



# **CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY**

## **THE REBALANCE TO ASIA: WHY SOUTH ASIA MATTERS**

**Testimony by Mr. Sanjay Puri  
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**House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific  
March 13, 2013**

## **Alliance for U.S.-India Business (AUSIB)**

**Testimony of Sanjay Puri  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Alliance for U.S.-India Business (AUSIB)**

**Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific  
“The Rebalance to Asia: Why South Asia Matters (Part II)**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2013**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today.

From energy security to defense cooperation to bolstering our economic ties and increasing opportunities for high-skilled workers to come to the U.S. or go to India, there are serious obstacles facing the U.S. as we re-rebalance to Asia. However, I believe our mutual interests and shared values can get us where we need to be if the U.S. is committed to deepening the U.S.-India partnership which is one of the most defining of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For purposes of this hearing, I will leave it to others to delve into counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation, military-to-military exchanges and defense trade. My objective is to focus on four broad issues which deserve our consideration.

The four are:

- 1) Enhanced education collaboration which can change the dynamics of this relationship
- 2) STEM teacher exchange which can be a game changer for the U.S.
- 3) The need to allow exports of natural gas to an energy starved India
- 4) Why we should look beyond New Delhi to different states in India

**Enhance Education Collaboration:** A Hindu proverb states that you can change a nation through education. I am a firm believer in this proverb and I think it holds a key for changing U.S.-India relations. For all the short-term fixes we might talk about today, I believe education is the long-term solution which is required for the U.S.-India partnership to thrive.

The Alliance for US-India Business (AUSIB) – a not-for-profit trade organization – has been at the forefront of enhancing dialogue between both countries to create opportunities for building higher quality education because we believe that building global partnerships between U.S. and Indian universities will strengthen the bonds between our two nations. Some of the top CEO’s and policy leaders in India today are educated from U.S. Universities. They take with them the knowledge, values and experiences of the United States. They take back the generosity of the

American people. This automatically creates economic and cultural bridges between the two countries. It is not a coincidence that Indian companies, led by U.S. educated CEO's, are much more active in the U.S.-India economic relationship.

Students from India form the second largest group coming to the U.S. for higher education. But demand for higher education in India is also increasing. The Indian Higher Education sector is rising to meet global benchmarks although further efforts are needed to enhance the accessibility, funding and the quality of higher education in the country. India needs at least 500 Universities and 33,000 more colleges in the next 8 years. This alone is a \$50 Billion market. India also has a great need for vocational and technical institutes which is another \$2 Billion market opportunity.

Where will this additional capacity come from? If it comes from Indian universities partnering with universities and colleges in the States you represent, I believe we will be on our way to making the kind of difference that needs to be made. Through AUSIB EduNext, a higher education initiative which mobilizes organizations and drives tangible results to empower and make educational institutes more capable and future ready for purposes of preserving and promoting the values that India and the U.S. share, we have created a platform for Indian Colleges/Universities to interact and establish long term relationships with visiting U.S. universities. We focus our efforts in the fields of medicine, pharmacy, engineering, business, hotel management, energy, technology and agriculture.

Our results have led to student and faculty exchanges, joint R&D and we have created an online platform that academics on both sides can use to exchange best practices. We have hosted two of the largest U.S.-India education conclaves in 2011 and 2013 which were attended by over 100 education and policy leaders from the U.S. and over 1,000 from India. All three Provosts of Public Institutions in Iowa were represented at the highest level at this year's conclave besides other Universities.

Governors, Members of Congress from India and the U.S., University Presidents, Provosts, Chancellors, Deans, Department Heads and senior faculty have participated in AUSIB- led delegations and we encourage universities in your district to collaborate with us or the Indian Higher Education sector so that together we can promote the highest standards of education, value systems and governance. All of our conclaves have had a strong corporate participation from the U.S. and India and I believe it is important for Universities to understand what kind of educational capability that companies need and also for companies to form a Public-Private partnership model with the Universities.

**Create a STEM teacher exchange program:** The second point I would make is regarding STEM education. The United States has a tremendous shortage of STEM teachers at the K-12 level. It is especially very acute in rural, inner city and remote areas. How can we expect our kids to have strong science, math skills when they do not have good teachers? India has a tremendous pool of science and math experts that also speak English. We should consider a specialized short term program that qualifies trains and brings these teachers over to the U.S. for a short duration so that we can create our own pool of STEM experts for the future. AUSIB is currently working with several states to establish a pilot program.

**Allow exports of gas to an energy starved India:** Currently India competes with China and Japan for buying LNG from Qatar and Australia. Generally it ends up on the short end of the stick as the growing appetite by China has made China much more aggressive. The U.S. only exports Gas to FTA countries and since India is not it needs approval. If the U.S. can find a way to have an economically viable and environmentally clear mechanism to export gas to India it would do three things: increase economic opportunity in the U.S. through exports, reduce India's energy dependence on the Middle East and thirdly build a more strategic relationship with India given the country's tremendous need for energy independence.

**Look beyond New Delhi outward to various dynamic states in India:**

As India has entered a period of coalition politics, the states are much more assertive and powerful. The U.S. should build strong economic and cultural ties with these states since they will get away from the policy paralysis that sometimes affects New Delhi. AUSIB just took a delegation to the state of Punjab where the Chief Minister wants to start a Farmer to Farmer exchange with the U.S. since his state is an agriculture state and he wants to learn best practices from U.S. farmers.

There are several dynamic states in India like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu that we should engage with. I would like to make a point about the U.S. relationship with the State of Gujarat and especially its democratically elected Chief Minister Narendra Modi. His state is one of the most economically dynamic and has attracted a lot of investments from U.S. companies like Ford and GM. I have participated with other delegates from around the world at one of the premier economic summits in India hosted by the State of Gujarat called Vibrant Gujarat. However, the U.S. Government has boycotted him. While all of us stand for human rights and deplore any violation, the fact remains that after ten years of investigation, India's Supreme Court has found no evidence against CM Modi regarding the 2002 Gujarat riots and he has been elected democratically thrice, representing more than 60 million constituents. Therefore, in my opinion, it is time for the U.S. to begin the process of engagement with CM Modi.

I thank you for your time and for holding this important hearing, and I look forward to answering your questions.