



**Ambassador Vijay Nambiar, Chief of Staff to
United Nations Secretary General**

Introduction of Ambassador Vijay Nambiar by Mr. Bharat Doshi on the occasion of the thirteenth Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture held on 3rd August 2007

Ambassador Vijay Nambiar, my friends on the dais, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my privilege and pleasure this evening, to introduce Ambassador Vijay Nambiar. First of all on behalf of the Trustees of the Lalit Doshi Memorial Foundation and on my personal behalf I must thank him for flying all the way from New York to deliver this year's Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture.

This is the thirteenth lecture in the series and in the past we have had bankers, economists, politicians, bureaucrats, scientists and diplomats. Incidentally, one of the past speakers, Dr. Rakesh Mohan is also amongst us today.

On analysis of the list of the past twelve lectures, I find that - the first five lectures were delivered by eminent personalities who knew Lalit personally. Thereafter we had some speakers who did not know Lalit but when they heard about Lalit and about the memorial lecture series, and also when they saw who the previous speakers were, they were very happy to accept. This year we have some one who not only knew Lalit but was also a close friend. When Ajit Nimbalkar suggested Ambassador Vijay Nambiar's name for the lecture last year, I met Ambassador Vijay Nambiar in New York, he said not this year, but I will definitely do it next year and he kept his promise. When I approached him again this year he very graciously accepted and over the last five months just the correspondence with him and communication on different subjects has been my pleasure.

Ambassador Vijay Nambiar is one of India's most distinguished and finest diplomats, having represented India as an Ambassador in Afghanistan, Malaysia, China, Pakistan and then the United Nations.

He was also the Deputy National Security Advisor (to the Government of India) and Head of the National Security Council Secretariat after his stint as a diplomat. At some point the world needed him more than India needed him and therefore in January 2007 he was invited by the Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Ban Ki-moon to join him as the Chief of Staff at the United Nations.

His career details is given in the invitation card, so I do not want to just read out various positions he held since he joined the Indian Foreign Service. I just wanted to mention three interesting events where he was very much involved. He was very much a part of the mission which went for the first time along with Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 to China. He was very much involved at the time of the Agra discussions and the role which he played behind it and in the recent past he was a key member of the special mission that went to defuse a crisis in Lebanon.

What I am saying now is, what we always read about and know what is in public domain. There are many critical things which he has done to shape India's foreign policy which we will never know. Sir, I hope that when you retire, you will write your memoirs and we will know the various aspects as to what happened behind the scenes to make history or change history.

I would like to share with you two special reasons why I am extremely happy today. First, Vijay was Lalit's college mate at St. Xavier's College where they did their undergraduate studies together. For their postgraduate studies – Lalit joined the Department of Economics and

Vijay joined the Department of Politics at the Mumbai University – and both secured gold medals in their respective fields. I am therefore very happy that we have someone who is a personal friend of Lalit as a speaker of the day. Last evening it was very touching for me and the family members to hear from Vijay and other friends of Lalit, who were present, as they went down the memory lane remembering their time at St. Xavier's College and in particular with Lalit.

The second important reason – before commencing his journey as a Diplomat in the Indian Foreign Service – Vijay was with the Mahindra group as a management trainee and later was member of the team at the International Tractor Company of India in its early stage of formation. He worked with the group from 64 to 67. This was, of course, a few years before I joined M&M – but some of Vijay's colleagues at that time called me and wrote to me recollecting nostalgic memories. Mr. Ali Mohammed is present here today and Mr. M. R. Ramachandran (Ramu), unfortunately, due to heavy rains has not been able to come from Thane. He wrote a very nice letter remembering how Vijay was present at his wedding. All the messages which I got and the vibes which I felt made me feel very happy that a Mahindra alumnus is delivering this thirteenth memorial lecture.

Vijay, I am sorry that Malini is not here today. Maybe you will have to deliver the speech to her all over again. I am however glad that Vijay's daughter Devaki is very much present here in the audience.

At the beginning I said that I feel privileged to introduce Ambassador Nambiar. I felt privileged introducing a diplomat par excellence, a St. Xavierite, a Mahindra alumnus and above all introducing a dear friend of my brother Lalit.

Thank you very much. We look forward to listening to Ambassador Vijay Nambiar later this evening.