

Indian business should intensify engagements with American counterparts: Ambassador Blackwill

US administration hopes that India will become partner on climate change & non-proliferation

“As US-India trade and investment in the coming few years will become more important than ever, I strongly encourage CII and the Indian business fraternity to intensify their engagement with American counterparts”, said Ambassador Robert Blackwill, Former US Ambassador to India & Senior Fellow and Senior Advisor to the President, RAND Corporation. He was speaking at a session on “US-India Relations” organised jointly by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Aspen Institute India.

Ambassador Blackwill called for holding frequent bilateral strategic policy dialogue pertaining to geo-political and trade issues. Sharing insight about bilateral relations, he stated that the Obama administration has an affirmative view of India and admires it as a remarkable democracy. It is positively influenced by the Indian-American community whose political voice is growing in the US. The US administration hopes that India will become a partner on climate change and non-proliferation issues. It wishes to increase markedly the volume of US-India trade.

According to him India should continue to cooperate closely with the US on non-proliferation and the US should treat India as a nuclear weapon state. The US President faces a binary choice regarding Iran’s nuclear weapon program – either to launch a US military attack on those facilities with disastrous long term consequences, or to acquiesce to an Iranian nuclear weapon capability with disastrous long term consequences. India should be far more forthcoming regarding much stronger international sanctions against Iran, he said. He mentioned that America will get strict with CTBT.

The Ambassador further stated that both the countries should intensify military interactions, force planning, weapons acquisition, interoperability, joint exercises, intelligence exchange, and threat assessment for strengthening defence ties. His address highlighted that India’s importance in the US worldview is diminishing due to instability in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq.

Condemning the concept of good and bad Taliban being propagated by the Obama administration, he said that the ‘good Taliban’ which is harmless for the west in turn is harmful to India. Therefore the fight against terrorism should be fought globally. He pointed out that given the historical and cultural linkages between India and Afghanistan, the existing American belief that India will be a short term partner in Afghanistan’s development should be discarded. He also proposed that

Washington should not, at this stage prepare an exit strategy from Afghanistan.

In the welcome remarks, Mr. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said that India-US relations in the context of present time should be viewed on a strategic domain. Aspen Institute and CII have been working closely on the issue since 2004 with a focus on value based leadership, and partnerships.

Delivering his concluding address, Mr. Hari Bhartia, Vice President CII & Co-Chairman & Managing Director Jubilant Organosys Limited said, Indian business fraternity should engage proactively with the US, which is in the interest of both the countries. He suggested that purchase of an item amounts to outsourcing and subject of outsourcing on the global domain has been misused. The US economy should not retract and put any barrier to it.

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