



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

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Press Release

on

Roundtable

on

National Security: The Key Challenges Ahead for India

(2 December 2014)

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), in collaboration with the Tribune National Security Forum organized a Roundtable on “National Security: The Key Challenges Ahead for India” on 2 December 2014 at Sapru House, New Delhi. The Roundtable was attended by diplomats, scholars and media persons.

In his Welcome Remarks, Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, DG, ICWA, highlighted that a holistic or comprehensive conception of national security is essential as security and development are inextricably linked. Shri Raj Chengappa, Editor-in-Chief, the Tribune Group of Newspapers in his Introductory Remarks, explained the importance of the Roundtable and expressed that national security faces multiple challenges.

While delivering the Special Address, Shri N. N. Vohra, Hon'ble Governor of Jammu and Kashmir emphasized the need of a national security framework for a cohesive national security policy. He noted that there is a need for a bipartisan national security mechanism to be formulated after consultation between the Centre and states.”



Shri N.N. Vohra, Hon'ble Governor of Jammu and Kashmir delivering the Special Address



Shri Suresh Prabhu Hon'ble Minister of Railways delivering Keynote Address

In the Keynote Address, Shri Suresh Prabhu, Hon'ble Minister of Railways, reinforced Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia's remarks that security and development are interlinked. He stressed the need to define national security and highlighted that energy security and food security are amongst the most important components of national security. He

explained that India's insecurity in these fields makes it necessary to import energy and food through seas and it required the help of Indian navy to secure its transportation. He highlighted the need to look beyond traditional security issues and focus equally on non-traditional security challenges.

The discussion at the Roundtable was divided into two working sessions. The first working session chaired by Governor N. N. Vohra and four panelists focused on addressing the core challenges to national security. Ambassador Kanwal Sibal highlighted the security threats due to unsettled boundaries with Pakistan as well as China. He noted that India's threats from Pakistan would not diminish by giving concessions to Pakistan.

In terms of traditional security threats, Sri Sanjeev Tripathi sought to make a distinction between overt and covert security threats and remarked that radical or Jihadi Islam pose the most serious security challenges to India. Ambassador Satish Chandra defined national security as a comprehensive concept and noted economic strength and well being of people as important factors for preserving India's national security. Shri Amitabh Kant highlighted the need to boost manufacturing sector and augmenting the production of defence equipment in India.

The second working session was chaired by Lt. Gen. (retd.) S. S. Mehta and included five panelists. The session discussed economic, cyber, technological and climate change issues having bearing on India's national security. While examining India's economic vulnerabilities, Dr. Subir Gokarn, emphasized the importance of food, water and livelihood in

the context of national security. Dr. Shubhashis Gangopadhyay highlighted that security is a collective concern and inclusiveness should be an essential aspect for national security. However, some inclusive policies have not benefitted the poor. Prof. N. Balakrishnan called for making a national cyber security policy and teaching cyber security from elementary school level while Ambassador C. Dasgupta maintained that India's policy towards climate change should be based on national compulsions rather than exigencies of international negotiations. Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma explained India's technological development post 1962 and argued in favour of a more cohesive march towards technology. In his concluding remarks Lt. Gen. (retd.) S. S. Mehta called for transition to a knowledge society.



Audience at the Roundtable

During the discussion, it emerged that national security should go beyond merely building the force. National security encompasses a whole range of issues apart from external threats. The threats to national security also emanate from various areas and therefore, it is required to ensure food, water,

health, education, energy and skill development to the people. Further, India needs cohesive policies on environment, technology, finance, cyber space, and con internal challenges including Naxalism, and coastal security. In this context, the need to establish National Security Commission to counter the challenges effectively was raised.
