

## **DNC Chennai Workshop (February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024)**

### **Opening Remarks (Draft)**

In 1949, the first Prime Minister of India had once told US President Harry S. Truman that “I trust that these two republics of the Western World & the Eastern World will find many ways of working together in friendly and fruitful cooperation to our mutual advantage, and for the good of humanity.” Nearly about 76 years later, it may be highlighted that this vision has manifested into a dedicated partnership, standing the test of time, finally culminating into mutual investment in aligned long-term trajectories between the two largest democracies and market economies of the world.

Owing to the converging security and strategic interests, embedded in the commitment to promoting a resilient, rules-based international order, a substantial bilateral progress has been witnessed through the ideation and execution of a ‘Comprehensive global strategic partnership’. In fact, the year 2023 remained at the cutting edge of enhanced cooperation with two leader-level summits, ground-breaking agreements on defense cooperation, a new technological partnership and coordination on global challenges. Consequentially, there has been heightened optimism and dynamism ‘trusted’ and ‘natural’ partners to collaborate in enhancing the multifaceted roadmap for Defense Industrial Cooperation.

Defense cooperation between India and USA has become an integral and central aspect of the national security policy of both the countries and has grown significantly in the recent past. Defense technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) has been instrumental as one of the foremost benchmarks of India-US elevated dialogue on cooperative research and development of defense trade to the highest levels of government. Keeping indigenous defense production, technology-sharing and promotion of supply chain resilience at the core of interaction, both

India and USA are looking forward to the finalization of the Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)- a principal priority to further coalesce the defense industrial ecosystem.

With the backdrop of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue (November 2023), the countries have been focused on interoperability and maximization of shared benefits of agreements like Logistics and Exchange Memorandum Agreement (LEMOA), so that reciprocal steps can be identified, thereby enhancing the reach of each other's national security services. This event was rightfully preceded by the launch of India-US Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X), in June 2023, during the State Visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to the US, to expand the strategic technological partnership and cooperation between governments, businesses and academic institutions of both the countries. Additionally, the Ministers have also confirmed the recently established negotiations between General Electric (GE) Aerospace and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to manufacture GE F-414 jet engines in India. This would inevitably be instrumental in accentuating ground-mobility systems. Synonymously, aspects like the launch of the INDUS-X Gurukul Education series to enable startups to leverage opportunities in the defence ecosystems of India and the United States along with interoperability, communication and facilitation of seamless cooperation between armed forces deserve special mention. In fact, this thread has been taken up since the Initiative of Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), launched in 2022, assuming a very critical position, also recently reflected in India's recently budget in 2024.

Moving ahead, the alignment towards the common objectives of the Quad has been rightfully identified as one of the most consequential collaborations of the 21st century and highlights the best practices of securing the Indo-Pacific against any revisionist intentions. The recently concluded Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD 2023)- an annual apex level international conference of the

Indian Navy (15-17 November 2023), addressing holistic maritime security issues builds skilfully on the 2+2 Dialogue, appropriating global norms and standards of India as a dynamic knowledge and capacity building partner in the global platform. Accelerating and banking upon the idea of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat,' India has been recognized as a leader in furthering its indigenous defense production and collaborations with USA, advancing partnership in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

With geopolitical tremors and escalating tensions in the Indian Ocean region, the contestations hold the potential of building new narratives with novel maritime architectures like the much talked about underwater digitization through Underwater Domain Awareness, associated with security apparatus, blue economy entities, environmental regulators and HADR mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction. At this juncture, relevance of platforms like the QUAD gain significance and priority for partners to work together at the forefront of the Indo-Pacific, intending to materialise all the priorities of maintaining a navigable ocean. Talking about the Quad, the Second India-Australia Defence and Foreign Ministerial Dialogue, held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, also strengthens this group, by comprehensively willing to support the security aspect of the quadrilateral setup, setting the tone of removing barriers and easing the access to consolidated capital as a strong forum of leading countries. Finally, India's vision of being the net security provider in the region shall also gain momentum as a progeny of this partnership, helping the country in creating its niche in Indian Ocean maritime security. Today's workshop builds upon such strategic developments and the congeniality of India-US collaboration, paving the way for further associations in the realm of economy and diplomacy.

---