



ASPEN INSTITUTE INDIA

Volume I Issue III

Aspen Institute India and Aspen Institute USA sign MoU to conduct joint programmes



(L-R (front row): Mr. Walter Issacson, President, The Aspen Institute and Ms. Kiran Pasricha, Executive Director and CEO, Aspen Institute India) coinciding with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to the US, on November 23, 2009, during Aspen Institute USA and Aspen Institute India signed an MoU to work together to foster a new generation of values-based action-oriented leaders. The two Institutes agreed to offer programmes such as the India Leadership Initiative and the Aspen Seminar. The programmes are designed to enable participants to become better leaders by understanding the goals that motivate them and how their values both coincide and conflict with those of others. The two Institutes will also conduct Policy and Strategic Dialogues on various issues which will engage government, industry and civil society into a more comprehensive discussion on the issues at hand. They will work closely to evolve programmes to develop value based leadership in India through the conduct of seminars, strategic dialogues and policy programmes. The MoU marks the commitment of the two institutes to work towards their common goals through these various programmes. For more details on the MoU, [click here](#)

India-US-Japan Trilateral Holds its Latest Meeting

The Strategic Dialogue between India, USA and Japan held its seventh meeting from Dec 4-6, 2009 in Tokyo, Japan. The strategic dialogue is organized jointly by the Confederation of India Industry (CII), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS, USA) and the Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA) to facilitate cooperation and understanding between the three countries on a range of issues. The meeting focused on the global economic situation, the US-Japan Alliance, international security challenges, the regional architecture and climate change/energy. The dialogues are managed by Aii.

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 Jacqueline Novogratz Explains the concept of 'Patient Capitalism'

 Registration Open for Aspen India's annual Discussions forum 'Ideas India 2009'.

 Forthcoming activities

Secretary William S. Cohen: "Leadership is Not a Science Based on Logic"



(From R-L): Mr. Gautam Thapar, Chairman, Aspen Institute India; Sec. William S Cohen, Former United States Secretary of Defence., and Ms. Bhairavi Jani, Director, SCA Group of Companies

his first poem ‘Season and Reason’. According to Sec. Cohen: “Whatever your background, you can always rise to the maximum of your potential”. Sec. Cohen referred to himself as an accidental leader, and said that a leader should have integrity and honesty as one will never be rich enough to buy back one’s honesty. A leader should always lead by example. To read more about this session, [click here](#).

On 19 November 2009 Aspen Institute India along with Young Indians Delhi Chapter organised a session on **The Art of Leadership** with Mr. William S Cohen, Former United States Secretary of Defence. In his welcome address, Mr. Gautam Thapar, Chairman Aspen Institute India and Chairman & CEO, Avantha Group, introduced Sec. Cohen, by referring to him as one of the 200 top leaders of the world in this age. Sec. Cohen said that leadership is not a science which is based on logic. There are many components of leadership like intelligence, self confidence, knowledge, ability to motivate and inspire, perseverance, sharing credit, being open minded, having the ability to look at things differently which largely depend on place, time and the prevalent culture. Sec. Cohen had a modest beginning; his father was a beggar. He mentioned that his teacher was instrumental in instilling his poetry writing skills, and also motivated him to write

“To a majority of the world, dignity is more important than wealth”: Jacqueline Novogratz, CEO, Acumen Fund

“To a majority of the world, dignity is more important than wealth. As humans we are capable of extraordinary good and also evil.” This was the basic premise of the discussion led by Ms. Jacqueline Novogratz, founder and CEO of the Acumen Fund, who spoke at a session on **‘Patient Capitalism’** organized by Aspen Institute India on October 29, 2009. ‘Patient Capitalism’, a new method of providing aid is a novel idea developed by Ms. Novogratz that is helping people the world over achieve a better life, while retaining their dignity in doing so. This method allows the beneficiaries to support themselves and thus create change rather than be someone’s charity case. “Patient Capitalism, is simply finding a way to ‘make it work’” according to Ms. Novogratz. In her view, we need to think more strategically.

Charity, according to her makes matters worse as it makes the recipients dependent

on charity for the long run. Thus her mantra for how aid should work is by raising philanthropic donations in large sums, identify viable enterprises, use the donations to invest in social entrepreneurs, provide managerial investment and once the investment yields revenue reinvest into the society around. She explained that Acumen is currently working in South Asia and Africa as they are currently the priority in the developing world. In summation, she explained that patient capitalism = long term profitability. Dignity according to her is the top most concern, where in the rural community must be treated like real customers and not helpless people who need to be guided in what choices to make. Last, she mentioned that Indians are contributing to the programs, but a larger contributing from the private sector is needed not only in monetary terms, but also in mentoring and building intellectual platforms that can directly help these young and novice entrepreneurs. ‘Community of individuals who want to contribute to the country’ according to her, are what are needed for the programs to succeed. To read more about this session, [click here](#).



Jacqueline Novogratz, Founder and CEO of the Acumen Fund

Gurcharan Das asks “Why Be Good?” in the context of the Mahabharata

“The definition of being good is balance”. This clear and concise answer to the essential question of ‘why be good?’ was



L-R: Mr. Gurcharan Das, author of *The Difficulty of Being Good: The Subtle Art of Dharma* and Mr. Arun Maira, Member, Planning Commission (Right)

delivered by Mr. Gurcharan Das noted author and management guru, at a session organized by Aspen Institute India, on his new book “The Difficulty of Being Good: The Subtle Art of Dharma” on October 28, 2009. The concept of being “good” in society was illustrated by Mr. Das, drawing on inspiration from the texts of the Mahabharata, in his opinion the most unique epic among the epics of the world as it is consistently engaged in politics. He pointed out, that in this epic, no character ever appeals to god or the divine but rather questions morality. While the Ramayana portrays the utopian view on life, the Mahabharata is the grim reality of life and morality. In his book, Mr. Das uses different themes set within the Mahabharata to extract the answer to the central question of ‘why be good?’ and then relate them to current affairs. Mr. Das painted a clear image of the evolving nature of goodness ultimately saying that the act of goodness might be the only worthy thing to do and the purpose of the Mahabharata will always continue the dialogue on ethics and morality. The session was chaired by Mr. Arun Maira, Member, Planning Commission, who noted that questions and books such as the one written by Mr. Das are exactly what are needed to provoke minds and leaders of this country. To read more about this session, [click here](#).

German Marshall Fund Session: The Future Geopolitical Landscape



Three members of the German Marshall Fund addressed a session organized by Aii on December 03, 2009. The GMF was started in Europe as a way to thank the Marshall plan for the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War. GMF is primarily a grant making organization, which brings together and funds scholars, economists etc in various fields of study. Mr. Craig Kennedy, President of GMF, Asia has become the new focus for the GMF. He mentioned that while China is grabbing attention around the world, India has been largely ignored, especially in the United States and Europe. He also elaborated on GMF’s

plan to start an annual India Forum, in which India’s role in Europe and in its own regional stability will be discussed. Dan Twining, spoke of three primary issues facing India in relation to the west: AfPak, India as an Asian power and India’s global partnership with the west. The last speaker, Mr. Will Inboden defined his stance as ‘Pro India’, stressing that the partnership of democracies across Asia is important. Values-based cooperation is needed between the “largest democracy (India), the oldest democracy (US) and new democracies (Asian Tigers)”. To read more about this session, [click here](#).

The Aspen India Seminar’s New 2-Day Module Holds Another Session



Aspen Institute India conducted another session of the new 2-day module of the Aspen India Seminar on October 30-31, 2009. The module invites executives to introspect and contemplate the values of good leadership, and how to manage change in a rapidly changing world. The tensions that globalization brings in its wake, the compulsions of development and economic growth, and the challenge of climate change, consumerism, etc. demands value based leadership. These are some of the core issues that will be explored during the course of this seminar. The seminar convened a

small group for lively, intensive roundtable discussions led by skilled moderators. The moderators for the recent session were Kishan Rana, India’s Former Ambassador to Germany and Sudha Iyer, Chairperson and managing director of Haritas Health Services. To read more about the Aspen Seminar, [click here](#)

Registration Open for Ideas India 2009!!!

ants at the-day Aspen India Seminar

Let's Think Ideas India

If ideas can change minds, can they change a country? We spend our lives discussing the issues affecting India, in the privacy of our homes, our offices, our minds but never on a stage like this. Aspen Institute India, proudly presents, Ideas India 2009, from **December 17-19, 2009, New Delhi**. A conclave of the great minds of our generation, discussing the next big ideas that will shape the future of India. Come join the debate, where what

you say can steer the direction that India will take in the coming years. The idea is not to lecture, but to create a launching pad for action, to exchange ideas and enable introspection. In the course of two days and 27 sessions, over 90 speakers will deliberate over the biggest challenges and opportunities facing India today. The effort will be to thrash out issues, examine the core concerns and look for fresh and innovative ways of looking at existing problems and leveraging advantages.

**Space is limited and prior registration is a must.*

[Click here to register for Ideas India 2009.](#)

Forthcoming Activities

January 9-11, 2010, New Delhi: US-India Strategic Dialogue (*by invitation on only*)

January 12, 2010, New Delhi: Session with the Center for New American Security, New Delhi

January 18, 2009, New Delhi: Session with Richard Danzig, Chairman, Center for New American Security

January 28, 2009, New Delhi: Talk by Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State, USA

February 19-20, 2009, Singapore: India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue (*by invitation on only*)

5-8 March 2009, Jaipur: The Aspen Institute, USA and Aspen Institute India ICT Roundtable on E-Health (*by invitation on only*)