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European Institute
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EU-INDIA-USA Triologue

EU-INDIA-USA TRIALOGUE IDENTIFIES COMMON OBJECTIVES AND INTERESTS IN INTER-REGIONAL SECURITY

A unique EU-INDIA-US Triologue on Inter-regional Security was co-organised by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the Hanns Seidel Stiftung and the European Institute for Asian Studies on the 30th of September 2004 in Brussels, ahead of the EU-India Summit to take place in 2004 or early 2005. Speakers at the Triologue represented the EU institutions (European Commission, Council of the European Union and European Parliament) while India was represented by her Ambassador to the European Union. Speakers also included leading analysts drawn from prominent think tanks in the US, India and Europe. The track-two Triologue was attended by 150 participants from the diplomatic, official and academic communities in Brussels. [See the list of Chairs and Speakers below].

The Triologue was organised in recognition of the need to develop a comparative perspective between EU-India and US-India relations with a focus on commonalities and differences of perceptions within the EU-INDIA-USA. It was noted that EU-India relations are to a very considerable extent co-determined by events outside this relationship, most significantly the 9/11 attack on the US as well as regional security issues within the wider Asia. The Triologue analysed the state of play in EU-India and US-India co-operation, the progress on working together on non-proliferation and peace building, on defining and addressing the common security threat and promoting trilateral cooperation in global governance. Main themes throughout the Triologue were the commonalities and differences of objectives, interests, values and strategies between the EU, India and the US.

State of Play: EU-India and US-India Cooperation

EU-India relations have been growing closer since the initiation of annual summits in Lisbon 2000, placing India amongst the top-priorities of the EU's common foreign and security policy. The EU and India share global vision on the importance of 'effective multi-lateralism'. Also the EU has come to realise that India's economic capabilities will place it as one of the largest economies along with the US, EU, China and Japan by the end of this decade. The EU seeks to intensify its political dialogue with India, engage in a wide range of sector-specific dialogues and develop new instruments to institutionalise the cooperation. The EU pledges to help India achieve the Millennium Development Goals and develop new forms of academic exchange, amongst others through the Erasmus Mundus scholarship system, enabling Indian students to come to Europe as well as European students to study in India.

USA-India bilateral relationships have undergone a sea-change transforming from one of 'estrangement' to one of 'engagement'. Nevertheless, many in India remain ambivalent about the US, fearing to be 'swallowed in the embrace'. The US interest in the relationship has focused on defence and security, while the trade and investment cooperation is still woefully underdeveloped. However, India's commitment to economic liberalization has raised interest within the US. The end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union ushered in a new pragmatism in Indian foreign policy – less ideological, less anti-western and more accepting of globalisation. This pragmatic stance was reinforced during the NDA administration and is set to continue by the new Congress-led UPA administration. The role of the Indian-American community, their strong performance in Silicon valley and across US universities and business communities, has too been an important facilitating factor. In recognition of India's growing importance, the US has recently modified its regulations governing the export of dual-use high technology to India (17 Sept 2004).

Still, India's 'hard' security focus may have underplayed the importance of 'human' security, focusing on factors affecting security in people's daily lives. The list of intended arms purchases includes many big price-tag items for external security, even though internal security has been a more important cause of death in India. Moreover, the level of spending on defence and security, though approximately constant as a share of GDP, measures very large as compared with expenditures on e.g. health or social security. A shift of focus away from hard-ware based external

security towards improving internal and human security would be desirable.

EU-INDIA-US: Working together on Non-Proliferation and Peace Building

India, like to USA and EU, is fully committed to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), to prevent the deployment of weapons in outer-space and also to reduce conventional forces as well as small arms and light weapons. However, the global non-proliferation process is virtually without progress – with no agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, no verification of biological and toxic weapon stocks and production and no dialogue on cutting off fissile material production. India's long-held view on the need for a nuclear free world was first articulated in 1965 and reinforced by its leaders on many occasions since. It cannot accept the inequities implied in the NPT-regime, but rather calls for concerted actions to delegitimise WMDs through a time-bound world-wide plan of action for their elimination. India also notes the link between effective peace-keeping and reform of the UN Security Council and seeks a better representation of the global power equations which will characterise the 21st century.

With both EU and US articulating an intention to deepen their strategic interest in India, it is opportune for India to seek to act in concert with these major global players – especially as this does not necessarily require identical views on each and every issue. India's neighbourhood is extremely volatile and thus far India is not part of any military alliance. The post 9/11 world is acknowledging that failed states and systemic failures of governance can be a reason to intervene. EU-INDIA-US share the view that strong actions may be needed to combat terrorism and also share a belief in the importance of maintaining international security. India's commitment to this has been shown as it has never proliferated WMDs or their means of delivery. It attaches great importance to contributing towards a rule-based equitable global system, geared to ensure a confluence of civilisations, and avoid a clash.

Analysts emphasized the need for a fresh start in US and EU dialogues with India, especially because of the involvement of non-state actors in security. The enhanced dialogues should accept political realities – that India will remain a nuclear power and non-signatory to the NPT regime and that US will remain the sole superpower for decades to come. India should be closer involved in Asian security and be encouraged to join the

general membership of the Proliferation Security Initiative. A world-wide effort should be undertaken to clarify the status of international law in the post 9/11 world, including a review of the issue of the permissibility of pre-emptive strikes. Finally, such a global debate should also review the future role of nuclear weapon systems.

Analysts also noted that India continues to be seen as a threat to a stable NPT regime and that the present US administration has engaged into creative thinking towards a new regime. The US strategic interest in India is clearly reflected by its initiative on the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership, enhancing civil nuclear, space and high-tech cooperation. However, from its side India should take on some burdensome tasks in ensuring an enhanced non-proliferation regime, thus contributing towards its universal enforcement.

EU-India-US: Defining and addressing the Common Security Threat.

India supported the war on terrorism immediately after 9/11 as it too perceives the threat of terrorism as an attack on the openness of its society. The new Congress-led Indian administration is committed to closely working together with the US, as shown by the recent meeting between President Bush and PM Manmohan Singh in New York, where they discussed, inter alia, the global fight against terrorism, WMD proliferation and Indo-Pak ties. The regional security situation in India's neighbourhood remains worrisome, with insurgency in Nepal, illegal migration from Bangladesh, unsettled border disputes with China, a stalled peace process in Sri Lanka, the continued use of Afghanistan as a hinterland for terrorism and, last but not least, the long standing differences with Pakistan, though recently defused through talks and contacts between the leaders.

The EU has recently re-examined and reformulated its security strategy, acknowledging that it faces common threats and that as an effective global actor it must be ready to share in global security. It circumvented the complex and divisive debate on the definition, nature and causes of terrorism, by asserting the importance of responding to terrorist *acts* – i.e. any attack on innocent civilians. It acknowledges that failed states can give rise to regional conflicts, e.g. in the Great Lakes region and that failed states can give rise to the proliferation of WMDs. State failures – in the sense of poor governance—too can be a source of regional or global insecurity. The EU's overriding objective remains to engender effective multi-lateralism, beyond the UN, but including other institutional arrangements such as International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Asean

Regional Forum (ARF). Strategic bilateral relations will be intensified with the US, Russia, Canada, China and India. The EU does not only focus on conflict management and resolution, but also seeks to develop its agenda for conflict prevention as well as post-conflict assistance towards rehabilitation and reconstruction. It has been noted that at present no structure (even informal) exists to promote EU-India-USA cooperation. The EU is partly to blame, with its weak visibility and low profile.

It was observed that the EU and USA security strategies were very similar and closely co-ordinated, especially through the consultation in the NATO-framework, comprising 26 nations and providing world-wide operations, including in Afghanistan and Iraq, although only for a training mission. Strikingly, despite simultaneous moves from the EU and USA identifying India as a strategic partner, NATO and India have not yet entered into informal consultations. Differences over e.g. Iraq between India and US may be expected to become less important, in the context of the transfer of sovereignty to an Iraqi government, forthcoming elections and a UN mandate for reconstruction.

EU-INDIA-US: Promoting Trilateral Cooperation in Global Governance

Analysts emphasized the unfairness of the present distribution of global power, noting a mismatch between countries' GDP contribution and their voting power in global governance institutions, especially across the UN system as well as within the Bretton Woods institutions. At the level of global governance, India's contribution in operations, finance and human resources was significant, while its role at the international decision-making tables had remained marginal.

It was observed that the EU-India cooperation has over recent years been given greater focus and institutional structure through regular political and business summits, an EU-India Round Table, the Commission's communication on the EU-India Strategic Partnership (2004) as well as the forthcoming European Parliament's initiative report on EU-India. EU-India-USA cooperation in global governance will need to involve the UN. However, UN reform will be a necessary pre-requisite. India candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council should be supported as it is the world's largest liberal and secular democracy, one of the world's largest economies with technological superpower capabilities, while showing responsibility in non-proliferation and peace-

keeping. In recognition of this, EU should support India's claim, whilst for itself advocating a permanent seat for the European Union in addition to the permanent seats of the UK and France. UN reform has to adopt a forward looking approach, reflecting the needs for the 21st century.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Both the US and the EU have "discovered" India over the past decade. This reflects, in part, a perception (which is shared by most Indians) of a "rising India."

The EU, India, and the US are simultaneously competitors and collaborators. Which of these two elements prevails at any particular moment will depend on the issue at hand. Decision makers and the general populace in each of the three entities must act to ensure that the competitive elements in these relationships do not preclude cooperation in other areas. In the immediate future, trans-national issues – including energy, disease, criminality, and environmental degradation – may represent especially fruitful venues for collaboration among the three parties. It was recommended that energy security be considered the main theme for the next EU-INDIA-US Triologue.

While not ignoring their continued non-proliferation differences, officials and opinion makers in the EU-INDIA-US ought to give greater attention to acting in tandem in pursuit of their shared non-proliferation objectives – most notably, a common desire to block the spread of dangerous technologies to terrorists or states supporting terrorism.

Despite evocations of "equal partnership" among the three, US power, in all its dimensions, will almost certainly overshadow that of either the EU or India for some decades. Each of the two less powerful parties (India and the EU), therefore, is likely to give precedence to its relationship with the US. On at least some occasions, however, these two less powerful parties may find themselves drawn together in their concerns about, or opposition to, the policies of the hegemon. The US, for instance, is not likely to accept the value placed on effective multilateralism that both the EU and India attach to it.

Efforts to promote serious tripartite discussion and, wherever feasible, cooperation among the three parties ought to receive higher priority at both official and non-official levels. Collectively, these three actors are home to one-third of humanity. This fact in itself suggests the necessity

for more serious and sustained attention to the many ways in which their interests clash, coincide, and run along separate but parallel tracks.

It is crucial for the **European Union** to begin implementing its proposed dialogues with India in a timely and efficient manner. Two major weaknesses were identified: (i) that no structure exists to promote EU-India-USA cooperation; and (ii) that the EU suffers from weak visibility and a low profile in India. The EU should understand the importance of its role in global security.

India should be closer involved in Asian security and be encouraged to join general membership of PSI in order to contribute to an enhanced non-proliferation regime. There is a need to shift India's security focus away from "hard-ware based" external security towards improving internal "human" security. Most immediately, India should seek to engage in, at least, an informal dialogue with the NATO.

*Rapporteur: Dr Willem van der Geest
Director, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels.*

Annex: List of Chairs and Speakers of the EU-INDIA-US Trialogue

Ambassador H.E. Rajendra Abhyankar

Ambassador of the Republic of India to the European Union, Brussels

Major General (retd.) Dipanker Banerjee

Director, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, India

Prof. Dr. Ludo Cuyvers

Chairman, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels

Dr. Gordon K. Duguid

Representative of the US Mission to NATO, Brussels

Markus Ferber MEP

Member of the Board, Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung

Mark C. Fischer (Chair)

Assistant Director, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Brussels

Dr. Karl Fischer (Chair)

Resident Representative, Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, New Delhi

Dr. Robert Hathaway

Director, Asia Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C.

Dr. Karl-Heinz Kamp

Co-ordinator, Foreign- and Security Policy, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Berlin

Ambassador Tomasz Kozlowski

Head of Asia Task Force, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Brussels

Dr Apurba Kundu

Senior Research Associate, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels/University of Bradford, United Kingdom

Ambassador Satish Lambah

Convenor of the National Security Board of India, New Delhi

Armin Laschet MEP

Member of the European Parliament Committee for Foreign Affairs

Prof. Dr. Günter Rinsche

Member of the Board, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Berlin

Malcolm Subhan (Chair)

Vice-Chairman, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels

Rensje Teerink

Principal Administrator, India Unit, DG External Relations, Directorate H – Asia, European Commission

Dr. Ashley J. Tellis

Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Dr. Willem van der Geest

Director, European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels

Dr. Arvind Virmani

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