

INDIA TRILATERAL FORUM 12

(April 27-28, 2017, New Delhi)

Welcome Remarks by ORF Director Sunjoy Joshi

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,

It gives me great pleasure today to welcome all of you this evening for this very special address by H.E.Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Excellency it is a pleasure welcoming you in our midst. We have today commenced a day and a half of rather intense deliberations in this trilateral forum between the EU, the US and India. Before you are many of the experts and policy makers who have joined us for these discussions. So your special address on the Future of the India EU partnership in this Century holds special meaning this evening.

For our august audience, excellency Anastasiades has had a distinguished career both in uniform as a member of the National Guard and in politics. He is a founding member of the Youth of the Democratic Rally (NEDISY), in which organization he began as a District Secretary, and went on to become its Vice President and President. Since 1997, H.E Nicos Anastasiades has been President of the Democratic Rally, a position to which he was repeatedly re-elected in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2012.

During this period he also served the Parliament as Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Committee on Educational Affairs, Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Then it was on Feb 24 2013 that he was elected President of the Republic of Cyprus by winning the run-off presidential election.

Sir we are delighted that today you will address us on the EU India partnership in this century ... a subject that this Trilateral Forum remains deeply engaged with.

For this Forum is essentially a meeting of thinkers, policy makers, business leaders and influential voices from Europe, India and the US who seek to strengthen the engagement of the atlantic community with India across a variety of sectors, domains and theaters.

Through its 12 earlier rounds this forum, hosted by the German Marshall Fund and the Swedish Government, has brought together ideators and influential voices from our three geographies to help strengthen this partnership as a force in global stability ... And at a time, when a stable global order no longer seems a given, we as the Observer Research Foundation are delighted to be pitching in as a partner to help co-host this Forum in the years hence ...

For this is a time when democratic politics across the world seems to be acquiring some hitherto unfamiliar flavors, some rather strange tastes and smells are challenging us, It is changing in ways that are set to impact the future of global governance.

At a time when the dominating impulse of national politics seems set to irrevocably turn inward, this rather ambitious edition seeks to cover a vast expanse of issues. These range from the widely varying economic forecasts for our regions to the future of consensual collective action on issues of global trade, the commons of our shared environment, the oceans, and space.

Being housed in New Delhi, there is bound to be a special focus in this Forum on India, and we are seeing a lot of discussion on the economic policies of this Government and the sanguine hope of growth that this region still holds out for the rest of the world.

At a moment when nations are looking inward the forum re focuses on connectivity, both in its old traditional forms as well as in its new digital avatar and the various formats that have already run ahead and inadvertently redrawn a fresh blue print for a world integrated like it has never been through its history. This is a technology led world that challenges all attempts to segment and splinter it, For this is a world where the flapping of a butterfly's wing in the Amazon rain forest can have seismic repercussions in Brussels, and which by doing so simultaneously creates new political pressures and tensions.

So Security and defence partnerships have emerged as a key element in our deliberations as we gather to collectively interrogate the future of globalisation and try to guess at its emergent forms.

Therefore in this backdrop your oration today Mr President on the India – EU partnership forms the heart of our forum this year.

India and the EU are caught up in a new zeal that is keen to rediscover the merits of strong ties and your visit to India at this juncture is set to add momentum to this trend.

India has always had a tradition for strong collaboration with individual member countries but our ties with the EU itself have been on the ascendant.

For India, the EU remains a union with which it shares a common neighborhood, both on land and in the maritime domain ... this is a historical connect emanating from the old spice routes and our shared history of trade and investments. We reminisce about cultural traditions that bind us, define us and also add an edge, or I would say a fair amount of spice to our relationship.

So seen from the perspective of New Delhi it seems rather obvious that the the Indian Ocean and the intervening spaces of Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia would require us to work

together. That is where the last decade, which saw sporadic action by some EU member states in the middle – east does seem some kind of an anomaly.

The geographical fact remains that India and EU share a common periphery in the Middle –East and our policies on intervention, migration, development and reconstruction will require close collaboration.

Recent contributions of the EU Naval Forces in counter piracy and HADR demonstrate the EUs role in the Indian Ocean. European actors and the EU will need to design and implement their engagement with this ocean in close coordination with India and other actors in the region.

Then there are the new domains like space, cyber, renewable energy and technology where our collaboration will be indispensable. Bi-lateral trade, investments and joint research and development in these sectors need to be especially catalyzed at a time when the general mood is one of despondency, our common endeavor to draw closer is all the more necessary at a time when key actors in the world find it easier to advocate a moving apart.

At times like these Can the EU and India be the moderating influence in a world that desperately needs moderation?

Here the most important element of our relationship will be in joining together to frame the new norms, new rules and new ideas for not only the new world order but also for a new world.

In this, Mr President, your address this evening will form an important part of this forum this year and all of gathered today look forward to hearing your views on this partnership, without taking any more time. May I please request you to address us this evening.
