



Buttressing U.S.-India Economic Relations

India's Emerging Role in the Indo-Pacific Region

Thursday, April 19, 2018

Objective

To launch CUTS International-Washington DC Center (CUTS-WDC) by deliberating on some thought-provoking ideas about buttressing U.S.-India economic relations in the context of India's emerging role in the Indo-Pacific region.

Background and Context

More than a decade after the global financial crisis, the global community continues to witness significant geo-economic shifts with concomitant challenges and opportunities in the geo-strategic and geo-political spheres. Expectedly, the centre of gravity of this shift is moving more towards the Indo-Pacific region – a vast swathe from the west coast of the United States of America to the Bay of Bengal. Many pundits have argued that in the 21st Century access to global public goods – Trade, Environment, Security – will be shaped by three Cs – Conflict, Competition, Cooperation – in this region.

This is reflected in a number of far-reaching initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. While this term may be a geo-strategic concept, it embodies geo-economics as well as geo-political paradigms. The re-emergence of the Quad comprising Australia, India, Japan and the United States of America assumes importance in the context of maritime security in the greater Indian ocean. Asia-Africa Growth Corridor – a joint initiative of India and Japan – is another example.

Given this Background and Context, a moot question arises: can India play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific region – by preventing conflicts, balancing competition, fostering cooperation? While there is no single and easy answer to this question, one of the conditions for this to play out is to bolster U.S.-India economic relations in the near term in trade, energy, industry-military complex, disruptive technologies, etc.

However, there is still a substantial space to bridge the two-way gaps in thoughts and actions between New Delhi and Washington DC to take the bilateral engagement to a higher level. CUTS International is rightly placed to address this situation.

About CUTS

Deeply rooted on the ground and strongly networked with governments and inter-governmental organizations, CUTS International, a 35-year-old independent policy research organization, proposes to address bilateral and multilateral trade and economic matters of strategic importance to India and the United States of America through its Center in Washington DC (CUTS-WDC). The Center will be fully supported by the leadership and resources available to the organisation globally and will operate using the wide network and knowledge professionals of existing CUTS Centers in Geneva, Hanoi, Accra, Nairobi, Lusaka, New Delhi, and associates world-wide.

Program

- 14:00 – 14:45 **Registration**
- 14:45 – 16:50 **Creating a Balanced Discourse in the Indo-Pacific**
- This Plenary will focus on identifying challenges and opportunities for buttressing U.S.-India relations in the context of India’s emerging role in the Indo-Pacific region. Why and how should the Quad of Australia, India, Japan and the United States of America enhance their cooperation beyond maritime security engagement in the Indo-Pacific region?
- Chair
- **Pradeep S. Mehta**, Secretary General, CUTS International
- Speakers
- **Arvind Subramanian**, Chief Economic Advisor to the Govt. of India
 - **Ambassador Alice Wells**, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, US State Department, Washington DC
 - **Ambassador Katrina Cooper**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Australia, Washington DC
 - **Ambassador Santosh Jha**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Washington DC
- 15:35 – 15:50 **Q&A**
- Speakers
- **Subir Gokarn**, Executive Director, International Monetary Fund
 - **Nisha Biswal**, President, US India Business Council
 - **Mukesh Aghi**, President & CEO, US India Strategic Partnership Forum
- 16:30 – 16:50 **Q&A**
- 16:50 – 18:00 **Addressing the Bilateral Strategic Agenda**
- Panellists will propose actions to buttress U.S.-India economic relations in areas such as trade connectivity, energy cooperation, industry-military complex, disruptive technologies, etc. An expected outcome is to understand the economic and political economy context for creating a politically acceptable narrative for a potential U.S.-India Free Trade Agreement.
- Chair
- **Bruce Stokes**, Director of Global Economic Attitudes, Pew Research Center
- Speakers
- **Subhash Chandra Garg**, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India
 - **Richard Rossow**, Senior Adviser and Wadhvani Chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies, Center for Strategic & International Studies
 - **Rufus Yerxa**, President, National Foreign Trade Council
 - **Sanjay Puri**, Chairman, United States India Political Action Committee
- 17:40 – 18:00 **Q&A**
- 18:00 – 18:15 **Vote of Thanks & Brief Introduction to CUTS Washington DC**
- **Amb. Pradeep K. Kapur**, Senior Advisor, CUTS-WDC
- 18:15 – 19:00 **Reception**