



India's Maritime Infrastructure Development

US Firms Keen to Offer Products & Services

*US Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade Francisco J. Sánchez was in India recently, heading a business delegation. **Sanchez** took time off during his tight schedule to share some of his thoughts with **Veerendra Bhargava** of Indo-US Business, touching upon various issues ranging from infrastructure development and maritime technology transfer to increasing bilateral trade and two-way investment between India and the United States. Excerpts.*



You are heading the first-ever Port and Maritime Technologies Trade Mission to India with a team of 12 US leading companies. What is your overall agenda considering the fact that India offers huge potential in port and maritime infrastructure?

We recognize the growing importance of India as a market and as part of that market, we also recognize that infrastructure development is critical. India has a lot of requirements in this sector. India absolutely needs to work on its infrastructure if it is to meet the demands that will be placed upon its economy. So, we believe that US companies in this area have a lot to offer. And this being the first-ever trade mission we have taken to India in this sector. It won't be our last cause and we have a lot of very able companies that provide services and products in this phase. So my goal is to

match up some of the areas the best companies in the port and maritime sectors with business interests here that are focused on developing maritime infrastructure.

Since you have already visited Gujarat and the mission has zeroed on some specific deal. What more are you offering to other places that you are planning to visit in India?

Our delegation has a role with a wide variety of participants. We have two ports represented, the Port of Baltimore and the Port of San Diego. We have dredging equipment companies as well as those that provide dredging services. We have technology companies that provide everything from cargo tracking to security. So there is a wide variety and my view is that all of these companies have products and services that can be useful to the infrastructure development here throughout the coastal part of India.

Is there any specific maritime technology transfer deal that you are looking at? Because, there are many Indian companies that have developed technologies for tracking. Is there any specific



technology you are keen to sell in India?

My job is less about doing a specific deal and more about providing the space for American companies to meet their counterparts or interested business people to do deals. So I am not looking for specific deals and technology transfer. My hope is that there are a lot of deals that will get done as a result of this trade mission.

You are an architect of the Obama administration of export initiatives. What are the areas of mutual benefit that you see in the vast Indian market that needs high technology?

I am particularly interested and fascinated by the growth of your urban sectors. In the next 20 years, India will have approximately 68-69 cities with a population of a million or more. Each one of those urban centers will have needs and power generation in waste-water treatment and smart grid technology in traffic flow technology in education and health care and I am especially interested in getting American companies to these developing urban centers. So they can offer their products and services and be a part of the growth and development and in the improvement of the quality of life in those urban centers.

Is there any significant development that has taken place in the area of clean energy which you mentioned about in your last visit?

I think it is clear that India's energy needs are going to continue to grow and that India like much our own country is going to have a diversified grouping of energy sources and so, in that there is an opportunity for American know-how to contribute to your energy strategy. I think wind and solar are areas where we can participate and add value and to that end I brought a trade mission here last fall which focused on renewable energy and we will continue to focus on that sector in the future.

You are a strong believer in boosting private businesses that could help create millions of jobs both in the US and in India through joint ventures. Are there any US policy initiatives in this regard?



There are policy initiatives to attract investments in the US. One of the policy initiatives is a program that my bureau oversees which is called 'Select USA' and we particularly help international companies that want to invest in the United States and we hope that Indian companies will take advantage of this service and allow us to help them make investments in our country.

Couple of years back you talked about the US-India partnership initiative in the growth of the emerging metropolitan sector. Has there been any follow-up in this regard?

To some degree in the last two missions I have taken, have included stops in what we would call geographically emerging metropolitan sectors referred to as 'next year cities'. So we are going to continue to focus on those 'next year cities', this is what I have mentioned earlier that India has 68-69 cities; in the next 20 years these will have a million or more population. So, as we continue to bring in American companies here, we are not only going to come to New Delhi or Mumbai, but we will also go to some of these other emerging metropolitan cities as well.

US and India are strategic partners in the 21st century. What further initiatives are you expecting to be introduced jointly in the near future to extend bilateral trade ties to enhance trade and commerce between the two countries?

From the government and the private sector perspectives, I co-chair the commercial dialogue here and through the commercial dialogue we are going to look for ways to develop areas of mutual interest. Recently I met with Indian Commerce Secretary Khullar and we looked at ways to co-operate in the cold-chain supply. Another interesting venue is the US-India CEO Forum that seeks to identify areas where both governments can work together to reduce barriers and facilitate more trade and investment. And I think both of these venues will continue to work very hard to strengthen our commercial ties to reduce barriers and to encourage two-way trade and facilitate investment.

What message you would like to give to our readers?

I would have two messages: One is that America is open for business and we encourage Indian companies to look at our market as a place to invest. We welcome Indian investments. And two, we believe that it is both in the US and India's interests to foster two-way trade and we will continue to look for opportunities to increase two-way trade. ■