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AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND USA

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

India is an indispensable partner for the United States. India and the United States have built a strong and strategic bilateral relationship and continued to contribute the stability and prosperity of the world. India's growing national capabilities give it ever greater tools to pursue its national interests to the benefit of the United States. India has the world's third-largest Army, fourth-largest Air Force, and fifth largest Navy. All three of these services are modernizing, and the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy have world-class technical resources, and its Army is seeking more of them. The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru likened American Imperialism to that of British. He propounded and propagated the Non-Alignment Principle whereby India refused to join either the capitalistic US or the communist Soviet Union. India's socialistic economic principles and deep scepticism to the US hegemony resulted in its predilections towards USSR much to the ire of the West. As the ideological Cold War ended after a myriad of international convergences and divergences, India was forced to look West given the paradigm shift in the geopolitics of the world and in Francis Fukuyama's words "End of History". Today both India and US are among the most vibrant foreign cohorts and strategic partners.

INTRODUCTION

India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a "global strategic partnership", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. The emphasis placed by the Government in India on development and good governance has created opportunity to reinvigorate bilateral ties and enhance cooperation under the motto --- "Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go", and "Sanjha Prayas, Sab ka Vikas" (Shared Effort, Progress for All) adopted during the summits of our leaders in September 2014 and January 2015 respectively. Regular exchange of high level political visits has provided sustained momentum to bilateral cooperation, while the wide-ranging and ever-expanding dialogue architecture has established a long-term framework for India-U.S. engagement. Today, the India-U.S. bilateral cooperation is broad-based and multi-sectoral, covering trade and investment, defence and security, education, science and technology, cyber security, high-technology, civil nuclear energy, space technology and applications, clean energy, environment, agriculture and health. Vibrant people-to-people interaction and support across the political spectrum in both countries nurture our bilateral relationship.

travel to the Silicon Valley. There is frequent interaction between the leadership of the two countries, including telephone calls and meetings on the sidelines of international summits. A hotline has been established between the Prime Minister's Office and the U.S. White House.

India-U.S. Dialogue Architecture

There are more than 50 bilateral dialogue mechanisms between the two governments. The first meeting of the Strategic and Commercial Dialogue at the level of EAM and MoS (Commerce & Industry) was held in Washington DC on 22 September 2015; it has added a commercial component to the five traditional pillars of bilateral relations on which the erstwhile Strategic Dialogue has focussed, namely: Strategic Cooperation; Energy and Climate Change, Education and Development; Economy, Trade and Agriculture; Science and Technology; and Health and Innovation. In addition, there are Ministerial-level dialogues involving home (Homeland Security Dialogue), finance (Financial and Economic Partnership), commerce (Trade Policy Forum), HRD (Higher Education Dialogue), Science & Technology (Joint Commission Meeting on S & T) and energy (Energy Dialogue).

RECENT RELATIONS

Political Relations

The frequency of high-level visits and exchanges between India and the U.S. has gone up significantly of late. Prime Minister Modi visited the U.S. on 26-30 September 2014; he held meetings with President Obama, members of the U.S. Congress and political leaders, including from various States and cities in the U.S., and interacted with members of President Obama's Cabinet. He also reached out to the captains of the U.S. commerce and industry, the American civil society and think-tanks, and the Indian American community. A Vision Statement and a Joint Statement were issued during the visit. The visit was followed by President Obama's visit to India on 25-27 January 2015 as the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day. During the visit, the two sides issued a Delhi Declaration of Friendship and adopted a Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region. Both sides elevated the Strategic Dialogue between their Foreign Ministers to Strategic and Commercial Dialogue of Foreign and Commerce Ministers. Prime Minister Modi again visited the U.S. on 23-28 September 2015, during which he held a bilateral meeting with President Obama, interacted with leaders of business, media, academia, the provincial leaders and the Indian community, including during his

Major Exchanges in 2015

There were a number of high-level delegations in both directions in 2015. In January, Secretary of State John Kerry led the U.S. delegation to the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Ahmedabad. In February, U.S. Secretary of Treasury Jacob Lew visited India for the fifth meeting of the Economic and Financial Partnership Initiative with our Finance Minister. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx visited India in April for meeting with his counterpart Ministers in India. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter paid a bilateral visit to India in June. From the Indian side, Finance Minister and MOS (IC) for Environment, Forests & Climate Change visited Washington DC in April, the former for the Spring meeting of the IMF/World Bank and the latter for the Major Economies' Forum meeting. Finance Minister again visited the U.S. in June to promote Investment into India. External Affairs Minister and MOS(IC) for Commerce & Industry co-chaired the first meeting of the Strategic and Commercial Dialogue with their U.S. counterparts in Washington DC in September. MOS(IC) for Power held the Energy Dialogue with his U.S. counterpart in September in Washington DC. MOS(IC) for Power, Coal and New & Renewable Energy also attended the Climate and Clean Energy Investment Forum 2015 hosted by Secretary of State Kerry in Washington DC in October. MOS(IC) for Commerce & Industry held the 9th meeting of the

Trade Policy Forum with the U.S. Trade Representative in Washington DC in October. Raksha Mantri visited the U.S. at the invitation of his U.S. counterpart in December 2015. Chief Minister of Haryana led a delegation of the State government in August. There have been numerous visits of parliamentarians and senior officials in both directions.

Strategic Consultations

There have been regular contacts at political and official levels on bilateral, regional and global issues. Foreign Office Consultations, at the level of Foreign Secretary of India and US Undersecretary for Political Affairs, are an important part of the dialogue structure. The last round of Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi in April 2015. A new High-level Consultation between Foreign Secretary of India and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, and a Policy Planning Dialogue were launched in September 2015; these two mechanisms have already met for the first time, respectively in December 2015 and November 2015 in New Delhi. India and U.S. have in recent years instituted structured dialogues covering East Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, Africa and the Indian Ocean Region. India and the U.S. also have a trilateral with Japan (the first Ministerial-level meeting of the Foreign Ministers took place on 29 September 2015 in New York) and a trilateral with Afghanistan (last meeting held in 2013). Matters relating to international security and disarmament, multilateral export control regimes are reviewed under the Strategic Security Dialogue, while issues relating to high-technology trade are discussed in the India-U.S. High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG); both these groups, led by Foreign Secretary of India and her counterparts in the US Departments of State and Commerce respectively, last met in November 2014 in New Delhi. The two sides have agreed to work closely for India's phased entry into the global export control regimes to strengthen global non-proliferation, arms control, as well as nuclear security.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement was finalized in July 2007 and signed in October 2008. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to the US in September 2014, the two sides set up a Contact Group for advancing the full and timely implementation of the India-US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, and to resolve pending issues. The Group has held five meetings so far, and reached agreement on the compatibility of India's nuclear liability law with relevant international conventions and creation of an insurance pool drawing experience of best practices to take care of nuclear liability risk. Currently, company-level discussions are on with two U.S. companies --- M/s Westinghouse and GE Hitachi --- regarding techno-commercial viability of their reactors in sites in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh respectively.

Defence Cooperation

Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-U.S. strategic partnership with the signing of 'New Framework for India-U.S. Defense Relations' in 2005 and the resulting intensification in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, collaboration and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy, and exchanges between each of the three services. The Defence Framework Agreement was updated and renewed for another 10 years in June 2015. The two countries now conduct more bilateral exercises with each other than they do with any other country. An Indian Navy ship took part in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in 2014 for the first time. Bilateral dialogue mechanisms in the field of defence include Defence Policy Group (DPG), Defence Joint Working Group (DJWG), Defence Procurement and Production Group (DPPG), Senior Technology Security Group (STSG), Joint Technical Group (JTG), Military Cooperation Group (MCG), and Service-to-Service Executive Steering Groups (ESGs). Aggregate worth of defence acquisition from U.S. Defence has crossed over US\$ 13 billion. India and the United States have launched a Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) aimed at simplifying technology transfer policies and exploring possibilities of co-development and co-production to invest the defence relationship with strategic value. The DTTI Working Group and its Task Force will expeditiously evaluate and decide on unique projects and technologies which would have a transformative impact on bilateral defence relations and enhance

India's defence industry and military capabilities. During President Obama's visit in January 2015, the two sides agreed to start cooperation on 4 DTTI pathfinder projects and 2 pathfinder initiatives, which are currently at various stages of execution. During RM's visit in December 2015, the two sides also identified opportunities for bilateral cooperation in production and design of jet engine components.

Counter-terrorism and internal security

Cooperation in counter-terrorism has seen considerable progress with intelligence sharing, information exchange, operational cooperation, counter-terrorism technology and equipment. India-US Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Initiative was signed in 2010 to expand collaboration on counter-terrorism, information sharing and capacity building. A Homeland Security Dialogue was announced during President Obama's visit to India in November 2010 to further deepen operational cooperation, counter-terrorism technology transfers and capacity building. Two rounds of this Dialogue have been held, in May 2011 and May 2013, with six Sub-Groups steering cooperation in specific areas. In December 2013, India-U.S. Police Chief Conference on homeland security was organized in New Delhi. Police Commissioners from India's top four metropolises paid a study visit to the U.S. to learn the practices of megacities policing in the U.S. in November 2015. The two sides have agreed on a joint work plan to counter the threat of Improvised Explosives Device (IED).

Trade and Economic

From a modest \$ 5.6 billion in 1990, the bilateral trade in merchandise goods increased to \$ 66.9 billion in 2014. India's merchandise exports to the U.S. stood at \$ 34.57 billion during the period January - September 2015, while US exports of merchandise to India was worth \$ 16.54 billion in the same period. India - U.S. bilateral merchandise trade during the period January - September 2015 was \$ 51.11 billion. During the year 2012 (the latest year for which complete data on services trade is available), bilateral trade in services totalled \$58.76 billion, of which U.S exports of services to India amounted to \$30.17 billion and India's exports of services to the U.S. added up to \$28.59 billion. During Prime Minister's visit to the U.S. in September 2014, the two sides set a target to increase bilateral trade in goods & services to \$500 billion. According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S direct investments in India are estimated at about \$28 billion in 2014. As per Indian official statistics, the cumulative FDI inflows from the US from April 2000 to September 2014 amounted to about US\$ 13.19 billion constituting nearly 6 % of the total FDI into India, making the U.S. the sixth largest source of foreign direct investments into India. In recent years, growing Indian investments into the US, has been a novel feature of bilateral ties. More than 65 large Indian corporations, including Reliance Industries Limited, Essar America, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and Piramal, have together invested about US\$ 17 billion in the U.S. There are several dialogue mechanisms to strengthen bilateral engagement on economic and trade issues, including a Ministerial level Economic and Financial Partnership (last met in New Delhi in February 2015) and a Ministerial Trade Policy Forum (last met in Washington in October 2015). For greater involvement of private sector in discussion on issues involving trade and investment, there is a bilateral India US CEOs Forum, which held its last round of meeting in September 2015 in Washington D.C. coinciding with the Strategic & Commercial Dialogue. During Prime Minister Modi's visit in September 2014, it was decided to establish an India-US Investment initiative, with a special focus on facilitating FDI, portfolio investment, capital market development and financing of infrastructure and an US-India Infrastructure Collaboration Platform to deploy cutting edge U.S technologies to meet India's infrastructure needs. Both these dialogues have held meetings in 2015. US firms will be lead partners in developing Allahabad, Ajmer and Vishakhapatnam as Smart Cities. USAID will serve as knowledge partner for the Urban India Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) alliance with to help leverage business and civil society (Gates Foundation) to facilitate access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation in 500 Indian cities.

Energy and Climate Change

The U.S.-India Energy Dialogue was launched in May 2005 to promote trade and investment in the energy sector, and held its

last meeting in September 2015 in Washington DC. There are six working groups in oil & gas, coal, power and energy efficiency, new technologies & renewable energy, civil nuclear co-operation and sustainable development under the Energy Dialogue. Investment by Indian companies like Reliance, Essar and GAIL in the U.S. natural gas market is ushering in a new era of India-U.S. energy partnership. The US Department of Energy has so far given its approval for export of LNG from seven liquefaction terminals in the US, to countries with which the US does not have a free trade agreement (FTA) - with two of these five terminals, the Indian public sector entity, Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) has off-take agreements, totalling nearly 6 million metric tonnes per annum (MTPA). These terminals are expected to be complete and in a position to export cargoes by late 2016/early 2017. As a priority initiative under the PACE (Partnership to Advance Clean Energy), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Government of India have established the Joint Clean Energy Research and Development Center (JCERDC) designed to promote clean energy innovations by teams of scientists from India and the United States, with a total joint committed funding from both Governments of US\$ 50 million. India and the US are advancing cooperation and dialogue on climate change through a high-level Climate Change Working Group and a Joint Working Group on Hydrofluorocarbon. In November 2014, an MoU between US EXIM Bank and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) was concluded to provide US\$ 1 billion in financing for India's transition to a low-carbon economy. A new U.S.-India Partnership for Climate Resilience has been agreed to, in order to advance capacity for climate adaptation planning, as also a new U.S.-India Climate Fellowship Program to build long-term capacity to address climate change-related issues.

Education

Cooperation in education sector has been made an integral part of the strategic partnership between the two countries. The Fulbright program was renewed in 2008, with enhanced mandate and joint funding, to provide more student and scholar exchange grants. About 130,000 Indian students are pursuing advanced degrees in the US. The Higher Education Dialogue, which has had four meetings since 2011 (last in November 2014 in New Delhi), laid out the road map for promoting strategic institutional partnerships, deepening collaboration in research and development, fostering partnerships in vocational education and focusing on junior faculty development. India is learning from the U.S. experience in community colleges in order to meet our demands for skill-development. It has been agreed to collaborate with U.S. institutions in the area of Technology Enabled Learning and Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) to extend the reach of education in India. Under the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) launched by India, up to 1000 American academics will be invited and hosted each year to teach in Indian universities at their convenience. The two sides are also collaborating to establish a new Indian Institute of Technology in Ahmedabad.

Space

A bilateral Joint Working Group on Civil Space Cooperation provides a forum for discussion on joint activities in space, including (i) exchange of scientists; (ii) OCM2, INSAT3D collaboration; (iii) Cooperation on Mars mission; (iv) nano-satellites; (v) carbon /ecosystem monitoring and modeling; (vi) feasibility of collaboration in radio occultation; (vii) Earth Science Cooperation; (viii) international space station; (ix) global navigation satellite systems; (x) L&S band SAR; (xi) space exploration cooperation; (xii) space debris mediation. The last meeting of the JWG was held in September 2015 in Bengaluru. NASA and ISRO are collaborating for India's Mars Orbiter Mission and for a dual-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR).

Science & Technology (S&T)

The India-U.S. S&T cooperation has been steadily growing under the framework of U.S.-India Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in October 2005. There is an Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Joint Commission, co-chaired by the Science Advisor to U.S. President and Indian Minister of S&T. The U.S. attended as the partner country at the Technology Summit 2014 at New Delhi.

In 2000, both the governments endowed the India-U.S. Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) to facilitate mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in science, engineering, and health. Over the past decade, the IUSSTF has facilitated more than 12,000 interactions between Indian and U.S. scientists, supported over 250 bilateral workshops and established over 30 joint research centers. The U.S.-India Science & Technology Endowment Fund, established in 2009, under the Science and Technology Endowment Board promote commercialization of jointly developed innovative technologies with the potential for positive societal impact. Collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration has been strengthened under the 2008 MOU on Earth Observations and Earth Sciences. India's contribution of \$250 million towards Thirty-Meter Telescope Project in Hawaii and Indian Initiative in Gravitational Observations (IndiGO) with U.S. LIGO Laboratory are examples of joint collaboration to create world-class research facilities.

Health Sector

Under the 2010 U.S.-India Health Initiative, four working groups have been organized in the areas of Non-Communicable Diseases, Infectious Diseases, Strengthening Health Systems and Services, and Maternal and Child Health. In order to build up the disease surveillance and epidemiological capacity in India, Global Disease Detection-India Centre was established in 2010 and an Epidemic Intelligence Service program launched in Oct 2012. U.S. National Institutes of Health, the Indian Council of Medical Research, and India's Department of Biotechnology have developed a robust relationship in the biomedical and behavioural health sciences, research related to HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, eye disease, hearing disorders, mental health, and low-cost medical technologies. In the first meeting of the Health Dialogue in September 2015 in Washington DC, both sides agreed to collaborate institutionally in the new areas of mental health and regulatory and capacity-building aspects of traditional medicine.

People to people ties

The 3.5-million-plus strong Indian American community is an important ethnic group in the U.S., accounting for about 1 % of the total population in the country. Indian American community includes a large number of professionals, business entrepreneurs and educationalists with increasing influence in the society. With two Indian Americans occupying high level posts of Governor and several representatives of the people, the Indian Diaspora has assimilated into their adopted country and is acting as a catalyst to forge closer and stronger ties between India and USA.

Cultural cooperation

Cultural cooperation between India and the U.S. is rich and manifest in diverse ways. Apart from the India-focused educational programs at the Universities and educational institutions, many private institutions teach Indian cultural arts. In addition to the website 'www.indianembassy.org' and social media channels, the Embassy provides updated information on various aspects of India that are relevant to the United States, through its various digital newsletters, including the weekly "India: Partner in Growth", focusing on business and strategic matters, and the monthly "India Live", providing information on initiatives of the Embassy and the Consulates, major developments in India, and in culture and tourism. Cultural activities by the Embassy are grouped into five distinct series viz. Reading India Series (featuring events related to Indian authors and writings), Performing India Series (featuring music, dance and theatre), Beholding India Series (film screening, art and photo exhibitions), Understanding India Series (featuring lectures on comprehensive and cross-sectional views of India), and Young India Series (cultural events catering specifically to younger audience). Media: Indian media is present in strength in the U.S., including PTI, IANS, Times of India, The Hindu, The Hindustan Times, Outlook, Pioneer and other Indian media organizations, which have correspondents based in Washington D.C. and other major cities. The Indian TV channels represented in the U.S. include NDTV, Times Now, CNN-IBN and Asia TV. Reflecting the growing relevance of Internet based information dissemination, correspondents from websites like Rediff.com,

Firstpost.com based here also cover the India-U.S. relations.

CONCLUSION

India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a "global strategic partnership", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. Today, the India-U.S. bilateral cooperation is broad-based and multi-sectoral, covering trade and investment, defence and security, education, science and technology, cyber security, high-technology, civil nuclear energy, space technology and applications, clean energy, environment, agriculture and health. The two countries also identified opportunities for bilateral cooperation in production and design of jet engine components. The two sides have agreed on a joint work plan to counter the threat of Improvised Explosives Device (IED). USAID will serve as knowledge partner for the Urban India Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) to facilitate access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation in 500 Indian cities. In order to advance capacity for climate adaptation planning, as also a new U.S.-India Climate Fellowship Program to build long-term capacity to address climate change-related issues. The two sides are also collaborating to establish a new Indian Institute of Technology in Ahmedabad. NASA and ISRO are collaborating for India's Mars Orbiter Mission and for a dual-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR). They agreed to collaborate institutionally in the new areas of mental health and regulatory and capacity-building aspects of traditional medicine. Cultural cooperation between India and the U.S. is rich and manifest in diverse ways.

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