

Session on "After Bush: The Collapse of Bipartisanship and the Implications for US Foreign Policy" with Charles Kupchan

New Delhi, 04 February 2008

According to Mr. Charles Kupchan, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, USA, the Democrats may want to revise the US India Civil Nuclear Deal if they are elected to office next year. Mr. Kupchan was speaking at a session on "After Bush: The Collapse of Bipartisanship and the Implications for US Foreign Policy" organized by The Aspen Institute India in New Delhi today.

He felt that the Democrats may go ahead with the deal but may link it to India's support on issues such as Iran etc.

According to Mr. Kupchan, the next President of the US will be presiding over a deeply divided country. He observed that the President will take office with the most inauspicious set of geopolitical circumstances imaginable. Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc.

He felt that American Foreign Policy will be erratic during this period as the US will be going through an inward looking phase. It will look towards other countries such as Europe and India to fill the void that the US will leave behind in many parts of the world.

Mr. Kupchan pointed out that this would be a culmination of a process of collapsing bipartisanship which began in the 90's with the end of the Cold war and heightened in the Bush Administration.

He observed that during the Cold War, the US public had a rallying point in the Soviet Union. All its energies were channelised towards the containment of the Soviet Russia. With the collapse of the USSR and the end of the cold war, the US lost its point of focus and the two parties began to differ on foreign policy objectives.

With 9/11, the bipartisanship returned for a brief period of a few months. However, Mr. Kupchan pointed out that the Iraq war has been a major polarizing force in the US and has split the country into two.

Another issue which he felt that had led to the collapse of bipartisanship in US Foreign Policy was the declining dominance of the American Economy. The declining dollar, loss of American jobs had all contributed to this collapse.

The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Kuldip Sahdev, Former Ambassador of India to Japan.