

U.S. – India Defense Relationship

The U.S. and India are working to build the architecture of a durable defense partnership that will support our common interests in maintaining security and stability, defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated materials, data and technologies, and protecting the free flow of commerce via land, air and sea lanes. Since the signing of the New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship by Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister Mukherjee on 28 June 2005, the U.S. and India have made considerable progress in enhancing the relationship, through signing foundation agreements, conducting exercises and engaging in ongoing dialogue on a variety of security issues.

President Bush and Prime Minister Singh announced their intent to increase U.S.-Indian cooperation to improve security in the maritime domain. The two countries will soon sign an agreement for mutual logistics support that will enable our militaries to cooperate more easily during combined training, exercises and disaster relief operations. In January 2006, Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister Mukherjee signed the Research, Development, Test and Evaluation Agreement which will facilitate new avenues of cooperation in the area of scientific exchanges and joint development.

The U.S. and India's Military Services are improving their interoperability through increasingly sophisticated and complex exercises. The MALABAR Naval exercise conducted in September and October 2005 was the largest naval exercise to date between the U.S. and Indian Navies, and was the first to involve both U.S. and Indian aircraft carriers. The U.S. and Indian Air Forces conducted the third Cope India air exercise in November 2005 at Kalaikunda Air Station, West Bengal, India, the first U.S.-India exercise to involve Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft. U.S. and Indian Armies held a company-size exercise – their largest ever – in the foothills of the Himalayas in January 2006. Most recently in February 2006, the U.S. and Indian Navies were able to quickly organize a passing exercise with aircraft carriers from both countries, demonstrating capabilities that can be used to respond collaboratively to future emergencies at sea.

The U.S. and India seek to expand defense trade, co-production, joint development, and technology transfer, all of which will improve interoperability and cooperation. We are working through several forums to achieve this goal. The U.S. intends to transfer the USS TRENTON amphibious transport ship to India in early 2007. U.S. firms will compete with contemporary technology in the Indian Air Force's upcoming tender for

Multi-Role Combat Aircraft and a U.S. firm is competing in the Indian Army's commercial tender for a new light helicopter.

The U.S. Department of Defense and the Indian Ministry of Defense conduct ongoing dialogue on several topics of mutual interest under the auspices of the annual Defense Policy Group meetings, including counter-terrorism, missile defense cooperation, and strategic planning. A U.S. Defense Department delegation will travel to India soon to discuss the Quadrennial Defense Review with senior Indian officials and influential strategic thinkers.

U.S.-Indian defense cooperation is a force for good. The U.S. and India cooperated closely in providing aid to tsunami victims in December 2004-January 2005. In January 2006, the U.S. Navy rescued Indian mariners off the Horn of Africa whose ship had been hijacked by Somali pirates. Under the auspices of the U.S.-India disaster relief initiative, approved in July 2005, India airlifted supplies and made a contribution to the American Red Cross following Hurricane Katrina, and the U.S. and Indian militaries are working together to expand disaster relief cooperation.