
**US-INDIA RELATIONS
FROM ESTRANGEMENT TO RAPPROCHEMENT**

*Humera Hakro
Dr Naghma Mangrio*

ABSTRACT

Since the end of Cold War, relations between US and India were established for different geo-political and strategic purposes. America got seismic shift in its foreign policy from estrangement to engagement with India. In the post Cold War period the geopolitical realities of the South Asian region impale America to make amicable relations with India. Events like disintegration of the Soviet Union, rise of China, and deteriorated situation of Afghanistan after withdrawal of Soviet forces had created an administrative gap in the country. The rise of Taliban and other terrorist groups under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden appeared to pose an imminent threat to US security. In this sordid geo-political conditions America decided to establish geo-strategic and economic relations with India to counter emerging threats to it. At the initial period of 21st century the events like 9/11 and occupation of Afghanistan by NATO forces opened up new vistas of friendship between India and America. This research has highlighted major geostrategic, defence, economic and technological engagement between India and US during the period of post Cold war era and after the event of 9/11.

Keywords: Rapprochement, Strategic, Defence, Economic Relations

INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War era India was not so much important for US policy because of India's non-aligned behavior and its weak economic conditions. However, in the current scenario the situation is other way round. India possesses some cardinal credentials that attracts the super power states especially America. "Today India possesses billion plus population, strong democratic institutions, sustainable and growing economy and substantial defence, India is posing great significance. In foreseeable future India will emerge as one of the largest economies and lynchpin for the South Asia's security and stability" (Wisner, 2003). In such a way it will prove important for the American policy in the region as counter weight to the China, supporting India as pro-western regional power, enhancing India's look east policy and need of Indian support for enduring US presence in the region.

After the collapse of Soviet Union, the ultimate end of Cold War period has brought pragmatic shift in the US foreign policy. America had reviewed its bilateral regional, global relations not only with the South Asian region but also for the world at large. The new strategic conditions

emerged at the eve of collapse of Soviet Union. America has changed its foreign policy towards South Asian region in two broad ways. One, the Soviet Union did not remain Americas' key policy concern in the region. Two, America perceived that the future threats will emerge from inside the region not outside the region. These threats as Nonproliferation, economic liberalization, and enhancement of democratic credentials were crucial objectives of US objectives in the South Asian region. According to Stephen Cohen and Dasgupta America has facets of objectives in the South Asian region such as establishing long-term economic and strategic relations with India, mending the cohesive relations with Pakistan, eliminating Islamic extremism, stifling terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan, stave off an imminent threat of arms race between India and Pakistan, creating conducive atmosphere for the peace process between India and Pakistan.

President Clinton had shore up different initiatives to improve relations with India. First, the disintegration of Soviet Union had upset the fundamentals of Indian foreign policy and India did not remain the close ally of Russia as counter weight to America. Second, Pakistan's importance declined in the US policy matters due to the defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan and its withdrawal from the country. As an emerging power in the region India possessed more importance for US to maintain regional balance of power and stability. India's economic reforms during the 1990s have attracted the international players. America embraced India as big market for its future investment. Last but not the least, the geopolitical conditions of the region has greater significance in Clintons' foreign policy.

The era of Georg W. Bush was pragmatic change of US policy towards India. The Bush administration adopted the "India first" policy. Owing to this policy India, emerged as not only regional power but international power and potential international market. Comparatively the Clinton's policy was amicable towards China, it considered China as strategic partner but the in foreign policy of Bush, China was considered strategic competitor and India was considered as counter weight to the US foreign policy. The Bush administration also changed the policy for cementing the strategic relations with India, lifted the sanctions on India which Clinton administration had imposed.

The Kicklighter proposal was a major breakthrough in the constrained relations of India and America after the end of Cold War. The first broad based strategic agreement between the two states is known as the 'Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations' signed in 1995 (Mishra, 2015).

INDIA'S SIGNIFICANCE IN AMERICA'S GRAND STRATEGY

There are full scale US strategic interests in India. These interests are derived from different points of views. The increasing multipolar world is posing greater threat to American interests in the world. The

rising of the new emerging power in the world is posing peculiar kinds of challenges to the American unipolarity. At the one hand China is rising at a very quick pace and on the other hand the emerging economies like Brazil and Turkey are also challenging the American hegemony in the different parts of the world.

The existing situations in the Middle East and complexities in the South Asian region is creating more challenges to America being considered as the sole super power of the world. “The central geostrategic trends today and in the decades ahead are the tectonic shift of global economic gravity and geopolitical influence to the Asian region” (Bouton, 2010).

The unprecedented rise of China and the emerging geostrategic and political trends if not managed successfully will ultimately alarm the global balance of power and values that favors the American interests. The focus of American interests in the current world scenario is on the South Asian region. The imminent threats to American interests in the South Asian region and in the world at large are terrorism, nuclear proliferation, instability in the arctic region; it is difficult enough for the American to deal with these challenges unilaterally. “India is a viable partner for the US in the east and in the west while addressing the challenges and opportunities of foreseeable future” (*Ibid*).

India is an emerging power having potential of dealing any challenge regarding the stability of the South Asian region and Asian balance of power. Keeping in view both Washington and New Delhi some principles that bind them into a cordial relations and potential strategic allies; these are as pluralism, liberalism, democratic norms, India and US have security, politics and economic interests tilting towards new rapprochement since the end of the Cold War period.

DEFENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND INDIA

For most of the last 50 years, the relation between the US and India has been far from friendly. The end of the cold war provided an impetus to improving their relation in defence field. In the wake of September 11 attack, the US lifted nuclear sanctions. It eased export control on so called dual-use technology to secure both civilian and military purposes. This marked change in America India relations is owing to the increasing interests of both the states in the field of defence cooperation. For consolidating the defence and strategic relations both sides decided to engage themselves into military exercises, frequent visit of defence officials. More importantly the value of defence trade is enhanced through India purchasing US military hardware. The state to state visit of the Prime Minister of India and the President of America has further consolidated the defence relations between the two states. The President

Obama's visit to India in 2015 has put new heights to the defence relations between India and America.

Zhao Qinghai, a Chinese international affairs researcher has pointed out that, "There is a military meaning under Washington's pledge to "help India to become a competitor of China." Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing corp. are competing for India's plan to buy 126 multi-role fighters, which would be one of the largest arms deals in the world.

The president Obama and the Prime Minister Modi has renewed the ten years defence agreement which was signed by President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2005. According to the former defence secretary Chuk Hegel, "both the states will establish growing momentum in the field of defence cooperation since the last decade and establishing new military education partnership to make the next generation of military leadership" (Praises, 2015).

Indeed the agreement on Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) is attached on added significance. The agreement is signed between India and America to resolve procedural issues regarding defence, trade and investment for enhancing strategic partnership through renewed defence agreement. In such a way by this new agreement, there four major projects are launched expedite the cooperation on jet engine, air craft design, construction and on other areas.

"The Indian army is ready to buy huge amount of modern weapons from the America defence industry as Sikorsky S-70 Seahawk Helicopter worth \$1 billion, the huge amount of delivery of weapon worth \$9 billion is in pipeline" (Kay, 2015). Furthermore India is going to acquire the most advance four P8-1 long ranges maritime patrol air craft worth of \$ 1 billion these aero planes are used for the security and patrol for the Indian Ocean against the increasing influence of China in the region. India and America are also talking on deal worth of \$ 885 million for 145 M-777 Ultra light highly sophisticated weapon that would fulfill the security requirement of the Indian army. The upcoming deal of India with America is 22 Apache long bow gunships including C-17 Globe Master Air craft and other 15CH-47F Chinook Chopper and others.

DEFENCE TRADE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES

The initiative is crucial for the geostrategic relations of India and America. India's vision for future of the defence of the country is not as dependent on the import of the defence equipment but self sufficient in the field. The former deputy secretary of the state Aston Carter promoted the Carter Initiative later to be known as the Defence Trade Technology Initiatives (DTTI). The Defence Trade Technology Initiative is for the enhancement of defence cooperation between the two countries. "The DTTI is designed to reduce bureaucratic impediments, increase

technology transfer and coproduction and co-development of select defence system” (Kendall, 2015). The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) allows the two allies to use each other’s military facilities for checking China’s growing influence in Asia and in the fight against terrorists. The deal for India is to increase bilateral defence relations and unleash avenues for transfer of US defence technologies.

India has two prong strategies in this regard at first India wanted to stabilize its domestic production of defence and on the other hand, the country through defence production wanted to create employment opportunities. India in the current scenario is the largest importer of the conventional arms and spending about 40 percent of its total budget on defence and about 60 percent of its defence needs are fulfilled through imports.

Since three consecutive years India has now become world’s largest importer of defence equipment which is about 15 percent of global arms import. India wanted to change its strategy by focusing on “make in India” in such away India may fulfill its 50 percent defence needs in less than decade. This strategy will develop domestic industries, establish technologies civilian and defence production and enhance skills. If India become self sufficient in defence productions it will also shore up Indian currency and provide great impetus for India entrepreneurs. Both America and India are agreed to sign on joint production project through “rapid reaction team” for cooperation on four technologies on defence as RQ - 11B Raven Unmanned Aerial System, Roll off Kits for the C-130 J aircrafts, Mobile Electric Hybrid Power Sources; and uniform integrated Protection Ensemble increment along with cooperation on aircraft carries and Jet engine technology” (U.S. India Joint Statement, 2015).

INDIAN OCEAN REGION

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is becoming increasingly significant in the world arena, with the United States, India and China the most important stakeholders in the region playing substantial roles <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/>. In the post-Cold War world, the Indian Ocean starts to play a major role in American national security concerns. For an ocean that does not directly touch US territory, it plays a significant role in current American policy. In direct action, it is a vital logistical route, supplying American forces in the counterterrorism wars in the Middle East and South Asia. Additionally, the Indian Ocean is home to some of the key international economic supply routes (Suez Canal, Straits of Hormuz, Straits of Malacca), thus, having significant ramifications on US policy.

The Indian Ocean region has traditionally remained India’s crucial geostrategic and trade region and the country has been playing very

crucial role in establishing stability and peace in the region. Geo-strategically it is also very significant area for the China's increasing navel involvement. China's rise in infrastructural development projects and the trade has massively endangered the status quo of the Indian Ocean Region. India is doing 40 percent of its trade with the regional and other states through this sea route and it is imperative for India to keep its supremacy in the region. For keeping the tight grip in the region India has maintained its power capacity, strengthening deterrence and establishes ascendance over the maritime. Since the US India interests are amalgamated in the region both the states tried to meet the growing challenges in the region. "For the further cooperation, the American government is supporting India with the sophisticated electromagnetic lanching system for aircraft carrier especially the San Diego based General Atomics Electromagnetic Aircraft Lunch System" (Jeremy Bender, 2015).

The navies of the United States and India have begun to conduct joint exercises aimed against piracy, terrorism and any other threats to maritime commerce. America has brought about extensive strategic alliances with New Delhi for making viable balance of power in the Asian region to preclude China's ascendancy in the region. Both India and America have mutual broad based strategic interests for countering China through non-traditional security apparatus. In this regards America has supported New Delhi through supplying sophisticated weapon system, made Civil Nuclear deal, transformation of new technologies for making Indian Ocean safe.

According to Ayshley J. Tellis the major prospects of China's presence in the Indian Ocean is threatening India's security paradigm. For deterring the presence of China's navy in the region and its coercive behaviour, India US joint venture to counter China through making next generation aircraft carrier will enhance India's navel capacity. The most advantageous thing about the aircraft carrier is that it possesses marked superiority to the China's navel technology in the Indian Ocean Region. Furthermore in this direction US also offers most advanced aviation system such as Navy's E-2C/D Hawkeye or airborne early warning and battle management and Fifth generation F-35C fighter aiding more power to Indian navy. However, it is now question of great scrutiny that Can India manages to deal with security threats emanating from China in such a vulnerable situation?

AMERICA'S STRATEGIC CALCULUS

India and United States relationship is strategic in nature, as it is driven by the defence and security compulsion. The term strategic is

primarily concerned with the ways in which actors use defence power and capability to achieve political goals.

The term strategic is used in different perspective, many people use this term in a diverse ways. It is widely used in long term policies rather than short term tactics. "In terms military perspective, it is used for the weapon of mass destruction especially for the nuclear weapons which is used as source of deterrence in conflicts between the states. In terms of foreign policy, it is used for conveying a holistic framework embracing diplomacy, security in defence, food, energy and trade in short all aspects that impinge on nation's long terms interest" (Raghu, 2007).

The strategic relations between the US and India are long term, widespread and truly all embracing relationships. The strategic calculus between these two states has got hardnosed shift in recent years. This has brought a viable frame work and cordial relations since 2005 when both the states signed "India US Nuclear Deal", all time high agreement between the two states so far in the history. The deal has transformed India into an emerging world power in 21st century. The importance of the deal is that it highlights the security dimensions of the US- Indian relations for the South Asian region in particular and for the world in general.

The new dynamism between the relationship of New Delhi and Washington is the change of leadership in the respective countries. Since 2008 India became America's pivot in the South Asian region. The Obama Administration exaggerates these relations for establishing "next big idea" to enhance relations to next level. At the initial stages the Obama administration did not take India at its radar screen. The new administration of that time disclosed the foreign policy goals in which India was absent. The major concentration of the Obama was on governance issues and the relations with Beijing. Even in his major address on South Asia in 2009, India's role in the region was not mentioned.

The initial neglect of the new administration had created anxieties and ambiguities in Indian camp. One of the Indian analysts viewed the attitude of the Obama Administration as explicitly the new administration in Washington has little time for New Delhi and that there is no mistaken thrill in bilateral relations" (Pant, 2010).

THE U.S. APPROACH IN MOUNTING INDIA'S ROLE IN ASIA TO RESPOND THE CHINA'S RISE

From estrangement to engagement after the disintegration of Soviet Union; US tilted towards India. America brought round wide range of relations in economic, political and strategic aspects and reciprocation of military ties. Second, America adopted neutral stance on the issue of

Kashmir emphasizing both India and Pakistan to sort it out by peaceful means. Third, US had given a significant role to India in the South Asian region and recognized it as regional power and its role in international arena. Fourth, New Delhi became the second largest recipient of US aid as American aid to India in the year 2000 was \$170 million and 45 times more than Pakistan's \$3.78 million in the later years.

Recognizing India as strategic ally of US and world's largest democracy America has its own strategic objectives in the South Asian region. All major powers, including the United States, European Union, China, Japan, and Russia, are expanding their engagement with the subcontinent. Economically, India has brought about drastic changes to increase economic growth and now India is at the radar screen of the super power states like America. Washington wants to get strategic and economic benefits from the second largest economy of Asia (India). New Delhi is now permanent ally of America for the fulfillment of its energy need, managing international and regional trade and military support for America to counter rising China. Keeping in view the political aspect like terrorism, fundamentalism and non-proliferation, America is facing insurmountable challenges in the South Asian region in the prevalent geopolitical scenario. America is trying to stabilize its relations with the south Asian countries for securing its strategic objectives.

The National Security Strategy put India at new heights and the credentials of the new policy are enhancing India's economic growth, political engagement with India and strategic partnership. In economic terms the American strategy is to push India as competitor with the regional and international powers who are engine of economic growth in the world economy such as Russia, China, Brazil, South Korea and Singapore. "In military point of view, according to National Security Strategy, there are three powers that are potential threat to American interests like Russia, China, and India" (US Quadrennial Defence Report, 2006).

Russia becomes threat to US interests if it adopts the policy of authoritarianism and nationalistic direction. China is a long term threat if it acquires hegemonic policy in the East, South East and Central Asian region. To counter these emerging threats India is vital and key strategic ally for countering China and increasing Russian influence in the regions of American interests. According to New Strategic formulation South Asian region is crucial region for the US strategic objectives and this region can sever as bulwark of American interests in Afghanistan and Central Asian states.

Keeping in view the current scenario of the South Asian region both India and America for deeper strategic vision has decided to engage each other for multifaceted relations. For this President Bush engaged India into "Net Step in Strategic Partnership". The NSSP was the shift in

America's traditional policy, it was based on long term US Strategic engagement with India. America and India since has signed various agreements such as, Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement, America India Initiative on Agriculture, Agreement on American trade and development agency, US India high Technology Cooperation Group, covering nanotechnology, information technology, biotechnology and defence.

Indeed the defence and strategic partnership is at the center of the strategic relations between the two states. "The defence establishment of both the countries agreed to combine military exercises, strengthening military capabilities, promote regional and global peace and stability and enhance capacities to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions" (New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship, June 28, 2005).

Many analysts are of the view that Indo-Pacific area is so much vast that possess coherent strategic system. However, since the disintegration of Soviet Union this region has become the fulcrum of the power. In the post cold war period there is apparent manifest shift in wealth and power towards the South Asian. "The year 2012 for the first, States in the Asian states spent more on the defence than the European states. It is estimated that in 2030, eighty five percent of global energy consumption come out of the Eastern Coast to African through the Indian Ocean and including western and Pacific Ocean" (Rehman, 2014).

US-INDIA GEOSTRATEGIC COOPERATION

Former Secretary Kissinger responded, "The relationship with India is one of the very positive things that are happening. We can cooperate with them both on ideological grounds and on strategic grounds. It's one of the positive legacies that the new administration will inherit".

In the current geopolitical scenario of the South Asian region the imminent threat to India is nuclearization in the region and terrorism. The existing relations between America and India are based on the rational of new dynamics of geopolitical conditions of the South Asian region. Both America and India are cementing their relations owing to China as the emerging power in the region that could hamper America's unipolar status. The significant factors for the current geostrategic relations between the states are modernization of China's military and the geopolitical conditions of the South China Sea. The other challenges include China's violation of human rights that contravenes the United Nation's conventions and its policy to rewrite the rules of the global economy. The multi-polar Asia must include all the stake holders like Japan, India, South Korea and China. In this aspect India plays role of America's ally that attain counterpart to China as the emerging power.

America keeping in view the rules of the multi-polar Asian –Pacific establishes balance of power rather than containing China’s geopolitical ambitions. India is engaged in this regard by US through engaging it economically. America is interested in making India as its pivot to the South Asian region. In order to maintain stability, balance of power and maintain status quo in the region, it is important to have greater coordination between foreign policy orientation and military coordination between the two states. Some analysts define the US India relations in a very eloquence as David Karl “befitting two raucous democracies, once estrange but increasingly fraternal the US-India relations routinely evokes grandiloquence about “ natural allies, “an affair of the heart” “ kindred spirit” common DNA and defining partnership shaping the destiny of 21st century” (Karl, 2013).

Amicable relations with India’s market oriented democracy are crucial for America’s post cold war era world order. Intimate relations between India and America will sustain US economy growth through trade investment and transfer of technology, increasing cooperation in the field of energy security and environmental challenges. The new assertive economic powers like China, Brazil and Turkey brought about multi-polar trends that threatened the US objectives. On the other hand, the complex relations of US with Iran and Israel have made the situation more complex. “The pivot and center of attention in the current scenario and in the future ahead for the US geostatic goals and tectonic shift in global economic gravity and geopolitical influence to the region is Asia” (Bouton, 2010).

CONCLUSION

After the end of Cold War international politics got major shift from bipolar to unipolar one. However, there existed peculiar kind of challenges to America especially from the South Asian region. The dawn of 21st century heralded that this century is pertinent to the Asia, the immense rise of China, unstable situation in the Middle East and in fact the event of 9/11 accentuate the US think tank that without the alliances and friends US foreign policy objectives cannot be achieved. India owing to its economic rise, geography and technological advancement provided America a democratic friend in the region. India on the other hand changed its Non Alienated stance from its foreign policy and has established geostrategic and economic relations with America. The alliances between America and India posed great threat to China in the region. The new great game between India and China has made America a “pivotal state” in the triangular relations; where America will get benefit from the constrained relations between China and India.

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