

**Embassy of India**  
**Tokyo**  
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**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan on**  
**“India's security policy and foreign strategy”**  
**(May 30, 2023)**

Chairman Hon'ble Gen Nakatani,  
Distinguished members of the Diet,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege and honor to address this august gathering of Diet Members Council for Comprehensive Security. I understand this is the first time that an Indian Ambassador is addressing the distinguished Council. I wish to convey my thanks to the Council for inviting me to share my thoughts and interact with the Hon'ble Diet members. I am so happy to see so many of the members who have personally contributed in building India – Japan bilateral relationship in the last few decades.

2. Let me begin my remarks by personally inviting Hon'ble Members of the Diet here today to visit India, individually and collectively. It is just 6 to 7 hours' flight from Haneda Airport. We have flights almost every day, not one, but two or three flights a day. This year we are celebrating as the India – Japan year of Tourism – with the theme Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji. I look forward to receiving you in India. Parliamentary interaction and exchanges are a very important element of the political relationship between any two countries – particularly democracies like India and Japan. I am happy to note the key role played by JIPFL in this regard and look forward to an ever-expanding membership of the League.

Hon'ble Members,

3. Before I delve into the heart of today's topic “India's security policy and foreign strategy”, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the government and people of Japan for the successful organization of the G7 Summit, which was a historic event. I am happy to mention that during his visit to Hiroshima Prime Minister Modi unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi near the peace memorial park, which was attended by Hon'ble Gen Nakatani. I would like to highlight that on the sidelines of the G7 Summit, Prime Minister Modi had

engaging bilateral discussions with Japan and several other countries including Ukraine. This was the second meeting between PM Modi and PM Kishida this year, following PM Kishida's visit to India in March this year. These frequent high level engagements between our leaders is symbolic of our deepening partnership and the importance our two countries attach to each other. We also held the QUAD summit in Hiroshima. After the conclusion of his visit to Japan, Prime Minister Modi visited Port Moresby, where India and Papua New Guinea co-organized the third Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC). From there, he left for a bilateral visit to Australia where along with Prime Minister Albanese, he addressed a gathering of about 20,000 members of the Indian diaspora in the packed Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney.

4. On today's topic, let me begin by first outlining the major features of India's foreign and security policy. From a common perspective, India's foreign and security policy, like that of most other states, seeks to ensure prosperity and security of the people. How we do so is conditioned by our understanding of our circumstances, the situation in which we find ourselves, and the means available to us. All three of these have changed over time. Our understanding of our foreign policy, our circumstances and, most of all our capabilities have evolved, and it is this that guide us in our current foreign and security policy. This is what we call 'The India Way- strategies for an Uncertain World'.

5. Let me quote External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar who said, "foreign policy is the means to ensure greater prosperity at home, peace on the borders, protection of our people and enhancing influence abroad." Accordingly, India's foreign and security policy is driven by the goal of achieving consistent and inclusive economic growth by creating an environment that supports the country's development by maintaining peace and stability. India also aims to ensure access to important resources, energy, technologies, best practices, and markets. Furthermore, India seeks to play a positive role in shaping global discussions on important issues by providing solutions to these issues.

6. India's foreign policy initiatives are characterized by active participation in various platforms and forums, showcasing a commitment to multilateralism and collaboration. These include the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Lifestyle for Environment (Mission LiFE), the International Year of Millets and the Big Cat Alliance. Further, engagements such as the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region); Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI); QUAD; I2U2 (India, Israel, USA and UAE)

7. In addition to above, India maintains strategic autonomy and has a balanced approach with all nations based on the principles of proactive and inclusive engagement and dialogue. In this context, India is a member of several multilateral and plurilateral groups such as G 4, India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA), BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BIMSTEC, SAARC, etc . By actively engaging with the international community, India aims to create a safer, more sustainable, and prosperous world for all.

8. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, one of the most important aspects of our foreign policy has been the 'Neighborhood First' approach which signifies the importance India places on its neighbors. By adopting a non-reciprocal approach, India seeks to promote collective benefit and regional stability. This approach entails providing assistance and support to neighboring countries, especially in times of crisis. India's response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 and its efforts to address debt pressures are examples of this approach in action. A noteworthy example is India's provision of over \$4 billion in economic assistance to Sri Lanka.

9. While talking about neighbourhood, one issue that needs to be emphasized is our fight against cross border terrorism. Here I would like to quote from India – Japan Joint Statement: “The Joint Statement of 2018 said, “The two Prime Ministers condemned in the strongest terms the growing threat of terrorism and its universal reach. They called upon all countries to work towards rooting out terrorist safe havens and infrastructure, disrupting terrorist networks and financing channels, and halting cross-border movement of terrorists. They underlined the need for all countries to ensure that their territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks on other countries in any manner. They emphasized the need for stronger international partnership in countering terrorism and violent extremism, including through increased sharing of information and intelligence. They called upon Pakistan to bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist attacks, including those of November 2008 in Mumbai and January 2016 in Pathankot. They looked forward to strengthening cooperation against terrorist threats from groups including Al-Qaida, ISIS, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lakshar-e-Tayyiba, and their affiliates.”

10. India is also expanding its engagement through the concept of extended neighborhood. The “Act East Policy” aims to deepen India's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, including ASEAN is one such example. QUAD has established itself as an important platform with a constructive agenda for ensuring

peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. We see QUAD as a framework bringing together like minded countries with shared values and commitment to a free and open global order based on the rule of law. The significance of this group was underscored at the recent Leaders' Summit in Hiroshima, on the sidelines of the G7 Summit.

11. India has embraced a comprehensive approach in its interactions with the global community, involving all major centers of power. Its relations with major powers have reached a strategic level that is comprehensive in nature, while still maintaining strategic autonomy. This demonstrates India's commitment to cultivating diverse relationships that align with the evolving dynamics of a multipolar world. Each engagement holds unique significance and serves distinct objectives.

12. Referring to India Japan relationship, I would like to state that I am returning to Japan after a period of twenty years. I had visited Japan in 2001 accompanying the then Prime Minister Vajpayee to Tokyo when Prime Minister Koizumi was the Prime Minister here. In these twenty years, I have seen India Japan relationship evolve from what significantly was a G to G relationship with ODA at the heart of it, into a very much more B to B relationship. The ODA part is still very important, G to G is indispensable, but the landscape of our interaction, the playing arena has become so very much broader signifying a sort of maturing of the relationship, with economic and strategic partnership very much at the heart of this relationship.

13. India Japan relations began to gradually change in August 2000 with the visit of PM Mori when a Global Partnership was established. It gradually became a global partnership, a strategic partnership, a strategic and global partnership and in 2014 it was made a Special Strategic and Global Partnership. It was established in 2014 under PM Modi and Late PM Abe later reinforced under the leadership of PM Modi and PM Kishida. The prophetic words 'confluence of two seas' by Late PM Abe continue to resonate when we work towards a free, open and rule based Indo-Pacific. India - Japan partnership within the bilateral and plurilateral framework like the QUAD is key to stability and freedom in Indo-Pacific which faces several challenges today. Today our relationship indeed is special, special bilateral, special strategic and special global. A lot of goodwill exists for each other, there is also bipartisan support in both countries. Our many Joint Statements and our Vision Documents give us a clear roadmap to take our rela-

tionship forward. I request the support of Hon'ble Members of the Diet to help us take this relationship to a mutually beneficial high horizons of partnership.

14. Defense and security cooperation has emerged as one of the most important pillars of our Special Strategic and Global Partnership and I am happy to note that we have been able to realize momentum in this area. There is a need to move forward on co-operation under the Defence Equipment and Technology Agreement signed in 2015. There is immense potential for increasing defense co-operation between our two countries in all fields. We must continue to explore new areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, underwater domain awareness, high energy lasers, cryptography, sensors, optic cables, real time information exchange etc. Critical technologies will continue to play quintessential role in strengthening defence of our national interests. We need to quicken the pace of efficient and effective defence production and defence technologies cooperation.

15. Our relationship with the United States, deeply anchored in shared democratic values, is both comprehensive and strategic, covering a broad spectrum of human endeavour. The consistent bipartisan support in the US Congress, the robust defence partnership, and our joint commitment to counter-terrorism efforts, reinforce our converging interests. The economic ties are strong, evidenced by the US being our largest trading partner in merchandise, and the educational and civil space cooperation highlight the breadth of our collaboration. Importantly, the vibrant Indian diaspora in the US and the regular high-level engagements are testament to the strength and vibrancy of our people-to-people ties. About 4.2 million Indian Americans/Indian origin people reside in the US. Persons of Indian-origin (3.18 million) constitute the third largest Asian ethnic group in the US.

16. EU has also emerged as an important partner for India. We have a robust Strategic Partnership with EU, underscored by shared values such as democracy, freedom and rule of law. The relationship has grown stronger, with recent strides in the partnership and the shared commitment to advance the India-EU Roadmap 2025. In a significant step forward in our ties, the first Ministerial meeting of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) was held in Brussels just before the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. The India-EU TTC, a high-level coordination platform, has been established to focus on key issues relating to trade, trusted technology, and security. As our External Affairs Minister noted, TTC's focus is on issues critical to global economy and global security.

17. India has a long history of close partnership and engagement with Russia. On the Russia-Ukraine issue, our Prime Minister has already conveyed the message that “today’s era is not of war”. The Prime Minister said at the Hiroshima G7 Summit, and I quote, “From the very beginning, we have maintained that dialogue and diplomacy is the only way. And we will make every possible effort to contribute, in whatever way India can, for resolving this situation.”

18. China falls into a distinct category due to the ongoing boundary dispute and the abnormal nature of our current ties, which resulted from their violation of border management agreements. It is our position, made clear by our leadership on different occasions, that India-China relations cannot be normal if peace and tranquillity in the border areas are disturbed. In QUAD, India is the only country which has a land border with China.

19. India has also focused on providing space to the voice and concerns of the Global South and developing countries, exemplified by the Voice of Global South Summit held in January 2023, attended by 125 countries. India has deepened its relations with Africa, the Pacific, and Latin America. For instance, in recent years alone, we have established 18 new embassies in Africa and 2 new Embassies in Latin America. Our development partnership currently encompasses 78 countries, and we have undertaken nearly 600 projects worldwide to reflect our commitment.

20. It is essential to highlight that India has consistently advocated for Reformed Multilateralism. We firmly believe that this approach is crucial for upholding global order. However, the existing challenge lies in the resistance to reforming multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations and its various bodies. A country which is the largest populated country, largest democracy, fifth largest economy in the world is not in UN Security Council. Our common commitment to reformed multilateralism is reflected in the G-4 consultations that we hold regularly. Here, I would like to quote our Prime Minister who said at the G7 Summit that “The institutions created in the last century are not in line with the system of the twenty-first century. They do not reflect the realities of the present. That is why it is necessary that reforms should be given concrete shape in big institutions like UN. It will also have to become the voice of the Global South. Otherwise we will just keep talking about ending conflict. UN and Security Council will become just a talk shop.” Despite these challenges, India

remains deeply committed to promoting collective solutions for the greater global good.

21. Let me conclude by saying this. India has 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the population of the world, but not one sixth of the problems of the world. India is always part of the solution for the world, whether it is climate change or peacekeeping forces or the many issues that the world at large and the Global south faces. India's current Presidency of the G20 with its theme One Earth, One Family, One Future, is dedicated to addressing the genuine challenges facing global development and growth, reflecting our steadfast commitment to fostering a better world for all. We look forward to the continuous active engagement of Japan at the G 20 meeting.

22. I conclude here and will be happy to take questions or comments.

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