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**2**

**India and the Western Liberal Democratic Order**

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**Nehru Memorial Museum and Library**  
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# **India and the Western Liberal Democratic Order<sup>1</sup>**

Hardeep Singh Puri<sup>2</sup>

## **Part-A**

I deem it a great privilege to be able to interact with you this afternoon at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. There is unmistakable turbulence in the air. The unsettling nature of global changes presents challenges for countries like India that had come to accept the international order as a given with a certain underlying predictability in the unfolding of events. These events also offer, if I may submit, certain opportunities that India could seize.

Today's venue is important and I deem it a great honour to be able to speak on India and the Western Liberal Democratic Order. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's contribution to the establishment of the modern Indian State was, without doubt, truly significant. After the tragic assassination of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation, Mr. Nehru's was the dominant intellectual influence. He not only set the narrative but was largely successful in fashioning the course of newly independent India's domestic, social, and economic policies and perhaps equally important, defining the terms of newly independent India's engagement with the rest of the world, including the West. I shall shortly revert to that dominant narrative which bears Mr. Nehru's strong imprint.

### **Continuity and Change:**

For most of my adult life I have been fascinated by issues related to continuity and change. Except for historical events that are truly revolutionary in character and result in sudden cataclysmic change, students of the social sciences, like me, for most of the time try to study the phenomenon of continuity and change as part of inexorable forces that, at the very

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<sup>1</sup>Public Lecture delivered at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 31 January 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Hardeep Singh Puri has had a distinguished four-decade career in diplomacy spanning the multilateral arena, including as India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in both Geneva (2002-2005) and New York (2009-2013). He is one of the few Indians to preside over the United Nations Security Council and the only one to have chaired its Counter-terrorism Committee. He most recently served as Vice President at the International Peace Institute and as Secretary-General of the Independent Commission on Multilateralism in New York. Currently he is Director, Research and Information Systems (RIS), New Delhi.

core, are anchored in a struggle between a reassuring status quo and forces making for change, based on an increase and explosion of knowledge, innovation, and technology, to name a few. One generation, to cite just one example, concluded its study of physics by saying that the atom is indivisible. A succeeding generation was able to commence its knowledge of physics by empirically demonstrating that the atom is divisible and that too with devastating consequence.

For students of social sciences continuity and change are part and parcel of a slow, even boring movement of history, which because it often appears so dull, is not always discernible. This makes the student, the analyst, and the commentator complacent and liable to misjudge, underestimate, and mischaracterize underlying trends that are truly significant and could and do have far reaching longer term consequences. Some change, under this category—often difficult to discover—can be truly revolutionary in nature.

I should emphasize two caveats at the outset. One, beware of the student, the analyst, the reporter who loses sight of her/his primary professional role and chooses to inject herself/himself into an advocacy role drawing on the one hand, a salary, for example, as a news reporter and simultaneously also pursues a private agenda on an issue or a cause, or in an election, go after a partisan agenda that undermines her/his professional judgment and can, as it ever so often does, lead to wrong assessments, and mislead the consumers of his/her 'product'. Significant and distinguished members of the fourth estate including some of the icons of the industry, like CNN and the New York Times disgraced themselves in the elections that led to the inauguration of the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. That they wished to see another Clinton re-elected was the least of their problems. Their professional standing took a beating.

Two, the student, analyst, or the journalist would do herself /himself a great favour by acknowledging upfront that we are conditioned more profoundly by the 'dominant narrative' than perhaps we realize and more certainly, would be willing to admit. In analysing the influences on a growing child, one is ever so often tempted to ask and enquire, about the influence of 'nature' vs. 'nurture'. A good student of history is advised to ask 'who is the historian', what are her/his biases, how much of what has been written is 'commissioned' and is the account borne out by the objective reality recorded elsewhere? The medieval court historian could prove to be notoriously unreliable. Much of what he, yes I am not aware of

female chroniclers in medieval times, wrote was for posterity. More important, the intention was to produce an account that would facilitate a 'favourable view' of the King or the Emperor, the chronicler's master. Fortunately, the age of instant news and social media have the advantage of ensuring that barbaric acts will be judged promptly, no matter how painstaking the 'attempted white wash'.

In the interest of full disclosure, let me say that I had predicted both Brexit and the Trump victory, and no, I am not a 'psychic' as my younger daughter's sharp message made me out to be, the morning it was clear that Trump would win the electoral college. No, I am neither particularly knowledgeable about the dynamics of either a Referendum in the United Kingdom or American electoral politics. As a student of social sciences, I am, however, sufficiently educated to see the deep flaws in a dominant narrative when it is being falsely created with embroidered facts.

Most dominant narratives are axiomatically shaped by the maturity and strength of the intellectual discourse of the day. The intellectual class and professional thinkers, the think tanks, dominant sections of the press, and their economic and commercial collaborators were naturally shell shocked first by the Brexit vote and then Trump's election. With elections due this year in the Netherlands, Germany, France and elsewhere, the so-called western liberal democratic order may be facing denouement in the eyes of those favouring and heavily invested in the existing order who are also without doubt its beneficiaries.

The process did not begin in the West. Narendra Modi's election in May 2014 with the BJP getting an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha after a gap of nearly thirty years was not only unprecedented, the total rout of the Congress party was equally, if not more, significant. Were there any similarities in the tapping of the existential angst that made these electoral outcomes possible? I propose today to reflect on some of these factors.

### **Shaping of the dominant narrative**

I was born five years after India gained independence. By the time I reached university in the late 1960s, the ideological debate was shaped by the dominant intellectual influences of the time. Karl Marx, on the establishment of the classless society, and the

writings of Karl Popper (*The Open Society and Its Enemies*<sup>3</sup>), extolling the necessity of liberal democracy at one level (just to name two) and shades of socialism which India's western educated Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had imbibed. After the tragic assassination of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the father of the nation, Jawaharlal Nehru was undoubtedly the most influential intellectual figure of his time till his demise on 27 May, 1964. I have no doubt the dominant narrative would have been different if Gandhi had lived on.

In some respects, the Harrow and Cambridge educated Jawaharlal was the quintessential product of the interaction between India and the West.

### **Bharatvarsha and the Occident**

It would be instructive to briefly go into history prior to, and, during the phase of British colonialism. The Cambridge economist Angus Maddison<sup>4</sup> has estimated that India's share of global GDP in 1700, that is, before the East India Company established itself in India and before a 190 years typical colonial interaction commenced, was 27 per cent. By 1950, three years after India gained its independence, India's share had fallen to 3 per cent. Even 70 years after independence, India is only a \$2 trillion economy with 3.5 per cent share of global GDP.

In short, 27 per cent of global GDP before colonial exploitation, 3 per cent after gaining independence and only 3.5 per cent, 70 years later. Let us now look at some other perceptions of India, from the outside. I propose to quote two foreigners and one Indian.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born on 30 November 1835 in Florida, Missouri. Better known by his pen name Mark Twain, he travelled at the age of sixty to India and to what was then known as Ceylon. Some excerpts from his diary:

- (i) In religion, all other countries are paupers. India is the only millionaire.<sup>5</sup>
- (ii) India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Popper, Karl (1971). *The Open Society and its Enemies: The Spell of Plato*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

<sup>4</sup>Maddison, Angus. (2007). *The World Economy (Two-in-One Edition)*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

<sup>5</sup>Twain, Mark. (1897). *Following the Equator*. Ch. XLIII. Chicago, IL: American Publishing Company.

- (iii) So far as I am able to judge nothing has been left undone, either by man or nature, to make India the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on his rounds. Nothing seems to have been forgotten, nothing overlooked.<sup>7</sup>

This is what the French Scholar Romain Rolland had to say:

- (iv) If there is one place on the face of earth where all dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India.<sup>8</sup>

And Albert Einstein:

- (v) We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made.<sup>9</sup>

And Swami Vivekananda:

- (vi) ... India for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist. Even earlier, when history had no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it. We, of all nations of the world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on our head and therefore we live...<sup>10</sup>

How could a country with such economic, religious, and spiritual strength be subjugated and exploited by a colonial power thousands of miles away through the instrument of a trading company? Historians will advance a number of reasons: political rivalries within and a variety of other explanations. My focus here today is on the ‘dominant narrative’.

All thirty-six paragraphs of Thomas Babington Macaulay’s Minute on Education of 2 February 1835 merit being read in their entirety, I will quote only a few lines to provide an insight into the motivation and context that this monumental change of ‘narrative’ and ‘mindset’ entailed.

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<sup>6</sup> Twain, Mark. (1897). *Following the Equator*. Ch. XXXVIII. Chicago, IL: American Publishing Company.

<sup>7</sup> Twain, Mark. (1897). *Following the Equator*. Ch. LVII. Chicago, IL: American Publishing Company.

<sup>8</sup> Rolland, Roman. (1931). *Life of Ramakrishna*.

<sup>9</sup> *Vedic Revelations*, Jan-March 2010, Simply Vedic, Naperville, USA. But nowhere the source is mentioned.

<sup>10</sup> Vivekananda, Swami. (15 January 1897). Public Lecture in Colombo. Accessible at [http://belurmath.org/complete\\_works\\_of\\_swami\\_vivekananda/volume\\_3/lectures\\_from\\_colombo\\_to\\_almora/first\\_public\\_lecture\\_in\\_the\\_east\\_colombo.htm](http://belurmath.org/complete_works_of_swami_vivekananda/volume_3/lectures_from_colombo_to_almora/first_public_lecture_in_the_east_colombo.htm)

...we have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.<sup>11</sup>

It would be instructive to get some insights into the inferiority complex and subservient mindset of the Orientalists that were giving the Hon'ble T.B. Macaulay such disdainful confidence. The rest is history.

The British left behind an identical Indian elite. Many have written about the devastating economic effects of colonization, the de-industrialization India suffered. Perhaps more serious was the colonization of the mind which many of us have not yet fully shed even seventy years after independence. It is fashionable now-a-days to talk of strategic choices. We see India's first Prime Minister take the country into the British Commonwealth even after being subjected to colonial exploitation for two hundred years. It was most likely the same misplaced faith that explains the Kashmir issue being referred to the UN Security Council.

Lest I be accused of contributing to a populist narrative, let me flag that colonial exploitation was not the only process responsible for the vast disparity between the India of 1700 and 1947. By 1900, the world was largely in Europe's hands, both economically and politically. Economically, this was facilitated by the Industrial Revolution that took place between 1750 and 1850. Starting in England with the advent of the steam engine, industrial steel production, scientific farming and the mechanization of textiles, these developments truly created the European world.

## **Part-B**

It is a sign of the troubled times we live in that what we add to the lexicon are terms like 'post-fact' and 'post-truth'. My submission: This is yet another indicator that the dominant narrative, that is the narrative which could be described as the 'mainstream narrative', is a manufactured one; that it is carefully calibrated and nurtured.

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<sup>11</sup>Babington Macaulay, Thomas. (1835). Minute on Indian Education. Accessible at <http://www.mssu.edu/projectsouthasia/history/primarydocs/education/Macaulay001.html>



Many years ago, when I was a student at Delhi University, I recall reading a fascinating book *What is History?* written by E.H. Carr.<sup>12</sup> Carr was not even a historian. He was an analyst in the Foreign Office. Addressing the issue, he demonstrated that a historian has to give shape to facts. The fact that Caesar crossed a stream called the Rubicon is certainly a fact. If you add that millions of people crossed the Rubicon prior to Caesar and several million crossed the Rubicon after him, the ‘fact’ gets submerged in the ‘perspective’. In short, the historian or the commentator provides shape, life, and interpretation to facts. Up to that point, as a student, I am comfortable. But the new terms ‘post-truth’, ‘post-fact’ begin to enter dangerous territory because they involve, at the very least, an embellishment of facts. It doesn’t stop there. President Trump’s adviser Kellyanne Conway went several steps further in defending the White House spokesperson when she referred to ‘alternate facts’.<sup>13</sup> This enters dangerous territory and will invite the charge of ‘inventing’ facts.

Let us briefly look at the Western Liberal Democratic Order. Let us start with the genesis of the term. In the summer of 1992, Francis Fukuyama’s influential and much celebrated book, *The End of History and the Last Man*<sup>14</sup> announced the triumph of liberal democracy and the arrival of a post-ideological world. “What we are witnessing”, he wrote and I quote, “is not just the end of the Cold War, or a passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such; that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”

When he wrote the book, Fukuyama was a researcher for the Rand Corporation—this is before he joined the State Department. I was reminded about Fukuyama’s sleight of hand when I read a piece by Eliane Glaser a few years ago in the Guardian and this takes the cake. And this was also in 1989.

... the class issue has actually been successfully resolved in the West... the egalitarianism of modern America represents the essential achievement of the classless society envisaged by Marx.(Glaser quoting Fukuyama in 2014).<sup>15</sup>

It is indeed sensational!

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<sup>12</sup>Carr, E. H. (1961). *What Is History?* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>13</sup>“ Meet the Press.” NBC. 22 January 2017.

<sup>14</sup>Fukuyama, Francis. (2002). *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Perennial.

<sup>15</sup>Glaser, Elaine. (21 March 2014). “Bring back ideology: Fukuyama's 'end of history' 25 years on.” *The Guardian*.

*The End of History and the Last Man*, or rather the writing of it, it bears recall—time and context wise—represents the dominant narrative of that day: globalization, Washington consensus, trade liberalization, human rights, interventionist mindsets, where, including if necessary through regime change. With philosophers and thinkers like these, who needs enemies? This was, with the benefit of hindsight, a systemic and powerful generation of fault lines. Capitalism pretends to love free markets. In reality, it rigs markets for elites. Again, an attempt was made to falsify the narrative.

There is overwhelming evidence that trade has contributed to global prosperity, raised standards of living, and contributed to steadily growing real income. Globalization, however, produces both winners and losers. Trade produces not only prosperity but also inequalities. It can have a devastating effect on the manufacturing sector if it is subjected to subsidized or dumped products and exchange rate manipulation. Although the trading system provides remedies against unfair trading practices little can be done if predatory pricing is institutionally entrenched where entire systems do not work on the basis of market prices and it is difficult to determine where state subsidization ends and enterprise dumping begins. I have absolutely no doubt that Brexit and the Trump victory are the outcomes, at one level, of the industrialized western democracies not having learnt to cope and manage to live with the low rates of economic growth.

The anti-trade and anti-globalization rhetoric in the presidential campaign echoed arguments in the Brexit debate. Even if the ‘remain’ vote had won, half of the British electorate clearly would have felt alienated. The financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath of slow growth in developed economies intensified inequalities in the sharing of gains and losses, exacerbating inequalities and national level divisions between the better educated and economically well-off and the rest of the population.

Both the Brexit vote as well as the Trump victory represent at another level, the triumph of the alienated voter. But the most affected segments of society were provided leadership by the left of the centre and liberal intellectuals, particularly those who had been nurtured by the Liberal Democratic Order. Something similar had happened in India in May 2014.

Delivering the third Nikhil Chakravarty Memorial Lecture ‘To Question or Not to Question? That is the Question’ in New Delhi on October 26, 2014, Romila Thapar described the public intellectual in India as an endangered species. The lecture was revised, expanded, and published by Aleph in association with the Book Review Literary Trust in 2015.<sup>16</sup>

Nikhil Chakravarty thought and wrote about contemporary problems, flawlessly performing the role expected of public intellectuals asking questions of those who took decisions that impinged the society. NC guarded his independence fiercely. He shunned membership of the Communist Party of India for its collaborationist stance during the Emergency and justified declining the Padma Bhushan by explaining it would curtail his independence as a journalist. Being well read themselves, the doers of NC’s generation respected intellectual and academic opinion on public matters. The space for such discussion today, it is now being argued, has shrunk and the intellectual parameters narrowed. Is this really the case? In fairness to Romila Thapar, she claims this is a process that has been in the making *for over six decades*.

Many an incumbent politician, according to this view, is characterized by little, if any, vision of the model of society they wish to construct barring those that incline towards extreme nationalism and their ambition of creating an enclosed, uncritical, inward-looking society. For many, the aspiration is merely to make money and push people around in the process. Possibly, in this ambience, India’s public intellectuals shy away from debating the quality of the interconnection. Romila Thapar and her co-authors repeatedly echo the argument in *The Public Intellectual in India*.<sup>17</sup>

Such characterizations, at first glance, appear attractive, but subjected to closer scrutiny, the faint lies begin to appear. Several questions suggest themselves: Is the public intellectual ideology neutral? Is it in order for the public intellectual to allow his/her intellectual intent to be put to narrow and partisan uses by political parties? The responses to these questions need to be considered carefully. The choice of words employed will be indicative of intellectual bias and leanings on the ideological spectrum.

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<sup>16</sup> Thapar, Romila. (2015). *The Public Intellectual in India*. New Delhi, India: Aleph Book Company.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Witness the following extracts from *The Public Intellectual in India*—‘even the mantra of “development” sounds hollow, since thus far, it has seemed to be a mirage.’<sup>18</sup>‘The mafia, no longer outside the system, remains entrenched within it.’<sup>19</sup>‘Religion and politics are now seemingly more intertwined, although more often than not, the root-cause for disruptive behaviour is not hurt religious sentiments, as is claimed, but the bid to assert power and control over some crucial section of civil society. ...The present political scene, thus, seems to be regarded as a now-or-never situation by those that would want the Hindu Right to impose their will on Indian society.’<sup>20</sup>

Delivered less than six months after the installation of the Modi Government, the lecture and the subsequent volume would have us believe that the version of majoritarian fundamentalism being propagated these days is most conducive to aggressive mobilization; that Hindutva, by definition, is not identical to Hinduism; and whereas the latter is an ancient religion, the former, only a young ideology engineered for political mobilization. The critical discourse on this divergence is amply rich. However, is merely asking questions sufficient or should a debate also be accompanied by facets of advocacy?

As a proud member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, I gladly accept and celebrate the right to dissent and criticism from public intellectuals. I often ask myself basic questions: Who is an intellectual? Does possession of some intellect alone so qualify a person? Who and what determines the conferral of the title, ‘public intellectual’?

Criticism needs, at the very least, to anchor itself in an empirically verifiable base. For most of the seventy years of India’s existence as an independent country, the Congress Party provided a comfortable nurturing environment for liberal and leftwing intellectuals. In my own small limited world, a public intellectual does not need to be defined. The honorific is earned on the basis of decades of dedication to professional academic excellence, fearless and robust advocacy of what serves societal interests, public good and equally robust articulation of dissent. Each one of us can have our own shortlist of who qualifies for inclusion as an intellectual.

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<sup>18</sup>Thapar (2015). *The Public Intellectual in India*. p. xii.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* p. xiii.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.* p. xv.

## Part-C

### **Trump and turbulence**

Successive Indian governments have invested, some more heavily than others, in seeking greater strategic content in relations with the United States. Some have even been so bold as to suggest that the bilateral relationship now constitutes a strategic partnership. At the very least, this suggests some misreading of geopolitical trends. There is no doubt a shared value system, a broadening and deepening of interests and issues covered. The intensification of relations has come in small and incremental steps with India's policy continuing to be anchored in 'strategic autonomy'. The relationship has always been transactional, and the only risk we see now is that it could now become even more transactional.

I find it difficult to hide my irritation when asked the question—is Trump good for India? India was not even a peripheral factor in the election of the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The first determination that needs to be made is whether Trump is good for the United States!

What we are witnessing today is a businessman with no experience of government whatsoever, proceeding to deliver on election rhetoric and promises through executive fiat during the first month in the White House. The limits of such actions may soon be in evidence. Let us consider some of these actions.

The Mexican wall and the cost of its construction: Let us concede for the sake of argument that an impregnable wall can be constructed along the rugged terrain, mountains and fast flowing streams which by itself would be quite a feat in terms of engineering skills. If the cost is to be borne by a 20 per cent tax on imports from Mexico, would this not be self-defeating if it is the American consumer that has to pay?

The US is an \$18 trillion economy. It has provided leadership on issues related to the multilateral trading system. It is an original signatory to the WTO, NAFTA, and a host of other pluri-lateral trade and economic instruments. Can it unilaterally withdraw from some of these? The laws of physical sciences do not apply to the world of foreign and security policy, or for that matter to the world of trade policy.

Hypothetically, if the US were to withdraw from leadership positions in some areas, would other countries step in? Unless a country produces global public goods, I don't see how this could happen. More important, it is difficult to see how a country could assume global leadership if it refuses to accept the findings of an international tribunal in a system ostensibly built on the rule of law.

Trump comes to governance from the vantage point of a businessman who has had a fair share of successes and failures in his own domain of business. What does a businessman do if a particular venture fails or is likely to fail? He cuts his losses and moves on.

The strength of institutions—the judges who will strike down an illegal order, business interests that will lobby Congress, and public opinion that will find new and innovative ways to assert itself in US democracy—should not be underestimated. For better or for worse, in the coming years, we do not appear to have any choice but to deal with a global system under US leadership. Whether the US disengages in some degree, remains to be seen. It is entirely possible that it will engage more aggressively. In the case of either scenario, there will be consequences.

That brings me back to the question: How we, in India, should deal with the new emerging situation? I believe, we are uniquely positioned to take advantage of some of the opportunities that will come our way. For this, we need to exercise patience and tact. India and Pakistan were two young nations born from the womb of the same mother. In 1955, when the Republic Day parade was first scheduled at Rajpath, the Chief Guest was Governor General Malik Ghulam Muhammad from Pakistan. Even in 1956, the members of the Pakistan Cabinet held Indian passports. How did matters go so horribly wrong in the following decades?

I have always found it difficult to subscribe to the view that Pakistan stands isolated. *Can* we 'isolate' Pakistan or *should* we 'isolate' Pakistan? Quite apart from the absurdity of isolating a country with a 200 million strong population, it is a nuclear weapons State, a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation(OIC), a member of the UN having served seven times on the Security Council—same as India—and a member of a wide variety of multilateral organizations. Our objective should be to use our bilateral relations with other countries, particularly the United States, so that we can individually and collectively use

whatever margin of persuasion we have to instill the realization in Pakistan to desist from participating in state sponsored terror against India. Also, to the extent that the terror acts emanate from non-state actors to move with determination against such entities.

In the past, we have invariably found that the West, including and particularly the United States, whilst being supportive of our concerns has not moved against Pakistan to the full extent. There are many reasons for this selective approach on terrorism. In November 2014, the Counter Terrorism Committee of the UN adopted, under India's presidency a 'zero tolerance' approach to terrorism. This could not act as a sufficient pressure on our western neighbor quite simply because the United States and other countries were actively supporting the so-called moderate opposition groups in Syria and elsewhere.

In my book *Perilous Interventions* (September 2016), I quote former Vice President Joe Biden's somewhat controversial address at the Kennedy School at Harvard in October 2014, and I quote:

The Turks...the Saudis, the Emirates, etc. what were they doing? They were so determined to take down Assad, and essentially have a proxy Sunni-Shia war. What did they do? They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens, thousands of tones of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad. (p.31-33)

Even more notoriously, in August 2014, during a talk with Iran's Press TV, a former contractor of the US CIA, Steven Kelly, unabashedly admitted:

[The ISIS] is a completely fabricated enemy. The funding is completely from the United States and its allies, and for people to think that this enemy is something that needs to be attacked in Syria or Iraq is a farce because obviously this is something that we created [and] we controlled, [now] it has become inconvenient for us to attack this group as a legitimate enemy. (p.31-33)

And finally, I quote Lt. General Michael Flynn, the former Head of the Defense Intelligence Agency and short-tenured National Security Advisor who informed Washington's tactic of abetting Salafist extremists against the Assad regime as being 'a willful decision'. (p.31-33)

India will face many challenges, political, economic, and in the area of security policy in the years to come. I have absolutely no doubt that we are uniquely positioned and have the requisite resilience to deal with bilateral challenges, whether from the United States or other

countries. We also have the diplomatic strength and maturity to deal with changes in the multilateral system and the re-ordering of power relationships should those arise. In either case, what is required is patience, tact, and mature diplomacy.