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THE UNITED STATES & INDIA

A Partnership of Progress and Promise

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CSEP RESEARCH

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Designed by Umesh Kumar

THE UNITED STATES & INDIA

A Partnership of Progress and Promise

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I appreciate the kind introduction and for having me here to share a few thoughts on the U.S.-India partnership. Because I do think it's a good time to take stock of where we have been, where we are today, and where we are going.

And let me say up front how grateful I am for CSEP's leadership and scholarship in so many areas, but especially in the fields of economics, energy, technology, health and of course, foreign policy. Governments can only do so much, but great organizations like CSEP provide the innovative ideas to solving vexing policy questions.

So please keep up the great work – all of us serving in Government, whether we are in Washington D.C. or Delhi, we count on CSEP, we count on your fellow civil society and academic colleagues to debate, and analyze and generate the public policies for the future. And for that, we say thank you. We are very grateful.

And, while I know you have been independent from the Brookings Institution for some four years, let me say a word of thanks to the Brookings pioneers like Strobe Talbot, Tanvi Madan, and Martin Indyk, who so strongly supported the establishment of a separate research institution here in India.

And to Martin in particular, on his recent passing, we say a special word of thanks for his lifetime of service and impact. He was a towering figure, and he will be missed.

I've been in this role as Deputy Secretary of State for Management for nearly a year and a half. It's been a great honor to be back in the Department, after last having served as Ambassador here in Delhi. In these 18 months, I've been to over 50 of our Embassies and Consulates, and to dozens of countries.

I've seen a world that often seems filled with an unlimited set of challenges, from Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine, a Middle East reeling from the terrorist attacks of October 7th and now the prospects for broader regional conflict, a global competition with China, and too many transnational threats like climate change; health, food, and energy insecurity; democratic retrenchment; and cyber intrusions, and online surveillance, misinformation and harassment.

There's no question these challenges can feel overwhelming, and like we are losing ground. But, let me also say, in these 50 plus stops I've made, I've also seen enormous progress. I've seen innovation. And I've seen courage. Nearly 60 percent of the world have voted or will vote this year in democratic elections, including here in India and I understand there is an election coming up in the United States.

More people are living longer, and around the world development indicators are moving in the right direction. And I know this progress can be hard to see sometimes, especially when we are bombarded by the bad or salacious news on social media and the tv channels.

But maybe I can bring it closer to home for all of you – and focus on this partnership in particular – a partnership that I would argue has brought greater peace and stability to the world over the past two decades.

This is exactly the initial theory of the case as to why our two countries should be closer partners. It was President Eisenhower in 1959, here in New Delhi, in commemorating the US Embassy who predicted that when young Americans and young Indians come together, the future would be brighter and bring a greater measure of happiness to the world.

It was then Senator Kennedy, also in 1959, who said we needed to deepen our cooperation with India because “the hinge of fate in Asia” rests with India. It was then Senator Biden, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, who said in 2006 that the “pillars upon which security for the world will be built in the 21st century are India and the United States” and that his “dream is that in 2020 the two closest nations in the world will be India and the United States. And if that occurs, the world will be safer.”

And it was Prime Minister Modi, just last year, when addressing a joint session of the U.S. Congress who said that he was “here to speak about our calling for this century – the United States and India” and proclaimed that “together we shall give a better future to the world, and a better world to the future.”

You can see these are lofty ambitions from our leaders over decades – you also know that we were out of touch for many years, the mid to later years of the Cold War left us charting our own independent courses, if not estranged, but we lost time as well.

But thankfully, for nearly 25 years, we have realized ever more ambitious gains – including many achievements that would have been simply unthinkable just a few years ago. So, let me do two things with you today, briefly.

The first is just to recount the progress on the bilateral front. We shouldn’t take for granted the gains that have been made, especially in these past few years. And second, let me give you some examples of how we are doing what both President Biden and Prime Minister Modi called for – and that is having a real and measurable positive impact on the global community in so many key areas.

But first, the progress in our ties.

Ambassador Garcetti rightfully has framed our progress around the four P’s: peace, prosperity, planet and people. This is a brilliant formulation, so let me not deviate from it. On peace and security, we have become integrated, trusted, and confident security partners. We moved from sales to co-production and development of the world’s most sophisticated systems – in fact, our hope is that through our expanded co-production relationship India’s defense industry will become an additional and sorely needed manufacturing hub to supply partner militaries, including our own.

There is no other nation in the world designated as a “Major Defense Partner” of the United States, but India is such a partner, and the special status carries important significance in the sophistication of our defense trade and exercises. For someone who has been to nearly every U.S./India military exercise, I assure you our two great militaries are well positioned for the future.

And I look forward to hearing great things about the next iteration of our joint exercise YUDH ABYAS taking place in Rajasthan next month when 600 U.S. soldiers from the 11th Airborne division in Alaska will exercise alongside their brothers and sisters from the Indian Army – an example of convergence that our predecessors decades ago could hardly have imagined.

But the security enhancements not only come from our military, they come from our diplomatic power and diplomatic convergence as well. Our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific has brought us closer and helped reinforce the post-war order and norms grounded on democracy, the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Our new architectures for cooperation, chief among them the Quad, has brought greater certainty and clarity to the frameworks for cooperation, and indeed a sense of optimism for the future – despite initial skepticism from some corners, the QUAD has evolved into a leaders-level organization forming a new pillar of Indo-Pacific architecture.

When like-minded nations come together as they have in the Quad to deliver greater peace and prosperity, maritime security, to battle climate change, and so much more, our citizens are empowered and they are more secure.

And this bodes well for the future. Our economic prosperity is strong, and growing in many ways, but we are at the early stages of trade and economic convergence. And while \$200 billion in two-way trade is a big number, and some 10 times what it was just 20 years ago, we can do more, and can do better.

But again, the economic prosperity results not just from sales, but from joint research, joint exploration, innovation, and scientific discovery and collaboration. And this is where our natural affinities across industry and academia are having a real impact on the lives of our people.

As our governments seek to continue to break down historic barriers, so much more can and will be done in this category in the years ahead. On protecting the planet and battling climate change, we have found how much can be achieved when India and the United States work together.

While India and the U.S. are two of the largest emitters in the world, we've also partnered to address the climate crisis and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement by launching the U.S. – India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership.

Last year, President Biden and Prime Minister Modi announced plans to cooperate on rolling out 10,000 e-buses in India. Tomorrow, I'm delighted to be joined by John Podesta, the President's Senior Advisor on Climate and Clean Energy, and Dave Turk, the Deputy Secretary of Energy, for a full day of engagements with government, business and civil society leaders to see how we can take our climate and clean energy work to the next level.

In people-to-people ties, America boasts well over 4 million Americans of Indian descent and Indian immigrants to the United States constitute the second largest

category of U.S. citizens. And we are seeing cooperation in nearly every area. Take for example, our recent successes with sports. Sports and deep pride in the achievement of our athletes continues to unite our countries.

It was an honor for the United States to co-host the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, and we cheered on both our teams and celebrated India's thrilling championship win. And I was so glad to see that the Men's T20 World Cup marked yet another milestone for our relationship – when the Amul girl toasts the United States as the co-host of the Cup, as she did across India's newspapers this spring.

We really feel like we have become part of the family. The patriotism and dedication of our athletes that inspires us all forms yet one more close bond between our people. I know it was this close bond that inspired the dedicated advocacy of then-Mayor and now Ambassador Garcetti in his successful campaign to restore cricket to the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. And, who knows, we may even see the summer Olympics hosted right here in India in 2036. And the deepening of the people to people ties is only getting stronger.

Last year, around 1.3 million visas were issued to Indians. That was a record. In 1963, my dad was one of those aspiring visa applicants, as he tells me, so nervous when he was going through the process, and also so excited about the future that lay ahead. My father would go on to get his masters, PhD and teach in the United States for 43 years at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. My father passed away in March of this year, which was also a moment of real sadness for our family, but we've also taken these past few months to celebrate his life, and recall the huge impact he had on his thousands of students, in the books that he published, in helping to bring South Asian literature to the United States.

This is what the U.S. and India relationship is built upon – the courage and determination of millions who have set out to build stronger ties through their work and enormous contributions – my dad's story is a familiar one in the larger U.S.-India story. We are so grateful to all those who have helped build up this partnership over so many years. So, on any objective scale, we have done well, very well.

But we cannot rest on these successes; we can't assume they will continue; and we also have to now focus again on what President Biden and Prime Minister Modi said about delivering for the world. When I was serving as Ambassador, I recall so clearly what what President Obama and the Prime Minister used to tell us, which was that the real measure of success in the relationship was not what we would do for each other, but what we were doing for others in the world.

On this measurement, I am proud to report on our success, and this, if where I would say the real promise of the relationship lies.

Let me give you four brief examples in health, space, advanced technologies, and climate change.

Health

Together our countries are making important progress in the fight against cancer. The United States was pleased to partner with IIT Mumbai and TATA Memorial in the development of an indigenous CAR T- cell gene therapy for cancer. As President Murmu stated in announcing this important achievement, the launch of India's first indigenous gene therapy "provides a new hope for the whole of humankind."

We were glad to be a part of this initiative that will save lives in India and around the world. The collaboration combined strengths in affordable drug manufacturing and expertise in medical innovation making this new CAR T-cell therapy available at a fraction of the original cost—reducing it by nearly one-tenth. I also was pleased that 2018 Nobel Laureate for Medicine, Dr. Jim Allison from MD Anderson, University of Texas recently visited India to deliver the inaugural US-India lecture on cancer, highlighting even more potential for significant advancements in cancer research and treatment.

And when they met in June 2022, President Biden and Prime Minister Modi committed to working together "to end cancer as we know it." These developments highlight that we are in this fight together and our efforts are already saving lives. And I highlight the cancer work as just one example of our work in global health and global health security that spans the globe.

Advanced Technologies

Our cooperation within the Initiative for Critical and Emerging Technology, or iCET as its known, and our partnership in the Minerals Security Partnership represents an important investment in the future of our economies and our shared security. We are building trusted networks that will secure the supply chains for minerals essential to the development of next generation technologies and cooperating in the development and governance of those technologies themselves.

Our joint efforts, underpinned by shared principles of openness and transparency will ensure that the technology solutions will connect, rather than oppress and control, future generations of our citizens, and those around the world. And even during the short time that we have been collaborating in these areas we have seen incredible progress. Perhaps one particularly inspiring example is the investment of up to \$825 million by U.S. firm Micron in a semiconductor packaging unit in Gujarat, strongly supported by efforts by both our governments under iCET.

I understand that the first India-made semiconductor chips may begin to arrive in markets next year. This important investment is the first step in the creation of a semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem in India that has the potential to transform its economy. It was only a few years ago that many industry analysts predicted that a semiconductor industry could never take hold here in India.

Not only have our joint efforts, and the vision of firms such as Micron, proven them wrong, but our shared commitment to strategic technology cooperation has created hundreds of jobs in India and in related industries in the United States, and is poised to create far more.

Space

And no area of our shared cooperation captures the imagination of our young people more than the final frontier of space. We have spent years working together on missions like the Mars Orbiter and NISAR. And at the beginning of this month NASA head Bill Nelson welcomed the arrival in the United States of ISRO astronauts

Group Captain Shukla and Group Captain Balakrishnan Nair who were appointed by ISRO to take part in the joint U.S.-India mission to the ISS. Both these “gaganyatris” began training for the mission in the United States this month – a mission that will advance scientific research helping improve lives here on earth, and advancing our shared leadership in space exploration as we look towards new missions to the moon and mars.

I can't think of a more potent symbol of the depth of our relationship than American and Indian astronauts together, looking down on our planet from orbit. I'd like to highlight the visionary leadership of ISRO Chairman Dr. S. Somanath whose vision made this breathtaking step forward possible. And, of course, we are indebted to pioneers like Sunita Williams who at this very moment continues to inspire us with her bravery.

I know you all join me in praying for her safe return to earth and the continuation of her work that has inspired so many young people in both our countries.

Climate

As in the technology sector, our governments had long worried that our strategic competitors held many of the most important cards in clean energy, such as in the production of solar panels.

In January of this year the United States Development Finance Corporation provided a \$500 million loan to U.S. firm First Solar to support the establishment of a new solar panel manufacturing facility in Tamil Nadu.

This investment of U.S. taxpayer dollars to pioneer the birth of a new strategic industry in India will not only begin to free both our countries from a dependence on China for the components critical to our climate goals but will also mark an important step in U.S. cooperation with the Prime Minister's Make in India initiative, that will support the creation of high-quality jobs in both our countries.

As the production of solar panels comes online in south India, we may be witnessing the first chapter in India's role as a supplier of renewable energy technology to our partners in the region and beyond. So, for nearly 25 years, there have been many bilateral gains, and yes, global impact too. And we are just at the beginning of that scope and scale of work together.

And of course, we don't agree on every issue, and we will have divergent positions from time to time, but that is to be expected from two robust democracies. And we have important pressing work to do together to protect and strengthen our democracies, to ensure that all voices are heard and respected, that our work on women's empowerment and safety continues, and so much more.

I'm confident that so long as we stay true to our underlying shared values and deep people to people ties, the future will remain bright. It is exactly why President Biden and Vice President Harris have called the relationship the defining partnership of the 21st Century.

They are right. And I am so optimistic about our future together. I look forward to your questions. And thank you again for giving me this opportunity.

About the Author



Richard R. Verma serves as the Deputy Secretary of State for Management & Resources. In this role, he acts as the Chief Operating Officer of the State Department, managing key aspects of the Department's global mission and leading the Department's efforts on modernization, foreign assistance, and a wide range of workforce, consular, security, public diplomacy, and foreign policy issues. He also oversees the climate and Ukraine economic recovery teams, as well as the new State Department Bureaus on Cyberspace and Digital Policy, and Global Health Security and Diplomacy.

Deputy Secretary Verma previously served as the U.S. Ambassador to India, where he led one of the largest U.S. diplomatic missions and championed historic progress in bilateral ties. He is also a former Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs and the former National Security Advisor to the Senate Majority Leader.

Deputy Secretary Verma has also had a distinguished career in the private sector, most recently serving as the Chief Legal Officer and Head of Global Public Policy for Mastercard. He is a former partner at the law firm of Steptoe & Johnson, and the Vice Chairman of The Asia Group, a global consulting firm. He also served on the T. Rowe Price corporate board of directors.

Deputy Secretary Verma is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and the recipient of numerous military awards and civilian decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the State Department's Distinguished Service Award, and the Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship.

Deputy Secretary Verma was a member of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism Commission, and the Secretary of State's Foreign Affairs Policy Board. He has served on a number of non-profit boards, including the Ford Foundation, Lehigh University, and the National Endowment for Democracy.

Deputy Secretary Verma previously served as a Senior Fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and he holds multiple academic degrees, including a doctorate (Ph.D.) from Georgetown University, a law degree (J.D., *cum laude*) from American University, a Masters in Laws (LLM, *with distinction*) in International Law from Georgetown University Law Center, and a B.S. from Lehigh University.

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