



Indian Council of World Affairs
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Press Release

on

**The Round Table Discussion with
Dr. Satu Limaye, Director, East-West Center, Washington, D. C.**

The US wants India to play a larger role in South East and North East Asia commensurate with its economic strength and increasing global engagement, averred Dr. Satu Limaye, Director of the East-West Centre, Washington D.C. The East-West Centre is a leading research institute, promoting US engagement and dialogue with the Asia-Pacific region. Dr. Satu was speaking at the Roundtable Discussion on “US Pivot to Asia: Implications for India”, held by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) at Sapru House, New Delhi on February 7, 2013.



Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, DG, ICWA with Dr. Satu Limaye

Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director-General of ICWA, drawing an analogy of the term “pivot” from the game of basketball, queried in his Opening Remarks what strategic imbalance had prompted a rebalancing of US Asia policy. Dr. Limaye explained that the pivot policy essentially implies a rebalancing of US global priorities and a focus on Asia, as this region is becoming critically significant for the future growth and prosperity of the world. He observed that akin to India’s Look East Policy of 1991 that prioritized the country’s relations with South East Asia, US pivot strategy has a similar objective. His prognosis was that the US would continue to maintain its primacy as a strategic, military, economic, and technological power, and would consolidate its stature further in the next 10 years.

According to Dr. Limaye, the rebalancing of US focus on Asia, after a brief hiatus resulting from the US involvement in two exacting wars and pressing domestic issues, is actually marked by US' extensive ties to the region in the past. He alluded to several defence accords providing for US military engagement in the region; the presence of 60,000 US troops on the ground, and more recently, US membership of the East Asia Summit, signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the Trans Pacific Partnership and the Korea Free Trade Agreement, etc.

Dr. Limaye's presentation was followed by an informative discussion, which raised several questions ranging from the hyped US dependence on China due to its huge debt to the latter, to the "pivot" being aimed at containment of China. Responding to the questions, Dr. Limaye ruled out the assessment of the pivot as an effort to contain China. He stated, "US relations with China are quite good, but real substantial differences with China are there, and the US is managing them". He also pointed out that the US would not assess India's growing role in the region as a function of US policies.

It was pointed out by a participant that India's and US interests were congruent, but it would be helpful if the US factors in India's pressing border issues with China and its partner, Pakistan. He suggested that the US can at least depict the LOC in Jammu & Kashmir correctly. Another comment made was that the US reticence on the issue of China's supply of Pakistan's Chashma 3 & 4 reactors was disturbing, since these were in contravention of the NSG guidelines.

Dr. Limaye appreciated the candid discussion and the varied viewpoints articulated by the participants. The Round Table wrapped up with an optimistic suggestion for the US government to adopt a more democratic and transparent process of foreign policy deliberations with its partners, including India.
