

## **Packing Necessary Political Power into Indian Security Diplomacy: The Crying Need to establish a Center for US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation**

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### **A. Current State of US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation and the Need for a Center for US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation**

1. The US-India relationship is overwhelmingly dominated by commercial considerations. Most in the US view India only as a ready and growing market for US goods and services. While that is important for the growth of the bilateral relationship, India's concerns relating to its counterterrorism and homeland security need to find their necessary and rightful place in the US-India strategic calculus.
2. Common threats to US and Indian security are given if at all, passing mention in policy circles. Academics, policy experts, and the US media hardly, if ever, cover and explore these issues.
3. Most of the South Asia divisions within think tanks in and around Washington DC are successful in projecting the point of view of one of India's neighbors when it comes to counterterrorism and homeland security issues, with India's stand and point of view getting short shrift. Consequently, these organizations are able to influence US policy makers, administrators, US media, and the NGO community to bring them around to that country's slant to these issues, often even glossing over how these may impact US security interests. Issues relating to India's views and perspectives regarding terrorist threats to its security as well as how US security interests could dovetail with Indian security interests remain largely unexplored. In addition, most South Asian oriented think tank divisions espouse mainly the transactional and business dimension of the US-India relationship, while putting the counterterrorism cooperation issue on the backburner.

4. There is thus an absence of a think tank that is dedicated to a study, exploration, and investigation, and in-depth analysis of the US and India's common counterterrorism needs and how US-India counterterrorism cooperation can help address those needs.
5. The Middle East dominates the US media and policy domain; much needed and urgent attention to South Asian terrorist groups and the threat they pose to both US and Indian security gets practically no coverage in the media. The lack of any substantive US Media coverage of the recent LeT and JeM sponsored attacks in India in Gurdaspur and Pathankot respectively are a case in point. As is the case with the US's dismissal of Indian security concerns on US sales of F-16 bombers to one of India's neighbors, which was done ostensibly to beef up that country's counterterrorism efforts. There is thus a pressing need to sensitize the American public to India's security concerns and how they do and could intersect with US security concerns. Unless there is a think tank in Washington DC that is singularly focused on US-Indian counterterrorism issues, these will continue to remain unaddressed and not get the necessary visibility or traction with policy makers, media elites, and policy experts within and outside Washington DC, and consequently US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation would continue to be the casualty, as would the common security concerns of both nations.
6. Mere bilateral meetings, Joint Working Groups (JWGs), photo-ops, conveying of Indian security concerns to the US through the standard diplomatic procedures, and social dos do not appear to be adequate in themselves to promote or tangibly advance the US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation that will robustly and adequately address terrorist threats to both US and India, both in India's neighborhood as well as those from across the world. A think tank (the proposed Center for US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation) dedicated to the cause of promoting and implementing US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation is urgently required to complement bilateral dialogue at the inter-governmental level to the twin benefit of mitigating terrorist threats to both countries. Quite significantly, this Center would not work at cross-purposes to the current JWG mechanism; in fact it would contribute great value to it.

**B. What the Proposed Center for US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation will do?**

1. It will undertake study, research, and analysis to identify joint terrorist threats to the US and India, both current, and evolving, including those related to the announcement of the establishment of Al-Qaeda's South Asian affiliate, the withdrawal or tapering down of US-led troops from Afghanistan and consequent strengthening of Al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and ISIS.
2. It will develop policy solutions and devise actionable recommendations to address terrorist threats faced by the US and India.
3. It will identify the modalities and mechanisms to implement measures relating to US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation.
4. It will assess the implementation of existing measures pertaining to US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation and come out with recommendations on how these could be made more effective.
5. It will organize conferences, seminars, and fora on the subject of US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation.
6. It will publish thought pieces, articles, reports, books, and papers on the subject of US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation.
7. It will communicate and articulate the joint terrorist threats facing the US and India to US policymakers, media elites, policy experts, US administration officials, academic institutions, think tanks, research institutes, etc. and work with them to develop actionable recommendations to address terrorist threats facing both the US and India.
8. It will ensure that the issue of US and India's joint counterterrorism needs and requirements remains alive and of prominence amongst the US policymakers, media elites, policy experts, US administration officials, academic institutions, think tanks, research institutes, etc. To that end it will attempt to mold US public opinion towards the US and India's common security concerns emanating from terrorism in South Asia and how US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation could help address these concerns.

9. It will provide expert testimony and advice to Congress on matters relating to US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation and evolving terrorist threats to both countries.
10. It will sponsor cutting edge policy relevant research on matters and issues relating to US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation.
11. It will facilitate US capacity building and technical assistance to India in the fields of counterterrorism and homeland security and help identify and bring together subject matter experts in the US who would be able to deliver such capacity building and technical assistance.
12. It could provide technical advice and assistance in establishing a state of the art Counterterrorism Academy in India by marshaling the expertise of current and former counterterrorism practitioners in both countries.
13. It will foster, promote, and facilitate interaction between the academic, policy, and practitioners communities of the US and India in an effort to promote US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation.
14. It will sponsor policy relevant academic research and help design academic and training courses in India that focus on counterterrorism, countering the financing of terrorism, anti-money laundering, Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition, intelligence sharing, building prosecutorial and investigatory capacity, critical infrastructure protection, disaster management, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, cyber-security, online radicalization, forensics, etc. and how US counterterrorism expertise, experiences, and best practices could be leveraged to facilitate such activities.
15. It will help develop programs in US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation across academic institutions and research Centers in the United States and India.
16. It will promote the investment in, sale and transfer of US homeland security products and services, hardware, equipment, and technology to India with a special emphasis on the ultimate manufacture of US homeland security products, hardware, and equipment in India.

### **C. Funding the Center for US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation**

The proposed Center could be funded Through Public and/or Private Sources in Either or Both Countries.