term goals and objectives. Some of the strategic uncertainties likely to impact our macro policymaking and prospects of peace and which we would need to manage and vector toward more favourable direction and outcome are outlined in the following paragraphs.

India's Socio-economic Growth and Development.

This has to be seen in the context of increasing rates of economic growth during the past three decades and the consequent impact on reducing absolute levels of poverty and improving the quality of life of a large segment of Indian population (compared with the earlier generation). As it is the revolution of rising expectations is impacting our society in a major way. But a potential set back to rising levels of prosperity could almost certainly lead to major upheavals. The continuing social and political turmoil in Indonesia consequent to the economic crisis of 1997 is symptomatic. It needs to be remembered that most revolutions in human history have occurred not when there was acute poverty but during periods of relative prosperity (or its decline after a period of rising prosperity) when the reality and/or perceptions of disparities and inequities intensified.

The International Order

The international order is in a state of transition and its evolution will have a profound impact on the prospects of peace and prosperity. Contrary to conventional wisdom the reality is that new centres of power (with some old ones regaining their position) have been emerging in the past two decades or so. This defines the true contours of the emerging international order. The nature of this evolution is such that the world order can best be described as ***polycentric***. There are certain characteristics of this polycentric order that also define the nature of the international geopolitical architecture. These may be summed up as follows:

- Substantive asymmetry of power, capability, and willingness to exercise that capability already exists among the leading centres of power in today's world. This imposes concurrent pressures for competition and co-operation among states especially the leading centres of power.

- Co-operation and competition is increasingly issue based and driven by national interests. States may co-operate in economic matters and yet differ strongly on strategic goals.

- Uncertainty and fluidity in international affairs is accentuated by the information revolution which no longer allows governments the luxury of long reaction time, or the predictability available in earlier times.

- As we advance into the 21st century, the following half-a-dozen primary centres of power and capability are likely to influence politico-military and economic dimensions of the new international order:

  (1) United States of America is the most complete power and has maximised its influence through military, political and economic alliances/partnerships. However, the power of some other states has been rising in comparative terms.

  (2) China is growing rapidly across the board and will soon represent the second most powerful centre of power in the world. Its political system is likely to continue along the current vector making China the most powerful corporate authoritarian state in human history.

  (3) Japan has established itself as a techno-economic super power. But it hesitates to convert this into political influence and is very shy about exercising its military power.

  (4) The European Union (with France and Germany at its core) coming together in increasing ways and co-ordinating its policies is emerging as a major centre of power. However, while individual countries are likely to co-ordinate their policies with alliance policies and interests, significant autonomy in national policy choices is likely to continue in the coming decades.

  (5) India as the world's largest democracy is now on the move in economic and technological terms. It has successfully progressed in what can only be described as the human history's most ambitious experiment – of transforming a traditional society into a modern one, of transforming an agrarian-based economy into a comprehensive industry-service sector-agricultural economy, rapidly increase social mobility transforming the country into a class-less society, and so on, all through processes of consultative politics. The World Bank estimates that India will possess the fourth largest economy in the world by 2020. It has a resilient democratic system which has, if anything, gained in strength during the past half century. The country has overcome the fundamental deficiencies in agriculture (where it remained dependent on import of food grains for two decades after independence) although nearly 87% people lived on agriculture in 1950. India emerged into independence in 1947 after 200-years of de-industrialisation (see Figure 1). But since independence India has made rapid strides and now has the world's second largest pool of highly competent scientific and technological expertise while its software strength is likely to play a major role in the coming years. India's economic growth, not as dramatic as that of China or the East Asia "Tigers" has nevertheless shown increasing rate of growth in every decade since the late 1960s.

  (6) Russia has been seriously weakened by the collapse and break up of the Soviet Union and the continuing economic vulnerability and political-social crisis. The Red Army is struggling to retain its basic capabilities. But it still possesses a huge nuclear arsenal and the basics around which it could rebuild a powerful state. Above all it retains the images of a former super power that could exercise influence in many areas.

- The centre of gravity of the emerging international order and strategic affairs is increasingly shifting to the Asian landmass (and contiguous island territories). The 21st century is likely to be **Asia-centred** due to some of the reasons outlined below:

1. Asian landmass is where the most far-reaching social, economic and political changes are taking place. How these countries manage change will largely influence the course of world events in the coming decades.
2. The region still has extensive un-resolved disputes extending from issues of sovereignty to ideological issues which are often constructed on religious extremism.
3. By 2015, seven out of ten largest economies would be Asian countries (including three out of the four top being Asian, the other country being the United States with its deep and extensive interests in Asia).
4. Seven out of nine[*] nuclear weapon states are located in Asia (including the United States which has strategically shifted forward into the Asian contiguous oceans, has deployed nuclear weapons in Asia, and will remain an "Asian" power).
5. World's energy "demand heartland" composed of Japan, Koreas, China and India is in Asia. And so is the energy "resource periphery" extending from Siberia, Central Asia, Persian Gulf, North Indian Ocean, South China Sea, and East China Sea. Future needs and availability of energy resource base are likely to further emphasise the Asia-centred world order while enhancing the role of major centres of power.

China's Future Policies

China would not only remain the primary strategic challenge (in political-diplomatic, techno-economic, and ultimately, in military terms), but it would be in a position to cause serious damage to our vital interests unless we are adequately prepared. China, which is already the strongest military power in Asia, would have moved rapidly in further accretion of techno-economic strength. Its military modernisation is moving ahead vigorously. It already has increasing access to Western sources of military technology. More important, it now has access to Soviet/Russian military technology without which it could not have transformed the quality of its military technology on a large scale. Increasing Chinese power and the transformation of the international strategic landscape has opened up opportunities for China to move forward into the strategic vacuum created as a consequence of the Soviet collapse. If Russian recovery remains at a low pace, the emerging "strategic partnership" between China and Russia could strengthen, posing new challenges to our security. China-US relationship will be crucial to peace and security in Asia. This relationship appears to contain the seeds of a new cold war and confrontation. Polarisation of such relationship will pose new challenges and choices for countries on the periphery of China (many of which also now contain the world's reserves of oil and gas). It is highly unlikely that the United States would, in future, act against China, especially in Asia, and particularly in military terms. Its own compulsions may lead to the United States pursuing an ambivalent policy toward China. China's southward drive, especially into Myanmar, has long-term strategic implications for us. For example, the terrain and altitude limitations that China faces on the Sino-Indian borders may not be applicable to Chinese military posture in the Indo-Myanmar sector, especially as China continues to develop the strategic infrastructure in Myanmar. Tibet will continue to be a source of concern to Chinese leadership because it perceives serious vulnerabilities in this area. For the same reason, China repeatedly seeks assurances from India that it recognises China's sovereignty over Tibet. Any turmoil in Tibet in future has the potential of seriously eroding China-India relations (as much as they did after 1959). Domestically, China has its own vulnerabilities to resolve which could make it over-react externally. The special place of the PLA in the national power structure also needs notice. Unfortunately, unlike other countries, there is little transparency in China's policies and postures, especially in the military dimension. In the absence of transparency, and China's rapidly growing strength along with its demonstration and

---

[*] China, North Korea, Pakistan, India, Israel, Russia, and the United States

readiness to use assertive force (as the missile firings abeam Taiwan showed) are likely to generate a worse-case scenario approach in defence planning by other countries. This runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is essential to note that China's evolution will depend not only upon China itself, but also upon the way other states deal with China through these years of transition and change. This is why India would need to pursue the course of building closer co-operative relationship and stabilise the frontiers with China within a policy framework of `*co-operate and insure'*.

Impact of globalisation could generate serious imbalances and domestic disparities with far reaching effects on domestic peace.

Strategic Priority?
The nature of challenges that we are likely to face and the need to successfully meet them requires that **human development in all its dimensions continues to remain our highest strategic priority** for the foreseeable future. As noted earlier, peace is an imperative and a pre-requisite for human development if we are to successfully sustain our core values and safeguard our vital interests in the coming decades.

It is reasonable to assume that there will be strong tendency toward polarisation of the polycentric international system over time leading to multipolarity, and possibly, even bipolarity again, although the poles in either case would be significantly different in the past. But any form of polarity (which the US and Chinese policies appear to be heading for) in the international system intrinsically contains an implicit phenomenon of hegemonism and hegemonic framework of interstate relations. While this may reflect the traditional concept of power, it also remains contradictory to the goals of democratisation of the international system.

India's interest would be served well by the perpetuation of non-hegemonic polycentrism rather than any form of polarisation in the international order. This would allow for greater room for manoeuvre to serve our core national interests. India, therefore, may be expected to continue pressing for polycentrism in the international system as the fundamental strategy in the coming years. This would also be consistent with the philosophy and policy of non-alignment (with its roots going back to Indian political thinking before World War II) that it has pursued since independence. Its stand that the UN must continue to play its rightful role in a more democratised world, and consequent need for restructuring and reform of the UN as opposed to the tinkering through ad-hoc additions to the Security Council are premised on the same basic logic. In a parallel process the leading powers of the world are already seeking to ensure that no single power assumes a dominant position. The question that remains is whether some of the older centres of power will be willing to concede and adjust to polycentrism?

India, as one of the key country of Asia (and geographically at the centre of the energy resource circle) with its geo-strategic importance is likely to play significant role in Asian affairs. Peace and stability in the Persian Gulf/Central Asian region, peaceful transition to democratic non-aligned polities, assured continuous access to oil and gas at affordable prices, and co-operative relationship among countries of the region and beyond are some of these interests, besides the safety and well-being of more than 3 million Indian expatriates in the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

Peace in search of human development must not only be durable, but also seek harmony between peace and security at different levels --- international (global and regional), national, and societal levels not to talk of the level of the individual. Inter-state security has been characterised for far too long by the sovereign state-centred, egocentric, and *competitive* paradigm of security which is inherently destabilizing. This paradigm has historically relied on generating insecurity and exploiting vulnerability (as in nuclear deterrence) to seek one's own security. A major paradigm shift to a *co-operative* security is fundamental to durable peace and security. This requires not only a conceptual framework, especially for remoulding the mind to change the very way we think about

security matters, but also concrete feasible actions to reshape the security environment where human development must remain the prime strategic objective. This, however, requires co-operation by the adversary.

India has consistently sought co-operative security in preference for (unilateral or alliance-based) competitive security which seems to have marked the policies of Pakistan and even China in the early years. Organising the Asian Relations Conference of March 1947 even before the country became formally independent, Panchsheel, the principle and strategy of non-alignment (as distinct from the movement), Tashkent Declaration, the 1972 Simla Agreement, Delhi Declaration of 1988, bilateral agreements with China in 1993 and 1996 to maintain peace and tranquillity on the basis of "mutual and equal security," the Lahore Declaration of 1999, and the Vision Statement (between the United States and India) are but some of the examples that the country has followed for more than five decades. The vision for 2020 must seek peace as a strategic priority based on the principle of harmony within the country and co-operative security in international arena.

********* *8,770 words*