



The Future of US-India Relations

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In the two years that I have served in New Delhi, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has been a splendid partner in everything I have tried to do to further the US-India relationship. It has energetically promoted the flow of people and information between our countries, including showing consummate hospitality to many visiting US dignitaries to India.

A key CII accomplishment during my time here has been the creation of the CII-Aspen Strategy Group, led by its co-patrons Dr. Henry Kissinger and Mr. Ratan Tata. This strategic forum has allowed policy makers and the private sectors in both countries to discuss seriously how the burgeoning US-India bilateral relationship fits into the emerging international system of the Twenty-First Century.

In short, CII has been a steadfast, energetic, and inventive collaborator for the US Mission in India, for the Bush Administration, and for the American public more broadly.

Friends and colleagues from CII, thank you for all your extraordinary efforts and for hosting me here today.

The Bad Old Days

When President George W. Bush took office in January 2001, India had not been on Washington's primary policy agenda, except for a persistent US preoccupation with India as a nuclear proliferation problem of the first magnitude. For years, succeeding American administrations had pressed India to sign the Non Proliferation Treaty. Over time, this campaign was reinforced by strong US pressure on New Delhi to avoid nuclear testing. Finally, the United States mounted an energetic effort to persuade India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

These three contentious subjects had dominated the substance of our bilateral exchanges since the 1980s, sometimes in frequent and quiet high-level meetings, sometimes in public admonitions from Washington that sought to teach India what was best for its own national security. In response, India instinctively drew on its store of bitter anti-colonial rhetoric, simply substituting the United States in its pronouncements for another proper noun.

Always in the foreground in recent years were the 1998 US nuclear sanctions against India and, as important, the Administration frame of mind that those sanctions represented. In this regard, India was not seen in Washington as an essential and cooperative part of solutions to major international problems. Rather, India was one of the problems -- a nuclear renegade whose policies threatened the entire non-proliferation regime, and which must be brought to its senses so that its nuclear weapons program could be rolled back to zero. With India's reaction to this continual American carping being defiance or worse, the two sides intermittently conducted what was mostly a dialogue of the deaf that did little to narrow the seeming unbridgeable gap between the two sides on these nuclear issues.

It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the rest of the government-to-government relationship between India and America during this time was feeble. It was as if the largest and most powerful democracies had nothing else to talk about except India's nuclear weapons program, and episodically, how to defuse the latest crisis in South Asia. There was little diplomatic cooperation between Washington and New Delhi. Virtually no military-to-military interaction took place. No worthwhile intelligence exchanges were underway. Law enforcement collaboration was puny. And the visits of senior American government representatives to India were about as rare as white Bengal tiger sightings in the wild.

President Bush's Big Idea

And then the extraordinary change began. I worked on the White House foreign policy transition team in the month before President Bush's inauguration. During those weeks, current National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, her Deputy Steve Hadley and I continually discussed how we could help the new President quickly implement his big idea of transforming the US-India relationship on the enduring foundation of shared democratic values and congruent vital national interests.

This profound strategic and moral concept had been formed and articulated by then Governor Bush during his presidential campaign. His big idea is that by working together more intensely than ever before, the United States and India, two vibrant democracies, can transform the very essence of our bilateral bonds and thereby make the world freer, more peaceful, and more prosperous. In short, President Bush has a global approach to US-India relations, consistent with the rise of India as a world power.

When I first asked him in Austin Texas, in early 1999, about the reasons for his obvious and noteworthy interest in India, he immediately responded, "a billion people in a functioning democracy. Isn't that something? Isn't that something?" Knowing that Prime Minister Vajpayee believed that the United States and India were natural allies, we developed a roadmap in early January 2001 -- if I may use that term -- to accomplish the strategic invigoration of the bilateral relationship, which we presented to the President and which he approved. We were on our way, with the two respective bureaucracies to be driven by top-down direction by the two heads of government.

Two years later, US-India relations have achieved remarkable accomplishments based, on the US side, on a radically different approach to policy interaction with India. No longer does Washington regard India as an acute and abiding international proliferation risk that must be carefully managed and constantly lectured. Marking the first time in five years that a senior US official had come to India to discuss civil nuclear collaboration, in February 2003 Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Richard Meserve toured the Tarapur Atomic Power Station and the Bhabha Atomic Research Center. There are ongoing parallel efforts regarding high technology transfer and civil space cooperation.

No longer does the United States fixate on India's nuclear weapons and missile programs. No more constant American nagging nanny on these subjects, and no longer does the US largely view its relationship with India through a prism that must always include India's next-door neighbor. In short, the Bush Administration perceives India as a strategic opportunity for the United States, not as an irritating recalcitrant. Indeed, as a diplomatic historian, I can think of few instances in history in which the conceptualization and core components of a bilateral relationship -- especially between two democracies -- have been so transformed in so short a time by peaceful means.

Tangible Bilateral Advancement

As you know, the 1998 US sanctions against India are long gone, waived by President Bush. With more than 100 Administration policymakers visiting India in the past two years, diplomatically we cooperate closely concerning Afghanistan; with respect to Nepal; and on other crucial issues related to this region, including its real and potential sources of instability. We exchange views on the Gulf and the greater Middle East. We closely engage at the United Nations where we once conducted open warfare against one another. Washington works with the Government of India to share ideas on how to tighten export controls for sensitive technologies to be sure that they do not find their way into the hands of terrorists or, in some cases, their state sponsors. How things have changed for the better.

At the same time, and as you may have noticed, there have been some disagreements between India and the United States on the issue of Iraq. Let me only stress here that in my judgment, the two governments have managed these differing perspectives with sensitivity and skill. It is no surprise that these two great democracies with their dissimilar histories, their unlike domestic political constituencies, and their current, somewhat contending, perceptions of how best to deal with the challenge of

bringing democracy to a stable and viable Iraq, should not yet have come to a meeting of the minds.

But this time, and contrary to the dismal decades of the Cold War, we have disagreed in our official exchanges concerning Iraq without vitriol, without accusation, and without inflamed rhetoric. Instead, we always speak to one another regarding Iraq with respect, and in the context of our burgeoning bilateral ties. That, my friends, is another important example of the increasing maturity of the transformed US-India relationship.

On the topical issue of Indian troops for Iraq, the United States had obviously hoped that India would take a different decision. But the transformation of US-India relations that I am describing will not be affected in the slightest by this particular outcome of India's governmental democratic processes.

In the military-to-military dimension, we now have at least one joint military exercise or engagement each month. These exercises cover a range of military skills and are focused on improving our capacity for combined military operations across the board -- by Special Forces against terrorists, maritime interdiction, search and rescue, air lift support, logistics transport and airborne assault. In June and July 2002, the Indian Navy Ships Sukanya and Sharda conducted escort patrols for American ships through the Malacca Straits, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Knowing what they would be up against if they had to deal with the Indian navy, the pirates sensibly stayed away. With American warships now routinely refueling in Chennai and Mumbai, we saw last September the largest ever US-India naval exercise. We are in the planning stages for a fighter aircraft exchange. In 2003, more than 180 high-ranking leaders from the Indian security community will attend conferences sponsored by the US Department of Defense.

To put it directly, US military personnel like interacting with their Indian counterparts because they both come from professional cultures that believe that their central mission is to fight and win wars. How many armies can one say that about today? In short, Indian and American soldiers are warriors. That deep commonality is not going to change in either military establishment. In US defense sales to India, we have gone from zero to almost \$200 million in the past fourteen months, and are poised for far more ambitious interaction in this field, including the possible Indian purchase of defensive nuclear, biological and chemical equipment, Special Forces gear, and P3 Orion Maritime Patrol aircraft.

With respect to intelligence exchange and law enforcement, together we are going hard after the bad guys. The FBI and US Customs Service have intensified beyond recognition their cooperative activities with Indian colleagues to investigate terrorism, major crimes, money laundering, smuggling and customs violations. We regularly share information to detect and counter potential terrorist attacks, and strengthen our respective homeland security. In October 2001, we signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, that we hope will soon come into force, to counter criminal activities more effectively. In April 2002, a US-India cybersecurity forum was launched to boost our bilateral cooperation in this domain.

The American Drug Enforcement Administration is in constant contact with the Indian Narcotics Control Bureau and the Central Bureau of Narcotics to exchange information and develop drug cases. In concert with the Central Bureau of Narcotics, we are developing a methodology for predicting the size of legitimate opium yields to help control diversion of opium from legal to illicit uses. And we are stepping up our joint efforts to deal with the problem of Trafficking in Persons, a serious problem in both the United States and in India.

Regarding the \$145 million annual USAID program to India, our focus is on child, maternal and reproductive health; urban water and sanitation; institutional regulatory reform; disaster management; energy; and the environment. These all are important programs, but let me concentrate briefly on our crucial cooperative effort with the Government of India - the fight against HIV/AIDS. This is a global preoccupation of President Bush, as we have just seen on his recent trip to Africa. Since I feel so strongly about the subject of the spread of HIV/AIDS in India, may I repeat what I have said previously.

In the context of the transformed US-India relationship, the United States has made it a priority to work with India to address this calamity. Since 1998, the US Government has dedicated \$63 million to combating HIV/AIDS in India. Over the next five years, the total American government contribution could be as high as \$120 million. In addition to this direct assistance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health are funding joint US-India research projects and supporting scientific collaboration to develop an HIV/AIDS vaccine. The US Government has pledged US \$1 billion to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria -- more than any other donor. India has already benefited from the fund, and we will continue to be strong advocates for India to receive additional funding.

To prevent a looming catastrophe, we must make our efforts to contain and defeat HIV/AIDS a much higher priority. We must all act together to fight this battle -- and I mean all of us: India, the United States, other nations, donors, multilateral institutions, businesses, non-governmental organizations, foundations, health care workers, and all sectors of society. Time is against us. Complacency, timidity, ignorance, and denial can weave a cloak of indifference and discrimination beneath which the ravages of HIV/AIDS thrive. This must not happen to India.

The Missing Piece

I would like now to say something about our bilateral economic ties. India's large and talented labor pool makes it possible for it to become yet another "Asian miracle." Indeed, it already has shown its mettle through spectacular accomplishments in information technology and software. As President Bush has remarked to Prime Minister Vajpayee, human resources and intellectual capital are India's greatest asset. As a nation, you have great DNA. This advantage will have a multiplier effect on the economy when second-generation policy reforms present businesses and consumers with the right incentives. There is so much pent-up dynamism at the micro level of India's economy that Indian entrepreneurs and workers will amplify the benefits of these reforms as they are introduced.

An India that tosses its License Raj and red tape into History's dustbin would be ever more competitive in trade and the international capital markets, and that would bring increased American investment. An India that vitalizes its economy would buy more US goods and services and, thereby, help improve the balance of trade, which heavily and increasingly flows in India's favor. And finally, an India that brings its people out of poverty at a more rapid rate through economic growth would be an inspiration to democracies everywhere, and to the international community as a whole. This modernization of US-India economic interaction based on Indian economic reform is the missing piece in our transforming bilateral relationship.

On the geopolitical side, an India that takes full advantage of its extraordinary human capital to boost its economy would be a more effective strategic partner of the US in coming decades, including in promoting peace, prosperity, stability and freedom in Asia. An India that enters into a full-fledged series of second-generation domestic economic reforms would inevitably play an increasingly influential role in international affairs across the board. That, too, would be beneficial for the United States.

In his book *Diplomacy*, Henry Kissinger writes that the international system of the Twenty-First Century "will contain at least six major power centers - the United States, Europe, China, Japan, Russia, and probably India..."

It is up to India to make sure that it remains on that list. **A Bright US-India Strategic Future**

Close and collaborative strategic relations between America and India will further blossom over the long run, most importantly because of the convergence of our democratic values; our vital national interests; and our rapidly expanding people-to-people ties.

Our shared democratic principles bind us - a common respect for individual freedom, the rule of law, the importance of civil society, and peaceful inter-state relations.

With respect to overlapping vital national interests, my big three for the next decade and beyond are to promote peace and freedom in Asia; to combat international terrorism about which more later; and to slow the spread of weapons of mass destruction. It is difficult for me -- and this is a momentous strategic reality - to think of any nations other than India and the United States that will face to the same intense degree all three of these intense challenges simultaneously in the period ahead. Let me repeat them. Advancing Asian stability based on democratic values. Confronting daily the threat of international terror. Slowing the further spread of weapons of mass destruction. This daunting trio will be an encompassing foundation for US-India strategic cooperation for many years to come.

Regarding people-to-people connections, allow me to give you just a few statistics. Since I arrived in India, the US consular sections in Kolkata, New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai have issued more than a half a million business and tourist visas. And, please listen carefully, the overall visa issuance rate for India is the same today as it was before 9/11, and there are no long visa lines at US diplomatic facilities in India.

In addition, India has become the second greatest source of legal immigration to the United States, second only to Mexico. This is not a one-way flow. In 2002, our consular sections registered more than 5,000 new Americans in India, and the total number of US citizens in India is more than 65,000. Last year, India became the

single largest source of foreign students in the United States, over 66,000. This number of Indian students has grown by fifty per cent in the past 24 months. In 2002, India was second only to Germany as the country of choice for American senior scholars seeking Fulbright grants to study overseas. And we all know the extraordinary and growing contributions Indian Americans are making to US society.

September 11, 2001 And The War On Terrorism

In early 2001, none of us imagined in our darkest nightmares that the US-India transformation that the President and Prime Minister were so determined to establish would be dramatically accelerated by a cowardly terrorist attack on the American homeland that killed thousands of my countrymen and women, and their foreign friends and colleagues. There is currently a lively academic debate regarding how much the September 11 assault changed the international system. But there is no doubt that day produced a huge shift in the national psychology of the citizens of the United States.

America suddenly realized what Indians had tragically known for well over a decade - that there were individuals in the world so depraved, so evil, that they would scrupulously plan and meticulously carry out the large-scale murder of utterly guiltless human beings. Old people. Babies. The sick and the lame. Any innocent they could kill was a potential target. Like our friends in India, we in the United States came quickly to understand that these terrorists would attempt these murderous acts again, and again, and again. We now know that the best means to end their malevolence is to bring them to justice, or bring terminal justice to them. That is what the global war on terrorism in its essence is all about. As is my custom, let me be blunt. We must get the terrorists before they get us.

Some say that with respect to identifying terrorism, "it depends." To the contrary, I say that defeating terrorism for the United States and India is a matter of survival for ourselves, for our democratic values, for our religious freedom, for our children, for everything that we hold dear. Socrates thought that, "the beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms." So let us please clearly name for what they are those who murder innocents for political motives and who seek to bring down the very pillars of our democracy -- in New York, in Washington, at the Assembly in Srinagar, at the Parliament in New Delhi, and presently nearly every day in J&K.

These murderers are not misunderstood idealists. They are not disadvantaged dissidents. They are not religious perfectionists. And they are not freedom fighters.

They are terrorists, and we should never fail to call them exactly that.

Working with dozens of like-minded nations, the United States and India must have zero tolerance for terrorism. We will win the war on terrorism. And that war will not see victory until terrorism against India is ended once and for all. To quote my former Harvard colleague and Ambassador to India, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "reason and careful moral reflection...teach us that there are times when the first and the most important reply to evil is to stop it."

There is no better way to end this, my final policy speech as US Ambassador to India, than with Pat Moynihan's words, which I now repeat as our joint US-India mantra in the war against terrorism: "the first and most important reply to evil is to stop it."

And stop it we will, together.

Thank you.



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