

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE MEMBERS OF 66TH
NDC COURSE**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, October 13, 2026

I am happy to address this gathering of senior officers from Indian Armed Forces, Civil Services and officers from Friendly Foreign Countries. I extend a warm welcome to all of you.

The security and technological landscapes are changing rapidly, bringing new and complex challenges. These developments call for greater preparedness, strategic foresight and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Fast decision-making mechanism is also becoming more important because the techniques of modern warfare have expanded into cyber security, space technology, and biotechnology apart from the traditional domains.

I am told that the NDC course prepares senior officers of the civil services and defence personnel from India and friendly countries for higher responsibilities in national security and public policy. I am confident that the close interactions during the course have enriched your outlook on many national and international issues. Such courses help in paving the way for building pragmatic synergy in international relations through interactions at the highest level.

Today, national security extends beyond military capabilities. It requires close cooperation between scientific institutions and the armed forces to translate innovation into practical solutions. Recent conflicts have highlighted the importance of cost-effective technologies that complement advanced defence systems and make the best use of available resources.

In this context, government initiatives play an important role in strengthening the link between innovation and national security. The Research, Development and Innovation Scheme of the Government of India is a coordinated initiative to promote indigenous research and technological development. It supports not only deep-tech startups but also the development of technologies critical to strategic requirements, economic security and Atmanirbharta.

Dear Officers,

Many countries like India have recognized that the future landscape of national security would witness convergence of Quantum Technologies, Biotechnologies and Artificial Intelligence. Space-based capabilities have also become important for national security. The use of Artificial Intelligence in various domains of science, national security and economic activities is increasing by the day. This technology is going to increasingly assist in strategic decision making. However, decision making cannot be outsourced exclusively to this technology. A balanced approach needs to be calibrated. I am happy to note that your course modules and various interactions that you have had, address different dimensions of emerging concerns.

Dear Officers,

Many ancient Indian texts have elaborate descriptions about security response mechanism and duties that a ruler must be aware of. The Valmiki Ramayan and Mahabharat present exhaustive narration of the many steps that a ruler is required to take to secure the state. When Bharat goes to meet his elder brother in Chitrakoot during Bhagwan Ram's early days of Vanvaas, Shri Ram puts before him a detailed list of questions about how he was conducting the affairs of the kingdom.

The questions cover important dimensions of statecraft. Apart from military readiness, he asks question about strategic decision-making and intelligence gathering strategies. He subsequently enquires about fiscal management, justice, public welfare and external relations.

Similarly, in the Shanti Parv of Mahabharat, Yudhishtir asks Bheeshma Pitamah how a ruler should govern. In his exhaustive reply, Bheeshma elaborates several aspects of statecraft and the duties and responsibilities of an able ruler. He talks about the strategies to protect the kingdom and subdue the enemies, including the management of spying network.

The guidance from Bheeshma goes beyond security. It emphasises security with societal cohesion. Under his theory of righteous rule, Bheeshma defines economic resources, diplomacy, defence and internal peace as its integral parts.

Dear Officers,

Economic resilience is an integral part of national security framework. Indian economy has demonstrated, time and again, its capabilities to absorb disruptions created by external factors. India has accomplished this without compromising the strategic freedom of action.

I am sure that this course has equipped you with insights that would help you to contribute to the domains of strategic thinking and leadership responsibilities. The experience that you had here will enable you to contribute to strengthening the overall national security framework of the country you represent.

I extend my best wishes to each of you for success in your future endeavours and hope that you grow from strength to strength as seasoned professionals.

Thank you!
Jai Hind!
Jai Bharat!