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# United States - India Relations: An expanding strategic partnership

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At the turn of new century, the United States – India relations had entered a new phase. This new face of U.S.-India engagement has been persistently deepening and fostering. So far that United States vividly support India’s rise as a vital component of Asian security and stability. This paper attempts to describe the shift in the U.S. foreign policy in the beginning of 1990s that set new goals in post Cold War period. The paper also points out the strategic importance of India in the American view that can better protect the U.S. interests in the area. This paper also reviews the shared interests of U.S. and India that turned up the page of U.S.-India relations and accordingly United States started to classify India as an indispensable partner in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in Asia.

The beginning of 1990s brought significant changes in the international political and strategic scene. Soviet Union disposed of its political and ideological stance and ended its military confrontation with the United States. Finally with the disintegration of Soviet Union, the international communism stumbled on its end. The communist regimes in Eastern Europe started tottering and collapsing. The Warsaw Pact lost its worth. Berlin Wall fell, East embraced West. The United States emerged as a sole superpower and its victory in the Gulf War in January-February 1991 added new dimension in U.S. supremacy in world.

Emerging as a unilateral supreme power on world scene, the United States introduced a new world order that was to build the post- Cold War international political, economic and strategic milieu, on its own terms.<sup>1</sup> Main aims supposed to be end result of the U.S. future global agenda were as:

1. New leadership role for the United States in the new emerging world.
2. Establishment of the collective security system, emphasizing the multinational cooperation to deter aggression and achieve peace and prosperity.
3. Prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them by concluding and verifying new arms control agreements and non-proliferation regimes.
4. Promotion of the secular democracy.
5. Enhancement of the respect for human rights.
6. Development of market economies.
7. Growth of the U.S. economic potential to accelerate trade, investment, and implementation of effective principles of proportional gains.
8. Protection against international threats of narcotics, terrorism and environmental problems.<sup>2</sup>

The guiding principle for implementation and expansion of the new international order triggered the idea of establishment of a new regional alliance system in different parts of world. It was presumed that the new regional power centres, likely Israel, Germany, Britain, France, India, South Korea, and Japan, would support the U.S. foreign policy agenda and play a significant role on the political, military and economic fronts of international scenario in future.<sup>3</sup> President George Herbert Walker Bush (1989-93) described the role of new alliance: "We can help ensure future peace and defend our interests through a range of military arrangements... bilateral alliances, access agreements, and structures.... While we must adjust our force structure to reflect post Cold War realities, we also must protect our interests and allies."<sup>4</sup>

The foreign policy aspirations of the Bush Senior administration, based on the guiding principles of the new world order, emphasized:

1. Maintaining the international and regional balance of power appropriate for the United States and its allies.
2. Promoting an international trading and monetary system conducive to American prosperity.
3. Supporting the democratic political systems.
4. Securing the rule of law and human rights.
5. Strengthening the frame of international norms and practices to protect standards of order, justice and human rights.
6. Safeguarding the core American values and interests.<sup>5</sup>

To promote the U.S. international policy goals, the American policy makers presented a three- pronged strategy of 'Shape, Respond and Prepare.' This three pronged strategy aimed at shaping up the environment to "prevent or deter threats through diplomacy, international assistance, arms control programmes, non-proliferation initiatives, and overseas military presence." This strategy retained option to "respond across the full spectrum of potential crisis," and maintained the ability to meet the new "challenges of tomorrow's uncertain future."<sup>6</sup> This was dominating approach of United States in dealing with world affairs.

### **Asia-Pacific region: A new arena of power politics**

In the post- Cold War world, the balance of power had been transferred from the Atlantic Ocean to Pacific Ocean. Consequently, Asia-Pacific region, occupying a significant strategic position at the crossroads of a number of major sea and air routes, took importance for international politics in terms of Asia-Pacific geo-strategic, economic, and commercial motives. In the words of Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command:

The Asia-Pacific, perhaps more than any other region, represents a confluence of the security, diplomatic, and economic elements of international power. This confluence helps define the significance of the region to the US and the world, and drives our strategy of presence and engagement to promote and protect our national interests."<sup>7</sup>

President Bush also referred Asia-pacific as an important continent for U.S policy in international order and said: "We will deepen our partnership with our Asian friends in building democracy and freedom...In the area of security, Asia's variety has spawned a diverse pattern of political and strategic cooperation. Our custom-made agreements and relationships

provide a strong foundation for future security."<sup>8</sup> During his visit to the Asia-Pacific region in January 1992, President Bush declared that "America will remain engaged in the Pacific area economically, politically, and militarily. After all, we are a Pacific nation, and we should care about us to build a post-Cold War world defined by prosperity and trade, not poverty and isolationism."<sup>9</sup> On another occasion, President Bush said that "we will maintain a visible, credible presence in the Asia-Pacific region with our forward developed forces and through bilateral defence arrangements with nations of the region."<sup>10</sup> He further expressed that the U.S. "plan to base a key Pacific navy command in Singapore spells new naval arrangements in the Pacific. ... The shift may sound a minor affair but this in fact will be relocation the base of the US naval operation in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean."<sup>11</sup>

For the Americans, the significance of the Asia-Pacific region was underlined owing to China, which survived the communist base with its huge area and size of population and booming economy and strong military structure that the United States considered as the main rising threat to its national security, and the second concern for the Americans was the proliferation of nuclear weapons of mass destruction in the region that had reached its alarming point with the unrestrained nuclear capability of China, North Korea, India, and Pakistan as well. Third challenge which centralized the U.S. policy in Asia-Pacific region was the rise of religious extremism.<sup>12</sup>

China's fast growing economic and military potentials had posed stern threats to the American interests. In the U.S. perspective, China could happen to play a global role, which would eventually lead to a multipolar international system against the U.S. aspirations in the world.<sup>13</sup> The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was regarded as a move to undercut the U.S. supremacy in economic and strategic fields.<sup>14</sup> An executive

summary of the US Department of Defense annual report (2006) to Congress mentioned:

China's rapid rise as a regional political and economic power with global aspirations is an important element in today's strategic environment –one that has significant implications for the region and the world. ... China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages.<sup>15</sup>

Hafeez Malik, a renowned American expert on U.S. policy towards South Asia, stated that the Americans wanted Chinese to exist but on U.S. terms, likely:

1. Accept the U.S. -led security architecture in Asia.
2. No endeavors to undermine or disrupt it.
3. Undertake military modernization in a gradual and non-threatening way.
4. Evade from building relations with Russia, Europe, or India in to an anti-American alliance, which might alter the balance of power in a fundamental manner.<sup>16</sup>

Given the security situation in Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. foreign policy experts drew the U.S. core concerns in this region and recommended the strategy that accentuated on:

1. Enhance the strategic cooperation with allies through effective diplomacy and joint military ventures.
2. Ensure a strong security structure that would help reduce intra-regional fears and suspicions.
3. Build a structure for economic cooperation and growth that could support an open international trading system.
4. Increase a free and fair trade that could benefit United States and countries of area.
5. Promote democracy and human rights.
6. Maintain the regional political stability.<sup>17</sup>

To readjust its policies in the Asia-Pacific region, the United States sought alliance with the regional countries which had the attribute of success in industry, trade, education, science and technology sectors. Consequently, the leading powers of the region like Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore and India were maintained as the centres of power.

### Towards a Strategic Partnership with India

In the U.S. perspective, South Asia region, like the cold war days, remained significant to pursue its new world order.<sup>18</sup> The new priorities of the Americans in the region were:

1. Halting the nuclear proliferating.
2. Preserving the peace and stability.
3. Strengthening the secular democracy.

4. Promoting the respect for human right.
5. Pursuit of U.S. interests in trade and investment.
6. Assistance to the economic development.<sup>19</sup>

New U.S. policy in South Asia focused on reinvention of the region as a nuclear free and democratic area. The region was also underscored for enlargement of the U.S. economic interests, in course of development of free market economy.<sup>20</sup> New policy orientations reversed the options of past and set new trends in diplomacy. The new adjustments in U.S. South Asia policy were in accordance with the new international strategic order that changed the course of U.S. alignment of Cold War period in the South Asian region.

India was regarded as a regional power centre. Recommending an Indo-centric policy in South Asia, the American experts underlined that India as a largest democracy and dominant power in the region could play an important role to check future challenges.<sup>21</sup> Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of state, quoted India in his article entitled 'New World Order,' as a dominant power in the South Asian region. He said that "the Indian nation has retained a finely-tuned sense for domination which causes it to insist on prominence over all territories controlled from New Delhi at the acme of British rule."<sup>22</sup>

Indian defence potentials, in particular, were viewed very important. Indian blue- water navy was rated as prompt to meet the U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean and, Persian Gulf. Indian military strength was also valued as a countervailing power against China.

The Americans had viewed the rising tide of Islamic extremism in Afghanistan and Central Asian republics as a more



serious challenge to the new international order. Pakistan had been ranked as a main promoter of Islamic extremism in the region. India as a secular democracy was considered as effective to check the Islamic extremism and terrorism.<sup>23</sup> Under the different recommendations by U.S. study groups for evaluation of U.S.-India relations in 21<sup>st</sup> century, India was assigned a central role in new world order. The U.S. strategic concerns that prompted the U.S. government to form a strategic partnership with India were:

1. China's emergence with a huge military might in the Asia-Pacific will eventually challenge the U.S. predominance in the region.
2. Russia's potential revival will likely alter the international security arrangements, inserting new role for Moscow in the European affairs but more so in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East.
3. Emerging strategic partnership between Russia and China, complicate strategic equation on the Western rim of the Pacific.
4. Expanding menace of Islamic terrorism, Afghanistan, Pakistan and some of the Central Asian Republics, and moreover in Gulf create grave challenges for the United States and West, on whole.
5. US forward military presence in Asia-Pacific need to make more affective the sea-lanes security.
6. Pakistan-sponsored potential Talibanization in Afghanistan can most possibility mess up the South West Asia scene.

7. A politically and economically unstable nuclear Pakistan can be dangerous for world peace. Pakistan as a central Islamic state can most probably supply nuclear material to other Islamic countries.
8. In view of expanding Talibanization, Islamists can take control of Pakistani nukes<sup>24</sup>

Looking at the Indian foreign policy in the post Cold War period, it seems that New Delhi also had adopted new tendencies in relations with other countries and sharing the global concerns. India had prompt inclination towards the United States and moved swiftly to transform its relations with America in a partnership.<sup>25</sup>

The Indians had realized that strategic partnership with the unipolar world power would carry support in political, military, and economic terms and help build a suitable environment for the extension of Indian hegemonic influence in the region. The downgrading of Pakistan's image as a promoter of Islamic terrorism and its incredibility in international politics had provided a great opportunity to the Indians to win the trust of United States and filled the vacuum left with the end of Pakistan-United States alliance. *Times of India* wrote:

The end of the Cold War and the beginning of the Gulf war has created unprecedented opportunities for India to wean the US away from its traditional ally, Pakistan. The transformation of US-Pak relations is a major security gain for India. In fact, Pakistan is not likely to hand over a nuclear device to fellow Islamic countries, but the pan-Islamic wave sweeping the region can hardly make the US comfortable on this score. US now sees militant Islam as one of the biggest

threats (and) Pakistan simply cannot be a credible US ally against militant Islam. In sum, India has a golden opportunity to capitalize the US on downgrading of Pakistan,(and) should not spoil this by knee-jerk anti-imperialist sentiment."<sup>26</sup>

Here Mr. Misra, former National Security Advisor of India, is quoted who gave candid advocacy for alliance with America. While addressing at the Council of Foreign Relations, New York, he said:

It is an unquestionable fact that USA is the pre-eminent power in the world today. ...The US economy is as large as those of Japan, Germany and Britain put together. ...It would make poor political or economic sense for a country – or a group of countries – to set itself up as an alternate pole in opposition to USA. Most countries advocating a multi-polar world also affirm that they attach great importance to relations with USA. ...In the world order defined by the Cold War, India and US were not really allies though, to be fair, nor were they enemies. India-US relations reflected a lack of engagement, coupled with wariness and a periodically recurring suspicion whenever the shadow of the Cold War fell over our region.

In the post-Cold War world (and even in the post-9/11 world order), the situation is dramatically different. We have shared geo-political interests and economic opportunities, which can bind an enduring partnership. ...Given its past history, the Indo-US relationship needs to liberate itself from a number of misconceptions and prejudices of past years.<sup>27</sup>

From the Indian perspective, the factors which derived finally India to prefer to build a strategic partnership with United States were:

1. With its growing stockpile of nuclear weapons and military might, China poses a long range security threat to India.
2. Pakistan's nuclear capability and its exclusive missile armory have added horrifying dimension to South Asian security scenario.
3. The deepening China-Pakistan strategic nexus is likely going to create a security equation in the area. It is entirely against the Indian interests.
4. Expanding Islamic militancy, sponsored and launched by Pakistan, has engendered the Indian security, externally and internally. India singly cannot handle this threat of Islamic militancy, therefore it need international collaboration.
5. Swiftly developing strategic relations between Russia and China are creating an equilibrium of power to checkmate the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. China's increasing activism is entirely against the Indian interests in the region.<sup>28</sup>

Islamic extremism, Pakistan 's nuclear capability and China's nuclear and military dominance were the main concerns which provided common ground to the India-United States strategic partnership. India exploited its non-Islamic and secular credentials to convince the Americans that in a world swept by Islamic

fundamentalism, India, a non-Islamic heavy weight, was far more reliable than a Muslim Pakistan.<sup>29</sup> *Newsweek* wrote that in the rising state of Islamic extremism, the United States gazed at India "as the region's last outpost of secular democracy."<sup>30</sup> Jasjit Singh, an Indian strategist, remarked that "the threat of Islamic fundamentalism and the importance of protecting oil supplies from the gulf" were the new significant common concerns for the Americans and Indians.<sup>31</sup> With regards to China factor, Amitabh Mattoo, Associate Professor at School of international Studies, Jawarlal Nehru University, India, wrote about the common concern of the United States and India:

In terms of strategic issues, the rise of China and continuing uncertainty in the Aisa-Pacific region should be of critical importance and concern to both New Delhi and Washington .....China's revival as a great power, after a century of western humiliation, is already translating into sporadic acts of aggressiveness. Chinese claims, and the belligerence with which they are asserted, over most of the South China Sea, particularly the Sparty, the Parcel and the Senkaku islands, are only the most recent examples.<sup>32</sup>

During the Gulf War, the new tendency in Indian policy appeared when Indian government provided maximum logistic support to the U.S. forces in Indo-Ocean. India provided refueling facilities to the U.S. aircrafts transiting from the Far East to the Gulf through India.<sup>33</sup> It was turning point in Indian policy towards the United States–India strategic partnership. The U.S. government hailed the Indian stand on Gulf war. This Indian gesture helped much to bring the two states close. New Delhi also concluded an agreement with Washington to share valuable military intelligence.<sup>34</sup>

In the aftermath of Gulf War, Washington and New Delhi accelerated their efforts to expand long –term cooperation in defense and related matters. Exchange of senior military officials became frequent. The meeting between the Indian Defense Secretary Sharad Pawar and the U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney in Washington in April 1992 was very important in this regard. Both the sides identified the following measures for cooperation:

1. The United States would help India upgrade its defence capability, filling a vacuum created as a result of decline of Soviet Union.
2. India would provide port facilities to the visiting US naval ships, including refueling.<sup>35</sup>

It can be said that Indo-U.S. military collaboration began in 1992. Military cooperation grew so far that an India-U.S. Army Executive Steering Committee was set up. This was followed by the setting up of the Joint Steering Committee of the two countries. Subsequently, the two countries' Navies carried out their first ever joint exercise in May 1992.<sup>36</sup>

The Clinton administration swiftly worked on agenda for South Asia that centered on giving a real shape to the strategic engagement with India. Consequently, the new U.S. policy towards South Asia signified that the future ties of U.S. with India would no longer be a prisoner of U.S. relations with Pakistan. It was reallocated as:

1. America discarded its policy of being “even-handed” towards both India and Pakistan- a policy which equated the two countries.

2. A new policy was adopted in contrast of past policy to seek the solution of Kashmir dispute on bilateral level through dialogue with reference to Simla agreement
3. A congruent approach appeared among the Americans over the Indian stand that Pakistan had been promoting across the border terrorism in India generally and Kashmir particularly, and the United States promised to join hands with India in fight against terrorism.
4. Furthermore, the US stepped back from its policy of advising India on its matters with Pakistan, particularly on Kashmir.<sup>37</sup>

The diplomatic maneuverings recurrently took place for upward march towards a beginning of a new era in India-U.S. relations. The visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to the United States in May 1994 was significant in this regard. It marked the start of a new phase of U.S.-India relations. The Indian and American leaders discussed security related concession to make the strategic bargain workable and advantageous for both sides. Both the sides agreed through the MoUs to expand the official contacts, advance and improve 1984 understanding on high-technology transfer, boost defence cooperation, and commence the business partnership.<sup>38</sup> In mid- January 1995, Defense Secretary William Perry visited India and he concluded an defence agreement with his Indian counterpart and established a 'Defense Policy Forum, to reevaluate the strategic interests of both the countries in post- Cold War era, promote links between officials of both sides and increase steadily the opportunities of training and joint exercises. This landmark agreement on military cooperation was a breakthrough in India- U.S. relations.<sup>39</sup> The agreement provided for "consultations between the pentagon and

India's Defence Ministry, as well as joint military exercises, military training, defence research, and weapons production."<sup>40</sup> About the agreement, William Parry commented that the agreement would open "a new era in our security relations."<sup>41</sup> Immediately after the William Perry's visit, Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, went to New Delhi where he agreed to establish a 'Commerce forum' to open new vistas for the promotion of economic relations between the two countries.<sup>42</sup> U.S Secretary of Treasury Robert E Rubin also visited India in April and signed an agreement for increase in investment in India.<sup>43</sup> Now, heavy lobbying took place in Washington for new broader relationship between India and United States. On August 6, 1997, President Clinton, speaking at a White House press conference, referred to a stronger U.S. presence in South Asia and said that the "U.S. presence should be 'heavily' felt in South Asia because of the long relationship America had with India and because of the enormous potential of the region for good if things go well and for ill if things don't. ... We can be an even better friend in the next 50 years and a more constructive supporter of resolving these difficulties in the near term."<sup>44</sup>

The diplomatic move between India and United States received further boost when Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral met President Clinton in New York on September 23, 1997 at the annual session of the UN General Assembly. Both the leaders agreed to press the strategic discussions to a decisive point by resuming the debate on nuclear proliferation and disarmament that had been stalled for the past three years. The U.S. Under-Secretary of State Thomas Pickering arrived in New Delhi in October 1997 and initiated the broader-ranging strategic dialogue on the lines elucidated at the Gujral-Clinton meeting.<sup>45</sup> Pickering's mission was successful in carrying forward the "new beginning" in India-United States relations.<sup>46</sup> Strategic links between the two states swiftly expanded with the continuation of the various projects and supply of military equipments and technologies. In terms of economic plans, the India –United States



strategic partnership also based the joint ventures. India offered large opportunities for the American investors. The U.S. companies including General Motors Corp, Kellogg CO, Du Pont Co, and Motorola Inc started projects in India.<sup>47</sup>

Over time, the nuclear issue appeared as the central to all the strategic dialogues for upgrading the India-U.S. partnership. The U.S. officials started to acknowledge the nuclear capabilities of India. They underlined the option of a 'grand bargain' with India in nuclear field. The American experts proposed a change in U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policy, emphasizing a stable nuclear relationship with India that would help India in ending the India's nuclear isolation and attaining the legitimacy as a nuclear weapon state.<sup>48</sup> Among these think tanks, Selig S. Harrison, a renowned American expert on South Asian affairs, suggested a nuclear deal with India. He proposed that the United States should abandon its "roll back" policy and evidently "reconciled to India's acquisition of the nuclear weapons option." The United States should lift "ban on the sale of nuclear reactors to India and other restrictions on U.S. cooperation with India's civilian nuclear power programme."<sup>49</sup> Sumit Ganguly, a leading American specialist on South Asian affairs, suggested that the United States should adopt a new approach towards India, conceding India the right to "retain and pursue its nuclear option because of extant security concerns."<sup>50</sup> Consequently, the Clinton administration adopted a low key approach with regard to India on nuclear proliferation. The rollback approach was replaced by the policy of advanced technological cooperation with India. This new policy focused on locating the nuclear issue in the broader context of the search for a comprehensive strategic deal with India. Sumit Ganguly commented that the nuclear stability with India had been the essential part of U.S.-India strategic partnership, aspiring India as a legitimate nuclear power to create an equilibrium vis-a-vis China's nuclear dominance.<sup>51</sup> The Indian nuclear tests further consolidated the grounds for developing a nuclear understating between Indian and the United States.

The United States-India strategic dialogue, which expanded over fourteen rounds in 1998-999, was the longest series of negotiations on bilateral level between the two countries. The talks focused on issues related to security, disarmament, and non-proliferation. They led to create more understanding on security concerns amongst the authorities of both sides.<sup>52</sup> President Clinton's visit to India in March 2000 was crucial in process of starting a new era in India-U.S. relations in terms framing the strategic partnership in future. "India-U.S. Relations: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" signed by President Clinton and Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee was a unique groundbreaking agreement that defined the agenda of the partnership between the two states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The statement expressed the shared belief that the relationship between the two countries could be a vital factor in shaping international peace, prosperity and democratic freedom and for ensuring strategic stability in Asia and beyond. It reaffirmed:

In the new century, India and the United States will be partners in peace, with a common interest in a complimentary responsibility for ensuring regional and international security. We will engage in regular consultations on, and work together and with others for strategic stability in Asia and beyond. We will bolster joint efforts to counter terrorism and meet other challenges to regional peace. We will strengthen the international security system, including in the United Nations and support the United Nations in its peacekeeping efforts, we acknowledge that tensions in South Asia can only be resolved by the nations of South Asia.<sup>53</sup>

The leaders of both sides agreed over various initiatives to speed up and integrate the process of forwarding the U.S. – India relationship in depth. These steps included:<sup>54</sup>

1. Regular bilateral summits.
2. Constant meetings between the senior officials of both sides to discuss the mutual concerns in a broad range related to security, economy and non-proliferation.
3. Regular meetings of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism to intensify cooperation and sharing information.
4. Bilateral economic discourse through a high rank coordinating panel, led by the U.S. Secretary of Treasury and Indian Finance Minister.
5. Commercial dialogue between the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and India's Minister of Commerce & Industry.
6. U.S.-India Working Group on Trade would boost understanding and cooperation on trade policy.
7. Joint Consultative Group on Clean Energy and Environment would focus on collaborative projects, clean energy technologies, private and public sector investment and cooperation, climate change and other environmental issues.

This constant dialogue process was given name as 'Dialogue Architecture,' and as a part of this Dialogue Architecture, the Prime Minister Vajpayee paid a visit to the United States in September 2000. This visit helped to reaffirm the broader vision of relations. Clinton and Vajpayee stressed for the continuation of

dialogue on security, non-proliferation and disarmament as well as on trade, and energy to open new more doors for cooperation in these areas. In the view from New Delhi, it happened for the first time that India's security concerns, economic strength, and capabilities in information technology were recognized at the highest level in Washington.<sup>55</sup>

### Disjointing from Pakistan

The reorientation of the U.S. policy in South Asia renounced the decades-old Pakistan-United States relations. Pakistan once accorded with title of 'most allied ally' and stood as the 'front line' state in war against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, had lost its strategic significance for the United States and relations between the states had its lowest point. The downgrading trend in the U.S.-Pakistan relations reached distressing point when new perception captured the thinking of the U.S. policy makers that Pakistan had been promoting the Islamic extremism and militancy. The first meeting of the Indo-US Army Steering Committee was held in January 1992 to draw up the future course for Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation. The committee bracketed Pakistan with those countries that sponsored the Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>56</sup> Senator Larry Pressler- author of the Pressler Amendment that suspended military and economic aid to Pakistan in October 1990 in a bid to halt Pakistan's nuclear programme, also referred Pakistan as a state that backed Islamic fundamentalism. During this visit to India in early 1992, Larry Pressler warned the Indians about the emergence of a new grouping of Pakistan with Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran and Central Asian Republics that possessed the nuclear weapons capability. Mr. Pressler said that this alliance of Islamic countries could provide the ground for the growth of Islamic extremism.<sup>57</sup> He stressed that this "Islamic fundamentalism can travel from Pakistan."<sup>58</sup> Similarly in a testimony to the U.S. Senate on April 21, 1993, the CIA Director James Woolsey mentioned that Pakistan had supported the insurgents in "waging terror campaigns against the Indian Government in the States of Kashmir and

Punjab.”<sup>59</sup> This rising perception about Pakistan in Washington had built Pakistan’s image as a dangerous state. Consequently, Pakistan was threatened in 1992-93 to be declared as a state sponsor of terrorism.<sup>60</sup> This new image of Pakistan as a promoter of Islamic extremism and militancy had direct impact on Pakistan’s nuclear option. It was suspected that nuclear capability of Pakistan could better serve the causes of the Islamic extremism. The Islamic militants and their ideologues in Pakistan could use it as ultimate weapon of revenge against the states which they delineated as their enemy. These suspicions eventually created a new perception of an Islamic atomic bomb prevailed over the thinking of advocates of nuclear non- proliferation. Embarking heavily on a campaign, to malign Pakistan’s nuclear programme as a threat to stability of South Asian region, Indian lobbies in America played an effective role to mould the American approach against Pakistan’s nuclear programme.

### The U.S. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy in South Asia

The South Asian nuclear issue is fabricated by the nuclear triangular approach inserted by China, India and Pakistan. The nuclear pursuit began in South Asia since China had its first nuclear test in 1964. India perceived a threat from the Chinese nuclearization. Therefore, it finally took route to the nuclear weaponizing and after ten years it had a nuclear explosion in 1974. The Indian nuclear test weakened the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) system in the area. The Indian bomb provoked Pakistan to build up its nuclear capabilities and after thirteen years Pakistan reached the stage to match Indian nuclear strength.

A nuclear arms race in South Asia was an unwelcome prospect for the U.S. policy in the region. The Americans embarked on a drive to check the nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan. They emphasized the establishment of a NPT regime in South Asia. Washington pressed both New Delhi and Islamabad to join the NPT but both denied the NPT by underlining their respective

threat perceptions. India argued over Chinese nuclear might, coupled with the Pakistan's nuclear programme based on the Pakistan-China nuclear axis.<sup>61</sup> Indian security analyst Ashok Kapur said that "China is a wild card in South Asian security question" and issue of nuclear proliferation in South Asia could not be dealt "without taking into account China's attitude and policies."<sup>62</sup> With reference to the Pakistan-China nuclear axis, Ashok said that it further provoked India's nuclear ambition. He said that "the thing which matters considerably is China's nuclear presence in subcontinent as a result of China's military relationship with Pakistan. The image of Sino-Pak axis impacts negatively on the Indian psyche."<sup>63</sup>

The Indians called NPT a discriminatory treaty that drew line between nuclear haves and have not. The Indians argued that the purpose of this treaty was to prevent the non-nuclear weapons states from getting the nuclear capability but on the other hand, it allowed nuclear states to develop further their nuclear programmes.

While, in defense of its nuclear programme, Pakistan referred the growing intensity of nuclear threat from India. Pakistan argued that the Indian nuclear programme was not credible with its claim for peaceful nuclear intentions. Pakistani experts argued that Pakistan had no parity with India, in terms of conventional weapons. Besides its own domestic weapons industry, India had large sources to get weapons from other countries as well. Therefore, Pakistan had right to exercise a credible minimum nuclear deterrence, in order to come at par with India on military superiority and meet the threats to any of its strategic vulnerabilities from India.<sup>64</sup> Pakistan linked its joining of NPT with India's adherence to it. It was argued that adherence to NPT unilaterally would damage the Pakistan's nuclear programme. Pakistan would be vulnerable to a nuclear blackmail by India.<sup>65</sup>

## Nuclear Deal with India

A broader strategic alliance with India could not take a compact shape unless India's nuclear option was not protected. As a part of the U.S. grand strategy to contain the rising power of China, the Americans had depicted India's nuclear capability as a counter balance to China's nuclearization. According to Joseph Cirincione, America's best known weapons expert and former Director for Non-Proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, dealing with China in future, India would be "more valuable as a nuclear power, rather than as a non nuclear country."<sup>66</sup>

Eventually, the Americans maintained a high-handed approach towards the nuclearization in South Asia. Thus, the Americans willfully kept mum on Indian nuclear programme. They decided to broaden India's access to nuclear technology. While, Pakistan's nuclear programme comparatively was dealt in a critical and rigid way and pressure was put on Pakistan to stop its efforts for nuclearization. The U.S. coercive diplomacy against Pakistan nuclear programme contained the military and economic sanctions and restrictions by presidential clearance certificate, aiming at halting the process of developing the nuclear capability.<sup>67</sup>

The nuclear tests in 1998 by India and Pakistan tremendously shifted the South Asian security environment. In deed after nuclear tests, the US government immediately imposed sanctions under the auspices of the US Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994. However, as the U.S. strategy for re-engagement in the Asia-Pacific region had focused on improving bilateral relations with India, the Americans embarked the policy of developing India as a strategic and nuclear partner. The Americans viewed that the nuclear India could be better option to be an equilibrium vis-a-vis China's nuclear dominance.<sup>68</sup> The 'strategic dialogue' conducted by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Foreign Minister of India Jaswant Singh held in 1998-99 led to elaborate and clarify the security perceptions of both states in

future. Both sides were determined to develop broad-based bilateral security relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>69</sup> The Clinton administration started to treat India as a nuclear democracy. While on the other hand, Pakistan was considered as a dangerous proliferating state.<sup>70</sup> According to Bruce Riedel, a Senior Fellow at Saban Centre for Middle East Policy, Washington, Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear bomb had enhanced the confidence of terrorists linked with Al Quida and other Islamic terrorist groups who had been engaged in terrorist activities in India.<sup>71</sup> Kargil conflict provided ground to the Americans. The Kargil Heights overlooking the nation highway that connected the Leh with Srinagar in Kargil and Drass sectors along the Line of Control (LOC) were captured by Pakistan-backed militants, in 1999, created a dire situation for Pakistan. Bruce Riedel commented that if conflict exceeded so far, there was probability of a use of nuclear weapons from Pakistani side.<sup>72</sup> Kargil crisis staved off by U.S. successful diplomacy raised so much alarm worldwide and it was perceived as an extension of International Islamic terrorism. Pakistan came under fire for initiating this conflict through a secret military operation in the area with the help of Islamic militants, belonging to the Taliban militia and other Islamic militant groups fighting in Kashmir.<sup>73</sup> The Americans were of the view that Kargil like situation could any time intensify the religion extremism that finally lead to Talibanization of Pakistan.<sup>74</sup> On request of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, as militants executed the Kargil heights, it exposed the scope and scale of Pakistan's engagement with militant groups.<sup>75</sup>

In view of Pakistan's support to Taliban regime in Kabul and freely mobilization of Islamic militant groups on its soil, Pakistan had been incredible in the eyes of the international community. It raised a strong apprehension about the militants' access to Pakistan's nuclear nukes. In an interview with CBS news on October 16, 2000, the Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) General Anthony Zinni expressed this apprehension



that "nuclear weapons in Pakistan could wind up in the hands of extremists religious leaders."<sup>76</sup>

The terrorist attacks on United States on September 11, 2001, gave more twist to the U.S. Pakistan policy. Afterward Pakistan willfully and unconditionally came on U.S. side to join the military campaign against terrorism, and became a front line state, the U.S. Government removed economic sanctions imposed on Pakistan since nuclear tests and took further initiatives to support the Pakistan's derailing economy by rescheduling \$ 3 billion in Pakistan's debt, launching a five-year \$100 million aid programme and providing \$73 million in equipment and aid to secure Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.<sup>77</sup> However, despite all collaborations with Pakistan in war against terror, the Americans kept up Pakistan as a state sponsored terrorism. Washington supported New Delhi's policy of portraying the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir as purely a matter of cross-border terrorism from Pakistan side. Washington constantly exerted pressure on Islamabad to reduce its policy of supporting and backing infiltration in to the Indian side of Kashmir.<sup>78</sup> The terrorist attacks on the Srinagar Assembly on October 1, 2001, and on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 brought further the Indians and Americans on same page that these attacks were masterminded and operated by the Pakistan-based militant groups fighting in Kashmir.<sup>79</sup> Despite being partners in war against terror, Pakistan and United States were deeply divided on issues of terrorism and nuclearization.<sup>80</sup>

The Bush administration (2001-2009) further accelerated the transformation process of India-United States strategic relationship and enlarged the prospect of nuclear engagement with India. Its Indo-centric agenda aimed at:

1. Putting off the pressure on India to rollback the nuclear programme or sign CTBT.

2. Wavering the sanctions and resuming the economic interaction with India.
3. Easing the "labour and environmental restrictions in trade pacts" and opening more channels for trade "from traditional goods of agriculture to the virtual links of E-commerce and a further cut in the tariffs."
4. Improving the "cooperation against all forms of cross-border" terrorism.<sup>81</sup>

Washington decided to institutionalize consultations through a New Framework Dialogue. Consequently, Washington revived the U.S.-India Defense Policy Group, which last met in 1997 and remained suspended after India's 1998 nuclear tests. The enlarging framework of India- U.S. strategic engagement especially focused on civil nuclear cooperation, beside civilian space programs, and high-technology trade. 'Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) Initiative' programme initiated in January 2004 was a major development in the U.S. strategic orientation towards India that led to a full civil nuclear cooperation. The first phase of the NSSP included the implementation of measures to address proliferation concerns and ensure compliance with the U.S. export controls. These efforts enabled the United States to make modifications in U.S. export licensing policies that would foster cooperation in commercial space programs and permit certain exports to power plants at safeguarded nuclear facilities.<sup>82</sup> Further negotiations resulted in removal and revision of some US export license requirements for certain dual-use and civil nuclear items.

On June 28, 2005, the United States and India formally signed a landmark defense agreement named 'New framework for the U.S- India Defense Relationship.' This agreement signed by

the U.S. Secretary of Defense and Defense Minister of India was a first ever document related to the defense ties. The agreement defined the common security interests of both countries:

1. Maintaining security and stability.
2. Defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism.
3. Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated materials, data, and technologies.
4. Protecting the free flow of commerce via land, air and sea lanes.<sup>83</sup>

The agreement spelled out joint actions in pursuit of shared security goals:

1. Conduct joint and combined exercises and exchanges.
2. Collaborate in multinational operations when it is in their common interest.
3. Strengthen the capabilities of our militaries to promote security and defeat terrorism.
4. Expand interaction with other nations in ways that promote regional and global peace and stability.
5. Enhance capabilities to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>84</sup>

The visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the United States in July 2005 coincided with the completion of NSSP. Both leaders declared their resolve to transform this strategic relationship to a global partnership. In the Joint Statement, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Bush underlined the new significance of India-U.S. partnership and vowed to work together to promote the shared security vision in the world. Both the leaders expressed satisfaction for the successful completion of the NSSP that provided "base for expanding bilateral activities and commerce in space, civil nuclear energy and dual-use technology." <sup>85</sup> President Bush declared India as "responsible state with advanced nuclear technology," and said that "India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such states." He announced the U.S. commitment to go forward to "achieve full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India as it realizes its goals of promoting nuclear power and achieving energy security." The President assured to "seek an agreement from the Congress to adjust US laws and policies, and that the United States will work with friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India." <sup>86</sup> The Indian Prime Minister on his part declared:

India would reciprocally agree that it would be ready to assume the same responsibilities and practices and acquire the same benefits and advantages as other leading countries with advanced nuclear technology, such as the United States. These responsibilities and practices consist of identifying and separating civilian and military nuclear facilities and programs in a phased manner and filing a declaration regarding its civilians facilities with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); taking a decision to place

voluntarily its civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards; signing and adhering to an Additional Protocol with respect to civilian nuclear facilities; continuing India's unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing; working with the United States for the conclusion of a multilateral Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty; refraining from transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that do not have them and supporting international efforts to limit their spread; and ensuring that the necessary steps have been taken to secure nuclear materials and technology through comprehensive export control legislation and through harmonization and adherence to Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) guidelines.<sup>87</sup>

President Bush and Prime Minister Singh for the first time announced their intention to enter into a nuclear agreement in Washington. The decision of the two countries to move to obtain full civil nuclear energy cooperation was a huge step to broadening the scope of strategic partnership.

The agenda for nuclear cooperation set in the joint statement of July 18, 2005 was further carried out during the first visit of President Bush to India in March, 2006. President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reached a mutually understanding with regard to implementation of process that was outlined in the July 18, 2005 joint statement. The important development took place during the President Bush's visit to India was the preparation and acceptance of a separation plan that separated the civilian nuclear programme from the military programme.<sup>88</sup> Under the Separation Plan, India agreed to "separate its civilian and military nuclear programs over the next eight years in order to gain US expertise and nuclear fuel to meet its rapidly rising energy needs. India's

civilian facilities would be open for the first time to permanent international inspections."<sup>89</sup> The joint statement of March 2, 2006 by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh also hailed the successful preparation and acceptance of Separation Plan and determined to move on for the "full implementation of the commitments in the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement on nuclear cooperation."<sup>90</sup> The Joint Statement also stated: "This historic accomplishment will permit our countries to move forward towards our common objective of full civil nuclear energy cooperation between India and the United States and between India and the international community as a whole."<sup>91</sup> President Bush described understanding on civilian nuclear cooperation as a "necessary" agreement. He commented: "This agreement is in our [American] interest. I am confident I can sell this to our Congress."<sup>92</sup> After acceptance of a civil-military Separation Plan of India, Washington.D.C. sought change in U.S. law through the adoption of 'Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006' that modified the section 123 of the U.S. Atomic Power Act for permission for nuclear cooperation with India.<sup>93</sup> President Bush signed the bill on December 18, 2006. Signing the bill, President Bush said: "This is an important achievement for the whole world. After 30 years outside the system, India will now operate its civilian nuclear energy program under internationally accepted guidelines and the world is going to be safer as a result."<sup>94</sup> On August 1, 2008, IAEA Board of Governors approved a nuclear Safeguard Agreement with India, calling for application of IAEA safeguards to Indian civilian nuclear facilities.<sup>95</sup> After getting the approval from IAEA, the U.S. government approached the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) for granting a waiver to India to commence civilian nuclear trade. Consequently on September 6, 2008, NSG granted a special waiver to India which ended the India's nuclear isolation and granted a unique opportunity to access nuclear technology and much-needed nuclear fuel from other countries. India is the only country that is not party to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but NSG waiver enables it to have nuclear trade with

other countries.<sup>96</sup> Going through complex stages, the U.S. - India nuclear deal got final approval from the U.S. House of Representatives on September 28, 2008 and Senate on October 1, 2008. The legislation on the India-U.S. nuclear deal, approved by the U.S. Congress, was finally turned into a law with the signing of the President Bush on October 8, 2008. The new law was called 'United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Non-proliferation Enhancement Act.' After a three years span since July 18, 2005 when President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh unveiled the agenda for India-U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement, the nuclear deal reached its final point on October 10, 2008 by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee when they formally signed the nuclear accord in Washington. This agreement known as 123 Agreement between India and United States operationalized the deal between the two countries.<sup>97</sup> After signing the agreement, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee said:

India attaches great importance to this agreement and to civil nuclear commerce with the international community. The increased share of nuclear energy in our energy mix will make a major positive contribution to our sustainable development and to meeting our objective of eradication of poverty. We, therefore, see this as a critical development for civil – for our economic growth and development. The agreement is also important for global economy and energy security as well as a contribution to global efforts to meet the challenge of climate change.<sup>98</sup>

Condoleezza Rice recognized that the civil nuclear agreement "unlocks a new and far broader world of potential for our strategic partnership in the 21st century, not just on nuclear cooperation but on every area of national endeavor."<sup>99</sup>

The Obama administration fully endorsed the U.S.-India nuclear deal. President Barak Obama himself recognized India as an important strategic partner and described India-U.S. civil nuclear agreement as a landmark achievement.<sup>100</sup>

### Advancing the Strategic partnership

The Obama administration has determined to go beyond the civil nuclear deal to make the U.S.-India strategic partnership more productive and durable. The Indo-Centric policy of Obama administration had focused on:

1. Upgrading the status of India as a global power.
2. Expediting the implementation on U.S.-India nuclear agreement.
3. Expanding the military to military contacts, this will include defense trade and more joint operations, training and building compatibility between the two militaries.
4. Enhancing counter-terrorism cooperation. Sharing a common commitment to stability in Afghanistan that important for combating terrorism and enhancing regional stability and prosperity.
5. Sustaining economic relations. Opening up markets. Expanding bilateral economic engagement including two way trade and investment. Working more cooperatively in World Trade Organization. Intensifying collaboration on multilateral trade issue.



6. Expanding partnership in education, agriculture and public health.<sup>101</sup>

The U.S. Officials has been strongly arguing case for deepening the strategic partnership with India. Notably as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 13, 2009, vowing to construct the economic and political partnership with India, said: "We will build on our economic and political partnership with India, the world's most populous democracy and a nation with growing influence in the world."<sup>102</sup> Similarly she declared in Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 22, 2009: "The US is advancing its relationship with India as part of a wide-ranging diplomatic agenda to meet today's daunting challenges topped by the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan." She said that the relationship with India was essential because "It is the world's largest democracy, it is an important ally in so many efforts."<sup>103</sup> Likewise, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said in his testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defence on June 9, 2009 that "India has emerged as an increasingly important strategic partner. ... We seek to mature this partnership and address common security challenges globally as well as within the region."<sup>104</sup>

The U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's four - day exclusive visit to India on July 17 -20, 2009 was a very significant step of Obama's administration to strengthening and deepening the U.S.- India strategic partnership. Prior to Hillary Clinton's visit, CIA Chief Leon Panetta and National Security Adviser General Jim Jones also toured to New Delhi in March and June respectively. Their visits to India were part of the groundwork for accomplishments which the Hillary's tour scored.<sup>105</sup> Hillary's four day -visit to India contained a broad based agenda of holding wide-ranging bilateral strategic dialogue on issues of mutual concerns related to foreign policy, strategic challenges like terrorism, climate change, homeland security, and recession and

non-proliferation. Agenda was also designed to broaden and deepen partnership in spheres of health, education, agriculture, trade and economy.<sup>106</sup> Hillary Clinton's visit undoubtedly continued the promising trend in Indo-U.S. relations. It was to reset the U.S.-India relations at a higher plan. She concluded three hi-tech agreements in New Delhi. These three agreements: End Use Monitoring Agreement, Technology Safeguards Agreement, and Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement expanded the emerging scope of strategic partnership.

End Use Monitoring Agreement cleared the way for supply of U.S. nuclear and military technology to India on a large scale level. This agreement allowed the U.S. to monitor the end use of the arms and sensitive technologies sold to India and ensured that they were not diverted to other countries. Technical Safeguards Agreement permitted the launch of civil or non-commercial satellites containing U.S. components on Indian space launch vehicles. Science and Technology Agreement would be for jointly creating \$ 30-million science endowment to be used for research and development, innovation, entrepreneurial, and commercialization activities in science and technology.<sup>107</sup> The two governments also agreed to establish an 'India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue' that would meet annually and focus on five main pillars of bilateral relations likely strategic cooperation; energy and climate change; education and development; economics, trade and agriculture; science and technology, health and innovation. Both governments agreed on the formation of a sound structure of joint working groups, which would address "a wide range of bilateral, global, and regional issues of shared interest and common concern, continuing programmes currently under implementation and taking mutually beneficial initiatives that complement Indian and U.S. development, security and economic interests."<sup>108</sup> The structure of different working groups that would deal with five main areas, as:

1. Strategic Cooperation working groups will address counter-terrorism, defense cooperation carrying forward the Civil Nuclear Agreement and High Technology Trade.
2. Energy and Climate Change working groups will continue the energy dialogue and also initiate discussions on climate change.
3. Education and Development working groups will deepen partnership in education and carryout discussions on women's empowerment.
4. Economics, Trade and Agriculture working groups will strengthen discussions on business, trade and agricultural cooperation.
5. Science and Technology, Health and Innovation working groups will explore new areas for cooperation in leading technologies and in addressing global health challenges.<sup>109</sup>

Discussing about the results of Hillary's visit to India, *The Christian Science Monitor* called it a "tangible accomplishment."<sup>110</sup> Hillary Clinton's itinerary aimed at resetting the U.S.-India relations at a larger plan. It deliberately left out Pakistan and turned all out focus on India only. The visit was significant for several reasons. It undoubtedly continued the promising trend in U.S.-India relations. Teresita C. Schaffer, writes that the prime "objective" of the Hillary's visit to India was to "give the Obama administration and the newly elected Indian government 'ownership' of a relationship that both consider vitally important. She certainly did that.... She hit all the high points that she had defined as 'pillars' of the relationship."<sup>111</sup>

Both countries engaged in strategic dialogue. The first strategic dialogue was held on June 1-4, 2010 in Washington. The American and Indian delegates led by Ms. Hillary Clinton and S. M. Krishna respectively held eighteen individual dialogues, in addition to address the global security and stability. The dialogue discussions covered sub-dialogues across the full range of the relationship, for strengthening cooperation in trade and investment, science and technology, energy security, climate change, education, health, agriculture etc. Both sides pledged to push on "their shared goals of advancing security and stability across Asia, in particular, through the emergence of an open, balanced, and inclusive architecture of cooperation in the region."<sup>112</sup> The Joint statement at the end of the dialogue described that Ms. Clinton "welcomed India's leadership role in helping to shape the rise of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Asia. They shared their perspectives on South and Central Asia, East and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean regions and pledged to expand regular high-level exchanges on regional issues of mutual concern."<sup>113</sup> The second round of the Strategic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on July 18-20, 2011. The purpose of Strategic Dialogue series was to review the progress in cooperation in the areas of partnership and set guidelines to enhance cooperation and propose new areas of partnership. Commenting on the initiative of the Strategic Dialogue, *The Hindu* wrote that the Strategic Dialogue had led India and United States to expand significantly the "breath of their collaboration across a range of areas."<sup>114</sup>

Obama administration's 'National Security Strategy 2010,' upheld the U.S. -India relationship important for global peace and stability. The National Security Strategy document affirming the determination of Obama administration to maintain military superiority and defeat the challenges to international security through collaboration with its allies, placed India among "21century centers of influence" in Asia and pledged to deepen cooperation with it.<sup>115</sup> The document said: "The United States and

India are building a strategic partnership that is underpinned by our shared interests, our shared values as the world's two largest democracies, and close connections among our people. India's responsible advancement serves as a positive example for developing nations, and provides an opportunity for increased economic, scientific environmental, and security partnership. Working together through our Strategic Dialogue and high-level visits, we seek a broad-based relationship in which India contributes to global counterterrorism efforts, nonproliferation, and helps promote poverty-reduction, education, health, and sustainable agriculture. We value India's growing leadership on a wide array of global issues, through groups such as the G-20, and will seek to work with India to promote stability in South Asia and elsewhere in the world." <sup>116</sup>

Obama's three-day visit to India on November 7-9, 2010 added tremendous real content to the US-India partnership. This visit was called "significantly successful." This visit was to reassure India that the Obama administration valued the partnership and intended to build a genuine strategic alliance on the progress made during the Bush years. He called the U.S.-India alliance as one of the "defining and dispensable partnerships of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>117</sup> He welcomed India's emergence as a "major regional and world power" and said that "the United States will work with it to promote peace and stability and to set the rules of interaction with other nations."<sup>118</sup>

The contributions of Obama's tour to U.S.-India strategic partnership, included the U.S. assurances for U.S. support to India's bid for a permanent seat in U.N. Security Council, announcement for relaxation of controls on export of high technology items to India, pledge for expanding and upgrading the U.S. -India civil nuclear deal, cooperation in the space, and defense sectors. <sup>119</sup> President Obama fully backed India's fuss about terrorism, stemming from Pakistani side in particular. He said:

"We will continue to insist to Pakistan's leaders that terrorist safe-havens within their borders are unacceptable."<sup>120</sup>

The strategic dialogue enhanced the operation of partnership. The two agreements with regard to counterterrorism cooperation and nuclear civil cooperation signed in July 2010 further expanded the venue of cooperation in sectors of counterterrorism and civil nuclear cooperation. The Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative signed on July 23, 2010 by U.S. Ambassador to India Timothy J. Roemer and Indian Home Affairs Secretary G.K. Pallai was to enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism, information-sharing, and capacity-building. The agreement was to build and expand the joint efficient network against terrorism that would "redouble the collective efforts to deal effectively with terrorism." The agreement was to provide opportunities to both partners to operate jointly in areas like border security, money laundering, counterfeit currency and terrorist financing, maritime, transportation security, cyber security and mega-city policing.<sup>121</sup> The other agreement about the nuclear civil cooperation was signed on July 30, 2010 by the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Bill Burns and Indian Ambassador to the United States Meera Shankar, in Washington. The document was extension of the agreement between India and U.S. on nuclear cooperation, and formally known as the 'Arrangements and Procedures Pursuant to Article 6(iii) of the Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.' This agreement facilitated India to "reprocess U.S.-obligated nuclear material at its civilian reprocessing facilities." It was argued that this agreement would ease the participation of the U.S. firms in India's growing civil nuclear energy sector. It reflected the strong commitment of the U.S. Administration to "building successfully on the landmark U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative and is a prerequisite for U.S. nuclear fuel suppliers to conduct business with India."<sup>122</sup>

Augmented by President Obama's visit to India, the U.S.-India strategic alliance had been more potential. The second

meeting of strategic dialogue held in New Delhi in July 2011, very important in its character, committed to further broaden and deepen the U.S.-India global strategic partnership. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and India's Minister of External Affairs S. M. Krishna leading the dialogue, reviewed the progress in different areas of relationship and encouraged further measures in advancing the cooperation to achieve the shared interests. With regard to global stability and prosperity, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Minister of External Affairs S. M. Krishna acknowledged the United States and India's shared interests in promoting stability and prosperity across Asia. They intended to expand cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, including in multilateral forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). Both sides also "reaffirmed their support for a balanced and inclusive regional architecture and look forward to holding the recently announced trilateral dialogue between Japan, India, and the United States," which they underlined as an important forum to thrash out issues of mutual concern. It was argued that the strategic relationship between the United States and India in the Asia Pacific region "is marked feature of the overall partnership and one which will increasingly define it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>123</sup>

The leaders of U.S. and India also intended to expand scope of strategic consultations and work more closely with regard to regional and global issues. They decided to expand strategic consultations to other regions, including Central Asia, west Asia, Latin America and Caribbean. They also appreciated the bilateral talks on United Nations matters launched in March 2011 and Hillary Clinton reiterated the U.S. pledge about insertion of India as permanent member of U.N.<sup>124</sup> The issue of homeland security and counter-terrorism was given a special emphasis, and both sides went over their commitment to further strengthen cooperation to eliminate terrorism in all shapes. The joint statement at the end of the second meeting of Strategic Dialogue provided that both leaders expressed their shared concern that

"success in Afghanistan and regional and global security requires elimination of safe havens and infrastructure for terrorism and violent extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The two sides confirmed that all terrorist networks must be defeated and called for Pakistan to move expeditiously in prosecuting those involved in the November 2008 Mumbai terror attack."<sup>125</sup> In case of stability and prosperity in Afghanistan, the United States and India had immense consultations and both had made progress to carry out joint development projects in Afghanistan. The United States had encouraged India's larger role in Afghanistan to ensure a successful military and economic transition in the country.<sup>126</sup>

Talking about civil nuclear cooperation, the officials of both sides reaffirmed their commitment to erect tangible U.S.-India civil nuclear energy cooperation through "the participation of U.S. nuclear energy firms in India on the basis of mutually acceptable technical and commercial terms and conditions that enable a viable tariff regime for electricity generated." They stressed the need to resolve remaining issues over civil nuclear cooperation.<sup>127</sup>

The Strategic Dialogue is a vital part of drive to widen the US-India partnership. The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of strategic dialogue held in New Delhi, notably enhanced the level and scope of the U.S.-India strategic partnership, comprising an implicit U.S. commitment to support the Indian bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council in a reformed UN, and approval of the present Indian role in Afghanistan, which the Americans had termed as vital and constructive.<sup>128</sup> As the U.S. Officials are convinced that India can play a significant role in ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan, therefore, Obama administration actively consulted with India during drawing the ACPAK policy. ACPAK policy is heavily dominated by India-U.S. strategic cooperation. Both countries have determined to work together to achieve ACPAK goals. The U.S. has regarded India as a key partner in Afghanistan.<sup>129</sup> The U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrook for Afghanistan and Pakistan, had declared that 'we



cannot settle issues like Afghanistan and many other issues without India's full involvement and its own expression of views."<sup>130</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Strategic Dialogue also brought more imperative outcome when Ms. Hillary Clinton bracketed India as an important actor on the world stage. She pushed India to play a significant role in the region by exercising "political influence in consonance with its growing economic weight."<sup>131</sup> She asked India to "lead" for shaping the future of Asia-Pacific. She said: "It is time (for India) to lead. It has to do more to integrate economically with neighbors, Afghanistan and Pakistan and take a more assertive role across the Asia-pacific."<sup>132</sup> She added:

This is a time to lead...We are betting on India's future...that the opening of India's markets to world will produce a more prosperous India and South Asia. We are betting that India's vibrant pluralistic society will inspire others to follow a similar path of tolerance. We are making this bet not out of blind faith but because we have watched your progress with great admiration.<sup>133</sup>

Ms. Clinton statement was meant to push up India to expand its hegemonic role in the region. It created huge disparagement in China and Pakistan. *The Indian Express* commented that the US call to India to expand its influence across the Asia-pacific was meant to create a counterweight to increasing power of China. It wrote: "A weakening U.S. is looking for partnership in sharing not just some of its global security burden but also maintaining political and economic stability in the region."<sup>134</sup> China had taken serious note of Hillary's statement. China had been closely monitoring the India-U.S. strategic development. It had underlined the U.S.-India dialogue a way to "put more pressure on China."<sup>135</sup> *The China Post* commented that Clinton urged India to expand "its influence eastward, towards China's backyard in Southeast Asia

and the Pacific Rim, as well as engagement in Central Asia, on China's western flank. She said that the U.S. and India shared values that made them powerful partners in promoting security, democracy and development in areas in which China has made a push for dominance."<sup>136</sup> In China's view, the fostering U.S.-India security alliance would yield immense impact on China security environment. Both countries had been seeking a joint approach to curb the emergence of China on world map as a global power. One Chinese scholar Zhang Guihong said that both U.S. and Indian had seen China as a threat to their regional and global interests. He said that the U.S. strategy of containment of China had been increasingly developed as a "factor influencing America's Asia-Pacific strategy." He further commented that as the anti terror policy had occupied a central place in U.S. strategy, the Americans would not hesitate to use this military strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. This U.S. military strategy in Asia-Pacific region would have targets like "securing influence and location in Central Asia; the limiting of Western Asia's development; and a return to South East Asia. Within this context, India and the Indian Ocean constitute the bridge for the United States in its regional military strategy."<sup>137</sup>

Pakistan also showed serious concern on Hillary Clinton's statement. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani said that Pakistan would not "accept hegemony of any state in the region."<sup>138</sup> Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar commented that "bilateral ties, but not a one-sided relation with the U.S. was required." She added that Pakistan would not "accept anyone's hegemony in the region...We have to have a reality-based and pragmatic approach and no one downplays Pakistan's current strategic significance or importance, not the U.S. or even India."<sup>139</sup> *The Nation* in its editorial wrote that Hillary's statement for pushing India to play a leading role in the region undoubtedly gave "an unmistakable indication that Islamabad did not have much of a place in the U.S. scheme of things." The editorial further said that "our decision makers had failed to make out the significance

of the fairly good glimpses of Washington's intention that it had been giving since long or they simply overlooked these signs to keep themselves in the seat of power, regardless of national interests and public opinion." It added that Pakistan needed to "check out a policy that benefits an independent nation.... Our active association in the war on terror has done us immeasurably harm, to the law and order situation, the economy, the people's welfare, in fact, every field." The editorial communicated that Pakistan must realize the realities of time. "We must not remain in doubt about Washington's plans of building up new Delhi at our cost."<sup>140</sup>

Since the inaugural of the Strategic Dialogue in 2010, the U.S.-India partnership has been advancing steadfastly in nearly every area of cooperation. Both countries have been expanding their strategic consultations on all major issues of all regions of the world. The strategic relations which includes defence cooperation, counter terrorism cooperation, intelligence sharing, and nuclear cooperation have been tremendously increasing.

## Conclusion

Given the facts, it is evident that India-U.S. strategic relationship has taken a concrete shape and its effects are execution in fields of defense, nuclear and anti terror efforts. Choosing India as a potential partner in the Asian security affairs, Washington has been betting on India's growing stature. The Americans counts on India's rise as a leading power that would play prominent role in Asia-Pacific affairs. They believe that India's role as a main player in the Asia-Pacific would bring stability in the area. South Asia region would be stable under the leadership of India, as it has been following the policy of developing joint development plans to improve infrastructure and capacity in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and it also determines to reengage with Pakistan through normalize and stabilize the trade contacts. The U.S policy makers are appreciating India's determination to contribute in rebuilding of

Afghanistan with huge amount of multibillion dollars. They hope that it would be defining for future political and economic setup in Afghanistan.<sup>141</sup> The U.S. has been convinced also that India, besides Japan and Australia, has all potentials to protect the U.S. interests in Asia-Pacific region in particular which is main domain of U.S. global strategy aiming at containment of the increasing military and economic might of China. Both countries have launched a strategic dialogue on the Asia-Pacific, in order to expand cooperation in different areas.

As Japan has been accepting wider responsibilities in Asia-Pacific region, India is attempting to foster strategic relations with Japan. U.S.- Japan and India also have been making joint strive to deal with the regional security issues. For this purpose they had held their first trilateral dialogue in December 19, 2011 in Washington. The meeting covered international issues including Iran's nuclear policy and the going on situation in Afghanistan. The meeting also discussed the possibilities and opportunities for deepening of strategic ties between three countries. The Indian sources revealed that the talks marked the start a series of consultations among the three governments, which shared common values and interests across the Asia-Pacific and the globe. All sides appreciated the frank and comprehensive character of the dialogue, and agreed that the discussions would help advance their shared values and interests.<sup>142</sup> In view of the experts, it was an very important meeting between the U.S.- Japan and India whose relations have been in a "transformational stage." This first trilateral meeting provided them "an opportunity to begin the process of operationalizing Indo-Pacific cooperation as a seamless construct in areas such as maritime security cooperation, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, counter-proliferation, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance." <sup>143</sup>

China's reaction to the meeting was very cautious. Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesman said in a warning tone, in a media briefing, that "US, Japan and India are countries with great influence in the Asia-Pacific region. We hope the trilateral

meeting will be conducive to regional peace and stability."<sup>144</sup> Though U.S. State Department affirmed that there was no discussions about China's expanding influence in Asia-Pacific,<sup>145</sup> Media expressed that the meeting aimed at strategy to contain China. *The Times of India* wrote that "the meeting raised eyebrows in Beijing as it came against the backdrop of disputes between China and its neighbours like Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, and Brunei over the resource-rich South China Sea."<sup>146</sup> *China Daily* also wrote with reference of the *Wall Street Journal* that though this meeting agenda had not mentioned China, it discussed security matters of Asia-Pacific region in the wake of expanding power of china. The Journal wrote: "Security of sea lanes of communication, coordination of humanitarian assistance and global terrorism were the focus. But China was the unspoken subtext."<sup>147</sup>

Presently Afghanistan situation is a test case for the U.S.-India strategic partnership. The successful transition in Afghanistan, within the U.S. strategy, is considered by the American and Indians as a important area where their shared interests are playing. Both countries actively consult on ACPAK policy, and are determined to work together for success of ACPAK policy.<sup>148</sup> Explaining the shared interests of Unites States and India in Afghanistan, the U.S. Ambassador to India Timothy J. Roemer underlined: "Our core goal in Afghanistan and Pakistan –to disrupt, dismantle and defeat terrorist network – is an aspiration we share with India. ...India is a key global partner of United States and we value the positive role India continues to play in the region, including its significant humanitarian contributions to Afghanistan."<sup>149</sup>

India and Afghanistan signed a 'strategic partnership agreement' on October 4, 2011 that aimed at creating an institutional framework for the future cooperation in the fields of political and security cooperation, trade and economic cooperation, capacity building and education, and social, cultural,

civil society and people to people contacts. Both sides also signed MOUs for cooperation in the field of mining and hydro carbons.<sup>150</sup> *Dawn*, commented that this agreement was meant to secure guarantee to the “security” of Afghanistan, “as international troops begin withdrawing from the war-torn country.”<sup>151</sup> India participated in two international conferences on the future of Afghanistan, held in Istanbul and Bonn in November and December 2011. India was the only country in the conferences with which Afghanistan has signed a security agreement. The US welcomed the India –Afghanistan strategic deal and called it a route for India to participate in the “new Silk Road initiative.”<sup>152</sup>

### Pakistan’s condemnation

The India-United States strategic partnership has tremendously deteriorated Pakistan’s relations with United States to unprecedented depths. Once titled as most allied ally of United States in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pakistan has been facing huge strategic reversals in beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, entailed by India-U.S. strategic alliance. There is a heavy disillusionment on Pakistan side. Pakistan has delivered a very sharp response to U.S. –India strategic partnership. Pakistan has called this partnership a destabilizing factor in strategic balance in South Asia. Pakistan’s former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi said that the United States had ignored the “imperatives of a strategic balance in South Asia.” India’s strategic partnership with United States will enable India to “project power” in area.<sup>153</sup> Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Pakistani expert on South Asian security affairs, commented that “the US-India deal has not just destroyed the non-proliferation regime at the global level but has also created a new category of nuclear weapon state. It has allowed India to enjoy all the benefits without adhering to the NPT.”<sup>154</sup> He further said that the U.S. relations with India at the cost of Pakistan’s legitimate interests and regional stability had created adverse situation for Pakistan. “The government in Pakistan is likely to be subjected to intense pressures to re-evaluate its regional and global policy pursuits.”<sup>155</sup> Similarly, another Pakistani political scientist Dr. Nasrullah Mirza

commented that "the US objective of making India global or regional military power impinges upon security interests of other regional countries, especially Pakistan. The Indo-US nuclear deal poses grave repercussions on the deterrence stability in South Asia."<sup>156</sup> He further said that "In such a strategic environment, it would be prudent for Pakistan to reevaluate its policy of 'credible minimum deterrence' to counter the Indian threat and maintain deterrence stability in South Asia."<sup>157</sup>

However, the Pakistanis are convinced that, given the India-U.S. deals in defense and nuclear areas, Islamabad has right to carry on its nuclear programme. So that, a strategic balance vis-à-vis India must be maintained. Despite Pakistan's valued contributions in war against terrorism, Pakistan has not been succeeded to shed its international stature as a breeding ground for religious extremism and terrorism. Thus Pakistan is yet regarded in U.S. view as an unreliable state that provides safe havens to terrorists.

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