

# USInpact

**Celebrating 10 years of impeccable service  
to the Indo-American Diaspora**

**10  
YEARS**



# USInpact

## Published by

US India Political Action  
Committee  
(USINPAC is a bi-partisan  
organization that works to  
impact policy on  
Indian-American issues.)

## Editorial Board

Sanjay Puri  
Manasi Kakatkar-Kulkarni

## Authors

Gurmeet Kanwal  
David J. Karl  
Stuart Anderson  
Dr. Dilip Gadkar  
Nitin Pai  
Madhavi Bhasin  
Madhav Nalapat

## Design by

Brijnandan

## Contact

[www.usinpac.com](http://www.usinpac.com)

1455 Pennsylvania Avenue  
NW, Suite 400,  
Washington, DC 20004  
Ph: (202)-628-3451

## Disclaimer

Any articles published and/or  
views expressed in the  
magazine are the personal  
views of the author alone,  
and do not reflect the views  
of USINPAC, any affiliated  
websites or organizations, or  
any member of the USINPAC  
staff/team.

## Dear Reader,

This year USINPAC completes a decade in commitment of its services to the Indo-American Diaspora. It is hard to go back to a timeline of events in the evolution and growth of political awareness and activism of the Indian American community. This is especially true given the current bonhomie of the US-India relationship. Add to it that two of the most promising Governors in the country as well as several members of the Obama administration are Indian American.



The journey of USINPAC began at various dinner tables and social gatherings where frustration over the lack of “political power” led to a lot of hand wringing and frustration. It started from that point where a dedicated group of individuals gave up their jobs, put their families on the backburner, made enormous sacrifices, and braved skepticism of a relatively new immigrant community. What began as a journey by manning booths at Diwali melas ended up on the front pages of New York Times, Washington Post, and various other media outlets! From being considered by everyone as another vanity organization by Indian Americans to having 3 Ph.D. dissertations written about it along with being called the “Indian Lobby” and the 2nd most powerful ethnic lobby in Washington, DC by most of the mainstream political media in the U.S. has been an incredible journey. The message is that passion triumphs everything else, it can be a startup or a political organization. It also helps if you have facts and integrity supporting you.

In celebration, we bring you some of the best from the past decade shedding light on the ever evolving and strengthening ties between the two democratic giants of the world. In closing, none of this would have happened without the support and passion from a large group of friends/believers. I am personally obliged to all of you even if you are not currently active with USINPAC. Do watch out for our special edition on a Decade of USINPAC on our website.

See you all in a decade!

*Sincerely,*

**Sanjay Puri**

**Chairman**

**US India Political Action Committee**

# New UNSC member India takes firm, 'mature' stances on international issues

by Nilova Roy Chaudhury

A key new aspect of India's foreign policy positions in 2011, to coincide with its assumption earlier this month of a non-permanent seat at the United Nations' high table, will be "firmness and maturity", a government official said, indicating that New Delhi would increasingly articulate positions on issues on which it would earlier have remained silent.

Whether it was an unequivocal condemnation of terror or quiet satisfaction at the exit of the UNMIN from Nepal, or the strong affirmation of support for the referendum in South Sudan while expressing "concern" over "a high and worrying level of violence in the region of Abyei which led to loss of lives" and urging an expeditious return to dialogue for "the situation in Darfur (which) also remains a cause for concern", or firming up a position on issues as delicate as the report of the UN Security Council – mandated Special Tribunal on Lebanon on the Hariri assassination, India's foreign office is working overtime to ensure it will not be caught unawares and will make its presence felt.

Hardeep Puri, India's Permanent Representative at the UN, has articulated Indian positions strongly at every opportunity, most recently reiterating "India's unwavering support for the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Arab Peace initiative, Quartet Road map and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions," clearly indicating that New Delhi will not shy away from taking positions when required.

What will test this uncharacteristically forthright set of positions from South Block will be issues that more directly impact India's bilateral relations with strategically sensitive countries, particularly like Iran and Myanmar. With the P-5+1 (five permanent UNSC members and Germany) countries beginning another round of talks with Iran about its nuclear programme on Friday, the issue will sorely test New Delhi's diplomatic manoeuvrability. However, according to senior officials, the idea is to show that it can take positions and be firm when required to do so.

Equally, sources indicated, India would not get provoked into responding to "regular pinpricks" from neighbouring countries like Pakistan, or to China's aggressive, even

**Also, working with two key allies from the Group of four, Germany and Brazil, India is aiming to ensure that its non-permanent presence on the UN Security Council translates into a permanent presence by the end of its current tenure in December 2012.**

expansionist posturing, like the official launch this week by China of its state-run mapping website called 'Map World' (that Beijing has authorised to rival Google Earth), showing Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin in Jammu and Kashmir; two key areas of its long-standing boundary dispute with India; as part of its territory.

As it articulates its positions on strategic issues more strongly, India is also pushing an agenda for reforms of UN organs including the UNSC, a text of which is circulating with some speed among members of the UN General Assembly. Also, working with two key allies from the Group of four, Germany and Brazil, India is aiming to ensure that its non-permanent presence on the UN Security Council translates into a permanent presence by the end of its current tenure in December 2012.

The United States is clearly upbeat about India's so-called "coming out party" with State Department Spokesman PJ Crowley saying, "India is an emerging global power in its own right, and it is increasingly involved and engaged in global challenges from regional security to the environment. So we value the role that India is playing on the world stage and look forward to working with India on the Security Council," Crowley said. US President Barack Obama had, during his visit to India in November, articulated US support for a permanent place for India on the UNSC after reforms. Strong expressions of support have also been made by French President Nicholas Sarkozy, Russian President Dimitry Medvedev and British Prime Minister David Cameron. India's neighbour China is, however, wary and has cautioned patience, though its Premier Wen

Jiabao claimed Beijing "understood" New Delhi's aspirations. The China Daily said reforms at the United Nations could not be achieved "overnight" and the complex issue requires a lot of patience. "UNSC reform will not occur overnight, or in a few years. It will require many rounds of thorough consultations and negotiations. Therefore any attempt to set an artificial time limit for UNSC reform is both far-fetched and reckless," the state-run daily said in a recent editorial.

India, meanwhile, has been elected to chair several UNSC subsidiary bodies, including two crucial committees on counter-terrorism, a committee on sanctions against Eritrea and Somalia and a working group on additional measures against terrorism.

### Reason for USINPAC to be around!

**First and only bipartisan organization that works closely with other Indian American organizations and presents a unified voice to Congress.**

## The Raymond Davis Drama

by Nitin Pai

### Looks like the North Waziristan operation will be postponed again

From the very beginning, it was hard to shake off the suspicion that the Raymond Davis affair involved covert operatives from both the United States and Pakistan. That Mr Davis was engaged in diplomacy by other means should have been clear to anyone with a passing familiarity of the business (attained, perhaps, by the study of the scholarly works of David John Moore Cornwell or Ian Lancaster Fleming). Once the US embassy confirmed that he enjoyed diplomatic immunity it was a matter of pedantic or professional interest as to whether he worked for the CIA, DHA, State Department or indeed was a private security contractor employed by the US government.

But what was less discussed, at least until a couple of days ago, was that the two Pakistanis men (referred to as 'youths' or 'boys' in the Pakistani media) he killed might have also been engaged in diplomacy by other means. (Incidentally, Express Tribune pulled the initial report, here's the cached article). Diplomats and foreign journalists who have served in Pakistan are familiar with such diplomacy, not infrequently conducted from a motorcycle. It would be of pedantic or professional interest as to whether they worked for the ISI, Intelligence Bureau or some other "agency".

It is possible that the dust-up between Mr Davis and the two Pakistanis was the result of the

escalation of free and frank discussions to a higher calibre. It is also possible that the two Pakistanis, and one of their innocent counterparts, lost their lives in the risky venture of creating a dust-up.

Consider. There are two possibilities why Lahore police would arrest a white American man who identified himself as US diplomat with immunity. First, that they were told to do so by higher authorities. Second, that the local authorities were so radically anti-American—consistent with general public sentiment—that they were willing to disregard claims of diplomatic immunity, and brazen out the consequences. This is unlikely, not least because it would mean some people would lose their jobs in the process.

General Kayani's guidance to the interior minister reminding him to keep Mr Davis' military background in mind supports the hypothesis that the military-jihadi complex instigated this drama. Why?

That is hard to say. It is, however, the biggest beneficiary of the crisis. Politically, it is the Zardari government—which it has no love for—that is on the ropes, caught between an increasingly tough Washington and an increasingly anti-American public sentiment. Even if the matter is resolved in a few days'

time by getting the judiciary to affirm his diplomatic immunity, the episode can be offered as a reason, yet again, for the Pakistani army to avoid launching the much delayed operation against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in North Waziristan. The overall rise in temperature works to call for a reduction in US drone attacks, using the argument that doing so is necessary to lower anti-American feelings.

The Pakistani military leadership calculates that the United States can suspend bilateral relations or aid for a short while, but overall, the risk of a permanent break is low. It is not wrong. That is why it can afford to rock the boat—with terrorist attacks or diplomatic dramas—to preempt US coercion. After all, for the Pakistani military-jihadi complex, poking the United States in the eye is less risky compared to having to really fight itself.

**Nitin Pai**



Nitin Pai is founder & fellow for geopolitics at the Takshashila Institution, an independent networked think tank and editor of Pragati – The Indian National Interest Review, a publication on strategic affairs, public policy and governance.

**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

**Creates a platform to enable the entry of Indian Americans into mainstream politics.**

USINPAC introduces the **Events Calendar** and invites you to contribute information about political and community events you may organize, participate in, or know about. The event could be a simple meet & greet with your local political leader, a fundraiser, or a community event; e.g. a Diwali function where a political leader will participate.

Simply email us your event flyer, announcement at [share@usinpac.com](mailto:share@usinpac.com) and we will post it to our online Events Calendar and make sure that the event gets the visibility it deserves!

# US-India Strategic Partnership will Counter-balance China's Growing Assertiveness in Asia

by Gurmeet Kanwal

The India-China strategic relationship is stable at the strategic level, but it is marked by Chinese aggressiveness at the tactical level. Though the probability of conflict is low at present, it cannot be completely ruled out. Given China's growing assertiveness in Asia, it has now clearly emerged that its rise is likely to be anything but peaceful. Under the circumstances, the US-India strategic partnership is emerging as a counter weight to China's assertiveness and as a force for stability in Asia.

China is engaged in the strategic encirclement of India, both from the land and from the sea by way of the string of pearls strategy. The China-Pakistan nuclear, missile and military hardware nexus is a threat-in-being for India. Also, China is making inroads into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and emphasising economic cooperation to justify building its own rail and road route linking Xingjian with Karachi. China and Pakistan have a cosy arms trade relationship. Their friendship, in President Hu Jin Tao's words, is "higher than the mountains and deeper than the oceans." Will they collude with each other in a future conflict with India? The answer to that question is undoubtedly yes. That is why two of the Indian armed forces Chiefs have said recently that there is a possibility of a two-front war in a future conflict either with Pakistan or with China.

China's far from peaceful rise is marked by the fact that there is not a single bordering country with which China has not fought a war: the erstwhile Soviet Union, Vietnam, India, and Korea. They have shot down their own satellite

in space. They have been firing missiles across the Taiwan Strait. They have begun to physically occupy some of the disputed Spratly and Paracel Islands. Due to internal contradictions there is a probability that some time in the future China may implode. There is also a possibility that China may behave irresponsibly towards its neighbours. China has been modernising its military at a very rapid rate. Its defence budget has been growing at 12-16% per annum in real terms. Therefore, 15-20 years down the line, when China has completed its military modernisation and resolved the dispute with Taiwan, it may turn its gaze southwards towards India. China will then

**Also, China is making inroads into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and emphasising economic cooperation to justify building its own rail and road route linking Xingjian with Karachi. China and Pakistan have a cosy arms trade relationship.**

be in the position of military strength and India will be in a position of relative military weakness. China will be able to dictate terms to India in the resolution of

territorial dispute. The real driving force behind India's strategic partnership with the US is to counter China's diplomatic aggression and military assertiveness. If China implodes or if China behaves irresponsibly, India would need a strong friend, if not an ally, and no one could be better than the US.

India should upgrade its military strategy against China from that of dissuasion to deterrence in terms of both conventional deterrence as well as nuclear deterrence. The army in particular lacks the ability to deliver a strong offensive punch across the high Himalayan mountains on to the Tibetan Plateau. Genuine deterrence comes only from the capability to launch major offensive operations to threaten the key objectives of the adversary. If the Chinese are convinced that India will launch major offensive operations across the

Himalayas in retaliation for Chinese aggression, they will be deterred from waging a war. Local border incidents can, of course, never be ruled out. The strength of the Indian Air Force has gone down from 39 Squadrons to 32 ½ Squadrons. That should be unacceptable to India's strategic planners. The Indian Navy needs greater support by way of budgetary allocations, capabilities for tri-Service amphibious operations and offensive air support in order to make it a genuinely blue water navy. The one weakness that China has is that its oil tankers and its trade pass through the northern Indian Ocean Region (IOR). If the Chinese

decide to mess with India on the high Himalayas, they can be squeezed in the IOR.



**Gurmeet Kanwal**

Brigadier Kanwal is the Director, Center for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi. He has contributed extensively to Strategic Analysis, CLAWS Journal and other military journals and national newspapers of repute, including a column on national security for the Statesman for two years.

**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

Acts as a watch dog for Indian Americans and supports favorable immigration policies and ensures that the interests of the community are protected and that their concerns are addressed.

## WikiLeaks and US-India Relations

by David J. Karl



Whatever else it says about the propriety of India's political class, the latest tranche of WikiLeaks cables now being dispensed by The Hindu newspaper contains a sobering lesson for US-India relations. The revelations about the parliamentary chicanery surrounding the 2008 civilian nuclear accord, intended to be a launching pad for a new era of bilateral dynamism, can only reinforce lingering doubts in Washington about whether India's political institutions are even capable of acting on the

ubiquitous rhetoric one now hears about taking relations to a higher plane.

It came as a shock to US officials that the nuclear agreement, which garnered strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, provoked extraordinary melodrama on Raisina Hill. As the Washington Post noted in amazement at the time, "if New Delhi's politicians cannot find a way to say yes to such a clearly advantageous agreement with a natural ally, the next U.S. administration no doubt will think twice before trying anything like it." Of course, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh finally did manage to push the accord through the Indian parliament, but only after an extended and acrimonious debate. It was especially disconcerting that the debate devolved into an unprecedented parliamentary vote of confidence regarding a foreign policy issue. Singh's narrowly-won victory was possible only through resort to some exceptional measures, including the furloughing from jail of members of parliament

who had been convicted of murder and other serious crimes.

As part of the debate, the main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, accused – in rather theatrical fashion – the Congress Party and its allies of paying hefty bribes in exchange for votes. A subsequent inquiry concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support the claim. But now the WikiLeaks cables give renewed credence to the allegation. In a dispatch sent a few days before the crucial confidence vote, the US Embassy in New Delhi noted that the Congress Party machine was “working overtime” to ensure victory, including assembling cash-filled war chests “lying around the house for use as pay-offs.” The cable reports that members of the Rashtriya Lok Dal, a small party based in Uttar Pradesh, had already agreed to trade their votes in exchange for \$2.5 million bribes and that an unsuccessful attempt had been made to inveigle members of the Akali Dal, a small Punjab-based party. Kamal Nath, a Congress Party veteran then serving as Minister of Commerce & Industry, was described as “helping spread largesse.” According to the cable, a Congress Party insider told an Embassy official that “formerly [Nath] could only offer small planes as bribes” but “now he can pay for votes with jets.”

These are serious – albeit unverified – allegations that only add to the thickening taint of corruption now engulfing Prime Minister Singh’s government. Of course, log-rolling and intrigue are nothing new in Indian politics, and those implicated in the cables have denied their veracity. But to policymakers looking on in Washington, what must be most dismaying is that, in order to secure passage of an agreement so obviously favorable to India, the Congress Party had to engage in such extraordinary steps. Apparently, the “normal” rules of parliamentary bargaining do not apply to significant foreign policy issues involving the United States. For those, the Congress Party has to up the ante – from small planes to jet aircraft.

The WikiLeaks cables also do nothing to strengthen the BJP’s credentials for principled leadership. During the debate over the agreement, Jaswant Singh insisted that the party’s opposition was not about tawdry partisanship but rather involved solemn issues of national sovereignty and military preparedness. But the opposite now appears true. In a March 2009 conversation with the US chargé d’affaires, BJP supremo L.K. Advani connected the party’s stance to “domestic political developments then at play in India” and downplayed previous declarations that a future BJP government would “reexamine” the accord.

The WikiLeaks dispatches hardly inspire confidence in New Delhi’s credibility as a serious strategic partner. Prime Minister Singh deserves kudos for the political resolve he displayed during the tumult over the nuclear agreement. But his victory was also pyrrhic, revealing just how isolated he is inside the corridors of power. And if there is any substance to the latest accusations of political shenanigans, his reputation for probity will be further dented. For their part, BJP grandees stand exposed as petty partisans rather than stalwart champions of the national interest.

There are plenty of reasons to criticize the Obama administration’s approach to bilateral relations. But the next time the Indian commentariat is tempted to indulge in the “Obama disses India” narrative, one might first inquire into New Delhi’s own capacity for far-sighted statesmanship.

**David J. Karl**

David J. Karl is President of the Asia Strategy Initiative, a consultancy based in Los Angeles that provides policy-relevant analysis of geopolitical, diplomatic and macro-economic developments in Asia, with particular focus on South Asia.



# A US-India Nuclear Alliance

by Madhav Nalapat



Although President George W Bush understood the need to ensure parity for India with France and the UK in a 21st century alliance calculus, the Europeanists within his administration slowed down his effort at ensuring an equal treatment for India. Much the same as Winston Churchill in the previous century, they regard it as a “country of a lesser god” that is simply undeserving of any except a subservient status. Sadly, the Obama administration has become even more a Europeanists’ delight than its predecessor, and it has very rapidly sought to dilute the few concessions that President Bush succeeded in extracting from his skeptical team.

This has been especially pronounced in the nuclear field. It is not rocket science that India’s ascent into middle income status will depend on a huge increase in its generation of energy, and that such an increase, given existing green technologies, will need to be powered mostly by energy from nuclear sources. The nuclear industries of India and the US have excellent synergy between them, provided the US acknowledges the implicit premise of the 2005 Singh-Bush statement and the 2008 unanimous vote of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to allow commerce and cooperation with India.

**The nuclear industries of India and the US have excellent synergy between them, provided the US acknowledges the implicit premise of the 2005 Singh-Bush statement and the 2008 unanimous vote of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to allow commerce and cooperation with India.**

The non-proliferation lobby within the US (a group heavily represented in the Obama administration) made India its primary target since 1974, neglecting to take account of the leaching of nuclear and missile technology from China and other locations to Pakistan and North Korea. Small wonder that it has demonized the India-US deal as a “danger to non-proliferation efforts”, despite the fact that a democracy of a billion-plus people is as much entitled to critical technologies as France or the UK. The reality, however, is that the Manmohan Singh government made several concessions to the US side that have had the effect of substantially degrading India’s offensive capability. An example was the closing down of the CIRUS reactor, which was producing weapons-grade plutonium for decades. In exchange, India was to be given access to re-processing technology. Not merely has such technology continued to be denied to India, but the Obama

administration is seeking to cap, roll back and eliminate India’s homegrown reprocessing capabilities.

Apart from strong-arm (and secret) tactics designed to force India to agree to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), the Obama administration is now seeking to force India to give up its Fast Breeder Reactor program. As if on cue, those commentators in the world’s second-largest English-speaking country – including those not known for any previous interest in matters nuclear- who hew to the line of any incumbent US administration have used the Fukushima disaster to call for the FBR program to be abandoned.

Whether by accident or by design, since 2007, this program has slowed down substantially, to

the dismay of scientists working in the Atomic Energy Establishment who were rooting strongly for the India-US nuclear deal on the premise that this would ensure a much-needed alliance between the nuclear industries of both countries.

Instead, because of the present administration's steady drumbeat of fresh conditions (and retrogressive tweaking of existing agreements), nuclear cooperation between the US and India has remained frozen, even while that with Russia has bloomed. Hopefully, such a state of affairs will not continue for long.

One sector where a vigorous India-US partnership would immensely benefit both countries (of course, on the assumption – challenged by key elements in the Obama administration – that India is entitled to the same status as other key US allies) would be in the field of thorium. India has nearly 300,000 tons of thorium (Th), more than enough to power the nuclear industries of both countries. India has already gone a substantial distance towards a viable thorium-based technology. The catch is that this involves reprocessing on a significant scale, a technology that the Churchillians in the US administration say should be denied to India. This is despite the fact that when anyone last checked, India was not an authoritarian state but a democracy. Unless of course, such a prejudice is based on instincts that are not mentionable in polite

company.

Despite having been treated as a pariah state by the US, India consistently abided even by agreements that the US side had unilaterally discarded, for example at Tarapur. In this facility, a huge amount of radioactive material has piled up, that India has not re-processed, despite having the technology to, because the plant was set up in collaboration with the US. Some of the spent fuel has been converted after much expense and effort from unsafeguarded radioactive material to safeguarded irradiated fuel, especially in RAPS 1 and 2.



Despite such good behavior, not to mention an impeccable non-proliferation record, the Obama administration in effect continues to treat India as a nuclear pariah, seeking to drive it down to the status of a recipient country under the proposed international scheme for nuclear cooperation. Such a mindset would put paid to any possibility of an India-US alliance, and would be very good news to a country that US non-proliferationists treat with kid gloves, China.

**Madhav Nalapat**

Madhav Das Nalapat holds the UNESCO Peace Chair at the Department of Geopolitics and International Relations at Manipal University in Manipal, India. Mr. Nalapat writes extensively on security, policy and international affairs.



**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

Works closely with other Indian American organizations to promote fair and balanced policies.

# Retail Reverberations

by David J. Karl

**India's retreat on economic liberalization has broad consequences for the country's international standing and for U.S.-India relations specifically**

Just when it looked like Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would make something out of his second term, he beat an ignominious retreat on opening up India's huge retail sector to foreign companies. The stunning turnabout — actually more of a debacle — has a number of significant implications for the domestic economic and political landscapes. In particular, it confirms what many have increasingly suspected: Regardless of whether he manages to hang on through the Uttar Pradesh state elections early next year or miraculously serves out his allotted term, Singh is very much a lame duck presiding over a government that is hopelessly adrift and ineffectual. He and his long-time Cabinet associates, once lauded as the “economic dream team,” have proven themselves incapable of making the bold decisions many believe are crucial for India's future.

The capitulation also has far-reaching consequences for the country's international standing and for U.S.-India relations specifically. The retail liberalization was hailed as a landmark economic reform, evidence that New Delhi had finally overcome the chronic leadership paralysis and policy contradictions that have made foreign investors wary. This leeriness is the reason India is perpetually unable to lure in the levels of global capital that have fuelled China's stratospheric economic ascent. It accounts for the marked withdrawal of foreign investment that has caused the rupee's rapid depreciation in recent months. And it explains why the business community felt it necessary to launch a “Credible India” marketing campaign to address India's image problem. Yet the retail retreat will only solidify international skepticism. After the rescindment, the chairman of Microsoft India announced that the country could no

longer even be regarded as a magnet for technology investment.

The backtracking similarly reinforces the growing perception that India is the Godot of great powers — its arrival in the top tier of countries is much heralded but never quite happens. The country's elites speak assuredly of the coming “Indian Century” and yet are haunted by the shadow of the long-defunct East India Company, a corporate entity that is in any case now owned by an Indian entrepreneur. The contrast with China is instructive. Even with its own history of foreign exploitation, Beijing was confident enough about its strengths to allow Walmart, Ikea and other foreign retail enterprises to set up shop more than 15 years ago.



India possesses a multitude of latent resources necessary for national greatness but is conspicuously bereft of strong political institutions capable of mobilizing them in a purposive direction. This absence habitually condemns India to punching far beneath its strategic weight. A few days ago, Jim O'Neill, the progenitor of the now ubiquitous BRICs saga, pronounced India the “most disappointing” member of the quartet and ranked it on par with Russia in terms of governance and corruption. And Jyoti Thottam, Time magazine's South Asia bureau chief, warns that the reversal “may be remembered as an inflection point in the ‘rising India’ story, a moment when skepticism about India's future finally started to overshadow optimism.”

The episode will also have repercussions for relations with the United States. It will ensure that bilateral commercial ties remain far below their potential and that U.S.-India trade levels

continue to be eclipsed by U.S.-China economic interactions. This is most unfortunate since, as Raymond E. Vickery, Jr. points out in his new book, *The Eagle and the Elephant*, private-sector linkages are a key driver of the overall U.S.-India relationship.

Many have proposed that Washington launch negotiations on a free trade agreement with New Delhi, while others criticize the Obama administration for dragging its feet on crafting a bilateral investment accord. But the logic of these measures is now in severe doubt. Given the obvious inability of Indian leaders to make the bold decisions that would be necessary, there is no reason why a beleaguered U.S. president would spend precious political capital on ventures that promise so little chance of success.

On the geopolitical level, Singh's retreat further undermines the seriousness with which Washington views the current Indian government. From the political soap opera that accompanied the parliamentary debate over the nuclear cooperation agreement three years ago to last year's nuclear liability law that effectively locks out U.S. involvement in the nuclear energy sector, and from this spring's rejection of American entrants in the lucrative fighter aircraft competition to this week's retail rollback, doubts have been steadily rising about New Delhi's capacity for strategic engagement. It is little wonder why, six months after Ambassador Timothy Roemer departed New Delhi, the Obama administration has yet to bother nominating a successor.

A chorus of critics accuses Washington of being derelict in relations with India. In a just-published article, for example, the *Wall Street Journal's* Mary Kissel rebukes the

administration for "neglecting" and "ignoring" New Delhi. She's right that the Team Obama was too slow in distilling rhetorical professions about "indispensable partnership" into meaningful policy initiatives. But even if the administration had been more pro-active and creative, would it have made much of a difference? Sadly, the record of the past few years indicates that leadership dysfunctions in New Delhi would have precluded any sort of serious response.

Ever since President Obama's inauguration, Indians have vocally complained that he has forsaken them in favor of the Chinese. The grievance has some justice, though many in New Delhi are oblivious to how they too bear some of the blame (see here and here). They would be wise, however, to heed the warning just issued by Ashley J. Tellis, one of the architects of the Bush administration's strategic entente with New Delhi. In the coming years, he cautions, Washington may become "hard-pressed to justify preferential involvement with India at a time when U.S. relations with China – however problematic they might be on many counts – are turning out to be deeper, more encompassing, and, at least where the production of wealth is concerned, more fruitful."

**In a just-published article, for example, the *Wall Street Journal's* Mary Kissel rebukes the administration for "neglecting" and "ignoring" New Delhi.**

**David J. Karl**

David J. Karl is President of the Asia Strategy Initiative, a consultancy based in Los Angeles that provides policy-relevant analysis of geopolitical, diplomatic and macro-economic developments in Asia, with particular focus on South Asia.



**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

**Organizes events and promotes and facilitates dialogue between politicians and policy makers in the US and India.**

# Reforms That Would Help Employer-Sponsored Immigrants

by Stuart Anderson

Indians wait longer than other potential employment-based immigrants. That means reforms to America's employer-sponsored immigration system are likely to help many Indians, as well other skilled professionals. There are several actions Congress or the executive branch can take that will reduce wait times and provide substantial relief to employers and skilled immigrants.

## STEM Exemption for Skilled Immigrants

First, Congress can exempt from the green card quotas immigrants with a master's degree or higher from a U.S. university in a science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) field. This provision has been included in past legislation by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and some others. Congress could expand this measure to go beyond only degrees in those fields or to include individuals who received a Ph.D. in a technical field from abroad. Research has shown those who receive their degree abroad arrive in the United States with substantial human capital, garnered without any U.S. expense, but also may be among the finest in their fields.

## Count Only Principals, Not Dependents, Toward Annual Quota

Second, a new law could count only the principal employment-based immigrants, not their dependents, against the 140,000 annual employment-based quota. One reason for the large green card backlogs is that annual H-1B temporary visa quotas count only the principal recipient of an H-1B visa, whereas about half of the 140,000 quota for employment-based

immigrant visas is utilized by the dependents (spouse and/or children) of the sponsored immigrant. In addition, Congress could raise the 140,000 annual quota to a higher level.

## Utilize Unused Employment-Based Green Cards

Third, lawmakers could provide additional green card relief by including numbers previously allocated by Congress that were not utilized in prior years, such as due to agency processing delays. The State Department estimates there are more than 300,000 unused employment-based green cards allocated in previous years

that have never gone to recipients due to administrative issues.

**Liberalizing rules for employment-based green cards is less controversial than other proposed immigration reforms, as evidenced by the overwhelming vote in the House of Representatives on H.R. 3012.**

## Eliminate the Per Country Limit

Fourth, Congress could eliminate the per country limit on employment-based immigrants. H.R. 3012 would accomplish this feat over a four-year period. The legislation passed the House and, at least for now, is being delayed by a "hold" on the legislation by Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA). Liberalizing rules for employment-based green cards is less controversial than other proposed immigration reforms, as evidenced by the overwhelming vote in the House of Representatives on H.R. 3012.

## Allow Filing of Adjustment of Status Before Priority Date

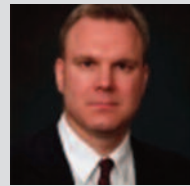
Fifth, allow individuals to file for Adjustment of Status (Form I-485) prior to when his or her immigrant visa become available. Currently, skilled foreign nationals mired in the

employment-based green card backlog are often not able to accept promotions or change jobs without the risk of starting their green card applications again. For those waiting a long time the fear of waiting even longer is significant. That would change if early filing of Adjustment of Status were permitted.

If U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services were to allow individuals waiting for green cards to file for Adjustment of Status even if their priority date has not been reached it would facilitate a more normal existence for those stuck in the green card backlog. For example a spouse would likely become eligible to work legally in the United States. Also, it is likely the

ability to travel in and out of America would become easier, helping people both personally and professionally.

Implementing any or all of the reforms recommended here would aid U.S. employers, immigrants and the American economy, keeping more talent and resources inside the country.



**Stuart Anderson**

Stuart Anderson is the author of the book *Immigration* (Greenwood, 2010) and a researcher on trade and immigration issues.

**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

Leads the way, onward and forward

# How Well Do Immigrants to America Assimilate?

by Stuart Anderson

Do immigrants assimilate or stay forever apart from American society? This question affects nearly all immigration issues, including family and employment-based immigration, both of which concern many Indian immigrants. A lack of consensus on the issue of assimilation has prevented action on broader immigration reform. In addressing the question of immigrants and assimilation it is useful to look at three areas: wage growth, education and English language acquisition.

**Historical Concerns About Assimilation**

Concerns about the assimilation of immigrants have been a key part of the debate over immigration for much of our nation's history. Discussing the restrictions on immigration

imposed by Congress in the 1920s, historian Oscar Handlin wrote, "The objections to further immigration from Italy and Poland reflected the objectors' unfavorable observations of the Italians and the Poles they saw about them. The arguments that Greeks and Slovaks could not become good Americans rested on the premise that the Greeks and Slovaks in the United States had not become good Americans."

**Wage Growth**

Jeffery S. Passel, senior research associate, Pew Hispanic Center, has developed techniques to differentiate between legal and illegal immigrants in Census data and to track changes based on years in the country.

Passel's research on immigrant wage growth and other issues demonstrates how important it can be to determine legal status when examining data on assimilation.

Census data show legal immigrants experience significant wage gains over time, even surpassing the average family income of natives, in the case of naturalized citizens. But illegal immigrants do not show that type of income gain based on years in the United States. "Average family income for both legal immigrants and refugees in the U.S. for more than 10 years is only 2 to 3 percent below that of natives," writes Passel. "For longer term naturalized citizen families, average family income is 23 percent higher than native income." But the average income level of an illegal immigrant family remains well below the average native family (about 35 percent below) even among illegal immigrants in the country 10 years or longer.

Research that did not distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants still found significant wage growth among immigrants. Economists Harriet Duleep and Mark Regets found that after a decade in the United States the earnings gap between new immigrants and natives largely disappears, with immigrant wage growth faster than native (6.7 percent vs. 4.4 percent).

## Education

A similar story on legal immigrants can be seen in the Pew Hispanic Center's analysis of Census data on education and immigrants. Overall, 32 percent of legal immigrants have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 30 percent of natives and 15 percent of illegal immigrants.

What about those who did not finish high school (ages 18-24)? Among illegal immigrants, 49

percent did not graduate high school, compared to 21 percent of legal immigrants and 11 percent of natives. Even among illegal immigrants who completed high school, less than half went on to attend college.

In contrast, among immigrants and natives who have completed high school, more legal immigrants have gone on to attend a college than natives – 73 percent of legal immigrants vs. 70 percent of natives – according to Passel's research.

Education levels for legal immigrants improve across generations, just as they have historically for Americans. "Turning to the data, educational assimilation appears alive and well," according to Pia Orrenius, senior economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. "High school dropout rates for immigrants improve across generations, dropping from 27 percent in the first generation to below the native average of 8.9 percent in the third generation."

**Economists Harriet Duleep and Mark Regets found that after a decade in the United States the earnings gap between new immigrants and natives largely disappears, with immigrant wage growth faster than native (6.7 percent vs. 4.4 percent).**

## English Language

Do immigrants and their children learn English? Do they want to learn English? It's possible many Americans believe the answer is "no." The data suggest otherwise.

In the report *The New Americans*, produced by the National Research Council, only 3 percent of immigrants in the country 30 years or more reported not speaking English well in the 1990 Census. This illustrates that assimilation takes place. But also how important it is to make judgments on data that are longitudinal, since newly arriving immigrants can skew the totals.

The story is quite positive with the children of immigrants. According to a Pew Hispanic Center survey, 88 percent of second generation children from Latino immigrant families and 94 percent from the third generation said they

spoke English very well.

Contrary to concerns Spanish-speaking immigrants will pass along to their children and grandchildren a proclivity to speak Spanish over English, research shows the opposite is true. A study by Frank Bean and Ruben Rumbaut (both University of California, Irvine) and Douglas Massey (Princeton University) found “Although the generational life expectancy of Spanish is greater among Mexicans in Southern California than other groups, its demise is all but assured by the third generation.”

Bean, Rumbaut and Massey concluded, “Based on an analysis of language loss over the generations, the study concludes that English has never been seriously threatened as the dominant language in America, nor is it under

threat today.”

### Conclusion

The conclusion one draws from the data is that today’s immigrants are indeed assimilating. As a group, they are gainfully employed and experience wage growth over time, education levels rise, and acquisition of the English language increases, particularly in the second generation. This does not mean all immigrants assimilate. But it does mean that, overall, the American “melting pot” continues to work.

### Reason for USINPAC to be around!

Sets a futuristic perspective towards the better of the Indian-American community

## Little Known Fact: Indians and Others on H-1B Visas Fund Scholarships and Job Training for Americans

by Stuart Anderson

One of the more surprising aspects of America’s debate about high skill immigration is how little attention focuses on the fees paid by employers of H-1B visa holders. Indians generally make up roughly half of H-1B professionals, though it varies from year to year, so the fee issue should be of interest to the Indian American community, particularly since it can play a role in the broader immigration policy debate.

Back in 1998, when Congress debated an increase in the H-1B quota, a compromise was reached to raise the 65,000 annual limit for temporary visas for high skilled professionals. The policy debate over increasing the annual H-1B limit centered largely on whether America and U.S. employers were doing enough to train and educate Americans for high skill jobs in the technology field. Under the legislation passed in

1998, Congress raised the H-1B quota for three years, but also assessed a \$500 fee on for-profit employers each time they hired (or renewed the status of) an H-1B professional, with the money going towards scholarships and job training.

In 2000, Congress again temporarily boosted the annual quota on H-1B visas and this time raised the training/scholarship fee to \$1,000. After both the fee and H-1B quota increase ended in late 2004, Congress raised the H-1B training/scholarship fee to \$1,500 (\$750 for smaller companies) and provided 20,000 H-1B visas annually (in addition to the 65,000 quota) for individuals who received a masters degree or higher from a U.S. university. Congress also added a \$500 anti-fraud fee on each H-1B and L-1 visa.

## Lots of Money Raised, But Little Attention

The money raised from this training/scholarship fee has quietly grown over the years. In fact, its growth has been so quiet that nobody seems to have realized how much money has been spent by employers on these fees and where the money has gone.

A recent study from the National Foundation for American Policy concluded:

*In addition to paying skilled foreign-born professionals the same wages as comparable American workers, government data show U.S. employers have been required to pay over \$3 billion in mandatory government fees since 2000. The data call into question critics' assertions H-1B visa holders are hired to save money. Data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services obtained by the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) show from FY 2000 to FY 2011, employers have paid over \$2.3 billion to the federal government in H-1B scholarship/training fees (generally \$1,500 per individual), while a \$500 anti-fraud tax/fee on each H-1B and L-1 visa has cost employers more than \$700 million.*

## Where Has the Money Gone?

There is no scandal here. No one claims the money has not gone to its intended purpose. But it is clear this topic has fallen through the cracks. Employers gain no political credit for paying the fee and neither the U.S. Department of Labor nor the National Science Foundation give much publicity to the training or scholarships that the fee funds. Nor do employers gain much credit for their individual efforts to train workers or support education.

According to the most recent annual budget document of the National Science Foundation, due to the H-1B fees assessed on each H-1B professional hired, "Approximately 58,000 students have received scholarships ranging from one to four years." The scholarships can be as high as \$10,000 and are used by U.S.

undergraduate and graduate students pursuing math and science degrees.

Examining past budgets finds over 100,000 U.S. workers have received training via the H-1B fees paid by employers. In its annual budget document the Department of Labor describes its H-1B-funded job training initiatives as targeting "skills and competencies in demand by industries for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers."

**Table 1**  
**College Scholarships and Job Training Funded by Employers Through H-1B Fees: FY 2000 to FY 2011**

College Scholarships through National Science Foundation	58,000
Job Training through Department of Labor	100,000 +

Source: National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Labor, National Foundation for American Policy.

## Conclusion

Thirty percent of every H-1B fee goes to scholarships provided to U.S. students through the National Science Foundation. Fifty percent of the fee is allotted to training programs. That means every time an H-1B visa holder is hired (or his/her status is renewed), \$450 goes to fund a scholarship for a U.S. student and \$750 is sent to provide job training for a U.S. worker.

It is good that U.S. workers and students receive training and scholarships. Whether that money, particularly \$3 billion worth, should come directly from employers when they hire H-1B professionals is less clear but it has been U.S. government policy for a decade. If these fees are to continue, then they should figure more prominently in the debate over skilled immigration. The fees call into question the assertions made that 1) employers hire H-1B visa holders to save money and 2) companies do not help educate and train students and workers. There is one point everyone should agree on – even in Washington, \$3 billion is a lot of money.

# Secretary Clinton's Diaspora Engagement Alliance: Opportunities for the Indian Diaspora

by Madhavi Bhasin



In the same week that President Obama delivered his much awaited Middle East speech, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton inaugurated the State Department's new diplomatic outreach initiative – The Global Diaspora Forum held from May 17-19, 2011. The initiative, christened as idEA (International Diaspora Engagement Alliance) is based on simple understanding: Diaspora communities often have the local knowledge and contacts; US Government agencies have the technical expertise, global presence, and convening power. Based on these complementarities, the State Department shall develop new diaspora-centric partnership models and undertaking new programs to encourage intra-diaspora collaboration and learning.

During the Forum, hosted jointly by the State Department, USAID and Migration Policy Institute, a host of initiatives were launched to partner closely with the diaspora communities to further United State's international diplomacy and development efforts. The goal of the Forum, as stated by Secretary Clinton was to 1) recognize and celebrate the contribution of diaspora communities to America's relationship with their countries of origin or ancestry, 2)

foster diaspora-centric partnership models, and 3) encourage intra-diaspora collaboration and learning.

It is somewhat strange that given the usual hype over any development in Indo-US relations, the Diaspora Forum was overlooked in the mainstream media as well as social media avowedly utilized by non-profits based out of US. This could be attributed to the fact that diaspora philanthropy and partnership for social entrepreneurship between US and India is considered less important than the bilateral political and strategic partnership. However, the programs launched during the Forum present an important window of opportunity for the Indian Diaspora to deepen social, economic and cultural partnership between the two countries.

Secretary Clinton during her speech identified the diaspora communities as wielders of smart power. According to her, "You [the diaspora communities] have the potential to be the most powerful people-to-people asset we can bring to the world's table. Because of your familiarity with cultural norms, your own motivations, your own special skills and leadership, you are, frankly, our Peace Corps, our USAID, our OPIC, our State Department all rolled into one."

According to the Migration Information Source, US is home to 1.6 million Indian immigrants, the third largest migrant group in the country. Given the numbers and potential of the Indian Diaspora, the Forum offers great opportunities to forge creative partnerships. Some of the proposed avenues for collaboration include the following.

- **diasphilanthropy:** Diaspora Philanthropy is not a new phenomenon. Indian Diaspora has been actively involved in philanthropy over the

past decades through professional associations, faith-based groups, hometown associations and individual contributions. However, the community needs to invest more thought and effort into ensuring mechanisms for strategic giving. Philanthropy is not merely an emotionally induced social commitment but is also a strategic economic decision. While the community is fervently involved in making donations, it is equally important to invest in research to identify the most urgent social challenges, explore innovative solutions and ensure goal compliance. While giving is important, it is critical to ensure that the donations are impactful on the ground. It would be helpful if some members of the community devise and publicize tools to identify social causes demanding urgent action, provide lists of organizations involved in advocating the causes, offer secure and easy options to make donations and provide regular updates on progress made and challenges encountered. Making philanthropy simpler and strategic is both desirable and necessary.

**There is great scope to encourage diaspora volunteerism among the members of the Indian community based in US. Teach for India and Indicorps are some platforms that offer such opportunities.**

• **diaspora 2.0:** The Indian Diaspora in the US is uniquely positioned to foster communication and information technologies for enhancing and deepening engagement. Given the diaspora's extensive talent in ICT it is possible to create virtual communities and devise ways sharing information and resources online. While social networks have emerged as the best medium to engage the diaspora, it's essential to bring some order to the chaos of information available online. For example, several US based non-profits working on social empowerment projects in India are currently competing for the Chase Community Giving Event. Though each organization approached its faithful supporters through Facebook and twitter, there was no attempt to involve the diaspora as a community by providing information on various organizations and monitoring the vote count for each. By voting for different charities, the collective strength of the

diaspora was reduced with the possibility that no non-profit working on challenges in India secures the top slot. It's important to use the communication tools to operate as a collective force rather than contribute individually.

• **diasporacorps:** Apart from sharing monetary resources it is important for the Indian Diaspora to share time and talent to make a difference on the ground. There is great scope to encourage diaspora volunteerism among the members of the Indian community based in US. Teach for India and Indicorps are some platforms that offer such opportunities. However, most of these volunteer opportunities tend to target youth and students, leaving a huge resource pool untapped. Technology professionals, teachers, small business owners, home-makers, farmers, nurses – Indian immigrants in every walk of life can contribute to social innovation in their own ways. It's important to mobilize these members of the community and provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to them. Every member of the diaspora needs to be made aware of his/her potential as a volunteer.

• **diasplomacy:** Diaspora diplomacy is traditionally related to political lobbying for issues such as work permits, migration status or bilateral trade and strategic relations. Kathleen Newland of Migration Policy Institute has discussed in a Report, published in November 2010, the advocacy and lobbying trends and techniques among the various diaspora communities in the US. The Report appreciates the efforts of the USINPAC (US India Political Action Committee) in persuading the US Congress to pass the 2008 Indo-U.S. Civilian Nuclear Agreement. Non-traditional mediums such as sports, arts and culture (which contribute to creating the image of India) need to be used strategically for advocacy purposes. Advocacy and diplomacy are the strengths of the Indian diaspora that can be employed in promoting creative partnerships.

• **diaspreneurship:** The entrepreneurial spirit of the Indian Diaspora has received numerous accolades in the US and across the globe. It's time to utilize the entrepreneurial skills in identifying opportunities in India, to exploit such opportunities as "first movers," and to contribute to job creation and economic growth. The State Department plans to support diaspora entrepreneurs in investing and building enterprises as well as stimulating trade in countries of origin. This provides the Indian Diaspora the encouragement and support to contribute to India's economic growth.

The Secretary's Global Diaspora Forum sought to challenge diaspora communities to forge partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and public institutions in order to make their engagements with their countries of origin or

ancestry effective, scalable, and sustainable. It is essential for the Indian Diaspora to take this challenge and actively contribute to idEA. Hopefully, the Indian Diaspora will contribute to this Alliance by providing innovative ideas for partnership and mobilizing the immigrant community to get involved in the emerging venture.



**Madhavi Bhasin**

Madhavi Bhasin is a Visiting Scholar at Center for South Asia Studies, UC Berkeley and Program Coordinator at Global India Foundation.

**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

Robust, thinking, and insightful into the aspirations & concerns of Indian-Americans

## Is there merit in NRIs contesting elections in India?

by Manasi Kakatkar-Kulkarni

The Indian Overseas Congress (IOC) has announced plans to field Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in the Punjab State Assembly elections next year. The party plans to field about 10 candidates on the Congress Party ticket next year according to IOC President Vikram Bajwa.

According to the Representation of the People Act, 1951 a person can contest elections if he is also an "elector for a Parliamentary constituency in India". Or simply put, being a voter is the primary prerequisite for contesting elections in India. In a recent amendment to the 1951 Act, NRIs who have not acquired the citizenship of another country can now register as voters in India.\*

This means that a non-resident India could contest elections in India at the local, state and federal levels if he is a registered voter. It would be a great opportunity for NRIs to participate and make a difference in the political process and policy-making of their country. Their international experience could be put to good use in improving governance and bringing new ideas to the administration of their states/country.

However, it might not be in the interest of the voters if the individual is required to reside in or cannot leave his host country for long stretches of time. It could affect the elected NRI's parliamentary attendance and actual participation in debates and discussions on the

floor of the House. Questions need to be raised if such a candidate would be attuned to the needs and interests of his constituents, and can serve them efficiently. Or will he be an arm-chair philosopher? Governance is a full-time responsibility, and if a representative cannot be present with and for his constituents at all times due to other work/ business obligations and financial constraints, it would be a big loss for the voters. (Would the travel expenses of the NRI, traveling to be with his constituents, be charged to the taxpayer?)

The IOC's decision to field NRIs in Punjab is commendable, but it should be scrutinized if the purpose is to provide representation to the NRI community and its needs; or allow a distinguished member of a constituency to represent and give back to his community; or simply appease the NRI community with the purpose of acquiring more support and funds for the party? If the decision is about representing NRIs, then a different process of nominating such a member of the non-resident community to the Assembly or Parliament should also be considered. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has already been created with such a mandate to look into the concerns of the community.

The right to contest elections for NRIs could be an important event in the political evolution of India. But it first needs to go through the right process of deliberations. The opinions and interests of the voters, the intentions of the political parties and an objective analysis of what the NRI community can contribute to the governance of the country should be considered before allowing NRIs to contest elections in the country. The sentiment of participation if commendable, the practicality of it is suspect.

*\* An NRI can vote in an Indian election if he is present in the constituency where he is registered on the date of voting. Unlike earlier provisions that automatically removed a person's name from the list if he were not living in India for a stretch of six months, the new bill will allow voters to stay away for more than six months and continue to exercise their vote.*



**Manasi Kakatkar-Kulkarni**

Manasi Kakatkar-Kulkarni is a commentator on foreign policy and writes for the Foreign Policy Association's India Blog and the Atlantic Sentinel. She is particularly focused on international arms control, nuclear proliferation and India's foreign relations.

**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

Organizes delegations from India and the U.S. to cement ties between the two nations

**USINPAC holds talks with delegates from the US and India and works with them to resolve issues related to the Indian-American community. Let us know what your concerns are and we will try to take it forward. Post your grievances and issues on our forum and let your voice be heard at: [www.usinpac.com/forum](http://www.usinpac.com/forum)**

**Keep yourself posted on the latest happenings in the Indian-American community by following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).**

# Arise! Awake! And Stop Not Till the Goal is Reached!

by Dilip Gadkar

Today Indian-Americans are an envied group in the United States. They represent what the American mainstream desires in immigrants – a hardworking, law-abiding community, a community focused on education, family values, assimilation and one that articulates its views in discussions and debates – in short, a group that succeeds in the right way.

But there is one area where Indian-Americans are sorely absent – participation in the political and civic process. Indian-Americans speak up only occasionally even on issues that are of deep concern to them; they rarely call or write to their Congressional Representative. In my experience, Indian-Americans tend to express their discontent in private circles, over dinners, often on Saturday evenings with their close friends. The common expression at these dinners is “someone should do something”. Unfortunately, that someone is most often, if not always, supposed to be someone else.

There are valid socio-historical reasons for this reticence. A vast majority of Indian-Americans came to the U.S. from middle class backgrounds. They were taught from childhood to focus on education and not get embroiled in activities that might distract them away from a good education and career.

As immigrants, success in the U.S. did not come easy for Indian-Americans. Each profession found itself stereotyped at different times in the journey. For example, in the 1980s, American managers routinely stereotyped Indian technology professionals as “good techies” but “not good managers.” This was not deemed to be a racist statement at the time but a rational, reasonable one. Even today, physicians educated in India have to suffer grossly stereotyped statements about the quality of their medical education and clinical experience in India.

Despite all of these obstacles, Indian-Americans have achieved enviable success in America. In this quest, the Indian attributes of keeping one’s head down and focusing on one’s education, career and family paid off.

But, now it is time to get on to the next stage in being an important part of the American society. It is time to bring issues that are near and dear to the hearts of Indian-Americans into the American mainstream. These could be issues of culture, education, employment, history or religion. We Indian-Americans owe it to ourselves and to our next generation to be active and vocal. If we learn to be both, we will obtain a level of political success that we only dream of today. The 2010 mid terms elections were only a preview of what one can expect when the Indian-American community becomes truly political active.

My column today has been triggered by two recent events and the media attention they received. The first shows the weakness of the Indian-American community and the second shows a new spirit among Indian-Americans.

- Mumbai suffered a vicious, horrific attack by Pakistani terrorists in November 2008. This week, according to media reports, a lawsuit was filed in Brooklyn Federal Court by relatives of four Jewish victims slain in that attack and one survivor. The suit contends Pakistan’s shadowy Inter-Services Intelligence provided support to the gunmen who killed 166 and wounded more than 300 people. The government of Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Taiba are also named as defendants in the suit according to media articles. The plaintiffs are represented by Lawyer James Kreindler, whose law firm successfully sued Libya on behalf of the 259 passengers who died in the attack on Pan Am Flight 103 and the 11 people killed on the ground.

To me, this illustrates the difference between an awake, active Jewish community that lost 4 members in the Mumbai attack and a relatively asleep, inactive Indian community that lost approx 160 people.

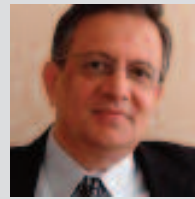
- This past Sunday, the second most read article on the New York Times website was Hindu Group Stirs a Debate Over Yoga's Soul. This article is about the Campaign "Take Back Yoga" by the Hindu American Foundation. As the article states, the Campaign "suggests only that people become more aware of yoga's debt to the faith's ancient traditions". This campaign has generated media articles including a column on the On Faith blog of the Washington Post and an article about the philosophy underlying Yoga titled Bin Ladenism in Religion & The Practice of Yoga.

My objective here is not to discuss the merits or demerits of the campaign but to point out one of the first attempts by a group of Indian-Americans to create in the American mainstream a debate, to an awareness of a topic near and dear to their hearts. I hope we

look back at this campaign as the first among many such campaigns by Indian-Americans that impact the American mainstream.

The title of the article is the exhortation by Swami Vivek-Anand to all Indians to Arise and Awake. It is up to each Indian-American to decide what goal he or she wants to reach. But the message, a variation of the ancient exhortation from Kathopanisad, applies to each and every Indian-American.

I believe the country wants the Indian-American community to Arise, Awaken and Participate actively and vocally in the American political and civic mainstream. I sincerely hope it begins to do so.



**Dilip Gadkar**

Dr. Dilip Gadkar is the Founder & Chief Executive of an Investment Firm. Dr. Gadkar's main interests are global strategy, monetary and political policy with focus on US-India issues.

**Reason for USINPAC to be around!**

Inspires thought for better U.S.-India ties

**News this month**

**Indian-American Ravi Batra appointed to the New York State Ethics Committee**



Ravi Batra, a prominent Indian-American attorney has been named to the New York State's Ethics Committee that acts as an independent corruption monitor.

Ravi is a New York-based attorney with a private practice experience, and is the only Indian-American to be named to the 14 member Joint Commission on Public Ethics.

### Knighthood for Nobel laureate Venkatraman Ramakrishnan



Indian-American Nobel Laureate Venkatraman Ramakrishnan has been honored with a Knighthood by the royal establishment in London in recognition of the achievements by foreigners based in Britain.

58-year old Venky, who is now based at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, was honored for the services to molecular biology, as per an official announcement.

### Indian-American Shefali Razdan Duggal is the 'most powerful' woman in California



Shefali Razdan Duggal, an Indian-American fundraiser at President Barack Obama's re-election campaign, has made it to a prestigious list of the "most powerful and influential women" of California.

40-year-old Shefali will be formally recognized at a ceremony on February 2. She is also a member of Obama's Presidential Partners, National Finance Committee (NFC) and Northern California Finance Committee.

### Readers Speak,

Hi there,

Last month's edition on H.R. 3012 was an eye-opener. Got to know a lot about this law and its implications. Though it is stuck right now, I feel there is definitely a way out. Thanks to you, we see this as a possibility. Thanks very much for keeping all of us posted.

**Shraddha Kamat, San Diego**

Hello,

Your magazine has been the primary source for me on Indo-American issues. I have always waited for your magazine and look forward for the next edition. The piece on 3012 was really great. It was certainly a good and crunchy read. I guess finally I came to know why my friend has been trying for a US citizenship for long. You magazine had all the answers. Keep up the good work.

**Ashwin Kotian, San Francisco**

Thank you for the blog on The Real Tragedy on Memogate. It was an informative read. Keep it up!

**Bhavna Singh, Minneapolis**



The Voice of Indian-Americans

## About US India Political Action Committee

USINPAC is the political voice of 2.7 million Indian-Americans. As a bipartisan organization we work to impact policy on issues of concern to the Indian-American community in the United States. USINPAC has enhanced the community's presence and its issues on Capitol Hill and given Indian-Americans a stronger voice in the legislative process in a bipartisan manner. USINPAC's activities focus on strengthening a grassroots network to work on issues concerning the community.

We promote fair and balanced policies by working together with other Indian-American organizations and creating a platform that enables entry of Indian Americans into the political process. USINPAC has a dedicated presence in Washington, DC with full time staff and passionate volunteers. We provide bipartisan support to candidates for federal, state and local office who support the issues that are important to the Indian-American community.

USINPAC had been at the forefront of advocating and lobbying the US Congress and Indian policy-makers right since the inception of the US-India Civil Nuclear Deal in 2005. We organized fact-finding missions, conferences, Congressional briefings, receptions, weekly community calls and meetings with policymakers and stakeholders in both countries to understand and impact the passage of the agreement in the Congress. The bill was successfully passed by the US Congress in 2008.

Contact us at  
[info@usinpac.com](mailto:info@usinpac.com)

Media Inquiry: Ph: 202-628-3451  
[media@usinpac.com](mailto:media@usinpac.com)