

# Indo-US 'Strategic Dialogue': Binding India Closer in Imperialism's Embrace

Thursday 10 June 2010, by [CPI \(ML\) Liberation](#) (Date first published: 8 June 2010).

The Indo-US Strategic Dialogue that has taken off early this June in Washinton DC, capital of the United States, is an attempt to bring various key Indian sectors closer into the US embrace. The process, begun during President Bush's visit to India, with the Indo-US Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture being launched alongside negotiations towards the Nuke Deal, is now being taken much further and deeper.

The 'Strategic Dialogue' saw India represented by Minister for External Affairs S M Krishna, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and architect of the neoliberal project in India Montek Singh Ahluwalia, HRD Minister Kapil Sibal, and Minister of State for Science and Technology Prithviraj Chavan, and the US by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, as well as representatives of the US Security and Intelligence establishment.

According to a 'U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue Joint Statement' issued on conclusion of the Dialogue, the Dialogue covered the many opportunities to deepen cooperation between the two countries - in security and counter-terrorism, trade and investment, science and technology, infrastructure investment, climate change, energy security, education, agriculture, food security, and healthcare. As Robert O. Blake, Jr., US Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, indicated in his press briefing on the eve of the Indo-US Strategic Dialogue, "On the bilateral front, we have 18 separate dialogues underway between the United States and India to really try to capture the full scope of the opportunities ahead of us."

In the same press briefing, the US Assistant Secretary categorically informed his American audience that the US was keeping a close eye on the nuclear liability legislation in India, which when passed "would provide a very important legal protection and open the way for billions of dollars in American reactor exports and thousands of jobs." In the wake of the recent Bhopal verdict, it is clear that while the liability legislation spells "billions of dollars" and "legal protection" (read impunity) for US reactor companies, it spells more corporate crimes and endangering of the safety and health of people in India.

The US interest in education legislation in India, in particular the Foreign Universities Bill, also came out clearly, with US representatives expressing the hopes that this Bill would soon be enacted. Behind the US eagerness for the Indian education market lie not just commercial interests but long-term political and foreign policy objectives. The US-educated Indian-American community has played a key role in facilitating the present phase of Indo-US strategic partnership. With Indian students getting American degrees on Indian soil, the pro-American constituency within Indian middle classes and policy-making establishment is likely to expand further. The 'Obama-Singh 21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge Initiative', already launched last year, is yet another mechanism through which the US is likely to influence and shape the education agenda in India.

The Strategic Dialogue comes in the wake of the launching of 'Economic and Financial Partnership' between India's Ministry of Finance and the US Department of the Treasury in April 2010, the Indo-US 'Framework for Cooperation on Trade and Investment' in March 2010 and the 'Memorandum of

Understanding on Agricultural Cooperation and Food Security.’ The thrust of all these ‘partnerships’ was indicated by Hillary Clinton’s urging of India “to reduce or ease caps on investment in critical sectors.” She also noted that “the US military holds more exercises with India than with any other country”. The US military-industrial complex is clearly looking to corner the huge Indian market for arms imports – a key part of the “strategic dialogue” agenda.

US Under Secretary for Political Affairs William J. Burns, on the eve of the Strategic Dialogue noted that India had “\$1 trillion worth of new projects to build highways, airports, electrical power stations and other infrastructure”, representing “major potential opportunities for American firms”, and also argued for “easing of caps on investment in critical sectors” to facilitate the entry of US firms.

While there was much talk of shared counterterrorism objectives, there was conspicuous silence, even on the Indian side, on the dubious and murky attitude of the US to David Headley, one of the key masterminds of the Mumbai terror attack.

The Headley episode and the Bhopal gas disaster are just two reminders of the deep inequalities between the US and India and double standards of the former towards India. Any ‘strategic partnership’ between the two can only be scripted and directed by the US in its own interests – and is bound to be deeply damaging to the interests of the Indian people. We must resist this growing US interference in critical sectors of Indian economy and national life and defend and assert India’s sovereignty and independence with all our might.

---

**P.S.**

\* From ML Update, A CPI(ML) Weekly News Magazine, Vol. 13, No. 24, 08-14 JUNE 2010.