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'India needs a strategy to attain major power status'

CHECKING IN

T V PAUL, Professor and Director, University of Montreal-McGill Research Program in International Security, firmly believes that India will have to devise a cohesive strategy to overcome many constraints if it wants to attain the 'Major Power' status.

Paul who has authored books like *Power versus Prudence: Why Nations Forgo Nuclear Weapons*, *The World Order and India: Challenge and Integration in the Major Power System* (with Baldev Nayar/Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), *International Order and the Future of World Politics* (Cambridge University Press) was in the city to deliver a lecture on 'India and the World Order' at Nehru Centre. He shared some thoughts with ABHISHEK SHARAN.

■ **How do you define the present New International Order?**

The United States of America is the most dominant player in this system. The 'NIO' is quasi-unipolar, there are many other important players in it that carry tremendous weight. They are the European Union (EU), China, Britain, France and Germany within the EU, and lastly, India. Still, the nature of actual power distribution is undefined here.

■ **Do you think that America's war against Afghanistan has been a confrontation between nation states and dangerous sub-national actors like terrorism?**

Yes, it is. If America would have lost against sub-national actors like Taliban and Al-Qaeda,



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its repercussions might have been devastating for the survival of stable, nation states. But with America's victory, this challenge has been temporarily quelled.

■ **Are India's long-term foreign policy goals also driven by a desire to acquire power?**

The longstanding foreign policy goal of India's ruling elites has been to achieve major power status. Though, they have always couched this ambition in normative terms. But it is still looked upon only as a 'potential power'.

■ **What is needed to become a major power?**

Conventional definitions emphasise upon military power as constituting the key ingredient towards the attainment of a 'Major Power Status'. Nations that possess the most physical power to hurt, deprive, deny, or provide military security to others could wield dominant status.

■ **So, even now, premises of Hans Morgenthau's Realist School which defines international relations in terms of naked power**

struggle holds sway?

That forms the core of global politics. But, now, scholars give more importance to around 10 other key factors as well which is essential to attain major power status. Some are hard power resources - military, economics, knowledge and technology and demographic while others are soft power resources - norms, leadership role in international institutions, culture, state capacity to control its people, strategy and diplomacy. Each of these are inter-dependent.

■ **Based on these parameters then, what are India's chances of becoming a major power?**

A comparison with the five major powers will be instructive in this regard. The parameters will be Territorial Size, Gross National Product (GNP), GNP at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), Per Capita, Per Capita at PPP, Average Annual Economic Growth, Military Expenditures, and Active Armed Forces. The results are mixed as far as India's capabilities are concerned.