

**091105 Speech by Dr Ewa Bjorling, Swedish minister for Trade, at the Swedish Indian Defence seminar in New Dehli**

Distinguished Participants and Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to make some comments on the occasion of the seminar on India Sweden Defence Partnership "Forging Alliances".

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to meet with such a distinguished group, representing the most important and valued contacts for the Swedish companies here today - Kockums, SAAB, BAE Systems, Volvo and Ericsson.

Sweden has for decades been non-aligned located between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. To be trustworthy we had to develop and build our own defence system. We had to spend a lot on research and development and set aside substantial resources in order to keep a standard that was technologically on par with what other countries had. That is why we still today have a state of the art defence system.

The challenge of today is to manage risks, threats and vulnerabilities that are different in character. We need different strategies for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The traditional goals of ensuring territorial integrity and national sovereignty must therefore be complemented with securing critical functions in society.

Societies are dependent on safe, secure, and efficient flows of goods, services, capital, people, and electronic signals. If critical functions such as transportation, energy, health-care systems, food security, communications, and financial systems are debilitated - either by an intentional act of terrorism, an accident, or through a natural disaster- it will have severe consequences for everyone in society.

It is crucial that a shared approach is taken by all of us, as societal vulnerabilities are amplified by globalisation, interconnected technological systems, and an ever-faster pace of innovation and evolution of science and technology. In an interconnected world, no nation can isolate itself from events, as consequences can easily spread over jurisdictional and geographical borders.

In essence, there is a merger of the domestic and the international arenas. Nations are moving towards regional and global webs of dependencies and interdependencies. While it still matters what a neighbouring nation does, increasingly, what happens on the other side of the globe may be just as consequential.

In Europe, we continue to evolve the European Union. With the Lisbon Treaty, we will also get new instruments and institutions to develop the common foreign and security policies. Much has been done in that respect. We have launched 28 European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions in different parts of the world. The most demanding today is probably the forces that we have in Chad and the Central African Republic, in order to protect the humanitarian efforts of the UN and others. An ESDP mission was also crucial in implementing the peace agreement in Aceh in Indonesia a couple of years ago.

We are building up increasingly important rule of law missions in areas such as Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. More must come. We are, with the new treaty soon entering into force, aiming at a Europe which is far more of a voice and an actor on the global stage.

This also applies in our relationship with India. I do consider this to be one of our strategically most important relationships in the decades ahead. On paper, of course, there is strategic partnership between India and the European Union, since the summit between India and the European Union in The Hague in November 2005.

India and the European Union are the two largest democracies in the world. We are multi ethnic, multi religious and multi regional to a higher degree than any other major political entity around the globe. We share a pluralistic, secular and democratic framework that defines the values that are important also in our respective relationships with the rest of the world.

Both India and the European Union give priority to the shaping of a peaceful environment for our respective political, economic and social developments. Both of us do it in neighbourhoods that are not always ideal from that particular point of view. Increasingly, we must recognise that these neighbourhoods that we are concerned with are the same neighbourhoods: the areas in between India and the European Union. We look here at the threats that we are facing. The threat of fragile, failing or failed states. The emergence of areas of lawlessness and chaos. The rise of fundamentalists and terrorism. The risk of a true clash of religions and civilisations, as well as clashes within religions and civilisations.

The challenges of energy supply and energy security. The risks that lie in a further proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

All of these issues are of profound global concern. They lie in the regions between India and the European Union. It is an area of concern to us, from the political, economic and security point of view. It is an area where the common interests and common values of India and the European Union make for a strong common interest in the search for lasting solutions and enduring stability.

These, and many more, are issues where I believe India and the European Union share common interests and common ideas. There are strong reasons to seek to develop the strategic partnership further.

In this age, of the accelerating globalisation, there is a need to look at strategic relationships across the world in order to safeguard our interests and to secure our values. A stronger relationship between India, as it emerges as an increasingly important and democratic power, and the European Union as it now consolidates its institution for its common and foreign security policies is, in my opinion, clearly called for.

In the defence field, Sweden and India have participated in many international peace-keeping activities together. It shows that both of us share the same kind of responsibilities when there are conflicts that must be solved. A recent example is the mission, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions, to contribute to the deterrence and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast.

We must also engage to secure a stable Afghanistan, and to understand that this will require our sustained commitment for many years to come. Building peace, as we should have learnt by now, is somewhat more complex than just winning a war. Recent steps to increase the coherence of the international efforts in the country are therefore most welcome.

The industrial and commercial relations between India and Sweden are impressively strong and vital. Our business co-operation goes back almost 100 years. Many Swedish companies - such as Sandvik, Atlas Copco, SKF, Alfa Laval, Ericsson, Tetra Pak, Volvo, have a long history of trade and co-operation with India. Several of them also have production here.

Since the early days of our business relations, India has not only developed into a large economy in the world but has also become one of Sweden's most important business partners. It goes without saying that also for my government, India is an excellent partner. We have had and continue to have successful co-operation in many fields since we established diplomatic relations in 1948.

Personally, I am convinced that there is plenty of room for even deeper and closer co-operation between Sweden and India, in several fields. Both nations are global leaders in a number of industrial and technological fields. We share a passion for innovation and we spend substantial resources on research and development.

One specific area in which I believe we have great potential to further our co-operation is the defence sector. As you know, Sweden has some outstanding systems, technologies

and products that we would be happy to continue to share with India and - given the interest and the possibilities - also to develop together.

Today, we will focus on exciting areas which I am sure could be of interest in India, namely defence technologies for the future, including naval, army and air defence systems.

When our governments have signed the MoU concerning co-operation in the field of defence it will be an excellent platform for co-operation between our armed forces within mutually beneficial areas.

Sweden is not seeking a buyer, but a strategic partner for long-term co-operation also for future air defence and industrial development. That would serve as a guarantor for independence instead of relying on a single partner.

I hope that you will find today's presentations interesting and that this seminar could be the start of an intensified dialogue and co-operation between Sweden and India in the defence industry sector. Later, my State Secretary will elaborate on how Sweden can transfer its technologies in the field we are here to discuss today.

Thank you!