

# United States for rapid economic reform in India, says Mulford

“Reforms at the macro level will be central to transforming into a superpower”

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** The United States is interested in promoting further economic reform in India as this would increase the country's opportunity to attain higher economic growth, David C. Mulford, United States Ambassador to India, said in Chennai on Thursday. In his introductory remarks, before he interacted with students at Madras University, here, Mr. Mulford outlined the paths of Indo-U.S. co-operation in various fields. An economist himself, the Ambassador said the reforms would also be at the macro level — agriculture and liberalisation — and that these would be central to the transformation of India into a superpower.

The U.S. and India had developed an important strategic relationship with each other covering a broad range of issues, including science and technology, military and political affairs, and health issues. “There is virtually no area we have not touched,” he said, adding that between the two countries, there also existed a very strong people-to-people relationship.

Talking about the education exchanges between the two countries, Mr. Mulford said while there were very few American students in India there were over 80,000 Indian students in America, the largest contingent from any country. As part of its initiative towards promoting foreign visitors to the U.S., attention would be paid to reduce the delays that currently plague visa processing for students and business people.

## War on terror

He went on to patiently answer questions from students gathered in the newly renovated Senate Hall for about an hour. While the students' questions covered a range of issues from America's invasion of Iraq, its foreign policy with relation to a host of countries, agriculture subsidies, definitions of development and democracy, the UN Se-

curity Council and outsourcing, the oft-repeated question remained the war on terrorism.

While justifying the invasion of Iraq on the ground that it was an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein, Mr. Mulford also admitted that it had proven to be a difficult exercise. While there was dissension in Iraq and much violence, that was being portrayed in the media, the progress that had been made in terms of democracy, delivery of medical services, the rights of women and restoring order were not well represented. Mr. Mulford reiterated several times during the interaction that America had no alternative but to stand for freedom and stand with nations fighting terror, including India.

## U.S.-Pakistan relations

In response to a question about U.S.-Pakistan relations, he said the U.S. was very conscious of the fact that the sovereignty of nations must be respected even as the cause of democracy is advocated.

The U.S. was interested in promoting economic growth in Pakistan and sought the nation's co-operation for anti-terror activities, but it was an imperfect democracy and there was a long way to go.

With reference to outsourcing microbiology tasks into India, Mr. Mulford said India was blessed with a huge, smart population, but in order for investment to flow into the country, the standards of Intellectual Property Rights must be defined and the Government's willingness to enforce these standards should be exhibited. “India is on the brink of the very expansion you are looking for if you get this going,” he said.

Madras University Vice Chancellor S. Ramachandran acknowledged the U.S. contribution (\$35,000) towards the restoration of the Senate House.

The American education system promoted openness of mind and encouraged the youth to think independently, he said.



**ON THE PATH OF COOPERATION:** U.S. Ambassador David Mulford at the Senate House of the University of Madras in Chennai on Thursday. Jeannie Mulford and Vice-Chancellor S. Ramachandran are also seen. — PHOTO: K. V. SRINIVASAN