



A Journey of Indo-US Security Relations: An Overview

Maher Singh

Lecturer in Political Science
Govt. Senior Sec. School- Kohla
Distt. Sonipat (Haryana)
Email: Maher.mdu@gmail.com

Abstract:

The relations between India and US have witnessed many highs and lows. America was a prominent supporter of Pakistan since the late fifties and during the Indo-Pak war. This made India distant itself from U.S. because of the differences on the military front. However, post cold war the dissolution of U.S.S.R. opened many new possibilities. Furthermore, globalisation pushed the ties of the two countries together. The visit of President Clinton in March 2000 marked a new beginning of the Indo-US relations. This further paved way for co-operation of in the field of security, counter terrorism, joint military exercises etc. The US-Pak relations are what deteriorated India in making US a full time partner. Moreover, India and Russia are all weather friends. Due to this reason, US distanced itself at first from India. However, the US saw China as a rising power from the

subcontinent and in order to tackle this, it strengthened its ties with India .The stronger Indo-US ties have weakened the US-Pak ties and are beneficial for India. Therefore, the possibilities of international relations keep changing in the subcontinent.

Keywords:

Security, Bilateral, Make in India, Cold War, Terrorism, Nuclear Programme.

Introduction:

Indo-US relations took a giant leap forward after the cold war ended. This was marked by the visit of US president Clinton's visit to India. During his visit, a 'vision statement' was signed on 21 March 2000. Its key features were that India and the US will work together to diminish the use and supply of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, after the terrorist attacks of September 2001 on the WTC, India took an initiative

and offered America full cooperation for counter terrorism operations. The then Prime Minister, of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee met the American president George Bush in November 2001 and the relations of the two countries further extended by co-operation in regional security, space and scientific collaboration. In January 2004, Prime Minister Vajpayee took the Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) which included co-operation in missile defense, nuclear and space program. A team arrived from Pentagon in India to hold meetings and discussions about the missile defense and later on a technical presentation was given. Further in 2005 US offered to sell border management project to India and showed keen interest in India arms market. Recent visit by PM Modi to US marked a new era in these relations. PM Modi, help meeting with CEOs of top companies and met Barak Obama. Modi again visited US in September, 2015 and brought in FDI from US for investment of his dream project 'Digital India' and 'Make in India'. Thus with time, the ties of the two countries have strengthened.

Research Methodology: The present paper is exploratory in nature. Therefore, the researcher has used analytical method and the research material for the paper has been taken from the secondary sources of data collection such as newspapers, reputed journals and books. The researcher has also used some observational facts to pace the study.

Research Objectives: The present research paper is based on the following objectives:

- To know about Indo-US strategic partnership.
- To point out the efforts made by India to strengthen the strategic partnership.
- To highlight the recent trends in Indo-US security relations.

INDO-US Partnership: United States was once considered a hostile nation by India after the unanimous support US gave to Pakistan during the Indo-Pak war. This made India distance itself from US. US on the other hand distanced itself from India because it saw India as an ally of Russia. However, the visit of President Clinton



broke ice between the two nations and a new era of international relations between the two countries started. US saw India as a potential market for arms whereas India saw an opportunity to buy technology from US. In order to pursue this cooperation further, US announced on 31st August, 2005 that under the NSSP, it would remove the licensing required for nuclear related items. Restrictions on the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Atomic Energy Commission were also lifted. The relations between the two gained further momentum after the visit of Manmohan Singh on 17 July 2005. In the further wake of events, George Bush in January, 2006 warned US of India and China as the growing economies and competitors in the world market. Thereafter, Bush visited India for three days in 2006. He issued a statement saying that he wanted to strengthen the bilateral ties with India and would help India in becoming a major world power. He charted a two-tier diplomatic offensive during his stay. This was forging architecture of civilian nuclear cooperation with New Delhi. It was the centrepiece of his endeavour as on it rested the second

part of addressing other important issues. After, the nuclear deal concluded with a hard bargain, this paved way for further development of ties between the two countries.

It is noteworthy here that the main benefit of the nuclear deal was to differentiate civilian from military reactors. Eight nuclear reactors involved in the weapons programme were excluded and did not form a part of the deal. It is hoped that PM had taken good care to protect India's vital long term security interests. The Indo-US nuclear deal ended India's three decades of nuclear isolation that resulted in technology denials. A science and technology endowment fund was created and an India-US framework for maritime security cooperation was established. Further, this deal led to opening of channels for commercial cooperation in satellite launches, space exploration, satellite navigation and earth science.

After this deal, the ties between the two countries got stronger which led to further progress of many new projects. Both the countries witnessed the Malabar joint naval exercise being held regularly



since 1992. Apart from the joint exercises and exchanges of officials, arms sale and procurement of military equipment forms a substantive part of the bilateral economic relation with the military trade playing a significant role in trade between the two countries. In 2007, a purchase of 12 Thales-Raytheon System AN/TPQ 37 Firefinder artillery locating radar, 40 General Electric F404-GE-F2J3 engines for India's indigenously designed Light Combat Aircraft, deep submersible rescue vessel systems and spares for Sea-King helicopters has been among the major deals finalised with the US. Further, a deal worth \$ 1.059 billion was clinched between the two countries for sale of six Lockheed Martin C-130 J Hercules transport aircraft to India. Then, in October 16, 2008 India and US for the first time agreed to work together to formulate a doctrine and raise the level of participation in the joint military exercises. The chief of the US army, General William Caesy met his Indian counterpart General Deepak Kapoor. Further discussions were made on security related issues in the Southeast Asia, especially in Pakistan, Nepal and China. An agreement was also made to

co-operate in exchange of military and related technologies for development of enhanced capabilities for the future soldier. The two chiefs re emphasised on the need to exchange of information between the personnel of security.

Thereafter, India was shaken by the Mumbai terror attacks on 26 November 2008. Due to this, US took a tough stand against Pakistan and further extended its support and a team of FBI came to India to assist the local investigative team. Then, in 2009 Manmohan Singh and Barack Obama held bilateral talks on the sidelines of G 20 summit. This included discussion of issues such as terrorism, energy security, climate change and the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The issue of terrorism was further discussed after the visits of US secretary of the state Hillary Clinton's visit to India. On November 2010, President Barack Obama visited India and extended his support for including India in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and other multilateral export control groups. In the 2011 meeting of NSG, US came out with a 'Food for Thought' paper on the possibilities of bringing India to the group. Although,



India being a member of NSG is yet ascertain but the benefit of nuclear deal during bush administration is showing up. This has helped India in the nuclear sector in a great way as it has opened up opportunities for India to buy enriched uranium for its peaceful nuclear energy programme and nuclear technology from the leading international players and also allowed India's nuclear and defense market for them. Moreover, due to lifting of ban by the nuclear deal, there has been substantial progress in US-India defense deals and the trends shows that it has an immense potential to go further.

Thus, till 2010 the ties between the two countries were getting stronger. Later, they got a push again the second term of Obama. Obama has been continuing the policy of past administration of consolidating relationship with India encompassing the political and economical co-operation between the two nations. To pace this further, Manmohan Singh visited Washington DC on September 27, 2013. The two governments then put out a long list of accomplishments. They announced a new defense framework and laid emphasis on

the strategic partnership and defense trade of \$ 9 billion. This was the time were the Indo-US relations had touched a new height.

However, the ties between the two nations soon faced a setback after the arrest of Deputy Consul General of India in New York, Devyani Khobragade. She was accused by U.S. federal prosecutors of submitting false work visa documents for her housekeeper and paying the housekeeper far less than the minimum legal wage. India then, lodged a protest against this which the US didn't drop the charges. In retaliation, India too revoked all the facilities for the US diplomats. Khobragade was subject to prosecution at the time of her arrest because she had only consular immunity (which gives one immunity from prosecution only for acts committed in connection with official duties) and not the more extensive diplomatic immunity. After her arrest, the Indian government moved Khobragade to the Indian's mission to the United Nations, upgrading her status and conferring diplomatic immunity on her; as a result, the federal indictment against Khobragade was



dismissed in March 2014. This incident deteriorated the ties between the two countries. Following this, the US Ambassador Nancy Powell announced her resignation.

Security Relations in Modi Era: After the general election of 2014 in India, the power shifted to BJP government led by Narendra Modi. This was the time when the bilateral relations between India and US were about to take a new turn. Soon after resuming power, Modi travelled to US on 27 September, 2014. Modi addressed the UN general assembly and was treated like a rock star in the Madison Square Garden by the Indian community. Modi met many top leaders there and urged them to make in India. India wants to expand its aerospace and therefore, Modi met the head of Lockheed Martin. Presently, Lockheed Martin has a facility in Hyderabad in cooperation with the Tatas where they are manufacturing tail segment of C-130 cargo planes. An increase of 49 per cent cap on foreign direct investment in the defense sector was announced. The defense budget was hiked by nearly 11 percent and India

joined hands with the defense manufacturing companies of the US to make their weapons in India. Rs 5,992 crore was diverted towards revenue spending. India is seeking to fast-track its military modernisation and has a number of pending deals ahead like the multi-billion contract for 126 multi-role combat aircraft contract. The other major acquisitions expected to be finalised include the deals for 22 Apache combat choppers, 15 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters and besides new submarines and vessels for the Indian Navy. Also, the regular Malabar exercise between the US and Indian navy was held on 26 January, 2015. However, this year Japan was also invited to be a part of this exercise. The Indian Navy was represented by INS Sindhuraj (diesel-electric submarine), INS Ranvijay (guided missile destroyer), INS Shivalik (stealth frigate), INS Betwa (guided-missile frigate) and INS Shakti (fleet tanker). The Japanese Navy sent destroyer JS Fuyuzuki. From the U.S. Navy came the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), the USS Normandy, Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Fort Worth (LCS 3) and Los Angeles-class



submarine USS City of Corpus Christi (SSN 705). Moreover, an India-US Combined Military Training Exercise YUDH ABHYAS was held from 9th September 2015 at Joint Base Lewis McChord in the United States. This YUDH ABHYAS was started in 2004 and is a regular feature since then. This main objective of this exercise was to broaden and strengthen the cooperation and interoperability between armies of both democratic nations. It also provided an ideal platform for the army personnel of the both countries to share their experiences on military operations in urban terrain under the United Nations mandate.

Conclusion: To conclude, it can be said that the relation between India and US have evolved over time. From the time when the two nations considered each other hostile to the present time when much progress has been made and many new opportunities are arising. However, US-Pak strategic relations will continue to hamper the Indo-US relationship. US on the other hand saw a threat rising from the subcontinent because of the Pak-China relations. So, in order to tackle this, it came

closer to India. India on the other hand needed investment and technology from US. Together, India and US can work around to tackle terrorism on a global level. The freshly formed government seems to be promising in broadening the scope for co-operation between US and India. With projects like 'Make in India' vision of Narendra Modi will show its fruits in the defense sector in the years to come.

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