

**ASIA WONERS WHY
TALKING ABOUT FOREIGN
POLICY, TRADE, AND ASIA
IS SEEN AS A NEGATIVE
IN THE CONTEXT OF U.S.
DOMESTIC POLITICS.**

about why Asia is fundamentally important to U.S. prosperity and peace. This above all other actions will convince Asia that the United States is committed for the long term. This leadership effort cannot be deputized or delegated, though the ground work has certainly been laid in speeches by successive Obama national security advisers and other key cabinet members.

Asia wonders why talking about foreign policy, trade, and Asia is seen as a negative in the context of U.S. domestic politics. Asian partners are being told repeatedly that the White House will spend political capital on the

Trans-Pacific Partnership after the November midterm elections. This is not a good message in Asia. It undercuts a belief in a sustainable and serious U.S. commitment to the region. Engagement in Asia cannot and should not be something the administration squeezes in during the lame-duck session or after elections so it doesn't divide its political base. The United States must develop an Asia consensus that serves as a foundation for policymaking for the remainder of the 21st century and beyond. ►

The Long View on India

Richard M. Rossow

Ironically, the U.S. rebalance to Asia is viewed by some in India as a pivot away from their country. Repeated U.S. attempts to initiate top-down cooperation in strategic sectors, such as civilian nuclear power and defense trade, have experienced uneven success. Today, some senior U.S. policymakers privately question efforts to court a nation that often appears unwilling to reciprocate U.S. outreach. Few would argue that, in 20 years, a rising India will not play an important role in regional stability. For the United States to be a partner in this future, it must commit to finding small ways to work toward this vision—even if there will be few instances of short-term gratification.

U.S. policymakers have a powerful predilection toward tangible deliverables. Senior officials want to walk away from public service with a sense that they, as individuals, made some particular contribution to America's strategic success. There is less interest in engaging in relationships where there are low expectations for immediate repayment. Unfortunately, India has fallen into this category.

President George W. Bush placed a "big bet" on India as a distinctly important partner in Asia's future. But with the rebalance, India sees the United States as placing multiple smaller bets across Asia, with little strategic focus on India. The truth, of course, is much more nuanced; defense relations are expanding and space cooperation is back on the agenda, while nuclear cooperation is stuck in neutral largely due to India's inability to open the door for commercial trade.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) resounding victory in the spring 2014 parliamentary election offers a chance to review how the United States and India might engage on strategic affairs. This BJP government is *not* the Congress Party, and therefore historical positions concerning nonalignment bear less significance. While there will still be adherents to



nonalignment in the bureaucracy, policymakers will be willing to approach issues differently. While India has no desire to be seen as a junior partner to Washington, Narendra Modi's government is more open to expanding cooperation with the United States on a whole range of global issues.

There are already strong signals that New Delhi is thinking differently about its global interests, as evidenced by the Joint Statement issued following Prime Minister Modi's September 2014 visit to Washington, D.C. While the statement rehashes and updates some of the areas previously highlighted for bilateral cooperation, it expands the number of areas where the United States and India promise to collaborate, including North Korea, Iraq, Syria, and the South China Sea. Historically, India has avoided being this specific when it comes to identifying regions where it has strategic concerns and interests.

If India is interested in being a partner to the United States in developing a new Asian security architecture, there are important domestic issues within India that must be addressed. First and foremost, finding a solution to the nuclear liability issue—which has thus far precluded American commercial involvement in India's nuclear power

industry—must be tackled. Second, India must be more receptive to U.S. attempts to initiate co-development and co-production of next-generation defense equipment. Third, India must show more willingness to engage on trade. While trade and strategic issues are sometimes viewed through different lenses, many consider the Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade agreement to be one of the more tangible initiatives of the rebalance.

India's avoidance of engaging in high-standards trade agreements, combined with the Modi government's decision to walk away from the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement in July 2014, does not give confidence that the government is ready to make tough decisions on

trade issues that could bind the United States and India closer together.

Building a comprehensive, strategic relationship with India will continue to be an elaborate courtship. The United States needs to sacrifice its fondness for regular, clear deliverables, and be prepared to play a long game that may take decades. But India must also show greater willingness to take decisions that form the building blocks of a deeper relationship. A thoughtful assessment of Asia in 20 years shows a convergence of interests, but there is much work to be done to make sure that the United States and India have a dependable and comfortable partnership. ►

**THERE ARE ALREADY
STRONG SIGNALS THAT
NEW DELHI IS THINKING
DIFFERENTLY ABOUT ITS
GLOBAL INTERESTS.**