

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE CALL ON BY MEMBERS OF THE 54TH NDC COURSE AND STAFF OF NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE

Rashtrapati Bhavan: Nov 12, 2014

1. At the outset, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the National Defence College for giving me the opportunity to share some of my perceptions with participants attending the 54th NDC Course at the National Defence College which includes officers from the Civil Services, Armed Forces, and officers from friendly foreign countries. I welcome all of you to the historic Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan.
2. I need to hardly emphasize that the success of any nation depends on how effectively it can harness resources available at its disposal, foremost among which is human resource. The National Defence College of India, where senior officers from not only armed forces but also from civil services and friendly foreign countries are imparted domain knowledge, perform the task of development of human resources effectively. Their

skills are honed to elevate them to effectively deal with national security issues.

3. In a democratic system like ours, various organs of the state must complement each other in the goal espoused by the Political leadership. Senior civil service officers must be conversant with the capabilities, challenges and issues concerning the national security. Similarly, the officers of the armed forces must get a perspective of the constitutional frame-work under which the political executive and the civil services function. In this context, there should be synergy and coordination amongst them all to take informed decisions regarding national security.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. The global environment today poses numerous challenges because of its dynamic nature. Every country is guided in its actions by its national interests and objectives. Power relationships are constantly changing, and unless a nation

fully understands and adjusts itself to the changes that are taking place, its own security could be in jeopardy.

5. We, as a nation, are constantly pursuing the development of friendly relations with countries in all spheres. Security is an important aspect of international cooperation. It, therefore, transcends the traditional view that the armed forces of a nation are only concerned with the territorial integrity of a nation and where conflict is involved. Its role today encompasses economic, energy, food, health, environment amongst many others.
6. The prestige and power of a nation is also significantly influenced by its military capabilities that have to be effective in countering security challenges.
7. Today, we as a nation are faced with several challenges. They include the scourge of international terrorism. The problem has been compounded by non-state actors who are often sponsored, financed and armed by states. Not only our armed forces, but those of other peace loving nations too should brace themselves to meet this challenge.
8. In order to counter the complex security threats, our defence forces should be equipped with modern and sophisticated weapons.

9. Unfortunately, our forces are heavily dependant on imported wares. Today the dependency is around 70 percent in regard to our capital requirement. But this high level of dependency is fraught with danger for our armed forces. The technology denial regimes, and the availability of critical spares and support at crucial moments can pose serious challenges to our security forces. This level of dependency has to reduce substantially.
10. A well calibrated strategy with primary focus on the development of indigenous military industrial complex should be implemented sooner than later. In such instances, the Cabinet Committee on Security would take decision on a case-to-case basis.
11. We have recently enhanced the FDI ceiling in defence from 26 to 49 per cent. This ceiling would not be an impediment

where state-of-the-art technology is involved. This measure is expected to strengthen the indigenous defence industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

12. National security demands a multi-dimensional, and a systematic and holistic approach. It calls for intense research across a wide spectrum of subjects. At the same time, the various subjects should not be studied in isolation. The emphasis should be on analysis maintaining cross linkages.

13. Kautilya, in his famous treatise on statecraft, *Arthashastra* has given importance to multi-disciplinary approach. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, while inaugurating the National Defence College in 1960 had articulated his thoughts and I quote: *“Defence is not an isolated subject. It is intimately connected with the economic, industrial and many other aspects in the country and is all encompassing”* (unquote).

14. I have been informed that six streams comprise the curricula of the National Defence College course. The Socio-Political Study is intended to help you comprehend the main features of the Indian society and polity and to assess issues which have a bearing on national security. The Economy, Science and Technology Studies have been intended to introduce you to the principles and practices that shape economic trends and the influence of science and technology in attaining self-reliance primarily in fields that have a bearing on security. The Studies on International Security Environment, Global Issues and India's Strategic Neighborhood focuses on the international security environment as also its impact on India's foreign policy. The Study on Strategies and Structures for National Security is a synthesis of all that you have learned and experienced during this course.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

15. The role of the armed forces has expanded with the revolution in military affairs and globalization. It is clear that future conflicts in the complex defence and security ecosystem will require a more integrated multi-state and multi-agency approach. Preparing military leaders, police officers and civil servants to deal with the security environment of the future will necessarily have to be addressed in a holistic and comprehensive manner. I am confident that this prestigious Course would enable you to take informed and reasoned decisions regarding security issues. I congratulate NDC for conducting this course every year with élan.
16. I once again wish you all success in your future endeavours and hope that you all will bring laurels to National Defence College and the country that you serve.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.
