



Distinguished Guests,

- Let me provide you with a brief outline of the ICRIER-Wadhvani Programme which we are launching, focusing on five of its essential components.

Approach

- The spirit of India is today marked by dynamism, self confidence and high aspirations. Whatever terminology we use to characterise the India-US strategic partnership, it is indispensable for India’s emergence as an independent pillar of the global community in the 21st century. Based on this fundamental premise, the Programme will meet the demand for broader participatory frameworks to facilitate public policy formulation.
- There has been a sustained transformation of India-US relations in recent years, but more recently there is also the perception of a slow down as we have perhaps not been able to maintain the progress achieved from 2004-08. Momentum has to be restored to the relationship. The Programme has adopted the mission headline: “Advancing the strategic potential of India-US Relations, Accelerating India’s economic development”, to guide its initiatives.

Independent Platform for India’s Perspectives

- The Programme will serve as an independent platform to increase awareness in the US on critical issues facing India and India’s perspectives on the bilateral agenda of the two nations.

Scope

- The Programme will place special emphasis on initiatives that advance India’s emergence as a major economy through enhanced India-US cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, energy and high technology. It will also prioritise India’s soft power and demographic potential through bilateral partnerships for quality education, vocational skills, entrepreneurship and innovation. New initiatives that promote bilateral economic ties, such as a Bilateral Investment

Treaty (BIT) and a possible future Economic Partnership Agreement, will be promoted.

- The Programme will seek to strengthen broad bipartisan support for bilateral relations in both countries based on their democratic affinities and strategic convergences. Towards that objective, it will conduct research on public policy; strategic, defence and security ties; and partnership for peace, progress and prosperity in Asia.
- As our strategic engagement with the US expands, the Programme will identify and develop emerging areas for cooperation, such as Defence and Homeland Security. India-US collaboration on Asian security and economic architecture through the EAS process will also be prioritised.

Partnerships and Activities

- The Programme will work with its counterpart at CSIS through knowledge sharing to create a climate in which public and private sectors of the two countries can work together for the benefit of both societies.
- The Programme will build ICRIER's capacity to organise productive exchanges on India-US relations with a range of interlocutors. Our longer term objective will be to make the programme a leading focal point of research, discussion and conferencing on India-US relations.
- Apart from building a strong network of stakeholders, the programme will establish partnerships with leading Think Tanks in the US and Asia.

Outputs

- Programme outputs will include policy briefs, research papers, special events and conferences. Depending on availability of funding, more extensive projects will be considered on select economic and security dimensions of India-US relations.
- I am aware that we are setting ambitious goals towards which we can work incrementally. Ultimately, our success will rest on the Programme's capacity to contribute meaningfully to India-US relations. Going forward, we will remain conscious of this responsibility.
- We would welcome your support to these endeavours.