

Summary of Gen. V. R. Raghavan's presentation at the Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2009 organised by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore. (19-20 March)

### **Impact of the Obama Administration's Policies on Asia**

The impact of the Obama Administration's policies on Asia would depend on whether there will be changes in U.S. policies or a continuation of the old. As a member of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation & Disarmament, during its meeting in Washington D.C. recently, there were discussions with several senior officials of the administration like Joseph Biden, the National Security Advisor, Senator Kerry and others. The impression gathered at the time was that of a sound analysis of the global situation without an indication of new or innovative policy change in the offing. Perhaps they are still being evolved.

From the Indian perspective there are four areas where the Obama administration's impact can be felt.

- (i) Economy: To what extent would the U.S. introduce policies which will restore the U.S. global economic primacy? The revival of the economies in China, Japan and India, amongst others, would largely depend on this.
- (ii) Role in Afghanistan: The mere presence of troops and military operations in the region is not sustainable as a policy option. There is a need for long term commitment extended over 8-10 years in this unstable political environment. There is a critical requirement of the Pakistani involvement in strategic outcomes that are sought to be obtained.
- (iii) Global issues: New and inclusive policies on WTO and climate change.
- (iv) Nuclear issues: U.S. policies on Iran, NPT, CTBT and FMCT will be critical to both, nuclear stability and for supporting a new discourse emerging on nuclear disarmament. As of now, the U.S. position on the NPT Review Conference of 2010 and CTBT is unclear. India would be closely affected by U.S. policies on the subject.