

## **India and the World: A Personal Perspective**

### **Lecture by Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei (Former Director-General, International Atomic Energy Agency)**

It's an honor to speak before such a discerning group on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence. My remarks here today are personal reflections about a country I admire, a culture I value and friends I cherish.

I was fascinated growing up by this frail thinly clad man who was able through non-violent resistance to wrench his country's independence from the colonial raj. I was too young to fully appreciate the extent of his enormous influence on millions across the globe craving for freedom and equality.

It was during my first posting abroad at the Egyptian mission to the United Nations in New York that my long, close and wide ranging association with India and its people and culture began: diplomats, scientists, scholars, business people, artists and policy makers. Ambassador G. Parthasarathy's articulate speeches in the Security Council during the Arab Israeli war in 1967 and S.K. Singh's fluency and energy addressing the UN budgetary committee left a lasting impression on me as a young diplomat, as have the films of the brilliant Satyajit Ray who introduced me to the depth, complexity and humanism of the Indian culture with artistic simplicity. It was decades later I received the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace and Development, a prize dear to my heart; had lunch with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a man I greatly respect and who is a personification of Indian humility.

But perhaps the most treasured memories are of my Indian friends and colleagues - from my host Shyam Saran with whom I worked in Geneva on the disarmament agenda; to my close colleagues at the IAEA, including Sheel Kant Sharma, R. Swaminathan, Syed Akbaruddin, all of whom went on to have outstanding careers; to the many talented Indian Ambassadors in Vienna, including the Sufi bee keeper Kamal Bakshi and my golf partner T. P. Srinivasan, who alas had a much better handicap than I; to my outstanding counterparts in the Atomic Energy Commission in Mumbai, including R. Chidambaram- who introduced me to Thali- and Anil Kakodkar, all the way to my "Democracy Dialogue" with professor Raj Gandhi in Cairo at the time of the Egyptian uprising. And it was in Delhi in March 2011 where I gave my first lecture on the Arab Spring and our quest for democracy. In 2018 I collaborated with Sundeep Wasekar on the Normandy Manifesto of World Peace. Throughout all these rich interactions we had spirited discussions, agreed and disagreed, but camaraderie and mutual respect remained constant. I could continue down memory lane but I need to stop and go on to the subject of my talk.

Nehru had a vision of a modern India: secularism, nonviolence; parliamentary democracy; national unity within diversity; socialism and economic self-reliance; and emphasis on science and technology. Non-alignment was India's foreign policy. In 1962 Nehru said that he was "very proud of India and of the many things that India has given to humanity." "I think those are things of the greatest value to humanity and I do believe humanity will yet profit by them," he added.

While I certainly agree with Nehru on the past and potential role of India, I believe some of the “things of the greatest value” that India could bring to humanity today, at a time, when the global order is challenged and upended, are centered in three key areas: peace and security; governance and democracy; and economic and social development.

Nehru, in line with the Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence, was an early advocate of nuclear disarmament. In 1954 he was the first to call for a halt to nuclear testing. In 1962, at an Anti Nuclear Arms Convention Conference in New Delhi, he reflected on the difficulty and complexity of nuclear disarmament. Same as Bertrand Russel and Albert Einstein in their 1955 Manifesto, Nehru understood that nuclear weapons were “part of a larger thing- abolishing war” requiring something deeper: “the minds and hearts of men and the spirit of man rising to somewhat higher levels”. But he was pragmatic enough to recognize that “before war goes we must have full disarmament. All these things are connected.”

In June 1988 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi presented to the United Nations General assembly a bold and comprehensive “Action Plan for a Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order” which sought a universal, comprehensive and legally binding commitment to a staged elimination of nuclear weapons within a defined time frame (2010 at the latest) and the establishment of a “comprehensive global security system firmly based on non- violence.” In his speech Rajiv Gandhi was extremely critical of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. He described it as an “ultimate expression of the philosophy of terrorism, holding humanity hostage to the presumed security needs of a few.”

Much water has gone under the bridge since then, notably, India’s development of nuclear weapons in 1998. This was due, I believe, to a number of global and regional geopolitical considerations, including the stagnant nature of nuclear disarmament and the restrictive nuclear trade policy it faced as a non NPT party. India remains today a non-member of the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) but in 2008 it was granted access to civilian nuclear technology and fuel through a “waiver” exempting it from NSG rules. A measure I supported as Director General of the IAEA considering India’s energy needs and the importance of nuclear safety and international cooperation.

Sadly the prospect for nuclear disarmament does not look bright. A quarter of a century after the end of the cold war, we still have a little under 13000 nuclear weapons in existence, with around 2000 of them on high alert. In addition, most if not all the 9 nuclear armed states- the five NPT states (China, France, Russia, UK, US) plus India, Israel, Pakistan and DPRK- are in a race to modernize their arsenals. More ominously many are developing so called tactical “usable” nuclear weapons and availing themselves of new cyber and artificial-intelligence technologies, as well as advanced “sci-fi” hypersonic missiles that could trigger a nuclear catastrophe at a speed we cannot even imagine. All this of course increases the danger of a nuclear weapon launch, whether intentionally, accidentally, as a result of cyber manipulation or simply as an “act of madness” as president J.F. Kennedy feared. One of the most disturbing developments of the Ukraine war has been the reintroduction of nuclear weapons as a central component of geopolitics, shifting the possible use of nuclear weapons from an unthinkable nightmare to a terrifying prospect.

Given India’s long history of serious commitment to a world free from nuclear weapons, I believe it still shoulders a certain moral responsibility to lead the charge among the nuclear-

armed states and across the world towards nuclear disarmament. It should demonstrate through tangible measures that its acquisition of nuclear weapons was an “interim step” not a permanent policy and that its ultimate commitment to a world free from nuclear weapons remains unwavering. As Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi pointed out, however, this should be linked to and in parallel with an effort to establish a new global security architecture based on nonviolence.

Today our global security architecture is in disarray. And international relations have become much more “weaponized” than during Rajiv Gandhi’s time. The Security Council, entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, has become pitifully impotent. Ukraine again is the latest tragic case in point. The global order has become paralyzed and polarized; and our world remains marred by poverty, violence, repression and obscene inequality.

Over 700 million people live in extreme poverty with nearly half the world population struggling to meet basic needs; and it is getting worse. Brutal repression and denial of human dignity are hallmarks of one third of the world’s nations. We spend less than one percent of what we spend on armament (\$2 trillion) on humanitarian assistance. Inequality even extends to a cardinal human value, the sanctity of life. This was recently laid bare by Covid-19, the Ukraine war and the treatment of refugees. 83% of people in the EU/EEA have been fully vaccinated but only 15% of people in Africa have. The world is strongly reacting, as it should, to the war in Ukraine but it has mostly limited itself to hand wringing when hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed or died from hunger in Syria, Yemen, Somalia and other places. And while refugees from Ukraine are met with open arms as “one of us”, those from Africa and Asia escaping death and persecution are left to drown or placed in appalling detention camps! We often repeat the mantra that we should “build back better.” I believe we need to build a completely new global peace and security structure based on freedom, equity and nonviolence. Many people, myself included, look to India’s active contribution in this field.

Let me turn to governance and democracy. India, as the largest pluralistic and secular democracy in the world, has always been the proverbial answer to the skeptics who question whether democracy can work in a developing country and if it is compatible with poverty, illiteracy and other challenges. There is often a philosophical comparison between the “Indian model” and the “Chinese model”; specifically whether one ought to prioritize economic and social rights or whether human development and human dignity should be approached as an indivisible whole including civil and political rights.

Countries who opted for a democratic system are aware that democracy is not “one size fits all” nor is it instant coffee. It is the product of each country’s historical, social and political evolution. Democracy is always a work in progress in terms of its culture, institutions and modalities. It has its flaws and is often slow and messy. And as we know it is fragile and vulnerable to manipulation and abuse. But with all these caveats a democratic system is still, to my mind, the best political system humanity has come up with; it is aligned with people’s innate aspiration for freedom, dignity and equality. It is anchored in transparency and accountability; It advocates for inclusiveness, diversity and equity and, through an independent judicial system, protects the minority from the tyranny of a majoritarian rule, be it national, religious, ethnic or ideological. These are all key values for long-term social

cohesion and stability, more so in a country like India with such a diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic background.

Democracy is now under vicious attack by populism and authoritarianism due to the failure of many democracies to deliver on people's growing economic and social expectations, a failure coupled in many places by gross economic and social inequality. Here I also believe that India as a primus inter pares of democracies in the global south, has a moral calling to show the world that democracy and economic and social development are not only compatible but also reinforce each other; and that the challenges to democracy should be met with more democracy not less. India ought to demonstrate through words and actions that democracy remains the best underwriter of equality, accountability and human dignity, maintaining its long held principle of secularism. It was the poor uneducated Indian women who succeeded in the past through the democratic process to bring down governments that did not fulfill their aspirations for development and equality.

The recent and recurrent pattern of hate speech and acts of religious intolerance against the Muslim minority as well as the communal violence and riots that ensued are deeply regrettable, should not be tolerated and must be sternly confronted. The close and historic ties between India and the Muslim world are too valuable and strategic to be left to go down a slippery slope. I believe, an urgent dialogue is needed between all parties to explore means of creating an environment conducive to social cohesion and safeguarding against prejudice and discrimination. The healing should begin by talking to each other instead of talking at each other. The Indian established model of "Out of many, one" is too precious to be compromised.

India still faces huge economic and social challenges despite recent strides. A few years back I had a discussion with Amartya Sen. He explained that the three key elements that contributed most to economic and social development, in countries with varied political systems such as Singapore and Japan, were quality education, a good health care system and policies of social tolerance. India has given special attention to education ever since independence although there are still many unfulfilled expectations. One of the farsighted decisions was the establishment of first class scientific educational institutions, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, some 23 of them located across the country. They were rightfully named "Institutes of National Importance" by an act of parliament in 1961. When one looks at the number of CEOs of major US tech companies of Indian origin, one realizes how forward thinking India was at a time when the term "information technology" was barely known.

Information Technology in India accounted for 8% of India's GDP in 2020. With technology considered the Fourth Industrial Revolution and AI and super computers the future, India is well placed in the field of science and technology to establish itself as an important hub and a mecca for the global south. It has many comparative advantages. In the health sector, the Serum institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, has become for the last three years the principal supplier of affordable Covid-19 vaccines for low and middle income countries and one of the backbones of efforts by WHO and others to cope with vaccine "Apartheid" and protect the health of the poor; this is something you should be proud of and build upon.

Having spent most of my career dealing with international relations it would be amiss not to refer to the kind of foreign policy that India, in my view, should pursue as a major voice for the global south. During the cold war India was a champion of the non-aligned movement. It took part in the 1955 Bandung Conference. This was the precursor of the establishment in 1961 of the Non Aligned Movement through the initiative of Yugoslavia, India, Egypt Ghana and Indonesia. Although the movement now has 120 members, it has lost much of its clout and luster.

Since 2003 India has been a founding member of the IBSA Dialogue forum (India, Brazil, South Africa) established as a tripartite grouping of important democracies of the south to promote South- South cooperation. And since 2010 India has been a member of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) as the world's five leading emerging market economies. Last year India has also joined the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue QUAD with Australia, Japan and the US. QUAD commits itself to a free, open and inclusive Indo – pacific region and is regarded by many as an effort to counter balance China's role and influence in the region.

The global order is changing fast. The bipolar world has “expired” and is morphing into a multipolar one whose shape and precise constellation are still not defined. India given its size, culture, demographics and economic clout will certainly be one of the principal players. There are a number of questions on people's minds related to India's foreign policy that, no doubt, will be clarified along the way; is India going to be aligned with any of the existing poles as being a member of QUAD and a participant in military exercises with the US and its regional allies might imply? Is India going to maintain its long held independence as its vote in the UN on the Russia- Ukraine war suggests? And if so, what are the basic principles, values and laws that are going to inform its policy choices, and how will it strike the delicate balance between its basic values and national interests? While it is often tempting for states to look at their short term national interests, it is essential not to lose sight of the long term pillars of the international order such as the non use of force and the non acquisition of territory by war. In many cases this results in winning the battle for some but losing the war for all: forfeiting collective peace and security. Another question is whether India aims to be a “stand alone” pole? And if so would it continue to be closely associated with the large democracies in the South as well as with other South constellations, the non-aligned movement and G77?

I strongly believe that today's chaotic global order would be well served by an India that is a key spokesman for the “hurt” and the “hope” of the global South. In a global environment overshadowed by an inordinate dose of toxic nationalism, India can be an example of people's quest for a pluralistic, inclusive and nonviolent world. I have long believed that India ought to be a permanent member of the Security Council. But until that happens, India should continue to speak up loud and clear on major issues that shape and affect our future.

I recently told an American friend that I am giving a lecture on the role of India in our world today. His immediate response was: India should be a “City upon a Hill”; what he meant was that he hoped that it can and ought to be a model for some of the best human values. I cannot agree more.

**Conversation between Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei and Shyam Saran (Senior Fellow, CPR  
and Former Indian Foreign Secretary)**  
*Edited for Ease of Reading*

**Shyam Saran:** Thank you Excellency, that was a very moving presentation with tremendous insights which also reflects your deep engagement with our country over a long period of time. We will just have a short conversation and if there are other comments or questions I will pose them to you. But, I just wanted to reflect on two or three issues that you raised- one, of course, is that India having actually been one of the champions of nuclear disarmament, having been as you said one of the early champions of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty..well how is it that India then, after deriding nuclear deterrence finally ended up by espousing nuclear deterrence itself. You very rightly pointed out that there were a number of different circumstances and situations that led us in that direction. But, I would also like to mention here that in taking that step in 1998, one important declaration by India was that it remained convinced that a world which is free of nuclear weapons will enhance India's security more than a world where there are countries with nuclear weapons. So that commitment is very clear. India sees its security enhanced in a world free of nuclear weapons than a world in which nuclear weapons are deployed. I think that's an important aspect. We are also committed to non-first use of nuclear weapons. But it is certainly true that the progress towards nuclear disarmament has been very very slow if at all and in this context I wanted to ask you, Excellency, that you are aware of the fact that a number of countries came together, non aligned and neutral countries which actually concluded a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. And the first anniversary of that particular treaty is going to be celebrated very soon; there will be the first conference of the states parties to that particular treaty. And, in the context that you have mentioned over the resurgence of concern over the use of nuclear weapons particularly in the context of the Ukraine war, do you think that this particular initiative which after all represents the viewpoint of a fairly large number of countries, yes non nuclear weapon countries..is this something that can be taken forward because after all in a sense many years ago this is precisely the sort of thing that we fought for as Egypt and India. So, that was my question to you, what do you think is the way in which this initiative can be given some encouragement?

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** Thank you very much, Ambassador Saran. You are absolutely right on India's record and I fully understand and agree that you had, until you developed a nuclear weapon, a stellar record of fighting for disarmament- nuclear disarmament and you continue to believe that nuclear disarmament is the way. What I meant is that you shouldn't stop there. That even after you developed a nuclear weapon you should be at the forefront right now. It's very scary what we hear as I mentioned right now that the use of nuclear weapon, tactical or whatever, is possible. Everybody knows that once you use a nuclear weapon that's the end of it. There is no small or large nuclear weapon- that's end of it. I think the nuclear weapons ban treaty was signed or concluded by 122 countries so it's a large chunk of the human population and their message is nuclear weapons are awful, destructive, and cannot be used therefore we should ban it, the same way we banned chemical and biological weapons. So I don't see it to be something out of the ordinary, in the case of chemical and biological we banned and eliminated them, you know. And, why can't we do the same with nuclear weapons? Unfortunately, the attitude of nuclear weapon states and members of NATO and others is quite negative to the ban treaty. I mean three of the weapon states, I think the US, France, and the UK said we will never be able to become

party of that treaty. I mean it wasn't really an appropriate statement. You can say that I understand, you know let us work together but to say this is absolutely out of the question is not a great thing. The first meeting of the parties is going to take place next Tuesday here in Vienna and on Monday there is a conference on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. So, I have a feeling its not going to happen overnight, but it would be good to talk to the others, the other camp. Why can't India go for example as an observer? I also know that some of the NATO members are coming as observers. It would be in my personal view great if India could come as an observer, make a statement, express its views, how your commitment to nuclear disarmament remains. It's really is important to continue the dialogue, that is what I think and what I as a friend would advise.

**Shyam Saran:** Thank you Excellency. I think as a friend you have given us very wise advice and I hope that people in our government will listen to the advice you have given. Yes, I also think that the attitude of the US, UK, and France is not really very positive for the simple reason that just before the review conference of the non proliferation treaty (NPT) was going to be held sometime back and it was postponed because of the covid, the five nuclear weapon states party to the NPT did make a statement that a nuclear war can can be never won and must never be fought, that means that you should get rid of nuclear weapons sooner rather than later and also it is their commitment under Article 6 of the NPT, there is a commitment to nuclear disarmament. So in terms of even the commitments that they have voluntarily assumed, I think it is something that they should be doing. The second point that I was very much impressed by was your focus on democracy and you know that this is something which amongst the different dispensations, a political dispensation that has certain shortcomings but you know, this is probably the best that we can possibly hope for in terms of the possibility that it gives for personal individual development, you know creating an environment in which people can rise to their full potential, the fact that this is one system which allows for accountability of the government which is a very important factor. So in that respect again despite all its shortcomings, India has been somewhat unique in having maintained this political dispensation. Not that there have not been challenges in the past and not to say that there are no challenges today, but I do feel that in India we have been through these phases where we have had setbacks, and yet we have been able to reassert the democratic principle in our country. What you have mentioned about secularism is a particularly important aspect, and yes we are disturbed by what has happened recently but I think it is also perhaps encouraging that the Indian state has taken very quick action to try and contain the damage that it could do and I would hope that we could get back to the very strong relationship and a very strong mutual understanding that we have been able to establish with particularly the countries in the Gulf and other Muslim countries. This has been one of the success stories of this government, that it has been able to establish very close relations. I mean the Prime Minister himself, as you know, has been awarded the highest state honors by some of the countries. So, there is a very strong bond between India and these countries, and I certainly believe that despite what has happened we would be able to get back on track as far as those relationships are concerned. With regard to the secularism within India itself, I certainly believe that one of the greatest strengths of India is precisely its ability to manage what is absolutely incredible plurality and immense diversity. I think if there is one reason why India's case should be perhaps a lesson to the rest of the world, it is precisely its ability to really handle plurality and I believe that particular quality is especially relevant today when we are living in a very globalised world where intense interconnections exist now between all our countries and all our people. So whichever

country is able to handle plurality is probably going to handle globalisation perhaps much better than others. So, in that respect I also feel somewhat optimistic about the future and I was very happy to hear you say that you also believe that, even though we are living in a very complex world and a world which is changing so rapidly, there is still a constructive role that India could play going forward. And the last point I would perhaps like to address is where does India stand today? You mentioned the fact that India is a part of Quad, but India is also a part of The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, it is also a member of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, the BRICS Development Bank so it appears to me that today India has developed a network of relationships of different kinds and it is mainly because India's interests today are of a very wide spectrum. Those interests perhaps cannot be delivered upon only through certain limited partnerships. You need to have issue based coalitions and I think our effort has been to try and build up those interest based coalitions and in that respect I think we have done not too badly. You mentioned the Indian stand on the Ukraine war. I think it reflects that we are very uncomfortable with the violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty of a country, there are no doubts that we are very uncomfortable with the kind of human rights violation and violence that is taking place and we would like this to end as quickly as possible but we also believe that perhaps taking a condemnatory tone publicly on this issue may not really contribute very much to the solution of this problem. I think we have had this kind of a stance even in the past. But, having said that, let me come back to the last question to you, to ask that with the kind of situation that we are facing today, is there an incipient Cold War which is in the offing. You know, are we going to see Russia and China on one side and the US and the NATO countries on the other side? Is there perhaps a certain kind of logic of reviving something like the non-aligned movement? Is this something that we should be thinking of, is this something that India should be thinking of in terms of where it positions itself going forward? This is something we have also worked together on earlier as I mentioned in a very active capacity as non-aligned and neutral countries. Is there some space for something like that again?

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** Thank you very much, Ambassador Saran. Let me say that India has always been a model for many of us. A model of a country which with all its challenges has managed to work a democratic system. Democracy means freedom, it means human dignity, lots of problems but there is a way out of it through democracy. And I think what I am basically saying is hang-in there. Hang-in there because you are very important not just for India but for many of us in the South who look up to you. And, everybody who says democracy cannot work in the South because we are poor, my answer has always been throughout my life, look at India. So hang in there and I know the challenges but the challenges have to be dealt with with more democracy, with more inclusiveness. I think secularism is really the key. I mean I can tell you one of the major problems we see in the Muslim world is how we manage a relationship between Government and religion- this has been and is still a major issue; where does religion come in and where does secular law come in? I mean that we are never able to disentangle them and that has been I think until today a major issue. So, for me when I look at secularism, for me it means give what is for God to God give what is for Caesar to Caesar. On the other hand, you as India have always developed as a country based on beautiful values, peace, nonviolence, equity, openness. Hinduism is open, for it the world is one and I think that is what we need today, there is as I keep saying a moral calling, a moral responsibility when the world as we say is completely getting back into alliances, China, the US. I saw the Shangrila statement by the Defense Secretary of the US. Frankly, I was not very thrilled to listen to it. It's more say, we are



divided and that's not where we should be, we are united, that's what we should really look into, how we can get together. In this world, no matter what you do the only solution is that parties should talk to each other, should sit together, there is no other way out, you cannot fight, until the end of your life. We are still at the point where the earlier we get to talk to each other the less humans suffering we will have. So, I think as I mentioned India is primus inter pares among the South. The injustice committed against the South, against just about everybody is so horrible and there is a lot in what I said, you are the spokesman and you should be the spokesman for the South's health and the South's hope. So I believe that yes the G77 or the non-aligned should be revitalised, it has now lost a lot of clout and lustre. It should really be refocused. It should be now talking about how we save our world, how we first make sure that we do not use the weapons of mass destruction, how we re-engineer the multinational system, the UN right now is not there. How we make sure that we focus on cooperation whether it's China, Russia, whether it's India. We need to focus on cooperation, there is no other way than the cooperation. We are too entangled together right now, that to try to disentangle ourselves is madness. So, my personal feelings and that is very personal. Whether you like it or not, you are a pole on your own and but it's a pole that has to make sure that you are not only speaking on your own behalf but at the very least speak on the behalf of the world and then help in the process of reengineering our global, security architecture and not just look to your own security. When Gandhi said peace is power, I think that's correct, non-violence, dialogue, equity, equality, these are the very values, they come from India. I mean they are part of your culture and what you need to do, is to spread the gospel.

**Shyam Saran:** Thank you. I don't know whether we will be able to spread the gospel but I think you are right that India has to stand for something more than itself, I think this is very important. Dr.Baradei, if you give me just a few minutes because there are a couple of questions which I wanted to ask on behalf of those who have been listening to you very patiently for the last hour or so. There is one question from Doctor Bhaskar Balakrishnan who has served in Geneva and is very familiar with disarmament issues. He asks whether you think that declarations bilateral or plurilateral on the non first use of the nuclear weapons, is something that may be useful in terms of the whole nuclear disarmament process.

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** Yes, I believe as much guarantees you give to the rest of the world about non first use is very important. I mean people have become very cynical. To be frank, people don't believe in any commitments, guarantees, negative assurances. But I think if we, all the nuclear weapon states make a solemn commitment, a believable commitment that nuclear weapons, no matter what, will not be used first. When Russia said we can still use it if our very existence is threatened, well I think that, if Russia can do that every other country can say the same that we need to protect our very existence. So, I think working on non-first use at least would be a beginning. What can we do until we reach the disarmament to ensure that these weapons will not be used. But, it's the part of a process you cannot just talk about it alone. You have to talk about it in the context of cooperation, dialogue, trust building, and not just in the context of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapon reflects our fear and doesn't reflect our trust. But, yes we need to talk about it. I saw China a couple of days ago mention that they will never use nuclear weapons first under any circumstances. I think everybody should repeat that..I think a collective statement by all the nuclear weapon states, I would even dare to say including North Korea...we should get a

statement that says, we are not in the best situation, and we need to move forward and let us at least commit ourselves to non-first use.

**Shyam Saran:** And the very last question Dr. Baradei, the very question confronting the world, everyone is waiting with bated breath whether the Iran nuclear deal will be revived again. Negotiations have been taking place for quite some time and yet we don't seem to be able to cover the last mile in trying to revive it. You will agree that the revival of that agreement would be a very major contribution to bringing down some of the tensions that are there in international relations. In looking at where we are at this point of time with the JCPOA, what is your view? I mean should we now perhaps abandon hope that something will happen or is there still some traction left in terms of the revival of this deal.

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** The irony is that both the parties, the US and Iran very much want the agreement to come back into force. It's the domestic politics that is now, as I understand, creating hurdles. The question is how to treat what they regard as a terrorist force in Iran....

**Shyam Saran:** The Revolutionary Guards

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** Yes, the revolutionary guards, sorry, yes it's whether the revolutionary guard should be treated as terrorist. I still believe that the way to resolve the Iranian issue is through dialogue, gradual agreement, building trust, and not sanctions. Sanctions don't work, sanctions in fact make things even worse. Let us have the agreement, let us put aside all the other issues, I know there is a lot of other concerns and issue around, Iran's activity in the region, and the revolutionary guard, but let's at least have the agreement, sign the agreement, get the agreement in place and then continue the dialogue and this is again where maybe India or some other non-participant in this dialogue right now could chip in some ideas, or basically say, we do believe in the agreement, we need the agreement and we are ready to mediate. As far as I understand all the technical issues are in place, it is just a question whether the US will conclude this when they have the mid-term elections, can Iran conclude the agreement with the revolutionary guard labeled as terrorist, but let us separate domestic politics for the sake of a major security issue. I mean I shudder to think what the Middle East would look like if this thing will fall apart. And, I think they need an interlocutor, they need somebody from outside to tell them to put their heads together, and bash them together and say you are not the world, what you are doing has a lot of impact on the rest of the world and we need an agreement and we are ready to help. So, I think now again if you can lead or some from Latin America or some group of friends who can help the two-parties get together in a compromise even if they come shouting and screaming but at least let them sign.

**Shyam Saran:** Thank you very much. Well yes the Iranian Foreign Minister was recently in Delhi and I am not very sure whether this particular issue was discussed. But you are right, perhaps there is a certain amount of nudging from friends that is required at this point of time. Well, Dr. Baradei it has been absolutely an incredible experience for all of us to have the kind of very deep insights you have been able to offer us during the last one hour or so. You know this is really a critical moment for India, in a sense we are also at a crossroads. We are living in a very complex international environment and in this kind of situation to have advice from friends like you who have had long engagement with India is welcome. Sometimes we are so inward looking that it is very good to have a friend like you who has

perhaps been more familiar with us than we are with ourselves, to give us these very valuable insights in terms of what India's record has been, what may be the pitfalls as we go forward, but most importantly your message that India should remain true to itself in that this is not only important for India but for a large number of countries which rely on what India does, in a sense they take the cue from India, this is something that we perhaps do not always appreciate. So thank you for reminding us of where we are, and we once again, on behalf of the Centre for Policy Research and all the participants in this event thank you very much for spending time with us. We wish you all the very best going forward.

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** Thank you very much, Ambassador Saran, thank you very much it has been really a pleasure for me to be with you. And just to think together as friends, I think I would like to end just by saying, what we have today is a clash of values, in the world and you are a repository of values and don't be stingy in sharing it with us.

**Shyam Saran:** Thank you very much...Shall we say bye-bye now?

**Yamini Aiyar:** Yes, thank you, on behalf of CPR, thank you very much it has been an absolute privilege.

**Shyam Saran:** Thank you very much to all our friends who have been participating in this!

**Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei:** Thanks a lot! Pleasure.