

Gandhinagar, 5 January, 2018

**GNLU PRESS NOTE**

**No. 02/2018**

**We have to think big, but also remain inclusive: His Excellency Ambassador (Retd.)**

**Mr. Eric Gonsalves addresses the GNLU Students**

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Dear Sir/Madam,

On 5th January, 2018, the GNLU Centre for Foreign Policy and Security Studies organized the Distinguished Ambassador Lecture Series. The Lecture was delivered by Ambassador (Retd.) HE Mr. Eric Gonsalves, Former Ambassador of India to European Union and Japan and former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, on the topic, “Current and Future Trends in International Relations”.

Mr. Gonsalves focused on three key trends. First, he provided a bird’s eye view of the current global situation. He further emphasized on Asia and India’s neighbourhood, and finally set out his personal views on the best way to achieve India’s national interests and play an international role commensurate with her past and future endowments.

Through the course of his lecture, Mr. Gonsalves highlighted a fundamental dilemma faced in international relations. In today’s world, the contradiction between the total sovereignty demanded by nation states and the increasing need to regulate the burgeoning interdependence between them has never been satisfactorily resolved. The interdependence is necessary to regulate politics, territory, security, and economics, however, sovereign control is what affects an individual day to day life. In his view, seeking a balance between the two is perhaps the most notable, important function of diplomacy and available forums such as the United Nations and the SAARC.

While addressing key challenges in Asia, Mr. Gonsalves noted the regional disparity in economic cooperation and consolidation - efforts in the Middle East have reached fruition, the success in South



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Asia has been minimal. Asia continues to remain the only continent where no continental system for security, economic cooperation or connectivity has been contemplated, despite several ambitions of leaders such as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He highlighted the key issues of the region, such as the South China Sea standoff, and the relations between India and Pakistan, noting the need for a future Asia to accommodate India and China to remain strong.

Given this scenario, the question he posed and centered his focus around was how to take India's interests forward. First, he identified key problems: the dependence on imports for defence equipment, a requirement for research & development, and the image India has abroad. He then went on to trace possible solutions to these issues. Drawing from his experience in Tokyo, he suggested an improvement in the education system and syllabi, to cover manufacturing skills and latest technology. He further recommended that the projection of India needs to improve, by ensuring coordination and joint action between agencies abroad, in addition to cultural and economic work. With regular visits abroad, and facilitating tie-ups, India can court smaller nations the same way China has in the past. His concluding remarks perhaps struck the biggest chord with the audience, where he stated, "We have to think big, but also remain inclusive".

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