

V K KRISHNA MENON MEMORIAL LECTURE 2014

IT IS INDEED A HIGH HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO BE ADDRESSING THIS AUGUST AUDIENCE ASSEMBLED HERE TO PAY HOMAGE TO VENGALIL KRISHNAN KRISHNA MENON WHOSE LIFE AND WORK REMINDS ONE OF THOMAS CARLYLE'S DICTUM :

NO GREAT MAN LIVES IN VAIN...HISTORY OF THE WORLD IS BUT THE BIOGRAPHY OF GREAT MEN.

WHEN KRISHNA MENON STARTED SPEAKING FOR INDIA ON THE WORLD STAGE, THE ESTABLISHMENT IN THE WEST STARTED A COTTAGE INDUSTRY OF DEMONIZING HIM.

SOME IN INDIA OBEDIENTLY JOINED THE DEMONIZING GAME.

WHY DID US WANT TO DEMONIZE HIM?

BECAUSE, HE WAS SEEN AS 'DANGEROUSLY PERSUASIVE'

THAT IS WHAT THE CIA TOLD MI5.

THE MI5 ONCE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ASSASSINATING KRISHNA MENON WHEN HE WAS HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LONDON. FORTUNATELY, THE AGENCY RECONSIDERED THE MATTER .

THIS IS REVEALED IN THE BOOK **DEFENCE OF THE REALM**, WRITTEN BY PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER ANDREW OF THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, PUBLISHED IN 2009. HE WAS COMMISSIONED TO WRITE A HISTORY OF MI5 AT THE TIME OF ITS CENTENNIAL. MI5 WAS SET UP IN 1909.

OUR **IB(INTELLIGENCE BUREAU)** WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1887. DID ANY ONE THINK OF PUBLISHING ITS HISTORY IN 1987?

I AM DEEPLY BEHOLDEN TO THE INDIAN SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR INVITING ME TO DELIVER THE 2014 VKK MENON MEMORIAL LECTURE. THANK YOU, PRESIDENT, THANK YOU, SECRETARY GENERAL, THANK YOU PROFESSOR LAXMI JAMBOLKAR, EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT.

THANK YOU, DR. R K DIXIT FOR THE GRACIOUS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS. I DO RECALL WITH MUCH PLEASURE MY TIME IN PATIALA HOUSE WITH YOU AND SECRETARY GENERAL NARENDRA SING .

FRANKLY SPEAKING, I WAS INTIMIDATED WHEN I, AFTER ACCEPTING THE INVITATION, LOOKED AT THE LIST OF THE EMINENT PERSONS WHO HAVE DELIVERED THIS

LECTURE IN THE PAST. IF I HAD LOOKED AT THE LIST EARLIER YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE SEEN ME THIS EVENING.

KRISHNA MENON WAS BORN IN 1896. LET US DO SOME TIME -TRAVELING AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE WORLD VIEW PREVAILING IN THE WEST IN THE LATE 1890S. WE CANNOT FIND A BETTER GUIDE THAN ARNOLD TOYNBEE (1889-1975).

IN HIS BOOK '**MANKIND AND MOTHER EARTH**' TOYNBEE SUMS UP THE PREVAILING WORLD VIEW IN WESTERN EUROPE THUS:

THE CELEBRATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE IN 1897 CALLED TO MIND THE HISTORY OF THE PRECEDING SIXTY YEARS, AND THIS RETROSPECT OPENED UP A VIEW OF THE WHOLE OF HISTORY WHICH LOOKED CLEAR AND SIMPLE. BETWEEN 1837 AND 1897 THE WEST HAD COMPLETED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS ASCENDENCY OVER ALL THE REST OF THE WORLD. THIS WAS THE CONSUMMATION OF A PROCESS THAT HAD BEEN STARTED, FOUR HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE 1897, BY COLUMBUS'S TRANSIT OF THE ATLANTIC AND VASCO DA

GAMA'S VOYAGE FROM PORTUGAL ROUND THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE TO THE WEST COAST OF INDIA.

(AN OBSERVATION: VASCO DA GAMA CAME TO KOZHIKODE OR CALICUT, KRISHNA MENON'S HOME TOWN)

TOYNBEE CONTINUES:

IN THE COURSE OF THESE FOUR CENTURIES, ALL BUT TWO OF THE NON-WESTERN COUNTRIES, AFGHANISTAN AND ABYSSINIA (ETHIOPIA), HAD EITHER FALLEN UNDER WESTERN DOMINATION OR HAD SALVAGED THEIR INDEPENDENCE BY VOLUNTARILY ADOPTING THE TRIUMPHANT WESTERN CIVILIZATION'S WAY OF LIFE IN SOME DEGREE. PETER THE GREAT STARTED TO WESTERNIZE RUSSIA IN 1694; THE MAKERS OF THE MEIJI REVOLUTION IN JAPAN HAD EMBARKED ON THE SAME COURSE IN 1868. IN 1897, SIX OF THE SEVEN EXISTING GREAT POWERS WERE WESTERN STATES, AND THE SEVENTH, RUSSIA, WAS A GREAT POWER IN VIRTUE OF HER HAVING WESTERNIZED HERSELF TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST

TWO CENTURIES. JAPAN HAD NOT YET ACQUIRED THE STATUS OF A GREAT POWER; SHE DID NOT WAGE AND WIN HER WAR WITH RUSSIA TILL 1904-5.

THUS, THOUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WEST'S ASCENDANCY WAS RECENT, IT LOOKED AS IF IT WERE GOING TO BE PERMANENT. IN 1897 THE WORLD APPEARED TO HAVE SETTLED DOWN UNDER A WESTERN DISPENSATION. APPARENTLY, HISTORY HAD REACHED ITS DENOUEMENT IN THE POLITICAL UNIFICATION OF ITALY AND GERMANY IN 1871, IF 'HISTORY' WAS SYNONYMOUS, AS IN 1897, MANY PEOPLE ASSUMED THAT IT WAS, WITH THE ALARMS AND EXCURSIONS OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION'S TURBULENT PAST THAT, WITHIN LIVING MEMORY, HAD BEEN HAPPILY LEFT BEHIND. ACCORDINGLY, THE YEAR 1897 SEEMED TO BE A DATE AT WHICH AN OBSERVER COULD LOOK BACK ON THE COURSE OF HISTORY AND SEE IT 'STEADILY AND WHOLE', FROM A POINT OF TIME AT WHICH THE OBSERVER HIMSELF WAS NO LONGER FLOUNDERING IN HISTORY'S FLUX.

END OF QUOTATION.

A COMMENT IS IN ORDER.

WHEN FRANCIS FUKUYAMA ANNOUNCED THE END OF HISTORY FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF THE COLD WAR, THAT WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE WEST DISCOVERED THE END OF HISTORY.

ONE MORE COMMENT.

THE WORLD INTO WHICH KRISHNA MENON WAS BORN WAS RADICALLY CHANGED DURING HIS LIFE TIME AND BEYOND. IN THAT TRANSFORMATION, KRISHNA MENON PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE AND IT IS IN THAT SENSE THAT THE CARLYLE DICTUM APPLIES TO HIM:

NO GREAT MAN LIVES IN VAIN...HISTORY OF THE WORLD IS BUT THE BIOGRAPHY OF GREAT MEN.

WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHERE IT IS FASHIONABLE TO IGNORE HISTORY. OUR IGNORING OF HISTORY OR OUR IGNORANCE THEREOF DOES NOT MAKE HISTORY LESS RELEVANT TO OUR CONDITION. POLYBIUS, THE 2ND

CENTURY BCE HISTORIAN HAS POINTED OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING FROM HISTORY:

THERE ARE TWO WAYS OPEN TO ALL MEN OF CHANGING THEIR WAYS FOR THE BETTER - ONE IS THROUGH THEIR OWN DISASTERS // AND ANOTHER THROUGH THOSE OF OTHERS;// THAT INVOLVING ONE'S OWN CALAMITIES IS THE MORE VIVID,BUT THE ONE INVOLVING OTHERS IS LESS PAINFUL...

WE CANNOT HELP ASKING A QUESTION:

ARE WE AS A PEOPLE GOOD AT LEARNING FROM OUR OWN MISTAKES, LET ALONE, THOSE OF OTHERS? DO WE HAVE THE MORAL MATURITY AND NATIONAL DISCIPLINE TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR MISTAKES IN THE PAST, WHETHER IT IS THE 1972 SHIMLA AGREEMENT OR THE 1987 DECISION TO SEND TROOPS TO SRI LANKA- TO MENTION ONLY TWO OF A FEW MORE ?

THE ANSWER IS CLEAR.

INSTEAD OF CALMLY EXAMINING THE ISSUES, SOME OF US TEND TO POLITICIZE THE MATTER BY WANTING TO FIND FAULT WITH THE PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED. WHILE SOME OTHERS BY DEFENDING THE SAME INDIVIDUALS MAKE THE DISCUSSION EVEN MORE POLITICIZED.

IN THE PROCESS WE AS A NATION FAIL TO LEARN FROM OUR PAST.

SOME IR SCHOLARS ASSUME THAT THERE IS A **PECKING ORDER AMONG STATES BASED ON THE SIZE OF GDP AND MILITARY MIGHT**.THE ASSUMPTION HAS SOME MERIT.HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT ALWAYS APPLY TO THE REAL WORLD.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND KRISHNA MENON DEMONSTRATED THAT INDIA'S RELATIVE ECONOMIC

BACKWARDNESS, RELATIVE SOCIAL BACKWARDNESS(**LITERACY 18% IN 1950**), AND RELATIVE MILITARY WEAKNESS DID NOT DISQUALIFY INDIA FROM EXERTING ITS INFLUENCE IN SHAPING THE COURSE OF GEOPOLITICS.

WHETHER IT WAS THE 1954 REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR IN KOREA, THE 1954 GENEVA CONFERENCE ON INDO-CHINA, OR THE 1956 SUEZ CANAL CRISIS, INDIA SPOKE AND THE WORLD LISTENED. WHAT INDIA SPOKE MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THE COURSE OF GEOPOLITICS.

INDIA WAS NOT **EVEN INVITED TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON INDO-CHINA**. NEHRU SENT KRISHNA MENON. HE HAD 200 MEETINGS IN THREE WEEKS.

EACH MEETING LASTING ON AVERAGE TWO HOURS.**WHAT A WORKAHOLIC!**

THE **FINAL OUTCOME** OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS MORE OR LESS ON THE LINES OF PRIME MINISTER NEHRU'S STATEMENT MADE IN PARLIAMENT WEEKS EARLIER.

WHY DID THE WORLD LISTEN TO INDIA?

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE REASON.

PARTLY, IT WAS THE HIGH STANDING OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER, AMONG HIS COUNTERPARTS;

PARTLY, IT WAS THE REVERENCE FOR MAHATMA GANDHI UNDER WHOSE LEADERSHIP, INDIA FOUGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE NON-VIOLENTLY, A SINGULAR ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORY;

AND PARTLY, IT WAS BECAUSE THROUGH KRISHNA MENON INDIA SPOKE WITH COMPELLING LOGIC, CLARITY OF PRESENTATION , AND AN ABILITY TO RECONCILE POSITIONS THAT APPEARED IRRECONCILIABLE.

KRISHNA MENON WAS THE MASTER IN THE ART OF DRAFTING.

IN 1947 INDIA BECAME A DOMINION;AS INDIA STARTED DRAFTING ITS CONSTITUTION AS A REPUBLIC, THE QUESTION AROSE HOW INDIA COULD CONTINUE IN THE COMMONWEALTH WITHOUT ACCEPTING THE KING AS HEAD OF STATE. THE UK PRIME MINISTER ATTLEE JUST COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY INDIA FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THE KING AS HEAD OF STATE.

IT WAS KRISHNA MENON WHO DRAFTED THE FORMULA THAT SQUARED THE CIRCLE :

THE KING AS THE SYMBOL OF THE FREE ASSOCIATION OF ITS INDEPENDENT NATIONS AND AS SUCH THE HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

TO ILLUSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF DRAFTING, LET US LOOK AT A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WITH PAKISTAN ISSUED IN DELHI ON JULY 27, 2011 :

THE MINISTERS REVIEWED THE STATUS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS **AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION** ON THE HOLDING OF MEETINGS ON THE ISSUES OF COUNTER TERRORISM(INCLUDING PROGRESS ON MUMBAI TRIAL)AND NARCOTICS CONTROL;HUMANITARIAN ISSUES;COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION; WULLAR BARRAGE /TULBUL NAVIGATION PROJECT; SIR CREEK;SIACHEN; PEACE AND SECURITY INCLUDING CBMS;JAMMU AND KASHMIR;AND PROMOTION OF FRIENDLY EXCHANGES.

THE LANGUAGE GIVES THE WRONG IMPRESSION THAT INDIA IS SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS MADE IN PAKISTAN IN BRINGING TO JUSTICE THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR 26/11. THE WORDS “MUMBAI TRIAL” ARE CONFUSING. IS THE REFERENCE TO THE TRIAL OF KASSAB HELD IN MUMBAI?

THE SENTENCE IS A SIN AGAINST SYNTAX.

WHAT IS INTRIGUING IS THAT DIPLOMATS FROM INDIA WRITE WELL; SO DO DIPLOMATS FROM PAKISTAN . BUT WHEN THEY WRITE TOGETHER THE RESULT CAN BE AN AVOIDABLE DISASTER.

KRISHNA MENON WOULD HAVE NEVER AGREED TO SUCH DRAFTING...HE WOULD HAVE NEVER AGREED TO THE FORMULATION THAT BOTH PAKISTAN AND INDIA ARE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM, A FORMULATION INDIA RECENTLY AGREED TO.

HE WOULD HAVE POINTED OUT THAT BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN ARE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM ORIGINATING

FROM PAKISTAN'S TERRITORY OR THE TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY IT.

WE NOW COME TO THE THEME OF FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION OR CONTEXT.

A WORD OF CLARIFICATION ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY IS CALLED FOR. FOREIGN POLICY IS THE POLICY GUIDING THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS.

FOREIGN RELATIONS ARE NOT CONFINED TO INTERACTION BETWEEN FOREIGN OFFICES.

FOR INDIA, FOR EXAMPLE, FOREIGN RELATIONS INCLUDE ALL THAT IT DOES WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD, OTHER GOVERNMENTS, NGOS SUCH AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, CORPORATE BODIES, INTER-GOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND SO ON.

DECISIONS ON OPENING UP THE MARKET FOR IMPORTS ARE PART OF FOREIGN POLICY. OPENING UP THE

EDUCATIONAL SECTOR OR THE MEDIA SECTOR FOR OUTSIDE PARTICIPATION IS PART OF FOREIGN POLICY.

LET US LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE ABOUT THE STATE OF THE WORLD.

THE 20TH CENTURY HAS BEEN MARKED BY A HIGH DEGREE OF VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY.

IN HIS BOOK **THE AGE OF EXTREMES, A HISTORY OF THE WORLD 1914-1991** ERIC HOBSBAWM,(DIED AT 95 IN 2012) SAYS THAT A TOTAL OF 187 MILLION HUMAN BEINGS WERE KILLED OR ALLOWED TO DIE BY HUMAN DECISION DURING WHAT HE CALLS THE SHORT CENTURY(1914-1991).

. THERE ARE OTHER, DIFFERING, ESTIMATES FOR THE NUMBER KILLED.

WAS THE 20TH CENTURY THE MOST VIOLENT IN HISTORY?

HOBBSAWM THINKS IT WAS.

SOME SCHOLARS DISAGREE. THEY WANT THE NUMBER OF DEATHS TO BE SEEN AS A PROPRTION OF THE TOTAL POPULATION AND BY SUCH RECKONING, THEY ARGUE , THE 20TH CENTURY IS NOT THE MOST VIOLENT.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONING FOR INTRODUCING PROPORTIONALITY. IN ANY CASE, WE ALL CAN AGREE THAT THE CENTURY HAS BEEN EXCESSIVELY VIOLENT, WHETHER IT IS THE MOST VIOLENT OR NOT.

THERE IS NEED FOR A CLARIFICATION HERE. THERE ARE PREVENTABLE DEATHS OWING TO STARVATION OR DISEASE. BY 1960 /1970, MANKIND HAD MASTERED TECHNOLOGY AND HAD RESOURCES TO FEED AND RENDER HEALTH CARE TO ALL . BUT, MANKIND DID NOT ACT . IT FOLLOWS THAT THE NUMBER OF DEATHS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED IS ENORMOUS.

LET US PAUSE A MOMENT. I HAVE BEEN SPEAKING FOR 10 MINUTES.13 CHILDREN DIE A MINUTE IN THE WORLD ACCORDING TO UNICEF. SINCE I STARTED TO SPEAK, 130 HAVE DIED .

EACH OF THIS DEATH COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED .
WE ARE AFRAID THAT THE 21ST CENTURY IS NO
IMPROVEMENT ON THE 20TH IN THIS REGARD. THE TOLL
IN SYRIA EXCEEDS 160,000 AND NOW THE TURMOIL IN
IRAQ IS GETTING WORSE

**. THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THE WORLD HAS
GONE UP TO 51.2 MILLION, IN 2013, 6 MILLION MORE
THAN IN 2012.**

THE MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL OF REDUCING BY
HALF THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WHO GO HUNGRY IS
NOT BEING MET. ACCORDING TO **FAO(FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION) , THE WORLD**
PRODUCES ENOUGH FOR EVERY ONE TO HAVE 2720
KILOCALORIES A DAY.

THERE ARE 2.1 BILLION HUMAN BEINGS OVERWEIGHT
OR OBESE AS AGAINST 870 MILLION WHO GO HUNGRY.

I REMEMBER THAT TOWARDS THE END OF THE LAST MILLENIUM DISCUSSING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN FAO ROME. THE NUMBER OF HUMAN BEINGS GOING HUNGRY THEN WAS 814 MILLION. THEIR NUMBER HAS INCREASED.

A WORD ABOUT INEQUALITY. OXFAM CAME OUT WITH A STUDY.

THE BOTTOM 50% IN THE WORLD POPULATION HAVE LESS THAN 1% OF GLOBAL WEALTH

THE TOP 10% HAVE 86%

THE TOP 1% HAVE 46%.

THE IMF AND THE DAVOS FORUM HAVE CONCLUDED THAT INEQUALITY IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO GROWTH, A CONCLUSION THAT COMMONSENSE HAS ALWAYS HELD.

IS IT NOT EVIDENT THAT IT IS ETHICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY BETTER FOR 1000 INDIVIDUALS TO HAVE \$1 MILLION EACH RATHER THAN FOR ONE PERSON TO

HAVE \$1 BILLION? IS IT NOT EVEN BETTER FOR 10,000 PERSONS TO HAVE \$ 100,000 EACH?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHOLARS DISCUSSING GEOPOLITICS SELDOM SPEAK OF HUNGER OR INCOME DISPARITY. BUT WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT NATIONAL INTEREST INCLUDES THE INTERESTS OF THE NATIONALS. HOW THEY LIVE AND HOW AND WHY THEY DIE IS IMPORTANT.

TO UNDERSTAND THE BIG PICTURE WE NEED A PEOPLE-CENTRIC APPROACH.

A POWER-CENTRIC APPROACH IS NOT ALWAYS HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS AND EVEN MORE SO WHAT SHOULD BE.

LET US MOVE TO THE CONVENTIONAL TERRITORY OF IR

THERE IS MUCH TALK ABOUT A DECLINING US AND A RISING CHINA.

WILL CHINA EVER REACH PARITY IN POWER WITH US AND THEREAFTER OVERTAKE IT?

WHO CAN LOOK INTO THE SEEDS OF TIME AND SAY WHICH GRAIN WILL GROW AND WHICH WILL NOT?

IMAGINE A SKYSCRAPER

WITH A HUGE LIFT SYSTEM

PEOPLE ARE GOING UP AND DOWN THROUGH THE MANY LIFTS

US IS COMING DOWN FROM THE TOP FLOOR, ALONE IN THE LIFT

CHINA IS GOING UP ON ANOTHER LIFT, AGAIN ALONE

WHEN WILL THEY REACH THE SAME FLOOR?

MY VIEW IS THAT IT WON'T HAPPEN IN THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS.

CHINA'S ECONOMY MIGHT EQUAL THAT OF US IN NOMINAL TERMS BY 2032 OR EVEN EARLIER.

BUT CHINA'S PER CAPITA INCOME WILL BE LESS THAN HALF OF THAT OF US.

IN TERMS OF MILITARY TECHNOLOGY AND NUCLEAR ARSENAL, CHINA IS UNLIKELY TO REACH THE MAD (MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION) LEVEL WITH US.

A WORD ABOUT POWER. THERE ARE THEORIES, SOME VERY COMPLICATED.

A FEW POINTS:

1) NOT ALL POWER AT THE DISPOSAL OF A STATE CAN BE USED AT ANY GIVEN TIME

US CANNOT USE ITS NUCLEAR POWER IN IRAQ OR SYRIA

THEREFORE, MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN USABLE POWER AND NON-USABLE POWER

2) SIZE OF THE GDP IS IMPORTANT.

BUT IT IS WRONG TO THINK OF THE WORLD AS A POOL WITH FISH MOVING ABOUT WHERE THE MATSYA NYAYA FROM ANCIENT INDIAN POLITICAL THEORY APPLIES: THE BIG FISH WILL ALWAYS HAVE ITS WAY, IF

A SMALL FISH IS IN THE WAY, IT CAN BE EATEN OR JUST PUSHED AWAY.

HERE AGAIN IT IS USEFUL TO THINK OF THE USABLE PART OF ECONOMIC POWER AND THE NON-USABLE PART OF IT.

TAKE UKRAINE.

GERMANY CAN CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO RUSSIAN ECONOMY BY AGREEING TO US PROPOSAL FOR IMPOSING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA. BUT, SUCH SANCTIONS WILL CAUSE MUCH DAMAGE TO GERMANY TOO WITH OVER 6000 GERMAN COMPANIES WORKING IN RUSSIA. IN GENERAL, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS LIKE IRAQ OR IRAN, ECONOMIC SANCTIONS HURT BOTH SIDES SERIOUSLY , THE SANCTIONER AND THE SANCTIONED.

THERE IS ONE EXCEPTION. WHEN US BLACKLISTS BANKS IN IRAN, THE DAMAGE IMPOSED ON IRAN IS SIGNIFICANTLY MUCH MORE THAN THE DAMAGE ON

US. TO AN EXTENT, THE WORLD IS STILL UNIPOLAR IN TERMS OF CONTROL OVER INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF MONEY.

3) LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

IMAGINE A RACE BETWEEN A MARUTI 800 AND MERCEDEZ 600. WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN THAT THE LATTER WILL WIN THE RACE. IF THE DRIVER OF THE MERCEDEZ IS A BAD ONE HE MIGHT CRASH THE CAR.

GIVEN EQUAL ASSETS, THE COUNTRY WITH A BETTER LEADERSHIP IS BETTER OFF IN ANY CONFRONTATION.

THE SAME CAN APPLY EVEN WHEN THERE IS ASYMMETRY IN ASSETS.

IF WE LOOK CLOSELY AT SYRIA AND UKRAINE WE CAN SEE THAT THE SIDE WITH MORE ASSETS APPEARS TO BE LESS SMART IN PLAYING THE GAME OF GEOPOLITICS.

WE ARE WITNESSING A TIME OF LEADERSHIP DEFICIT ESPECIALLY IN THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

EUROPEAN UNION IS IN A STATE OF DISREPAIR. IT IS UNLIKELY TO EMERGE AS A GREAT GEOPOLITICAL

POWER. IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE A GREAT ECONOMIC POWER.

UK, FRANCE, AND GERMANY WILL CONTINUE TO COORDINATE POLICIES WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

UK MIGHT EVEN WALK OUT OF EU.

JAPAN IS RE-EMERGING AS A GEOPOLITICAL POWER; THE PACIFIST CONSTITUTION IS BEING RE-WRITTEN. TENSION WITH CHINA MIGHT INCREASE.

HERE COMES IN THE US WITH ITS PLANS ANNOUNCED IN 2012 FOR A PIVOT IN EAST ASIA

. WILL US BE CONSISTENT WITH FOLLOW UP ACTION?

I PERSONALLY THINK IT WILL,

BUT SOME INFORMED OBSERVERS AND SOME GOVERNMENTS SEEM TO BE DOUBTFUL.

THEY FEAR THAT US MIGHT AGREE WITH CHINA TO A BIPOLAR DIVISION OF THE WORLD.

TO ME THIS IS MOST UNLIKELY.

ARAB SPRING HAS PROVED TO BE A MISNOMER. TUNISIA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY WHERE THE SPRING HAS LASTED. EGYPT HAS GONE BACK TO THE PRE-2011 POLITICAL ORDER. THE ARMY SAYS THAT IT WILL TAKE EGYPT TOWARDS DEMOCRACY. IT MIGHT. LET US WAIT AND SEE.

BEFORE WE COME TO INDIA'S OPTIONS, A WORD ABOUT THE IDEA OF INDIA.

OPTIONS DEPEND ON OUR INTENDED DESTINATION
MY IDEA OF INDIA IS : A PEACEFUL INDIA WITHIN AND AT PEACE WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY THE NEIGHBORS.

I DO NOT WANT INDIA TO BE EXCESSIVELY STRONG AS A MILITARY POWER AND IMITATE PRE- WORLD WAR 2 JAPAN

BUT I WANT INDIA TO BE MILITARILY STRONG ENOUGH SUCH THAT NONE WILL DARE TO ATTACK IT ; IF ATTACKED INDIA SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESPOND AND MAKE THE ATTACKER REALIZE HIS FOLLY.

INDIA SHOULD WAGE A WAR ON POVERTY ON A WAR FOOTING AND ELIMINATE IT. IT CAN BE ELIMINATED MUCH FASTER THAN SOME ECONOMISTS MIGHT TELL US.

ONCE POVERTY IS ELIMINATED THE GENIUS OF INDIA WILL BLOSSOM.

COMING TO INDIA'S OPTIONS

WAS CHANAKYA RIGHT WHEN HE SAID THAT AMONG ONE'S NEIGHBORS THERE MIGHT BE AT LEAST ONE 'NATURAL ENEMY'?

OBVIOUSLY, THE DICTUM DOES NOT APPLY TO WESTERN EUROPE NOW . IT DID APPLY TO FRANCE AND GERMANY FROM 1870 TO 1945,

HENCE, IT IS NOT OF UNIVERSAL VALIDITY.

OF COURSE, IR IS NOT MATHEMATICS

BUT, DOES THE CHANAKYA DICTUM APPLY TO SOUTH ASIA?

DIFFICULT TO ANSWER CATEGORICALLY.

ALL THAT WE CAN SAY IS THAT INDIA SHOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY NEIGHBOR AS 'NATURAL ENEMY.'

BUT , THERE IS ANOTHER QUESTION:

DOES ANY OF INDIA'S NEIGHBORS CONSIDER IT AS A 'NATURAL ENEMY'?

THIS IS A QUESTION DIFFICULT TO ANSWER CATEGORICALLY.

BUT, PRUDENCE REQUIRES THAT INDIA TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DEEP NEXUS BETWEEN TWO OF ITS NEIGHBORS. THE MATTER DOES NOT NEED FURTHER ELABORATION.

INDIA SHOULD TAKE THE NEXUS AS A GIVEN AND
FACTOR IT INTO ITS POLICY.

TO BE SPECIFIC

TAKE CHINA.

WE SHOULD DO OUR UTMOST TO CULTIVATE GOOD
RELATIONS WITH IT. BUT, WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT ANY
SETTLEMENT OF THE BORDER DISPUTE ON TERMS
ACCEPTABLE TO US. BUT, TALKS SHOULD GO ON.

A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

.TO UNDERSTAND HOW CHINA LOOKS AT INDIA LET US PUT OURSELVES IN THE SHOES OF A CHINESE MANDARIN. HE WILL SAY:

1) INDIA IS A HUGE MARKET OF ENORMOUS POTENTIAL FOR EXPORT OF GOODS AND INVESTMENT.

2) INDIA IS NO LONGER A RIVAL TO CHINA AS A LEADER IN ASIA. THE ASYMMETRY IN GDP AND MILITARY POWER IS TOO OBBVIOUS.

3) THERE IS NO PARTICULAR ADVANTAGE IN SETTling THE BORDER UNLESS INDIA AGREES TO SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT ANY SERIOUS ESCALATION OF TENSION OVER THE BORDER AS IT MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT OUR EXPORTS. LET US SEND OUT FRIENDLY SIGNALS TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT. IT IS GOOD THAT INDIA IS ASKING US TO INVESTIN THE SECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE INSTEAD OF OUR SHOWING INTEREST FIRST.

AS REGARDS TRADE IMBALANCE, WE SHALL GIVE LIMITED RELIEF IF PRESSED.

4) OUR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN SHOULD CONTINUE EVEN IF INDIA RAISES CONCERN OVER IT

5) SHOULD NEVER AGREE TO INDIA OR JAPAN COMING IN AS A PERMANENT MEMBER OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL AS THERE IS NO ADVANTAGE TO US .

PERHAPS THIS IS HOW CHINA LOOKS AT INDIA, INDEED A RATIONAL APPROACH FROM ITS POINT OF VIEW OF ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST.

COMING TO THE TRADE DEFICIT WITH CHINA, WE ALL KNOW WHY IT IS THERE.WE ALSO KNOW THAT IMPORTS FROM CHINA HAVE HURT INDIA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR. THE SHARE OF THIS SECTOR IN GDP HAS COME DOWN TO 15%, A TEN YEAR LOW. INDIA ACCOUNTS FOR 2% OF WORLD MANUFACTURING AS OPPOSED TO 22% OF CHINA'S.

IF WE KEEP OUR MARKET OPEN FOR MANUFACTURED ITEMS FROM THE OUTSIDE IN A RECKLESS MANNER, OUR MANUFACTURING SECTOR WILL DECLINE. 12 MILLION

INDIANS ENTER THE JOB MARKET A YEAR AND WITHOUT A GROWING MANUFACTURING BASE THEY WILL NOT GET JOBS. GIVEN THE BACK LOG OF UNEMPLOYMENT OF THOSE WHO ENTERED THE JOB MARKET IN THE PREVIOUS YEARS, WE NEED TO CREATE MORE THAN 12 MILLION JOBS A YEAR.

AS REGARDS THE INCURSIONS ACROSS THE LINE OF CONTROL OR CARTOGRAPHIC AGGRESSION(ONE SUCH AGGRESSION WAS COMMITTED EVEN AS THE PANCHSHEEL WAS BEING CELEBRATED), OR CLAIMS ON ARUNACHAL PRADESH, IT IS NECESSARY FOR INDIA TO RESPOND WITH CALIBRATED STRENGTH AS OTHERWISE CHINA MIGHT GET A WRONG IMPRESSION. THE SIGNALLING SHOULD BE THAT CHINA CANNOT EXPECT TO HAVE CORDIAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS ALONG WITH UNCORDIAL ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM IT. PERHAPS THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S SIGNALLING WAS NOT CLEAR ENOUGH.

PAKISTAN

INDIA SHOULD ENGAGE PAKISTAN. BUT POLICY HAS BEEN MUDDLED UP FOR A LONG TIME AND THE DEBATE IN THE MEDIA OFTEN GOES OFF ON A TANGENT.

SHOULD WE HAVE A DIALOGUE WITH PAKISTAN OR NOT?

SOME PEOPLE WANT AN UNINTERRUPTED AND UNINTERRUPTIBLE DIALOGUE.

THEY FORGET THAT SO LONG AS WE HAVE A HIGH COMMISSION IN ISLAMABAD AND PAKISTAN HAS ONE IN DELHI THE DIALOGUE IS ON.

SLOGANEERING HAS AT TIMES REPLACED THINKING IN FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS.

AS REGARDS KASHMIR INDIA NEEDS TO BE CLEAR HEADED. THERE WAS A FOUR-POINT BACK CHANNEL AGREEMENT ARRIVED AT WHEN GENERAL MUSHARRAF

WAS PRESIDENT. THE AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE OFFICIALLY CONCLUDED, REPORTEDLY BECAUSE GENERAL MUSHARRAF CAME ACROSS POLITICAL PROBLEMS AT HOME.

SOME PEOPLE BEMOAN THE FACT THERE WAS NO CONCLUSION. I PERSONALLY THINK THAT IT WAS PROVIDENTIAL.

IT WAS NOT A GOOD AGREEMENT WITH PROVISION FOR A SOFT BORDER WITH TOO MUCH RISK FOR THE FUTURE.THERE IS NO NEED TO ELABORATE FURTHER.

BASICALLY, WHAT BHUTTO AND INDIRA GANDHI INFORMALLY AGREED IN SHIMLA IS THE ONLY WAY OUT. THEY AGREED THAT THE LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL WILL BE TREATED AS BORDER.BUT, PAKISTAN WENT BACK ON THAT AGREEMENT . THE LESSON IS NOT TO SEEK A SOLUTION PERSISTENTLY WHEN NO SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND. LIVE WITH THE PROBLEM AND CONTAIN IT.

DOES IT MEAN THAT INDIA SHOULD STRAIGHTAWAY TELL PAKISTAN THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS ABOUT KASHMIR EXCEPT ITS VACATION OF AGGRESSION AS KRISHNS MENON PUT IT AT UN? NO. KRISHNA MENON SPOKE IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT AND TIME. WE CANNOT NOW IN 2014 ASK FOR VACATION OF AGGRESSION.BUT, THERE ARE WAYS OF SIGNALLING.

ABOVE ALL CLARITY OF THINKING AND AWARENESS OF THE LIMITATIONS ONE WORKS UNDER ARE ESSENTIAL.

SAARC IS IMPORTANT FOR INDIA AND THE REST OF THE SAARC. THE INVITATION TO SAARC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO THE SWEARING IN OF PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WAS A GOOD GESTURE. IT IMPROVED THE CHEMISTRY. BUT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY SAARC IS ANEAMIC.

THERE IS A BELIEF AMONG SOME IN THE SAARC THAT A MOVE TOWARDS A FREER TRADE AND INVESTMENT REGIME WILL BENEFIT DISPROPORTIONATELY ONE COUNTRY THAT IS ASYMMETRICALLY BIGGER THAN OTHERS.

THE BELIEF IS MISTAKEN. TRADE HAPPENS ONLY WHEN BOTH SIDES FIND IT ADVANTAGEOUS. AS TO SIZE, IT IS GIVEN BY NATURE OR GOD. INDIA CANNOT START SHRINKING LIKE ALICE IN WONDERLAND DID BY DRINKING A POTION

AN AMBASSADOR FROM A SAARC COUNTRY IN DELHI WHO HAS ATTENDED MANY SAARC MEETINGS TOLD ME THAT WHAT IS REQUIRED IS PSYCHIATRICAL TREATMENT TO GET RID OF THIS WRONG BELIEF. HE MAY BE RIGHT.

WHILE SAARC IS IMPORTANT, INDIA NEEDS TO , SIMULTANEOUSLY, KEEP LOOKING EAST, WEST AND ELSEWHERE.

WE SPOKE OF THE RISE OF CHINA. CHINA SAYS IT IS PEACEFUL. BUT SOME OF ITS NEIGHBORS ACROSS THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND THE EAST CHINA SEA ARE NOT FULLY CONVINCED. THEY PREFER TO GO BY ACTIONS RATHER THAN WORDS.

LET US HOPE THAT WISDOM WILL PREVAIL AND THAT THERE WILL BE DE-ESCALATION. AND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. BUT WE CANNOT BE SURE.

INDIA SHOULD NOT TAKE SIDES OPENLY. BUT, IT SHOULD NOT DESIST FROM HAVING MILITARY EXERCISES WITH JAPAN ,VIETNAM, US, AUSTRALIA, AND CHINA TOO.

BEFORE CONCLUDING ONE OBSERVATION: IN THE PAST INDIA HAS TENDED TO BE MORE TEXTUAL THAN CONTEXTUAL IN OUR DIPLOMACY, BRIEFLY, INDIA HAS ATTACHED MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE WORD, WRITTEN OR SPOKEN, WITHOUT ASSESSING THE RELIABILITY OF THE WORD OF THE INTERLOCUTOR IN THE TOTAL CONTEXT. SUCH A TEXTUAL APPROACCH LEADS TO WRONG ASSESSMENT OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE

INTERLOCUTOR. THE 1954 PANCHSHEEL AGREEMENT IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF SUCH WRONG ASSESSMENT.

THUCYDIDES WROTE :

RIGHT, AS THE WORLD GOES, IS ONLY A QUESTION BETWEEN EQUALS IN POWER, WHILE THE STRONG DO WHAT THEY CAN AND THE WEAK SUFFER WHAT THEY MUST.

THUCYDIDES DIED A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHANAKYA.

BOTH HAVE A LOT TO TEACH US.

HOWEVER, LOOKING INTO HISTORY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO DISCERN, WITH SOME DIFFICULTY THAT WORLD HAS MOVING AWAY EVER SO SLOWLY FROM MATSYA NYAYA TOWARDS A LAW-ABIDING SOCIETY OF NATIONS.

INTERNATIONAL LAW REQUIRES THAT THE STRONG RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF THE WEAK.

ISIL SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1959 HAS BEEN DOING
COMMENDABLE WORK IN CONTRIBUTING TO IL AND
SPREADING KNOWLEDGE THEREOF AND REPRESENTING
INDIA IN INTERNATIONAL FORA.

MR PRESIDENT, WISH YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS.

THANK YOU,MR PRESIDENT, ONCE AGAIN FOR
HONORING ME WITH YOUR INVITATION!