



Decisive leadership and governance will make India's national security invulnerable : Gen. Saighal

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“Only a decisive leadership and governance on foreign policy will be able to make India's national security invulnerable”, opined Gen.(Retd.) Vinod Saighal as he delivered a lecture on ‘India’s National Security: The Missing Dimension’ recently at The International Centre Goa (ICG), Dona Paula.

The lecture was chaired by Mr. Yatin G. Kakodkar, President – ICG, who introduced the “ National Lecture Series (NLS) on the State of Affairs in India for 2015” initiated by The International Centre Goa. This lecture was supported by Dr. V A Pai Panandiker, Life Trustee - ICG

Gen. Saighal, former Director General Military Training exclaimed “it is remarkable to know that today, India is the only country of its size and geographical mass that is vulnerable to conventional intervention on its territory from 'our two semi permanent adversaries' to the north and the west. Even after 68 years, this is where we stand owing to our foreign policy failures, indecisive governance, planning and leadership”. He elaborated that “the only period, in our post independence history when we were immune to any foreign ingress, was between 1971 and 1990; this was wholly due to the mutual defence pact signed with the Soviet Union. This is how decisive foreign policy can be a security enhancer”, Gen. Saighal substantiated.

He highlighted various examples how India have lost opportunities due to incohesive and risk-averse leadership in the past. “Long term Indo-Iranian investment ties were severed after India voted against Iran in the IAEA under US pressure. India did not to provide military armanent and so lost the plot to seal a mutual defence pact with Afghanistan”.

Gen. Saighal further described how “unpardonable foreign policy lapses with its immediate neighbours that have cost India dearly”. He elucidated “India helped to liberate Bangladesh and aided Sri Lanka in the annihilation of the LTTE, yet India did not play its trump card; India should have demanded a transit route for trade in the north east corridor with Bangladesh and settled the elementary Tamil issue with Sri Lanka. India should have drawn red lines when it came to their relationship with Pakistan and China”.

“India’s soft power devoid of hard power leads to its loss in geo-strategic space”. He further explained

“India fails to retaliate against Pakistan; despite having the capability, as is fears China's conventional superiority”.

Gen. Saighal advised “the new government will be able to retrieve the situation if it capitalises on the fact that India has an advantage of being the only country whose presence is welcomed in the south east asia and asia pacific. Besides India’s presence in also welcomed in central asian republics, Afghanistan, Iran and Russia”.

“It is remarkable to understand that India is a unified country that has preserved its democracy and its potential has been increasingly recognised by world leaders in the recent past. Gen. Saighal concluded with the remark that “India needs to overcome past blunders and them accentuate on its strengths”.

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