

## **Indo-US Relations and Effects on South Asian Region**

**Dr. Omer Farooq Zain**

*Professor & Dean*

*Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan*

**Talha Shahid**

*PhD Scholar*

*Department of Political Science  
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan*

### **Abstract**

*Being a superpower, the US has interests in various parts of the world. South Asia is one of those regions where US has varied economic and military interests, which assumed greater importance in the wake of nuclear explosions by India and Pakistan in 1998. Recent culmination of War on Terror in Afghanistan and emerging geo-strategic and geo-economic nuisance of China and Russia have further enhanced the significance of the region manifold. Resultantly, the US is deeply involved in the region on diplomatic, economic and military fronts. However, the complexity of regional issues and divergent interests of key players is making it difficult for the US to take regional powers along for peaceful resolve of issues by not affecting her interests in the region. Indeed, the US has to walk on a tight rope to achieve the requisite balance between her economic and military interests and achieve her interests in South Asia. Foregoing in this view, we, in this research paper, will carry out in-depth study of all facets of the US interests in South Asia (specially the India-US relations) and offer suitable recommendations to enable Pakistan to maintain its relevance under this evolving international and regional environment and play its due role in the region.*

### **Keywords**

South Asia, Pakistan, India, US, Strategic Partnership

## **Introduction**

US interests in India has increased manifold in the recent past due to economic and diplomatic reasons. In the power corridors of Washington, India is considered as a useful strategic partner. Therefore, the Indo-US relations have been growing rapidly in the fields of economy, defense and technology. By fostering these relations, the US seems to have ignored the sensitivities of other members of South Asian region, particularly Pakistan.

Keeping in view the in-depth study of Indo-US relations and its effects on South Asian region, we will give proper recommendations to enable Pakistan to maintain its relevance under the present conditions.

## **Historical Background**

### **1. Cold War Era**

When India gained independence at the very start of the infamous Cold War, it rejected the idea of aligning with any superpower and the principal of neutrality was adopted. India, following her basic principles, has taken a position of non-alignment or neutrality as between the two power blocs, the Western and the Russian<sup>1</sup>. From the Indian perspective, South Asia was not to be the legitimate concern of the superpower rivalry. It was particularly unacceptable to India that its primary regional adversary, Pakistan, should be co-opted and given security support by Washington. Indian views on these fundamental issues have been hardly altered and have regularly caused differences with the US. Even in the late 1940s and early 1950s, before the creation of SEATO and CENTO, the East and West Asian components of the US alliances system were linked by Pakistan's common membership. M. Ayub Khan, for example, in his political autobiography,

Friend not Masters, notes that by the time of its coming to power, the "political identification of the country [Pakistan] with the West was complete<sup>2</sup>. The well-known scholar K. B. Sayeed considers Pakistan to have been practically in the position of a satellite of the United States during these year<sup>3</sup>. New-Delhi's

foreign policy makers were constantly pontificating on international issues in which, Washington saw it, India had little national interest or direct engagement but that did affect the US interests. Washington, nonetheless, put these irritations aside, India was considered a test case for economic growth and strongest power in the region with significant international influence with which the US should try and get along, even if with gritted teeth.

The two most lasting American contributions to Indian development were in fact services, not products of physical artefacts. Massive shift in South Asian grain production was facilitated in large part by an overproduction of wheat in the United States. PL-480 food aid program sent high-yield grain to India, checking communist threats while relieving excess US grain stock<sup>4</sup>. Between 1965 and 1975 the US provided new seeds and agricultural practices that gradually helped triple India's grain output, and secondly the Fulbright educational exchanges contributed enormously to the training of tens of thousands of Indians in every aspect of modern social, technical and economic life<sup>5</sup>. After Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, a self-professed admirer of Nehru and a big fan of Gandhi, was in the White House. Kennedy made utmost efforts to align India with US, but it was due to the cold shoulder of Nehru that the US could not achieve its dream. The United States and Britain failed in their joint goal to realign India closer to the West, but this setback did not prevent them from attempting to accomplish their other major goal improving Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly the problem of Kashmir<sup>6</sup>.

## **2. Post Cold War Era**

With the collapse of the USSR, the US had won the Cold War. The paradigms were changing. The US became the sole supreme power. Pakistan was not that important anymore. In its efforts to bring India closer to the US position, the US Congress since 1993, has been seeking 'new assistance categories', reflecting the modern realities to fulfill requirements of the post-Cold War concerns. This approach found scales of US policy preferences tilting towards India considerably. After the Cold War ended, both nations became friends and the United States began helping

the Indian government match China's increasing influence in Asia (Kissel, Citation2011)<sup>7</sup>. India has been getting along with its nuclear program and abuses in the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan has had to bear the brunt of not only economic and military sanctions but also the pressure by the US to control religious extremists and militant activities from its territory. It was a successful Narsimha Rao visit in 1994 to the US when the international financial sectors came in cluster to bail out of the great recession the country was in<sup>8</sup>. Rao opened the doors for foreign investment<sup>9</sup>.

The Indo-US dialogue, following the nuclear tests of 1998, has led to the crafting of multifaceted partnership in the post-Cold War milieu between the two 'largest' democracies. The tenth round of Indo-US talks held in London in January 2000, discussed the possibility of institutionalizing these bilateral consultations on several issues regarding security, economic relations and strategic cooperation, dialogue on nuclear nonproliferation, and other issues of concern such as drug trafficking, small arms and terrorism<sup>10</sup>. These concerns of the new millennium have now provided the material for more broad-based, forward-looking ties.

### **Commonality of Interests**

There are a number of issues where there exists a convergence of interest between the US and India. These points vary from economic to social and political affairs. Both the countries are jointly tackling those 'perceived' problems. Some dimensions of them are mentioned below.

#### **1. China Factor**

America perceives a varying degree of threat from China and Russia. China appears more likely than Russia to pose a serious threat to the US interests in the near future. The US has an abiding interest in the balance of power in South Asia. This balance may be disrupted once China gains economic, military and political power. With 1.4 billion people and a GDP of 17.9 trillion USD, China has the greatest economy after USA (25 trillion USD as GDP) and is one of the faster growing economies in the World<sup>11</sup>. According to SIPRI's latest data update, China

— the world's second-largest spender — allocated an estimated USD 292 billion to its military in 2022, constituting 13 per cent of the world's total spending. This represents an increase by 63 per cent compared to 2013, and a 4.2 per cent increase compared to 2021<sup>12</sup>. China remains a major worry for US dominance in the region and it is only logical, in American perspective, to prop up India as a counterweight to China<sup>13</sup>.

## **2. China Factor, the Politics of Indian Ocean and QUAD**

India's geographic location, astride the Indian ocean region major sea lanes of the world, points to the crucial relevance of its role in ensuring the free flow of oil and commerce from the Gulf to the Asia-Pacific region. The new Silk Route originates from the Persian Gulf and passes through the Indian Ocean, around the Indian Peninsula through the Malaca Strait to the Pacific Rim countries. It is estimated that almost 90,000 vessels carrying 80% of world's maritime oil and 9.84 trillion tonnes of cargo, traverse every year through the Indian Ocean, and move through its choke points for destinations in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas<sup>14</sup>. In 2022, the Indian Ocean rim reported over USD 7 trillion in total trade<sup>15</sup>. The crucial importance of a continuous and assured supply of energy resources, as well as international trade, for developed and emerging economies in the region cannot be underestimated. In the entire North Indian Ocean extending from the coast of Africa to Malaysia, India has emerged as the only large, stable, democratic, populous nation, having an efficient Army, Navy and Air Force to defend its interests.

Keeping in view the influence of China in the Indian Ocean, a quadrilateral security dialogue, namely QUAD is created which consists of USA, India, Japan and Australia. Known as the 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue' (QSD), the Quad is an informal strategic forum comprising four nations, namely -- United States of America (USA), India, Australia and Japan. One of the primary objectives of the Quad is to work for a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. The motive behind the Quad is to keep the strategic sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any military or political influence. It is basically seen as a strategic grouping to reduce Chinese domination<sup>16</sup>. As

“strategic competition” with China has become a rare point of bipartisan consensus in Washington, Chinese President Xi Jinping has taken to warning that his country faces a “struggle over the future of the international order” with a United States determined to thwart China’s rise. Xi believes Beijing has an opportunity between now and 2035 to make China the world’s top economic, technological, and potentially even military power. Integral to this push is persuading countries in Asia and around the world that Chinese dominance is inevitable and that, accordingly, they have no option but to start deferring to Chinese demands. That would enable China to begin re-writing the rules of the international order — and entrench its global leadership position, without ever having to fire a shot. Beijing has concluded that the Quad represents one of the most consequential challenges to Chinese ambitions in the years ahead<sup>17</sup>.

The term Indo-Pacific is sometimes also used for the area covered by Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The Indo-Pacific is the confluence of two major oceans the Indian and the Pacific. The geographical area covering the region is of great significance from geo-economical and geo-strategic perspectives. The region is home to some of the major rising powers, including China, India, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It is also a region that is in the center of geopolitical rivalry, making it the hotspot for the emerging great-power competition<sup>18</sup>. The rising influence of China in the region is foreseen by the US as threat to the hegemony of US and by India as an opportunity to portray itself as a counterbalance to the threat of Chinese influence.

## **Economic Dimension**

### **1. Emergence of Big Emerging Markets**

Traditional US policies were oriented towards Europe and Japan, however, a new class of nations economically known as Big Emerging Markets (BEMs) have shot into prominence. The ten largest emerging economies by nominal GDP are 5 of the 10 BRICS countries (Russia, Brazil, India, China, and Saudi Arabia) along with Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, South Korea, and

Turkey. According to the data provided by International Monetary Fund (IMF), the BEMs have a share of 59.44 percent based on Power Purchasing Parity (PPP) of the world's GDP<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, there's a possibility that their share of the World Imports may exceed that of Japan and the European Nations in the following years. Out of these, four Asian BEMs, including India, have crucial significance in terms of World Economy; already they constitute 40 percent of World's population and half of the GDP of BEMs. A fundamental shift in India's economic policies towards liberalization has opened vast opportunities for American investment.

## **2. Trade**

The Indo-US trade has also risen from 5.6 billion USD in 1990<sup>20</sup> to 191.8 billion USD (Exports were \$73.0 billion; imports were \$118.8 billion. The U.S. goods and services trade deficit with India was \$45.7 billion) in 2022<sup>21</sup>.

## **3. Indo-US Mutual Investment**

US is one of the largest foreign direct investors in India. US is the 3rd largest investor in India with FDI Investment of \$62.25 Bn from April 2000 to September 2023<sup>22</sup>. Though there is a gap between the actual and approved inflow, the ratio of cumulative US FDI inflow to approval has accelerated in the recent years indicating that FDI approved in the last years are materializing now.

Similarly, India also invests in the USA. U.S. annual FDI receipts from India 2000-2022: In 2022, the foreign direct investments from India in the United States amounted to approximately 3.75 billion U.S. dollars<sup>23</sup>.

## **People to People Ties**

### **1. Indian Americans**

The US-India people to people ties have expanded tremendously in the recent years. When the immigration laws were liberalized in the US, there were only 25000 Indian Americans. Now a days, the situation is quite different. The Indian diaspora is comprised of approximately 4.9 million U.S. residents who were either born

in India or reported Indian ancestry or origin, according to MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 ACS<sup>24</sup>. India has become the second leading country for students studying in the US, with a record high of 268,923 students in 2022-23, a 35% increase from the previous year<sup>25</sup>.

## **2. Contribution by Indian Authors**

The Indian image has received a boost from the contribution of Indian authors to contemporary English literature. At the time of Indian independence, few Americans would have been able to name a single Indian author. With the exception of Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore and R.K. Narayan, virtually no Indian works had been available in the US bookstores. Today, a host of writers from India and the diaspora have gained best-seller awards. Some of them are Dr Shashi Tharoor, Sarmila Bose, Sugata Bose, Arundhati Roy, Harivansh Rai Bachan, Vikram Seth, etc.

## **3. Indian Influence in Capitol Hill**

Another area where Indians loom much greater in the US is the Capitol Hill. Familiar with the give-and-take of the democratic politics, Indian Americans have become active participants in US political life and significant contributors to the election campaigns. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center found that 68% of Indian American registered voters identified as Democrats and 29% identified as Republicans<sup>26</sup>. In 2013, the House of Representatives had a single Indian American member. Fewer than 10 Indian Americans were serving in state legislatures. None had been elected to the Senate. None had run for president. Despite being one of the largest immigrant groups in the United States, Americans of Indian descent were barely represented in politics.

Ten years later, the Congress sworn in last month includes five Indian Americans. Nearly 50 are in state legislatures. The vice president is Indian American. Nikki Haley's campaign announcement this month makes 2024 the third consecutive cycle in which an Indian American has run for president, and Vivek Ramaswamy's newly announced candidacy makes it the first cycle with two<sup>27</sup>.



In 2002, India's Parliament organized a group, now some 80 strong, that is called Indo-US Parliamentary Forum. Delegations from the forum have thrice visited Washington to meet their counterparts, most recently in 2016<sup>28</sup>. In addition to having a positive influence on bilateral relations, the two parliamentary groups provide an important vehicle for Indian and US politicians to gain greater understanding about each other's political processes.

#### **4. Shared Democratic Values**

India has succeeded in establishing and maintaining an open political system. Like that of the US, India's democracy is based upon constitutional norms, representative governments, free speech, free and fair elections. Although the pursuit of national interest remains the principal foreign and security policies' driver, shared political values matter and have become increasingly important.

#### **Fields of Strategic Cooperation**

##### **1. Indo-US Nuclear Deal**

The joint statement of July 2005 between India and USA highlighted in which both states expanded their cooperation in energy and economic fields and enabled India to get latest nuclear technology from nuclear supplier group. After this deal India has a large improvement in their nuclear arsenals which is dangerous for Pakistan, for China and also dangerous for whole region. The proponent of Indo-USA nuclear initiative argued that the main purpose of this deal was to increase its civilian nuclear energy due to increasing electricity needs of India. On one side United States made possible steps to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapon but other side she helped and is helping India to enhance their weapons capabilities on the name of peaceful purpose (Sultan, 2006)<sup>29</sup>. The deal has main two parts, the first part covers nuclear cooperation and the second part covers space cooperation. The deal provided USA facilitated India for two-sided space activities. United States also allowed India to develop nuclear and civilian reactors under this deal. After a long time, USA congress permitted to changes in USA law by legislation and gave permission to export civilian nuclear technology and

fuel to India in December 2006. This changes in USA law granted that India and USA nuclear deal conclude under IAEA safeguard and nuclear agreement was approved by Nuclear Suppliers Group and provided an opportunity to India to access to international markets. India and USA has close relationship in space exploration, satellite navigation and commercial space fields. Moreover, both states are working on civil space cooperation for their own interests (Kimball, McGoldrick, & Scheinman, 2008)<sup>30</sup>. On October 2008 USA gave approval to the Indo-USA deal to facilitate the India the field of nuclear technology. Due to this deal thirty years of USA suspension on nuclear trade lifted from India. This deal provided assistance to Indian civil energy program. After this deal India and USA expanded their cooperation in energy and satellite technology. However, “this deal proved unprecedented for India. It can be look at the three countries outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)-Israel, India, and Pakistan, but this stands to be a unique deal” (Bajoria & Pan, 2010)<sup>31</sup>. But through this agreement USA broke long-standing policies toward India and recognized India as a legitimate nuclear state after 30 years. On the other hand, USA reviewed its strategic policies toward Pakistan which were increased through proper consultation and lifting sanction. Maintenance of strategic relations with both Pakistan and India by United States offers an important test of balancing theory (Jaspal D. Z., 2007). The last government of India Bharatiya junta Party and other members of government took some changes in India’s foreign policies that were developed by Nehru based on realism. Both are share common objectives for India to gain the status of major power of region. For this status, India increased arms and armed force. Congress government maintaining Indo-USA relations same as Bharatiya junta Party and got more benefits from sole superpower because of China’s relation with Pakistan and Myanmar. India also interested to work with USA multinational military operation that is not under the United Nation. India voted in right of USA in different matters like to sending its troops in Iraq and also supported USA against Iran at forum of international Atomic Energy commission. In Defense Policy Group meeting in 2003, both states agreed sign different agreements like special training programs of both countries armed forces including air training, multinational

Political Horizons, 1(1), 2023Murtaza et al.<sup>47</sup>planning exercise to establish operating method with the help of USA. It also includes development of defense supply relationship and government to government military sales program. Both states expertise are conducts dialogue on defense plans and policies. By this deal, India got more access to develop the nuclear technology (Jaspal D. Z., 2007)<sup>32</sup>. India opened 14 of its 22 reactors as civilian purposes and other eight reactors are used for military purposes. But India's past record indicates that India violated the agreement and policy that was signed with IAEA(Squassoni, 2006)<sup>33</sup>. The Canadian supplied CIRUSA reactor was difficult to resolve the problem when it use for military purpose rather than civilian and peaceful use(Mustafa A. , 2013). India had refused to accept this deal with new amendments. This deal has been helpful for India to increasing its weapons but it has many impacts on non-proliferation regime and South Asia<sup>34</sup>.

### **Military Cooperation**

India and US have begun a new military sales relationship. This became possible when the executive branch and the Congress lifted the sanctions imposed after India's nuclear tests and ceased many but not all administrative restrictions on export of dual-use technology. Planned before but executed after September 11, these actions clearly paved the way for sale of defense equipment to India after many years. The two countries have built intelligence-sharing channels and assessment capabilities to better identify and prepare for threats; developed access agreements for military logistics to support each other's reach; and conducted regular military exercises to improve our capabilities and interoperability. Reporting suggests the U.S. government is poised to authorize joint production of GE F-414 jet engines in India to power indigenous fighter aircraft. Insiders have also reported the two defense ministries are planning to co-launch an innovation bridge first promised when both national security advisers launched the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology last year<sup>35</sup>. The Indo-US military cooperation is soon expected to reach 25 billion USD<sup>36</sup>. India built a relationship with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and to this day, most of the Indian military's weapons come from Russia. It wasn't until the mid-2000s that India started buying arms from the United

States, growing from around nothing in 2008 to \$8 billion of US sales to the country by 2013, and to \$20 billion in 2020<sup>37</sup>.

### **Training**

Indo US military relationship has increased manifold since 2001. There has been a surge of high-level visits and cooperative activities between the US and Indian military services since then. Vajra Prahar, the last military exercise till now, was conducted in November 2023<sup>38</sup>. These exercises are of considerable political influence.

### **Technology**

#### **1. Science and Technology**

Science and Technology cooperation between India and USA is characterized by over five decades of successful and productive joint ventures by both. The Indo-US Joint Commission on Economics & Commerce, Science & Technology, Education & Culture, and Agriculture was established in 1974<sup>39</sup>. As provided for in the Joint Commission Agreement, an S&T subcommission was established in 1975. Cutting a long story short, now India and USA agreed to augment technology cooperation, especially through the initiative for Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) focussing on artificial intelligence, semiconductors, space, quantum, and telecom etc<sup>40</sup>.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for scientific cooperation in the area of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences was signed between the Department of Space (DOS) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of the Government of India and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States of America on December 16, 1997, in Washington DC<sup>23</sup>. A Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi and Cornell University, Ithaca, New York for cooperation in the area of Agricultural Research was signed in November 1998. Continuous efforts of cooperation have been witnessed afterwards between India and US in respective fields.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

Indian and US companies have direct link through satellite communications bypassing India's poor telecommunication system. The presence in the United States of so many India-American computer specialists has aided the outsourcing of software programming and research activities to India. Today, Microsoft, Intel, IBM, Sim Microsystems, Adobe, Oracle, Texas Instruments, and other major U.S computer firms have significant and growing operations in India. During the trip, Gates announced a further US \$ 400 million investment by Microsoft in India. Indian IT revenues grow fastest in a decade to \$227 billion in pandemic-hit FY22<sup>41</sup>. More than two thirds of foreign sales were to the United States.

### **2. Space Technology**

Indo-US cooperation in space technology dates back to sixties. In the early 1960's, the United States had offered substantial assistance to India in setting up an Equatorial Rocket Launching Station at Thumba (TERLS), subsequently; India dedicated this facility to the United Nations in 1968. In 1997, NASA & NOAA of United States and Indian Space Research Organization & the Department of Science and Technology agreed to share meteorological data from India's INSAT satellites.

Under this agreement, collaborative research in the area of earth & atmosphere sciences was undertaken. New Delhi is also seeking US approval to launch for third countries purely civilian satellites that contain US-licensed components.

India and the United States also intend to increase coordination on planetary defence to protect planet Earth and space assets from the impact of asteroids and near-Earth objects, including U.S. support for India's participation in asteroid detection and tracking via the Minor Planet Center<sup>42</sup>.

### **Implications for Pakistan**

#### **Nuclear Proliferation**

The issue of nuclear proliferation in South Asia has always gained a greater significance in the US foreign policy agenda. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan provided the 'strategic necessity' to US to overlook Pakistan's nuclear program. The role of a front line

state for Pakistan in war against terror has also provided certain respite to Pakistan in this regard. However, US diplomacy in near past regarding the nuclear issue in South Asia indicated that the US was willing to accept an Indian credible minimum deterrent based on a triad of land, air and naval forces propounded by its nuclear doctrine in August 1999. The United States also seemed to have bought the Indian argument that these concerns had more to do with China than with Pakistan. This adds to the security concerns of Pakistan.

### **Arms Race**

The strategic cooperation between India and US has the potential of disturbing the balance of power in favour of India. This will facilitate India to pursue her hegemonic designs in the region and beyond. It will also concern countries in her neighborhood to review their security safe guards. The cooperation will also trigger an arms race in the region, thus putting the security of the region at stake.

This can also trigger the acceleration of the already ongoing nuclear arms race.

### **Indian Hegemony**

The US-Indian deal, strengthening India, further imposes Indian Hegemony. Indian hegemony in South Asia. This is largely so due to India's hegemonic designs in the region coupled with the US promotion of India as an island of peace in a sea of turmoil. Unless the US took into account the military, political, economic and societal nature of the region, its strategic partnership with India could aggravate the smaller countries concerns vis-à-vis the hegemonic power-India. This would imply that if it was based on Indian security interests alone, the partnership would give a free hand to India to pursue her hegemonic designs in the region.

### **Balance of Power in the Region**

US India partnership could disturb Pakistan strategic relationship with India which would, in turn, have impact on Pakistan's role of a balancer in South Asia. Any further increase in the strategic gap in conventional forces between India and Pakistan, therefore, would disturb the balance of power in South Asia in India's

favour. Compared to Pakistan, US accorded a higher priority to its "fast growing relations with India" which the US accepted as the "dominant power" in South Asia. US declaration in March 2005 to help India become a "major world power in the 21" century" substantially enabled India to project its power in its "neighbourhood and beyond. It has not factored in the unlikelihood of India reversing its current trend of developing its strategic relations with China in favour of US geo-political strategy of weaving a web of containment around it, besides prejudicing an equitable settlement of Kashmir by aggravating the imbalance of power between the two contending sides.

### **Indian Involvement in Afghanistan**

The US-Indian partnership encouraged more Indian involvement in Afghanistan in the past during US war on terror in Afghanistan. This was at the expense of smaller South Asian states, especially Pakistan. This was largely due to India's ambition of aspiring to be not only a regional but a global power. Now after the US exit from Afghanistan, India is still striving for increased involvement in Afghanistan and even interacting frequently with Central Asian Republics trying to exploit situation in her favour after US exit. This has a sure backing of US.

Unless the smaller South Asian states strongly protest against it, the US support would provide India with a unique opportunity to realize its long held hegemonic ambitions in the region. India will be benefited out of its closer relationship with the Northern alliance to pursue her agenda of destabilizing Pakistan and jeopardizing fruits of CPEC.

### **Pakistan's Relevance to US in Afghanistan**

Compared to India, Pakistan was and would be far more strategically useful for the US in Afghanistan. This is especially so due to Pakistan's Islamic character and its geographical linkages with Afghanistan's ethnic majority the Pakhtuns US relied heavily on Pakistan to stem terrorism along its western border with Afghanistan, particularly in efforts to capture Osama Bin Laden during US war on terror and making the environment conducive for US Taliban talks in Doha prior US exit from Afghanistan. In the post US exit from Afghanistan, the nuisance of Pakistan for US has further increased manyfolds owing to her

geostrategic location and backdoor diplomatic linkages with Talibans. This signifies that despite its strategic partnership with the US, India would have to understand the primacy of Pakistan for the US security interests in Afghanistan.

### **Indian Ocean**

The US assignment of a significant role to the Indian navy in the Indian Ocean would introduce competition and conflict in the entire Indian Ocean region. China, Pakistan, Central Asian States, Middle Eastern States and Southeast Asian states, especially Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, would oppose India's increased naval activity in the Indian Ocean.

### **Sino Indian Rivalry**

The Given India's proximity to the Indian Ocean, it would be very hard to convince Southeast Asian countries that Indian's naval presence would not interfere in their naval waters and hence pose a threat to Southeast Asian security. Moreover, according to Wolfe and Bendersky, the US would want India's navy to serve As a bulwark against China, if she becomes more active in the Indian Ocean.<sup>27</sup> This could introduce direct competition as well as the possibility of conflict between Chinese and Indian navies which, in turn, could destabilise the entire Indian Ocean region.

### **Resolution of Kashmir Dispute**

Indo-US relations will only serve to increase discord between India and Pakistan, which has been of great concern to the US, as effort to bring the two countries to a dialogue table have assuredly been in favour of India.

### **Salient Conclusions**

#### **SALIENT CONCLUSIONS**

There are several areas where economic cooperation between India and the US

can progress further, particularly in IT sector.

Both India and the US share the common view of China as a potential and a

major future threat. In the long term, there is the possibility of establishing strategic relations with each other to contain China.



USA will continue to perceive radical Islam and China, as a threat to its security and uni-polarity. India is aspiring to go beyond Pakistan. She wants to be a regional power vis-à-vis China with a permanent seat in the Security Council.

China is unlikely to get into confrontation with any major power, unless its vital

interests and security is impinged. It would like to concentrate on economic development instead.

China is unlikely to get into confrontation with any major power until its vital interests and security is impinged. It would like to concentrate on economic development instead.

Geo-economic factors will get precedence over geo-politics in their inter state relations. The United States is attracted by the economic opportunities that the large Indian market (432 million middle class) provides.

By engaging the US in economic cooperation, New Delhi may hope to neutralize

American criticism of its nuclear and missile programmes. Therefore, in the short term

India would be willing to please USA, however, in the long term, Russia's traditional hold over Indian would necessitate a more balanced Indian approach.

American interests in and around Afghanistan even after her exit from

Afghanistan is not likely to terminate, which will have ramifications for Russia and

China. Washington's relationship with Islamabad will largely be driven by the

requirements of USA emerged after her exit from Afghanistan (need of military bases of Pakistan) and interactions of Pakistan with China and Russia as regional power blocks. Thus, in the short term USA will continue to engage Pakistan utilizing various pressure tactics, but for the long term India remains a more important partner for USA.

### **Recommendations**

**Diluting Effects of Indo-US Nexus.** Pakistan's foremost and primary concern should be to remain strategically relevant to the

US/West so as to limit the fallout of this emerging nexus. Pakistan must identify the US interests in the region, that is, containment of China, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, narcotics control, international terrorism and current Afghan situation. Pakistan must workout cooperation arrangements with the US on these issues barring relations with China. Pakistan's traditional relations with China and those of China with Russia should be exploited. Similarly the Chinese and the Pakistani economic markets should be made competitive vis-à-vis India so as to interest USA.

**Proactive Foreign Policy.**

Pakistan should follow a proactive policy to

benefit from the changing international and regional environment. Few cardinals in this regard are as under:-

**a. Avoidance of India Centric Policy.**

With the scope for interaction with other countries expanding and various forms of cooperation emerging, our foreign policy should cease to be frenzied with Indian threat. The determinants of Pakistan's foreign policy cover a much larger area of concern. While security should remain a basic determinant, greater emphasis on fostering economic development and cooperation with other countries, especially USA, European Union, China, Russia and brotherly Islamic countries is essential.

**b. Need for Regional Alliances.**

An 'Alliance Strategy' will be a more prudent choice for Pakistan. In this regard, alliance with China should constitute the mainstay of our foreign policy. Under the prevailing environment a formal political and military alliance with China can effectively address our insecurity syndrome. This suits both China as well as Pakistan to offset the fallout of the Indo- US nexus, which is basically China specific. Besides, there is substantial scope for an economic alliance. ECO could be used as a basis for such an alliance, and expanded subsequently.

**Fresh Afghan Policy.** There is a need to formulate a new Afghan policy to deal with emerging situation after US exit from

Afghanistan. The argument that we have lived with hostile Afghan governments before is only valid up to a point because prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, we were not a party to the politics of this country-nor were any of the other regional countries.

### **Signing CTBT.**

Pakistan must seriously consider the signing of CTBT in order to wrest the initiative from the Indians and limit the intensity of international hostility towards its nuclear programme, especially after AQ Khan scandal, which has potential to resurface. According to the State Bank Governor, the country is losing two billion dollars a year in foreign aid by refusing to sign the treaty. Japan has declared that the signature would enable it to resume economic aid to Pakistan, which runs to about 500 million dollars a year. Given Pakistan's present vulnerability, pragmatic conditions would favour making a deal on the subject. This however is to be very critically weighed in view of foremost important need to maintain a nuclear balance with India.

### **Expansion of Security Council.**

Pakistan should play an active part in the enlargement of the Security Council so as to block India's chances of becoming its permanent member on account of her poor record of adhering to UN resolutions and human rights violations. This would help limit the advantages of Indo-US nexus.

### **Emphasis on Economic Issues.**

The best Pakistan can, and should do, is to redefine its relationship with the United States by focusing on economic issues as far as Possible. It should also venture to improve its relations with Russia.

### **Conclusion**

Significant improvements in India US relations have gone relatively unnoticed in the past. However, after the events of September 2001, US operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere and situation emerged after exit from Afghanistan, this relationship has assumed a degree of significance. It will have an

impact on the future strategic environments and shared perceptions on various issues in the changed international environments.

The USA's "antifundamentalist" priorities have potential to overtake the developing relations with Pakistan, albeit more gradually than our previous experiences. As this, and the strategic Indo-US-Israel nexus will have ramifications for the ongoing Kashmir struggle and may have implications for Pakistan's nuclear programme as well. Therefore, Pakistan needs to draw optimum benefits from the post US exit from Afghanistan circumstances and continue to remain strategically relevant. It should aim at converting these short term advantages into a long-term relationship diluting the Indo-US nexus and enhancing its own. On the contrary by cultivating India for any balancing role in Asia, the US would endanger Pakistan's security environment on one hand and similar challenge in Sino-India context as well resulting further destabilization of the region.

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