



भारतीय नौसेना

17 Mar 11

AT DSSC WELLINGTON

Address by the Chief of Naval Staff

Commandant Defence Services Staff College, General Klair, Chief Instructors, members of the faculty and staff, students of the 66th Staff Course, ladies and gentlemen...

Let me first thank the Commandant for inviting me to speak to you this morning and share with you some of my thoughts on maritime strategy for an emerging India. I am indeed very pleased to be in your midst, not just because it is always refreshing to return to these soothing surroundings, but more importantly, because of the opportunity it provides me to interact with young minds, rich with fresh ideas. The fact that I had a wonderful tenure here in the faculty is an added incentive for me to be here.

Before I come to the main part of my talk to you today, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the officer from the Japanese Self Defence Forces for the tremble loss of life in the aftermath of last Friday extremely harsh tragedy. While we watch the horror of the devastation brought on your country, we admire the resilience with which your countrymen are handling the catastrophe history has shown – that your country emerges even more stronger from a challenge of this epic proportions.

An important facet of your training here relates to the colour 'purple'. It is here that officers of all Services are professionally equipped to understand the nuances of jointmanship. You will find many opportunities to work together professionally with each other in the years to come, and the shared understanding of jointmanship that you build here, will to a significant degree, influence your interaction, as it will without doubt, also be influenced by the close personal relationships built over the duration of your course. Do, therefore, cherish and nurture the links that you establish here.

As I stand before you today at this unique institution, I am reminded of the words of Thucydides. I QUOTE "the nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools". UNQUOTE. While his opinion may be somewhat terse, there is no mistaking the message it carries. Professional military education is vital for the Armed Forces if they have to be prepared to meet the ever-expanding set of challenges they are likely to face. The soldier-scholar is the soldier of the future.

The adage, that “war is the most demanding and consequential of all human endeavours” is also no exaggeration. To excel at war, requires personal preparation of a very high order, towards which, the DSSC has the unique role of preparing mid level officers to take up demanding staff appointments at various formations.

Do also give thought to the expectations, which your respective countries and organisations will have from you, once you graduate from here. General Scharnhorst, charged with reforming the Prussian Army after its defeat at the hands of Napoleon in Oct 1806 is often credited with the creation of the modern ‘General Staff’. While making a case for instituting the ‘Staff’, he stated that the purpose of the staff was “to support generals, providing the talents that might otherwise be wanting among leaders and commanders”. Von Moltke the Elder, subsequently brought out the essential traits of a staff officer and said that “a competent staff officer should work diligently, accomplish much, remain in the background and be more than he seems”. I recommend that you keep these in mind as you move on to your future appointments.

This morning, I intend to start with a brief overview of the Indian maritime strategy and its evolution so far. I will also make some comments on our security environment, focusing on the enduring drivers of change. I will thereafter examine the shaping factors and the building blocks of our maritime strategy. At the end of all this, I will be happy to hear your comments and field your questions till the Commandant hits the red-light switch.....yes...traditions endure at the Staff College.

I am reasonably certain that at the very beginning of your course, the Commandant and the Chief Instructors would have demystified ‘joint strategy’, within the ambit of National Interests, and the ‘single Service strategies’ in the context of our ‘joint strategy’. You would therefore be aware that Maritime Strategy is intricately linked to the maritime power of a nation, i.e. with the ability of a nation to use the seas in pursuance of its national interests. Maritime Strategy represents the vision, articulated in broad generic terms, of how the maritime power of a state is planned to be developed and used for attaining national objectives. Maritime strategy tends to be nuanced with both military and many non-military aspects, and has to be synchronised with the other instruments of national policy.

Even though many Indians are ‘sea-blind’, India is first and foremost a maritime nation. India’s destiny has always been intricately linked to the sea, and patterns of history speak for themselves. Through the ancient, medieval and modern periods, every era of heightened maritime activity has been accompanied by economic prosperity and political stability. Maritime trade was a constant feature in Indian history till about 1200 AD. During this time, our share in world GDP was higher than other contemporary nations and empires. However, the establishment of dynasties of Central Asian origins by the 13th century led to a continental outlook taking root and to a reduction in Indian maritime activity. India’s share in world trade dwindled, and India’s naval power was already in decline when the Europeans arrived in the late 15th century. It was our inability to contest the European control of the Indian Ocean in the 18th century that led to nearly two centuries of foreign domination. A powerful lesson - that our security strategy must have a maritime orientation. Conversely, India’s maritime strategy can only be considered comprehensive if it provides solutions to the security challenges we face as a nation.

If our past was closely linked to maritime activity, the present and the future are no different. The underlying reason is the enduring rationale of geography in both strategy and economics. Suffice it to say that an acute consciousness, firstly, of our rich maritime heritage, next, of our colonial experience resulting from a break with maritime endeavour, and lastly, of our unique geographical position, have all contributed towards shaping our modern maritime outlook.

One of the first to articulate this maritime outlook was Sardar KM Panikkar, when he stated as early as 1945 that **“while to other countries the Indian Ocean is only one of the important oceanic areas, to India it is a vital sea. Her lifelines are concentrated in that area, her freedom is dependent on the freedom of that water surface. No industrial development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her unless her shores are protected”**. Late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru echoed these views and stated that **“history has shown that whatever power controls the Indian Ocean has, in the first instance, India’s sea borne trade at her mercy and, in the second, India’s very independence itself”**.

Consequently, India’s maritime vision was expressed in our first Naval Plans paper. The Indian Navy was to have been structured around light aircraft carriers supported by cruisers and destroyers, with the objective of protecting India’s Sea Lines of Communication. The attack by Pakistan in Kashmir, less than three months after independence, drove our nascent democracy to focus on defending land borders. For twenty years, the Indian Navy struggled, as force levels depleted and replacements were hard to come by. It was only with the induction of platforms commencing the late 1960s, that the Navy slowly gathered the wherewithal to implement its maritime plans. This found expression in the 1971 conflict with Pakistan where the Navy conducted a coordinated campaign and made a decisive impact in the Western and the Eastern theatres of war.

Strategic thought within the Navy evolved, from merely securing the SLOCs and attacking the enemy’s Navy, to decisively shaping the outcome of a conflict by actions at the operational and strategic levels. During Operation Vijay (1999), in response to the Kargil incursions, and subsequently during Operation Parakram (2001-02), in response to the attack on our Parliament, the Indian Navy was deployed to signal national resolve, as well as deter and coerce Pakistan. There were valuable lessons to be learnt at all levels from these operations. These were amalgamated by the Navy and our maritime strategy was subsequently articulated in a document titled ‘Freedom to use the Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy’ that was published in 2007.

Strategies involve ‘Vision’, and to take evolving circumstances into account, strategies require to be fine-tuned periodically, perhaps once in a decade, if no drastic or extraordinary event occurs. About half way into the decade since our strategy last found expression in written form, the time has perhaps come to start deliberations on the contours of the future ‘maritime strategy for an emerging India’.

Strategy has to be both visionary and practical because it must be able to imagine how our country and her circumstances evolve in the future while realistically relating the ends sought to be achieved to the means available.

Seen militarily in the first instance, the ends of strategy are three fold. First, our strategy should produce deterrence – both conventional and otherwise. Second, should deterrence fail, it should allow for effective and efficient war fighting. Lastly, it should result in war-termination on favourable terms even against numerically superior opponents. A balanced, versatile, three dimensional force manned by skilled and motivated personnel is the means to achieve these ends. While employing the available means to achieve ends, the operating environment is an important variable and needs to be taken into account. Our maritime strategy should have the resilience to adapt to the changing global and regional security environment and strategic planners would do well to undertake the proverbial 'horizon scan' every once in a while.

A strategic shock in the later half of the 20th century created a world very different from the bipolar one that existed after the 2nd World War. The 21st century geopolitical landscape is a lot more unpredictable and uncertain. For example, the shocks that are reverberating through the Middle East were unpredicted, and the future interplay there is uncertain. Amidst this twin paradigm of unpredictability and uncertainty, fundamental shifts are taking place in the global order. In my opinion, there are certain issues which will remain key to our strategic environment and in fact, determine its very nature.

The first and foremost is the ongoing shift in the global power structure. It is now commonly acknowledged that the economic centre of gravity of the world is moving from the West to the East. National economies in Asia-Pacific are surging forward with growth rates of 8 to 10% while the West grapples with the fall out of an economic crisis. The growth of economic power has provided some nations the means to acquire more military capability and leap-frog through the military technology development cycle to obtain cutting-edge offensive, and disruptive weaponry such as new generation stealth fighters, anti-ship ballistic missiles and anti-satellite weapons. There is also an increased assertiveness borne of economic and techno-military growth.

The current period of strategic flux in the international system is accompanied by what is being called by some academics and analysts as the 'third wave' of globalisation. While globalisation is an enduring feature of our strategic environment and has created a financial system integrated across nations, economies themselves have become more interconnected and interdependent. Certainly, there is reason to believe that, for some time to come, the world will continue to ride the crest of globalisation, powered by information and communication technologies. But globalisation has also broken down traditional barriers by enabling instantaneous communication and the exchange of ideas from across the world. It has thus not only empowered the individual, but also expanded the ability of sub-state actors to inflict damage and destruction.

The third issue that will shape our strategic environment is resource scarcity and its resultant effects. The world population is likely to rise to about 9 billion by 2050, which would be an increase of 47 percent from the 2000 levels. A majority of this population growth will take place in the developing world. Continued population growth will create increasing competition for resources and capital amongst nations, transnational corporations and international organisations.

Heightened popular expectations and increased competition for resources, coupled with scarcities, may encourage nations to exert wider claims of sovereignty over greater expanses of oceans and waterways for natural resources, thus creating conditions for competition and probably conflict. We are already seeing the first ripples.

In addition to these, the evolving nature of modern conflict is another issue on the strategic horizon. Even as inter-state conventional war remains a distinct possibility, modern conflict is taking more amorphous forms. Since the early 1990s, epicentres of terrorism have emerged that create and exploit perceptions of injustice by invoking socio-ethnic and religious sentiments. Asymmetric methods, the state use of non-state forces, and the sponsoring of divisive forces in target countries are methodologies that are being adopted by nations. The 26/11 attacks in Mumbai have become the face of state sponsored terrorism in recent times, while terrorism itself has become a prominent feature of our security environment. Globalisation has thus also led to the emergence of non-state and trans-state actors, and altered the very nature of conflict.

The effect that non-state actors can have on the security environment and indeed on the global economic system is probably best exemplified by maritime piracy in the western Indian Ocean. Pirates operating from Somalia have indulged in widespread hijacking and commandeering of merchant vessels. Their modus operandi has evolved and is based on a complex network of informants, financiers, criminals and local warlords employing innovative tactics like the use of hijacked merchant ships as mother ships to extend their reach. According to some estimates, maritime piracy costs the global community upto 12 billion USD a year. As on 28 Feb this year, there were a total of 33 ships and 711 hostages held captive with pirates. The enormity of the problem can be gauged by the fact that a large maritime effort by individual nations as well as coalitions has failed to stamp out piracy. Maritime piracy is a typical example of a transnational problem that demands a collective response and is representative of the security challenges that we are likely to face in the foreseeable future. The possibility of cross-state elements employing the expertise of pirates to perpetuate future acts of incandescent terror is a symbiotic nexus that future strategists may have to ponder about.

Another alarming aspect that we need to take cognisance of is the presence of weapons of mass destruction in our neighbourhood. Our nuclear doctrine caters for the threat of the state use of WMD, but the possibility that some non-state or state sponsored actors may gain access to WMD adds a complex dimension to the issue, and this will need to be factored into our future security strategy.

Then, there is the emergence of cyber warfare as a new domain in warfare. Attribution of blame is very difficult in cyber warfare. The West considers the attacks on Estonia and Georgia in 2007-08 to be the first instances of cyber attack. Others claim that the destruction of a trans-Siberian oil pipeline in 1982 which caused immense damage to the economy of the erstwhile USSR, was the first instance of Cyber Attack. In the recent past, societies, economies and nations have become increasingly dependent on information technology and computers.

This increased dependence has resulted in increased vulnerability that can be exploited through cyber warfare to create desired effects at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The 'Stuxnet' worm which led to a partial malfunction at the Iranian centrifuge at the Bushehr nuclear plant was arguably a cyber weapon, employed to disrupt the Iranian nuclear programme. In our own context, there have been instances of repeated attempts at cyber espionage that have been neutralised. These factors mark the recognition of cyberspace as the fifth strategic dimension and cyber warfare as a new way of waging war. They have also resulted in the establishment of dedicated cyber warfare organisations in many countries. These organisations not only look to protect their own critical national infrastructure, but also develop strategies for offensive cyber warfare, which, when employed as an adjunct to military operations in the physical domain or by themselves, would have exponential effects.

It is in this strategic environment that India will pursue her national aims of unhindered economic progress and socio-political development. Given our economic growth, demographic dividend, strong democratic credentials and commitment to regional and global stability, it is evident that there is a larger global and regional role for India in the emerging world order. It is therefore important to understand the maritime concerns and aspirations of an 'emergent' India, before we set out to craft a maritime strategy for the future, because in my opinion, they would remain shaping factors of our future maritime strategy, along with the inescapable rationale of geo-strategy and geo-economics, which I shall touch upon briefly.

Our unique geographic position and its implications will be a dominant factor in deciding our maritime strategy because geography has a logic that cannot be ignored. We have an extremely strategic location in a warm water ocean, astride the major shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf to the Malacca Strait. The Indian Ocean is a virtually land-locked ocean – hemmed in by the landmass of Asia to its North, Africa to its West, and SE Asia and Australia to its East. Access to this ocean is controlled by several choke points, through which shipping has to necessarily pass. **These vital choke points need to be kept open at all times to keep our economy as well as global commerce running smoothly.** This would require ensuring freedom of navigation through these choke points against encroaching national jurisdictions, inter-state conflict and maritime terrorism and piracy - both through deterrence and cooperative maritime security measures. Our maritime strategy must take cognizance of our unique geographical position and its accompanying challenges.

Another important shaping factor would emanate from our national aim of continued socio-economic development, for which sustained economic growth is a pre-requisite. India is now projected to become the fourth largest economy in the world by 2020, after China, Japan and the US and by some estimates the second largest economy by 2050. It is of interest that for 2010-11, the GDP growth is likely to be 8.6 percent as per the economic survey released in Feb 11. There is no doubt that this growth can only be sustained in a stable and secure strategic environment. **Deterrence of interstate conflict is therefore key to furthering our national aims.** The Indian Navy aims to provide deterrence in both conventional and non-conventional forms. Our no first use nuclear doctrine makes it imperative that we have a retaliatory strike capability that is credible and survivable. Submarine based nuclear deterrence is most invulnerable due to the nature of its medium.

A robust sea based nuclear deterrent capability will therefore continue to be a cornerstone of our maritime strategy. The security of our sea lines of communication from state as well as non-state actors is also critical to sustaining this economic growth. In this era of globalisation, the liberalised Indian economy is integrated with, and increasingly interdependent on other world economies. The sheer volume of trade carried over the oceans and the inter-dependencies amongst nations enormously enhance stakes in the security of this trade. Even at current levels, in our case, 70% by value, and over 95% by volume of trade is carried by sea, as it is the most economical means of transportation.

A related issue is that sustained and uninterrupted supply of energy is a prerequisite for economic growth. Oil and gas constitute about 45 percent of the total energy consumed in our country. Around 80 percent of our requirement of petroleum and petroleum products is met through imports. Our dependence on imports to meet our requirements is only set to increase in the coming years. India is currently the fourth largest consumer of oil, behind only USA, China and Japan. Our oil consumption in the near future is likely to increase, though renewable energy will be tapped to meet domestic demand. As ship based transportation is the cheapest, most of our energy imports would continue to come by sea. Therefore the need to ensure unhindered flow of oil would be a major maritime consideration, both in times of peace and conflict. Threats to this flow may originate both from states intent on strangling our maritime lifelines, as well as from non-state actors such as terrorists and pirates. Ensuring the security of energy supply will continue to be an important challenge for maritime India and a strong navy would perhaps be the only guarantor of our energy security.

In order to protect our interests, we would need to evolve strategies to shape and influence inter-state behaviour. Throughout history, navies have proved to be eminently suited to transforming inter-state relations. Our future maritime strategy should focus on the deft employment of maritime power utilising its inherent versatility and flexibility to support foreign policy, and ensure that our friends are reassured, while potential adversaries are deterred.

Global energy interests in the Indian Ocean region also translate into the near-permanent and increasing presence of extra regional navies in the Indian Ocean in general, and the Arabian Sea in particular. The Indian Navy would therefore have to operate in a dense maritime environment, where neutral men-of-war as well as merchantmen would complicate our operational picture in addition to having a strategic impact on our foreign and security policies through their presence in our areas of interest. Our future maritime strategy must cater to our increasingly complex operational environment.

In addition, the issue of coastal security will continue to occupy a prominent position in our national security matrix. The 26/11 attacks on Mumbai have brought home the reality of terror from the sea. Various initiatives in this regard have been set in motion, including the setting up of the Sagar Prahari Bal and Joint Operations Centres, as well as revitalisation of state mechanisms through joint exercises. These initiatives will need to be sustained and strengthened to prevent infiltration through the sea. Synergising the actions of various central and state agencies, creating a consciousness amongst the coastal populace, as well as strengthening the coastal security infrastructure will require our continued focus.

Our Diasporas and investments abroad are only going to increase in the future. As of Aug 09, the strength of the Indian Diaspora abroad was over 30 million and overseas Indians contributed about \$46 billion in remittances to the Indian economy, which was nearly 3 percent of our GDP. With the increasing presence of our people and investment overseas, the need to provide security assurance in times of crisis is also growing. In the recent past, the Navy has been called upon to provide relief to our Diasporas in the form of non-combatant evacuation. The evacuation from Lebanon in 2006 and the recent operation to evacuate Indian citizens from Libya are cases in point. Given the prevailing strategic uncertainty, it is likely that such instances would increase in the future. **Our future maritime strategy must therefore build in the capability to provide requisite security assurances to our Diasporas abroad.**

This brings me to a related aspect. **A peacetime environment will require us to function at the benign end of the spectrum of operations,** though we would continue to maintain a high degree of combat readiness. Our maritime strategy must focus on peacetime operations at the lower end of the spectrum beyond non-combatant evacuation operations, to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and participate in cooperative maritime security mechanisms to deal with common security issues. The importance of such roles cannot be overemphasized. This is of particular relevance, given that South Asia and South East Asia are relatively more vulnerable to natural disasters than the rest of the world. Large scale relief effort comes in best from the sea. Due her maritime wherewithal, India would increasingly be looked upon for assistance in such eventualities.

Last, but not the least important, is the issue of our strategic autonomy. Right from our independence, retaining strategic autonomy has occupied centre stage in the Indian strategic thought. It is primarily due to the fact that India is not only a nation-state in the Westphalian sense, but also an ancient civilization with a deep consciousness of its contribution to the world and its unique place in world history. Though we constantly debate how to balance our strategic autonomy with the increasing need for bilateral and multilateral cooperation, strategic autonomy will remain the cornerstone of our foreign policy. Our maritime strategy must therefore support and in fact reflect this aspect in policy and material terms.

Having seen the likely shaping factors for our future maritime strategy, let us identify its important building blocks.

First and foremost is a strong doctrinal foundation. Doctrine is about standardisation within the existing structures and procedures. To ensure that the navy can holistically tackle the wide range of strategic challenges and capability building requirements, we have strengthened our doctrinal foundation over the years, by establishing a Directorate of Strategy, Concepts and Transformation at Naval Headquarters, the Flag Officer Doctrines and Concepts, and a Maritime Doctrine and Concepts Centre under him. These organisations have provided the much needed thrust to doctrinal standardisation.

Some of our publications like the Maritime Doctrine, revised in 2009, our Maritime Strategy published in 2006-2007, and our Maritime Capabilities Perspective Plan provide the necessary guidance for strategic progression into the coming decades, along with an internal document called 'Strategic Guidance for Transformation'. Let me emphasise that all these will be revisited periodically to align them to new strategic challenges as they emerge on the horizon, so that they continue to provide a guiding conceptual framework.

While we will internally continue to strengthen our doctrinal foundation, a cogent maritime strategy at the national level would rely extensively on grassroots maritime awareness. Towards creating such awareness, the Indian Navy supports the autonomous think tank, the National Maritime Foundation, while also encouraging other think tanks in propagating maritime thought. We believe that such a maritime awakening could serve as a catalyst for initiating a comprehensive programme for developing our maritime power and would find expression at all levels. For example, it will hopefully result in a greater thrust on marine infrastructure development, on reinvigorating our shipbuilding industry and on building a vast pool of trained manpower to populate this industry. At the apex level, an enhanced awareness of our maritime destiny could help in the crafting appropriate policies. Of course, enhanced maritime awareness would have recruitment spinoffs for the Navy, but for much larger reasons, I hope that more and more of our citizens understand that we are essentially a maritime nation.

Maritime diplomacy would also continue to remain a critical building block of our future maritime strategy. The unique attributes of maritime power, which I am certain that this audience is well versed with, make the Navy an ideal foreign policy instrument. In seeking to preserve, protect and further the country's maritime interests, the Indian Navy is mindful of the very substantial advantages of 'Constructive Engagement' with regional and extra-regional navies, since this enables the gaining and sharing of operational and doctrinal expertise, as also transformational experiences. It is in this context that the growing scope and complexity of 'Combined Exercises' such as 'MALABAR', 'VARUNA', 'KONKAN' and 'INDRA' assume great relevance. Of equal relevance, is maritime cooperation with other regional partners. Towards this end, the 'MILAN' series of exercises, as well as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium or IONS are self-sustaining initiatives. Through IONS, a variety of consultative and cooperative mechanisms are being promoted, to address regional maritime concerns including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, as also to enhance interoperability amongst maritime security agencies of IOR nations. **Cooperative engagement with our regional partners will also continue to remain a cornerstone of our future maritime strategy.**

Creating a force structure that has the capability, numbers and inherent doctrinal cohesion to fashion an appropriate response to the challenges in our maritime environment is critical to our future maritime strategy.

Developing a balanced force to meet our envisaged operational tasking in the coming decades would necessitate synergising our indigenous R & D, as well as our shipbuilding industry. The development of a strong research and development base, tailored to meet our weapon and sensor requirements must remain a focus area at the national level.

Staying abreast of latest developments in marine weapons and sensors, and identification as well as incorporation of transformational technologies will be essential to executing our future maritime strategy. To give just one example, the ongoing research in the field of non-fossil fuel propulsion will clearly have a major impact on all seagoing forces.

Similarly, the revitalisation of our public sector shipyards through capacity expansion and incorporation of the best practices of the shipbuilding industry will be essential to generating a maritime force suited to meeting national security needs. In the recent past, private sector shipyards have expanded their capacities and expressed keenness to build warships and submarines. An inclusive approach to shipbuilding that harnesses the potential of public and private shipyards will be the key to achieving the force structure that the future Navy will require.

In terms of capability building, the Indian Navy has planned significant additions in the years ahead. These include two Aircraft Carriers, three Destroyers, three Frigates, six Submarines, four Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvettes, and four Offshore Patrol Vessels currently under construction, as well as naval aviation assets. By this decade, the Indian Navy aims to evolve into a high-tech three-dimensional force comprising an appropriate number of units, with satellite-based surveillance and networking to provide force-multiplication. In all this, we will endeavour to maintain a significant thrust on developing and enhancing indigenous production.

Our human resource is and will remain the most critical building block in our maritime strategy. Our policies and efforts related to induction, training, utilisation and retention would need to be refocused to harness the potential and the capabilities of our young population. The youth of today will inherit and execute our future maritime strategy. The Navy will need to tap into our growing pool of talented young people to create the core human element around which our future force structure will be built.

Let me conclude by stating that the maritime strategy for emerging India must take into account the aspirations, roles and responsibilities of our nation in an uncertain global security environment. It would seek to balance these with our geostrategic and geo-economic challenges. Our national security imperatives, as well as the uncertain and unpredictable security environment mandate us to be able to provide the nation a versatile response in the maritime domain.

Naval Plans are committed to creating and sustaining a combat ready, technology enabled networked force capable of safeguarding our maritime interests. We seek to evolve relevant conceptual frameworks and acquire the war fighting capabilities to operate across the full spectrum of conflict as well as provide conventional and nuclear deterrence. In addition, we will need to be able to undertake benign and humanitarian tasks in our region, when required.

New transnational security challenges will continue to present themselves, demanding co-ordinated and collective response in the form of sustained, long distance operations. The Indian Navy would therefore have to operate increasingly in conjunction with like-minded states to address shared security concerns. Maritime diplomacy and co-operative engagement will therefore continue to be of importance.

There are many ways to describe the foundational principles of our future maritime strategy. I choose to suggest to you today the ABCD formula – namely develop and maintain **abilities** in all dimensions; develop and sustain a **balanced** force to cater to existing and emerging challenges; forge **cooperative** and **collaborative** regional relationships to address common concerns; and undertake **diplomatic** initiatives that support and promote national foreign and defence policy.

With these closing thoughts, I wish you all the very best.