

## VIEWPOINT

## Three-Dimensional Action for World Prosperity and Peace: Global Vision, Regional Cooperation and National Missions

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Small aim is a Crime

*This article is the speech addressed by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam to the Participants of the Leadership for the Billion Course, 2010 at Indian Institute of Management Indore on November 26, 2010*

Friends, I am delighted to be with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore and address and interact with the students participating in the short course on Leadership for the Billion. During the last 14 years, IIM Indore has earned a brand and it is rated as one of the most sought-after institutions in the country. I congratulate the students who have got admission and are entering into a creative learning process for exciting professional career. My presentation and discussion, your thoughts, responses and their review can, in an integrated way, take the shape of a vision for an action plan for the course participants in various national development missions.

I am delighted that the course has four streams of students, each with their unique qualities or experiences. I would like to assure you that I am not here to teach; I am going to facilitate the learning process for the next 3 months, particularly in the areas of how to evolve prosperous and peaceful societies and what is the type of leadership needed for achieving it. At this juncture, I would like to recall one of my early experiences in 1973; of course, many of you would not have been even idea form at that time. The experience goes like this -

**Problem should not become the captain; you should become the captain of the problems, defeat the problems and succeed**

I was working as one of the technologist in Vikram Sarabhai Space Center of ISRO. One day Professor Satish Dhawan, the chairman of ISRO, and Dr. Brahmprakash, Director VSSC, called me to their chamber. Very rarely I had seen either of them smile, but to my surprise, when I entered the room, I found that both of them were all full of smiles. So I was astonished and got the feeling that something was 'cooking'. Then Professor Dhawan said "Kalam, I have good news for you! You are going to run a huge program for ISRO. I and Director VSSC have decided to appoint you as the project director Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV). I am going to give all the money required for the project, the management structure and the human power needed. But you guy by 1980, you should show that you can launch Rohini Satellite using our own launch vehicle."

It was an unexpected message and it was indeed a happy moment. But, in my mind, I was full with questions and doubts of whether I can do it? The whole nation would be looking at the performance and India would be joining the leading nations capable of satellite launch. Then I have to deploy many institutions and industries, thousands of technologists, all this in 7 years. Can I do it? Can I do it?

This doubt and uncertainty made me dumbfound; I could not respond immediately. Then Prof. Dhawan came to my rescue and said "We believe in your capacity, we believe in your team building capacity and above all the knowledge required you can assemble and integrate: I can see the train of your thoughts. Let me tell you something. If one does not do any task, he or she does not have to worry about the result of positive or negative. But when you undertake a big mission like the satellite launch vehicle project, there will be many challenges - technological, leadership and also some unexpected critical problems which you cannot visualise in PERT. Kalam, remember, you should not let problems become your captain. Instead, you become the captain of your problems, defeat the problems and succeed." This advice reinforced my thinking and action and I accepted the project. This is my first lesson to all of you from the four different streams, multiple states and nations.

I was thinking, what can be the profile of my first interaction with all of you, young dynamic multi-dimensional future leaders of global excellence? Friends, on the 10th of this month, I was at Yaroslavl, a 1000-year-old city of Russia, to participate and interact at the Global Policy Forum, organised by the President of the Russian Federation, HE Dmitri Medvedev. The essence of the discussion directed towards how a happy, prosperous, democratic society with efficiency is possible in a multi-dimensional context. I selected a topic after many rounds of virtual conference with many expert friends in various parts of the world. I converged on the topic "Global Vision, Regional Cooperation and National Mission". Since all of you would be taking up many roles on national and international arena, in your careers, where you would be working from multiple nations and regions, I thought of sharing this topic with all of you.

Dear friends, so far I have interacted with more than 11 million youth like you across the world. I have been interacting with more than 37 universities internationally.

Whenever I meet the youth, intellectuals, academicians and leaders from various walks of life, one common question I come across is how we can evolve happy, prosperous and peaceful societies, across the globe. This question is very important because it reflects our commitment to create a sustainable future for the generations to come. How do we create a world with nations which are people-empowered states, with efficiency? What could be the possible ways to achieve this vision?

## Two Possible Solutions

There are two possible solutions for achieving this vision.

- 1) The first solution seems to be the conventional approach which has been followed so far across the world. It starts with working for national prosperity and peace within

the local boundaries and perspectives, hoping that over a long run it would percolate into regional prosperity and peace, ultimately leading to prosperity and peace at the global level. The collective experience across the world highlights that this solution has not yielded the desired results in the past, and with the globalising world, its efficacy in bringing prosperity and peace in the future is uncertain.

- 2) The second solution would be to look at the global prosperity and peace as the overall objective of the world, thereby striving to achieve regional prosperity and peace, both of which will be great enablers for the national prosperity and peace of the participating nations. It is all about making a study, with reference to global context and finding, how every nation can align towards the global missions. The three dimensions of global, regional and national are not mutually exclusive; indeed they are complementary. The synergy of these three dimensions is vital for not only the welfare of the world, but also regional and national prosperity and peace. It has also to be remembered that national missions inspire the citizens; this spirit has to be directed towards globally important missions.

Let us look at today's global environment. The present global environment indicates that we need new and out-of-box solutions. What is the global dynamics of the present time?

## Global Challenges

Today, the challenges of the world are poverty, illiteracy, safe drinking water, clean and green energy, equitable distribution of resources, quality education with values for all, societal imbalances, diseases, quality healthcare for all and good living conditions. Individual nations are working to find a solution to these challenges. These challenges are not only individual phenomena of certain nations, but a collective responsibility of the global community. These challenges take various manifestation based on the local dynamics which are interconnected on various factors. Let us look at the dynamics of these manifestations.

## Dynamics of Global Manifestations

The world today is integrally connected through four rapid connectivities. They are environment, people, economy and ideas. We all know that global warming and climate change are no longer problems of individual nations; they are planetary problems. In the present time, a single product may be made out of components sourced from multiple continents and provide services to markets far off from their place of origin. We also saw how the economic turbulence originating in one part of the globe shook the whole world and how a volcanic eruption in an island country brought the entire airline industry to a halt. Advances in transportation have progressively made movement of people across nations and regions more feasible. This has led to the globalisation of skills and talents which can flow seamlessly from one nation to another. This also has led to the globalisation of human diseases, the most recent instance being of different kinds of flu which rapidly spread across the globe and threatened the entire mankind. Similarly, ideas and innovations are no longer geographically or politically confined. An invention made today somewhere takes no time to find its market thousand of miles away. The expansion of information and communication

technology and the convergence of technological tools are structuring new world of knowledge where problems of one part of the world can be solved by multiple experts based at different points of the globe. Seamless flow of information and people also means that local or regional issues will invariably gain global prominence and unaddressed problems and poverty can mutate rapidly into global terrorism which we are already witnessing.

This flow of ideas has also led to increasing importance of global human rights and propagation of the idea of democracy. Let me recall an experience.

**Globalisation:** When I was travelling in an aircraft in USA, I was told that much of its controls were software driven and most probably developed in India. When I presented my credit card, I was told that it was being processed in the backend server located in Mauritius. When I walked into a multinational software company in Bangalore, I was fascinated to find that it truly presented a multicultural environment. A software developer from China, working under a project leader from Korea, a software engineer from India, a hardware architect from the United States and the communication expert from Germany were all working together to solve the banking problem in Australia.

When I see all of them working together like one family forgetting about the culture from which they came or the language they speak, I feel that the only hope for such borderless interaction to continue is to inculcate the spirit of "borderlessness" in every field of human activities on our planet Earth. How to make it possible?

Hence, it is beyond doubt that we are progressively evolving a world where our problems would cut across all boundaries and would be multipronged. This implies that solutions to these problems would have to be integrated with knowledge of multiple nations and skills of multiple societies. With this background, I would like to delve further into the implementation strategies and challenges in achieving the people-empowered state through integrated approach in a global democratic environment with efficiency. Let me now discuss the instruments for global prosperity and peace.

### **Global World System for Prosperity and Peace: World Vision 2030**

Recently I had an opportunity to take a course on 'Evolution of Happy, Prosperous and Peaceful Societies' at the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA. Based on the experience with the course participants, I have been discussing with the students from multiple institutions and disciplines ideas which can lead to the realisation of a World Vision 2030. Let me present to you these visualisations.

1. A world of nations where the divide between rural and urban, rich and the poor, developed and developing has narrowed down.
2. A world of nations where there is an equitable distribution and adequate access to energy and quality water.

3. A world where core competencies of each nation are identified. Missions synergising the core competencies of different nations lead to economic advantage and faster development for all the societies.
4. A world of nations where all the students of all societies are imparted education with value system.
5. A world of nations where affordable quality health care is available to all.
6. A world of nations where the governance is responsive, transparent and corruption-free.
7. A world of nations where crime against women and children is absent and none in the society feels alienated.
8. A world in which every nation is able to give a clean green environment to all its citizens.
9. A world that is prosperous, healthy, secure, devoid of terrorism, peaceful and happy, and continues with a sustainable growth path.
10. A world of nations with creative leadership who ensure effective mechanisms to resolve conflicts between nations and societies in a timely manner, keeping overall peace and prosperity of the world as a goal.

This is the kind of the world which we have to bequeath to the youth of the world. The foundation of the world vision 2030 shall be enshrined in regional cooperation and development. The regional development will ultimately empower the individual nations to realise the vision. Do you agree?

### **Regional Development for Prosperity and Peace**

The world has witnessed many successes for the regional cooperation. These may be based on political and economic cooperation, social amalgamation, environment protection or common developmental missions. Such cooperation has led to mutual prosperity and sustained peace, and overcome barriers which were centuries old.

**Political and Economic Cooperation:** One such shining example is the founding of the European Union covering 27 nations which are politically and economically connected. Based on my experience with European Union Parliament, when I addressed in 2007 at Strasburg, France, I witnessed the dynamics of regional political cooperation and underlying democratic principles in a regional organisation enriching the economic development. It should be remembered that Europe was the theatre of conflicts for hundreds of years among and between the nations, including generating two world wars. With this backdrop and dynamics, the European countries have established European Union with a vision for peace and prosperity for the entire region. European Union has become an example for connectivity among nations, probably with no possibility of war, leading to lasting regional peace. European Union formation and its performance reveal the necessity of active regional cooperation in political and economics spheres in multiple regions of the world of democratic nations.

I visualise that the regional cooperation is a very vital carrier for prosperity and peace. India, with a sound diplomatic policy, long-term vision and statesmanship, has to ensure that the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and similar associations deliver the optimal benefits. I visualise that ten such associations would be needed to cover the world. For example, BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) is another unique group of nations which is now striving for political and economic cooperation. For world peace and prosperity, definitely there should be an integrating force to promote such regional cooperation. I am not fully convinced that the United Nations alone would be able to achieve it. Probably, the regional cooperation has to come spontaneously based on necessity and competencies.

**International Social Responsibility:** I would like to touch upon India's personal experience in regional cooperation in fulfilling the millennium developments goals set by the United Nations for developing nations. As the President of India, I visited African countries such as Sudan, Tanzania, Zanzibar and South Africa in the year 2003-2004. Based on the suggestions by the then President of South Africa (His Excellency Mr Thabo Mbeki) I addressed the Pan African Parliament in 2004 at Johannesburg (South Africa), which was attended by 53 member countries of the African Union. India proposed to establish the Pan-African e-network, between India and 53 African nations for providing seamless and integrated satellite, fibre optics and wireless network. This Indian initiative was accepted by the African Parliament as a right project at the right time to fulfill the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) of Africa. As part of the project, 12 universities (7 from India and 5 from Africa), 17 Super Specialty Hospitals (12 from India and 5 from Africa), 53 tele-medicine centres and 53 tele-education centres in Africa were to be connected. The Pan African e-network will primarily provide tele-education, tele-medicine, Internet, video-conferencing and VOIP services. It also supports e-governance, e-commerce, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological services. So far 45 countries are connected. PAN African e-network is an example of international social responsibility emanating from the regional cooperation and acts as an enabler, which has a cascading effect on the socio-economic development of many developing nations and their societies. We have to facilitate the global communities towards execution of such international social responsibility programmes which will enrich the regional development.

**World Knowledge Platform:** Now let me focus on how India and Russia have worked together in creating the World Knowledge Platform as symbol of regional cooperation. This is a case how two nations have engaged in "hard cooperation" based on their core competencies to evolve a world-class product and systems using innovation, creativity, knowledge generation, knowledge sharing and knowledge dissemination among the scientists of two countries.

One of the significant technological breakthroughs in India and Russia, in this decade, is the design, development and productionisation of Supersonic Cruise Missile, BRAHMOS, by an Indo-Russian joint venture. BRAHMOS is the first universal supersonic operational cruise missile in the world which can be launched from multiple platforms such as ships, submarines, road mobile and silo, and with modifications from aircraft in multiple manoeuvring trajectory profiles and against different types of targets on sea and on land



in a network-centric warfare. The system so developed is precise on the target delivering enormous kinetic energy due to its supersonic speed and is most cost-effective. Most importantly, an advanced world-class system has been realised in the shortest possible time. This is indeed the result of technological and financial cooperation leading to an operational system in a short time. In successful design, development, production and marketing of BRAHMOS missile, an innovative way of technology cooperation has emerged between India and Russia for nearly 10 billion dollars business with an investment of 150 million dollars from each partner. The message I would like to convey out of this programme is that it is possible for India, with core competencies in multiple fields, to work with many countries in joint venture mode, bringing together multiple core competencies of partnering nations leading to successful enterprises. BRAHMOS is an example of technological cooperation leading to economic benefits for the partnering nations and adds value to a number of institutions in both the countries. BRAHMOS joint venture shows how the core competencies of two countries can be brought together for addressing a need, particularly societal transformation. As a corporate social responsibility, BRAHMOS has extended the benefit of the light-weight callipers, a spin-off from missile technology, to 30,000 polio-affected children from India, Thailand, Laos and other ASEAN countries. The connectivity and sharing of core competence will lead to the evolution of global knowledge capital sharing platforms in the form of a World Knowledge Platform.

Similarly, when I addressed the Parliament of Republic of Korea, I suggested the creation of World Knowledge Platform between India and Korea. My suggestion has taken shape by the initiative of President Mr Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea, and led to the establishment of Indo-Korea Science and Technology Centre at Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore, focusing on global science and technology missions.

Dear friends, there may be many successful examples of regional cooperation and development, but we have to connect these success stories as an integrated garland which would add to global peace and prosperity.

### **National Development for Prosperity and Peace**

Now let me come to the last mile connectivity at the national level, focusing on India as an example with the experience of a democracy for a billion people.

India is spearheading the developed India Vision 2020 of achieving the mission of transforming India into an economically developed nation. India has identified five areas where it has core competence for integrated action: (1) agriculture and food processing; (2) education and healthcare; (3) information and communication technology, tele-education, tele-medicine and e-governance; (4) infrastructure: PURA, interlinking of rivers and water management, reliable and quality electric power, and surface transport; and (5) self-reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely inter-related and coordinated, leading to food, economic and national security.

## **PURA Mission**

One of the important missions for sustainable rural development is PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas). This mission may be applicable globally for sustained development of the developed nations and developing nations and their societies. Each step the world takes towards universal development of all nations, it opens a fresh challenge for the global community to overcome. The need of the hour is the evolution of sustainable development systems which act as 'enablers' and bring inclusive growth and integrated development to nations.

One such sustainable development system is the mission of PURA.

The number of PURAs required for India alone is estimated to be 7000 covering 600,000 villages where 700 million people live. There are a number of operational PURAs in our country initiated by many educational, healthcare institutions, industry and other institutions. The Government of India is already moving ahead with the implementation of PURA on the national scale across several districts of India. We will be discussing about PURA in greater detail in a dedicated lecture.

Dear friends, so far we have seen the inter-linkages and interconnectedness between global vision, regional cooperation and national missions. There is a symbiotic and mission-oriented relationship among these three dimensions of development, which thrives in a democratic environment. This is a symbol of evolving a people-empowered state with efficient missions. What would be the standards with which we could define the distinctive achievements coming out of three-dimensional approach which leads to sustainable prosperity and peace for the world.

## **Towards Realising a People-empowered Society**

When the world joins together to build a cohesive people-empowered society, it is necessary to ensure that benefits of development encompass all sections of the civilisation. World-over, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and deprivation are driving forward the forces of anger, hatred and violence. These forces link themselves to some earlier real or perceived historical enmities, tyrannies, injustice, inequities, ethnic issues and religious fundamentalism, flowing into an outburst of extremism worldwide. Many nations have witnessed, and are witnessing, the manifestation of reaction against such inequalities. We have to jointly address ourselves to the root causes of such phenomena for finding lasting solutions for promoting peace.

## **Evolution of Enlightened Society**

With this spirit of righteousness in the heart, dear friends, I would like to put forth to my class an important outcome of evolving righteous citizens across the world, which I call as the "Evolution of enlightened society". I have shared these thoughts with many intellectuals in national and international fora. How do we create such an enlightened society? The foundation for evolving an enlightened society should be based on imparting education



with global value system to the youth, transforming religion into spirituality and accelerating the economic development missions for societal transformation with inclusive growth across the nations. The evolution of enlightened society will be our most prominent framework in ensuring the sustainability of the prosperity and peace achieved through the global missions. You can find details on the evolution of enlightened citizens on my web site and in the book Family and the Nation.

### **Conclusion: Evolution of Prosperous, Happy and Peaceful Society**

To achieve the people-empowered state, the basic foundation should start from education. Education, in its real sense, is the pursuit of truth. It is an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment. Such a journey opens up new vistas of development of humanism where there is neither scope nor room for corruption, disharmony, jealousy, hatred or enmity. It transforms a human being into a wholesome whole, a noble soul and an asset to the universe. Universal brotherhood, in its true sense, becomes the sheet anchor for such education. Real education enhances the dignity of a human being and increases his or her self-respect. If only the real sense of education could be realised by each individual and carried forward in every field of human activity, the world will be a much better place to live in, leading to the evolution of a prosperous, happy and peaceful societies. How can such a society be realised?

- Evolution of prosperous, happy and peaceful society is powered by integrated global actions.
- Integrated global actions are powered by regional cooperation.
- Regional cooperation is powered by sharing of core competencies across nations.
- Sharing of core competence is powered by innovative national policies with global perspectives.
- Innovative national policies are powered by vision of the nation.
- Vision of the nation is powered by integrated thinking of global challenges.
- Integrated thinking is powered by enlightened citizenship.
- Enlightened citizenship is powered by education with value system, transforming the religion into the spirituality and sustained development.
- Evolution of enlightened citizenship will ultimately emanate to creative leadership.

Creative leader has unique qualities of thinking, what my nation or organisation can give to the mankind? Another important quality of the creative leader is that they think about sustainable development and peace which goes beyond the boundaries of the individual nations. Creative leader works for confluence of civilisation to overcome the conflicts of cultures. What we need in the world today is a number of creative leaders who collectively

enrich the planet earth and human civilisation. I am sure that many of you may transform into such creative leaders, bringing peace and prosperity to India and many other nations.

Apart from economic prosperity we discussed so far, what we need is a carrier of eternal goodness and wholesomeness in human conduct, which is 'Righteousness'.

As we say in our nation:

### **Righteousness in the heart**

Where there is righteousness in the heart  
There is beauty in the character.  
When there is beauty in the character,  
There is harmony in the home.  
When there is harmony in the home,  
There is an order in the nation.  
When there is order in the nation,  
There is peace in the world.

Friends, you can see that if we have one unique quality of individual family that will result in beauty in the character and in turn harmony in the home, leading to order in the nation and finally a peaceful world.

My best wishes to all of you.  
May God bless you all.

### **Author's Profile**

**Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam** is notable scientist and engineer and served as the President of India from 2002 to 2007. He has been honored with many national and international awards including highest civilian awards in India like Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and Bharat Ratna.