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My dear young friends,
Affectionate blessings.

Even in the present all-pervading atmosphere of greed, venality and disillusionment, do not despair. Do not slide into despondency. For even in these ignoble times, when vice rules and values are forgotten, we can still find reasons to rejoice and role models to follow.

The shining example of our scientific community is an inspiration in itself. Our scientists, motivated by love for their country, have turned all their energies and employed all the facilities at their disposal towards devising ways to safeguard our national security. They have succeeded in discovering ways of reinforcing our national security to the point where our citizens can feel safe and secure.

Recall how our army, unaffected by the malaise of petty self-interest, defended the nation against assault with exemplary courage, superlative military skills and unshakeable self-confidence. The enemy was not just routed, but, utterly vanquished in a matter of weeks. The valour and fortitude with which the sudden and vicious attack on our forces in Kargil was repelled is a testimony to the matchless mettle of our soldiers.

During the Chinese attack on India in 1962, it was not our brave army that failed the nation, but our gullible leadership that failed the army and the nation. Our armed forces proved themselves yet again during the liberation of Bangladesh, when they took 93,000 enemy soldiers prisoner.

Can this proud tradition endure? Will it survive the ever-increasing onslaught of materialism and consumerism? Post-Independence India has become a slavish imitator of the west, which had once held our nation captive and is now trying to recapture it by insidious means. Multinationals hold out the dream of a consumerist paradise, promoting programmes like *KAUN BANEGA CROREPATI* which sanctify greed and seek to inculcate acquisitiveness in our young