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Speech by Foreign Secretary at Russian Diplomatic Academy in Moscow

April 17, 2014

Dr. Evgeny Bazhanov, Rector of the Diplomatic Academy
Friends, Gentlemen, Ladies,

1. It is a pleasure and a privilege to address the faculty and students of this esteemed Academy, and to have the opportunity to interact with the foreign policy establishment of a great nation like Russia – our long-standing friend and Strategic Partner – on the subject, "India's Perspectives in a Globalised World".
2. As I speak to you, India is in the middle of a giant democratic exercise – its 16th General Elections. With over 800 million voters, nearly a million polling stations, and a 9-phase process lasting over 40 days, the Indian election is by far the single largest electoral exercise in the world; a noisy and exuberant carnival of democracy that touches virtually every aspect of every Indian life. India's uninterrupted democratic tradition is not only a source of pride for us, but has also ensured that despite our multiplicities of language, ethnicity, and religion, the average Indian continues to feel a sense of empowerment in determining the government, and hence the policies, of the country.
3. I mention this right at the beginning of my address to underline the fact that the foreign policy perspectives of the largest democracy in the world need to be firmly and robustly rooted in the core concerns, needs and aspirations of its people and of how they see themselves and their country in the world. And it is this fact that explains why India's foreign policy perspectives have remained fundamentally stable, even while the means and manner in which we achieve our objectives continuously adapt themselves to keep pace with changing times. Let me review some of the main phases of our post-independence history, to explain this more fully.
4. India achieved independence in 1947 after a long and often bitter struggle against colonial rule. The early leaders of post-Independence India were the architects of our struggle for independence, with a view of the world profoundly shaped by our colonial experience. Our principal concern then was to guard and retain our hard-won independence. This translated into giving primacy to strategic autonomy in decision-making, not just in foreign policy but also in domestic policy. Domestically, this translated into an autarkic economic model based on socialistic principles, where India embarked on the gigantic task of building a modern country through a formal planning exercise to develop indigenous capabilities in heavy industry and infrastructure. Externally, our policy manifested itself in our doctrine of non-alignment, where India along with

other like-minded countries chose the path of not aligning formally with either of the Cold War blocs.

5. This policy stance, in the immediate post-Independence years, served us well. It allowed India to find its feet in the world, to build its capacity for basic industrialization, to achieve early gains in literacy and food security, and to have friendly ties with all nations.
6. The former Soviet Union was our steadfast and generous friend during this phase, a fact that no Indian can forget. The Soviet Union extended a helping hand to India in a number of critical areas, including heavy industries and engineering, education, atomic energy, space technology and defence equipment. The 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, was a defining moment of this phase of our relationship.
7. The start of the 1990s, marked by the end of the Cold War, was a defining and transformative phase in world history, not just for India but for all nations. At around the same time, in 1991 to be precise, India undertook economic reforms aimed at opening up the Indian economy to the world, allowing a greater role for the private sector and actively promoting trade and investment relations with other countries.
8. In 1998, India conducted its nuclear tests and became a nuclear weapon state, signaling its willingness to play a responsible role in the international nuclear order.
9. The late 90s and early years of the present Century saw India achieving unprecedented rates of high economic growth and emerging as a player of growing consequence – economically as well as politically – on the world stage. The opening up of the Indian economy to the forces of globalisation has had a transformative effect on our economic realities. From a largely inward-looking economy during the 20th Century, international trade occupies an increasingly important part of our GDP today. To illustrate the growth, our merchandise trade was under US\$ 100 billion in year 2000, but rose to almost US\$ 800 billion in 2011-12. As a proportion of our GDP, our merchandise trade rose from 28.2 percent in 2004 to 43.2 percent in 2012. India's share in global exports and imports has also increased from 0.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively in 2000 to 1.7 per cent and 2.5 per cent in 2011 (WTO figures). In this context, the establishment of fair and equitable rules of international trade is an important priority for India.
10. This period also saw the progressive transformation of our relationship with Russia, the successor state of the Soviet Union. The 1993 India-Russia Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was an early marker of the post Cold War relationship. Building on the warmth and trust that had been built through the Soviet assistance we received during the Cold War, India and Russia established a robust Strategic Partnership, which was formalized with the Declaration of Strategic Partnership signed by the Russian President and Indian Prime Minister in October 2000. Since the launch of the Strategic Partnership 14 years ago, Russia and India have erected a rich and diversified architecture of cooperation, spanning the pillars of nuclear, space, defence and science and technology. Among the Strategic Partnerships that India has concluded with various major powers of the world, our Strategic Partnership with Russia is undoubtedly a 'special and privileged' one.
11. The globalised world of the 21st Century has dramatically changed the context in which not just India, but all countries shape their policies. The international rules of the game are changing in a manner not seen since the Second World War. The dramatic economic transformation of China, India and the Asian economies has seen a steady shifting of global economic activity to Asia. International corporations today have multi-country operations, often basing their manufacturing and R&D facilities in emerging economies, not just to cut costs but also to tap these new markets.

The speed of modern telecommunications, the global impact of changing energy and food prices, the increasing movement of people across continents in search of economic opportunity, as also the cross-border impact of natural disasters and pandemics have interconnected the lives of people across our planet to a degree that presents significant challenges.

12. In the domestic realm, digital connectivity has led to sharply increased awareness and aspirations among all people, who are, today, exposed through modern media to standards of living, freedoms and opportunities enjoyed in the rest of the world. The Indian overseas expatriate community numbering over 25 million, which sends remittances back home of over US\$ 70 billion every year, also can, and often does, influence the domestic discourse about global technological trends and standards and the direction in which India should be heading.
13. The media itself plays an important role, especially in democratic societies like India. The immediacy of 24-hour news channels makes it imperative not only to have sound policies, but also to ensure that they are understood, and most importantly perceived, in a positive manner.
14. There are other factors that have come to define the globalised world of the 21st Century, and which pose new challenges to all countries, including India. The global cyber space, increasingly critical to the functioning of governments and economies, is still largely an unregulated anarchic space. Cyber-security, especially of critical infrastructure, is a real and growing issue. The anonymity of cyber-space also facilitates the operations of global terror chains. In such a situation, we support a multilateral transparent and representative system of Internet governance, where the institutions that manage and regulate the internet should be broad based and internationalized.
15. Then there are the politics of climate change, directly linked to the achievement of our developmental goals. We believe that the developed world, responsible as it is for the bulk of the greenhouse gas build-up in our world, should also take on the responsibility to drastically reduce their own Greenhouse Gas emissions and work with the developing world to reach their developmental goals with minimum environmental impact through cost-effective and affordable technologies that should be in the public domain.
16. In this broad context, it is important that all countries developed or developing countries play a role in shaping and formulating the rules of the changing international order. The days are gone past when one group of countries could determine the rules of the international world order and shape them to suit their own objectives. This brings me to the issue of the reform of international institutions. Reform of the UN, particularly the Security Council to reflect contemporary realities of the world, is an important foreign policy perspective for us. India's aspiration for a seat on the UNSC is well known, and is supported by Russia. Similarly, reforms are necessary to enhance the voice of developing countries in multilateral financial institutions.
17. It is not possible for me to conclude without elaborating on perhaps the most challenging issue that not just India but many other countries across the world deal with – the threat posed by international and cross-border terrorism. India has long maintained that organized terrorist networks pose a growing threat to all societies in the 21st Century. After the September 2001 attacks in New York, the world came to realize the truth of this. Russia has faced dastardly terror attacks on its own soil. The epicenter of terrorism is in India's north-western neighbourhood and terrorism emanating from there poses a threat not just to India or other countries in South Asia, but is increasingly manifesting itself in other parts of the world, from Syria to China and Russia. India seeks to deal with the threat of terrorism at multiple levels and cooperates with its bilateral

and regional partners in dealing with it. This is an aspect that we will need to be increasingly watchful of, especially in view of the transitions underway in Afghanistan.

18. So, where, in all these currents and cross-currents shaping our world today, does India stand? I started my address by taking you back 67 years to when we achieved independence and the factors that shaped our policy then. I would like, while concluding, to bring you to the present and the principles that define our foreign policy today. Here I would like to quote from what Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said a few months back in addressing our annual conference of Indian Ambassadors from all over the world. He said that "five principles have come to define our foreign policy", namely:

- i) India's relations with the world are increasingly shaped by its developmental priorities; our objective is to create a global environment that is conducive to the well-being of India;
- ii) Greater integration with the world economy is of benefit to India and its people;
- iii) We seek stable, long-term and mutually beneficial relations with all major powers, and are ready to work with the world to create a global economic and security environment beneficial to all;
- iv) The Indian subcontinent's shared destiny requires greater regional cooperation and connectivity; and
- v) Our foreign policy is defined not only by our interests but by our values.

19. It is important to note, in this concise enunciation, what has changed and what has not. You will agree that the fundamentals remain the same – the progress, development and well-being of our people.

20. Gentlemen, Ladies,

I come to the end of my brief overview of some of the facets of India's perspectives towards today's globalised world. I realize that I have possibly left out more than I have been able to cover. I leave that for the questions and answers. I look forward to a very stimulating discussion with you on any of the issues that occupy us today in the current international context. But, I would just like to note in concluding that India's overall approach to dealing with an ever-changing world has been and will be consistent – to grasp emerging opportunities, while exercising eternal vigilance against traditional and non-traditional threats.

Thank you.



