

**US-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND  
COOPERATION ON COUNTER-TERRORISM UNDER  
GEORGE W. BUSH AND BARACK OBAMA  
ADMINISTRATIONS**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for  
the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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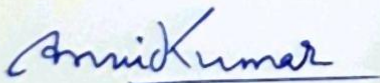
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# On Counter-Terrorism Under George W. Bush and Barack Obama Administrations

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**



## INTRODUCTION

With the onset of the new millennium, US-India relations turned over a new leaf. The historic visit of US President William J. Clinton to India in March 2000 opened new vistas for the relationship. The emerging political bonhomie between US and India was visible to all discerning eyes. The rest of the world has been watching these developments with keen interest. There was continuity in the United States and India relations under the George W. Bush's administration. In the beginning of the Bush's Presidency, the September 11 (9/11) terrorist attacks in 2001 led to monumental shift in the United States foreign policy. The refusal by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to hand over the Al Qaeda leaders responsible for the 9/11 attack led the US to launch global war on terrorism which targeted Al Qaeda and its vast worldwide network. The attacks on the US exposed its vulnerabilities and brought a distinct alignment with India's approach to counterterrorism. Following the 9/11 attacks several initiatives were brought to the fore that put counterterrorism as a primary driver of US-India relations. The 26/11 (26 November 2008) attacks in India further cemented US-India cooperation on counterterrorism. Since the attack (9/11) on World Trade Centre (WTC) the strategic partnership between the US and India has relied heavily on counterterrorism cooperation. This cooperation has been multidimensional and multifaceted.

In the "India-US Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group", meeting in New Delhi on 27 March 2018, the threats, and challenges emanating from terrorism, both at regional and global, along with cross-border terrorism in South Asia, were discussed at length. Ambassador Nathan Sales, the US counter-terrorism coordinator stated that "India is an incredibly important, incredibly valuable, incredibly close counterterrorism partner of the US". The US was quick to acknowledge the impact of terrorism and, in the post-9/11 years, took an unprecedented step to root out and confront terrorist networks across the globe. This course of action aligned with India's position on counterterrorism. Since the George W. Bush administration both countries have worked together on a wide range of issues, from information sharing to joint military training exercises.

In addition to the steps taken by leaders from both countries, the bureaucratic and administrative branches in the US and India also cooperated with one another and affirmed their commitment to fight terrorism. For instance, when speaking to a crowd in New Delhi, Kenneth Juster, the former US ambassador to India (from 2017 to 2021), said, “Each of our countries has endured horrifying terrorist acts and are still being attacked. Eliminating this menace to our society is strongly in both of our interests. We will not accept international terrorism or safe havens for terrorists, President Donald Trump and other US authorities have made it clear”. He added that a key component of US-India relations was in defence and counterterrorism cooperation to achieve enduring security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Juster also stated that the US was committed to support India in particular as it provided regional security, and respond successfully to threats in and around the Indian Ocean.

Since January 2000, the “India-US Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism” has played a fundamental role. It has led to cooperation between the two countries at various levels. Both countries share information on terrorist financing and intelligence reports, explored various forms of surveillance, and held joint training exercises on border management. These measures were scaled up in recent years. For instance, the “Yudh Abhyas” (2017), which roughly translates into “war training,” is a joint military exercise aimed at enhancing counterinsurgency and counterterrorism cooperation between the US and India. India's inclusion in the US’s Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program, which provides 53 active partners worldwide with counterterrorism training including detection, deterrence, and disruption of terrorist activities, is a significant example of cooperation between the two countries (US Department of State, Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program). The ATA has trained Indian personnel in handling hostage crises, detecting explosives, and police training, among others.

Further, an initiative was introduced in 2010, known as the “Counter-terror Cooperation Initiative” (CCI), to increase capacity-building efforts and establish effective counterterrorism cooperation through information sharing. The primary objective of this initiative is to strengthen US-India counterterrorism cooperation. As part of this initiative the two countries have engaged in an exchange of skills and

techniques and joint military training. The counter-terrorism cooperation agreement was possible as the US and India had agreed to a strategic partnership in 2004. It was during the Presidency of George W. Bush that cooperation on counterterrorism and other military exchanges became an important component of US-India relations.

The relations between the US and India are often defined as a strategic partnership. It essentially describes a partnership that has grown from a point of commonality, such as economic, political, historical, or social, into multiple relationships. Whereas “strategy” originates in the military domain, it is also used to refer to the methods, tactics, and techniques used during wars to defeat the enemy. It has gradually evolved in the diplomatic domain. It is now used to explain or symbolize the relations between two states that share common interests and explore new frameworks for enhanced and multifaceted engagement. Scholars point out that the proliferation of strategic partnerships proves that the international system is in transition as most countries find it suitable to deepen bilateral, trilateral, or even multilateral cooperation to achieve common goals.

In the post-Cold War period, the US and India found many historical irritants removed except the nuclear issue. However, during the last years of the Clinton’s presidency, the nuclear issue was revisited and renegotiated. The dialogues between the US and Indian governments that followed, introduced steps that led to enhanced cooperation between the US and India in several crucial areas. Further, when President Bill Clinton paid a five-day visit to India in March 2000 that resulted ending of a turbulent period in US-India relations especially after the 1999 Kargil War.

However, it was during the George W. Bush administration that relations between the US and India achieved a higher benchmark. To many observers, it seemed as though President Bush was in favour of an “India first policy” rather than an “India centric policy” in South Asia. He also proposed to end the hyphenated relationship between India, Pakistan, and the US. The US recognised India as a strategic partner in Asia that could balance China's growing regional influence (Tellis 2008). As the US indicated an interest in establishing greater cooperation with India during the Bush administration, India was also eager to negotiate several issues, including the nuclear program and other critical security and defence projects. However, the events of 9/11

disrupted the negotiations. While the bilateral relations continued to make significant strides, the 9/11 attacks forced the US to focus its relations with Pakistan.

Despite the US's considerable focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan the US and India announced the "Next Step in Strategic Partnership" (NSSP) in January 2004 (MEA 2005). According to the "US Department of State" and India's "Ministry of External Affairs" (MEA), the NSSP initiative included "cooperation in strategic areas such as nuclear, space, missile defence, hi-tech trade and commerce, and military". (MEA 2005; US State Department 2004).

The NSSP was a significant milestone that transformed US-India relations. Since 2004, cooperation between the two countries has gradually deepened in other areas. The dialogue on counter-terrorism cooperation that had started in 2000 now focused on the exchange of information, strengthening intelligence gathering, cyber security, military-to-military cooperation, and curtailing terror funding, among others. During George W. Bush's second term in office, the effort to conclude the negotiation of the "Civil Nuclear Deal" was given high priority. By March 2006, the deal was signed, and by October 2008, it was ratified by the US Senate. In the following years, counterterrorism cooperation remained high on the agenda, and India's strategic relevance in the region was recognized by the Obama administration.

During Barack Obama's Presidency, there had been speculation over the President's interest in the Indo-US strategic partnerships (Booth 2009). Nevertheless, Obama understood the growing relevance of India particularly in America's Asia policy. This recognition meant that US-India strategic partnership and cooperation in counterterrorism continued during the Obama years. President Obama expressed how the United States partnership in the current century would be based on interests that suit both countries equally and would be on convergent lines. He strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Mumbai (26-29 November 2008) and took the opportunity to strengthen the US-India partnership to counter the threat of terrorism. In fact, during Obama's administration, the number of joint military exercises increased significantly, and the sale of military equipment to India also increased substantially. Obama's commitment to further counter-terrorism cooperation with India was given sharp focus. This commitment resulted in the signing of the "India-US Counter-Terrorism

Cooperation Initiative”, signed in 2010. This initiative expanded collaboration on counterterrorism, information sharing, and capacity building. The "Homeland Security Dialogue" was announced by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in November 2010 as a component of the US-India global strategic partnership. In the following year, on May 27, 2011, US Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Indian Home Minister P. Chidambaram reaffirmed the need “of mutual cooperation in fighting terrorism and other security concerns”. (MEA 2011).

The first “US-India Strategic Dialogue” was also convened in 3 June 2010. As the two sides familiarized themselves with the values and shared goals, particularly on global and regional security, the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called India “an indispensable partner” for the US (US State Department 2010). In addition to the strategic dialogue, from 2011 to 2014, US Arms exports and sales to India increased substantially.

While the US showed greater interest toward deeper cooperation with India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi ushered in a different tone and understanding regarding relations with the United States. It was transformative, as it opened diplomatic avenues for engagement between the two countries at various levels of government. Further, counterterrorism expanded to include the tenets of global security due to the growing defence partnership. This transformative partnership was symbolized during India's Republic Day in New Delhi on 26 January 2015, when President Obama was invited as the chief guest. Obama's visit and participation were followed by more substantial agreements such as the establishment of a “Strategic and Commercial Dialogue” and renewing the “India-US Defence Partnership”. This agreement strengthened India's position in Asia, particularly when China was steadily rising. According to India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the engagement continued rapidly and was strengthened by including several areas apart from the original five pillars that undergirded the relationship.

Between the two governments, there are more than fifty bilateral dialogue mechanisms. The “US-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue” (S&CDfirst )'s two gatherings took place in Washington, DC, in September 2015, and New Delhi, India,

in August 2016.. These high-level dialogues added a commercial component such as creating sustainable economic growth, job creation, improvement in business practices that is not harmful to the environment, improving the quality of lives, and maintaining the “rules-based global order” (US Embassy & Consulate in India).

On August 30, 2016, a second Strategic and Commercial Dialogue meeting was held in Delhi. Ministerial-level discussions have also taken place on the topics of Homeland Security Dialogue, Finance and Economic Partnership, Trade Policy Forum, Higher Education Dialogue, Science & Technology Joint Commission Meeting, and "Energy Dialogue. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2016).

The two countries also agreed that defence ties are fundamental aspect of the partnership. After the “New Framework for India-US Military Relations” was signed in 2005, the MEA confirms that defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-US strategic alliance. Through this agreement, the three military services increased personnel exchanges, collaboration and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy, as well as trade in defence goods. In June 2015, the “Defence Framework Agreement” was extended for an additional ten years (MEA, Government of India, 2016).

The “Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement” (LEMOA) was signed in 2016, it was yet another high benchmark in Indo-US relations. It paved the way for better refuelling capabilities and spare parts in a crisis. The United States designated India as a “Major Defence Partner” in June 2016. Consequently, India is involved in numerous military exercises with the US.

In addition to the enhanced role of inter government agencies in promoting cooperation on both sides, the role of the US Congress in these years (2000-2016) was also favourable toward India. There was significant bipartisan support for India during the Bush and Obama administrations. The US Congress, on many occasions, sided with India, be it through the Civil Nuclear deal or countering terrorism, or strengthening military relations.

In this context, the study focused on why and how counterterrorism cooperation developed between the US and India. It has attempted to answer why the focus shifted from cross-border terrorism with Pakistan to being part of the Af-Pak strategy. The research also critically examined the causal factors that enhanced security cooperation between the two countries since 2001. As the US Department of State noted, the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the US-“India Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group” and the fourth session of the US-India Designations Dialogue was held in Washington, DC, on October 26-27, 2021. Mahaveer Singhvi, Joint Secretary for Counterterrorism at the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and John T. Godfrey, United States “State Department Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism”, led their respective interagency delegations. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing their cooperation in law enforcement, information sharing, exchanging best practises, and increasing strategic convergence on counterterrorism challenges as part of the “US-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership”, (Joint Statement on US-India Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group and Designations Dialogue, 2021).

### **Literature Review**

While the research provides a narrative on US-India Strategic relations and cooperation in counterterrorism, it has focused more sharply on how it has changed from an “estranged relationship” to a “defining partnership.” The study examined and analysed the factors responsible for this change in relations. The following literature survey is a comprehensive assessment of the primary and secondary sources relevant to the research. It covers how the US-India partnership developed after the Cold War and the strategic partnership that resulted from closer cooperation between the two countries. In addition, highlights the counterterrorism initiatives during the Bush and Obama administrations. The following pertinent issues make up the literature review, which is followed by a discussion of the study's theoretical framework.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Alliance-making is an age-old strategy to develop an edge over a potential enemy. It can be offensive and defensive, depending on the nature of the circumstances. Alliances can identify threats, develop measures to counter them, plan military operations, collectively deploy armed forces, conduct combined exercises, propagate interoperability of forces, and send discouraging indications to foreseeable foes.

States that become part of collective arrangements can politically cooperate when there is peace. Hence, creating an alliance is not easy sans a particular adversary. Alliances play an essential part in the practice and theory of international relations (Owen 2005: 73-99). At a wider end of the semantic spectrum, a partnership is a formal or informal relationship of security partnership between two or more two sovereign states (Walt 1981: 1). Robert O. Keohane opines that partnerships are institutions as they have rules prescribing the role of the participants.

It is difficult to define the term “strategic” because of its loose and indiscriminate use. The term “strategy” originates in a military expression delineating the art and science of preparing for victory in a war. Hence, strategic planning was markedly different from tactical or everyday deployment. The term, as of now, is used in international relations. It was borrowed from the discipline of business management and organizational theory. The term strategic partnership has come to define a lot of diplomatic relationships all over the world. Scholars have argued that the increase in strategic alliance mirrors an international system in metamorphosis. They are better suited to accelerate bilateral, trilateral, or even multilateral cooperative attempts between nations to achieve mutual objectives. Hence, rather than being a threat driven, they are “goal-driven” (Chaudhari 2009: 14)

Phrases like “strategic partnership,” “strategic relations,” and “strategic dialogue” are so commonly used these days that their significance has been deprived of them. Both of these expressions are frequently used to refer to various interactions between the United States and Russia, Uzbekistan and the US, the European Union, China, Iran, and India. Instead of content, the connection between them appears to be one of intention. Two governments concur to increase the level of their communication from lowest to highest to tackle mutual predicaments that are connected to each of them in a cordial and unified way so that long-term commitments are made for shared benefits and advance their respective aims but stay aloof from allying. The solidity of any strategic relationship, and its change from deliberation to an alliance, relies on the degree and depth of that relationship. (Mansingh 2005)

Unlike formal partnerships, strategic alliances are not vertical or hierarchical structures marked by various strata of obligations. It is not aimed at creating an



alliance of states where the lead actor, like Russia in the Warsaw Pact, wishes to enjoy a status of the impact that overrides the authority of other member states. In the post-Cold War years, all the major powers engage each other for mutual interest. It is no longer a zero-sum game between the major powers. Engagement between two powers does not necessarily mean a loss in a relationship with other major powers. This phenomenon creates new opportunities for Strategic Partnership (Menon, 2008: 10). Strategic Partnership is not static but dynamic as it considers changes in the geopolitical world order.

### **Evolution of Indo-US Strategic Partnership**

Scholars have defined India's relations with the US in various ways and under several frames; some described it as "estranged democracies" (Kux 1993), others as "distanced powers" (Cohen 2002: 269), and "distanced democracies" (Khare 2002: 245-296), "engaged democracies" (Bajpai and Mattoo 2002), and finally as "natural allies" (Datta-Ray 2002: 161). The history of the partnership between India and the US has varied between cordial relations and hostility emanating from common suspicion and estrangement. During the many ups and downs, the temporary closeness between the two countries showed potential for a permanent alliance. However, due to US's Cold War considerations, and India's relations with Pakistan, Indo-US relations suffered considerably. The countries were on best terms with each other's primary adversaries (Talbot 2004: 7).

In the literature regarding the strategic alliance, scholars have come up with a misleading concept that strategic alliance is a new occurrence especially after the end of the Cold War and, more particularly, in the twenty-first century. In the case of India, while the rhetoric of strategic alliance might have been evoked only at the beginning of the twentieth century, its conceptual underpinning involvement without the disadvantage of partnership commitments in terms of strategic autonomy is not new, for example, Indo-Soviet relationship. After the Cold War ended, India, by necessity, remained careful about allying with other states. The noticeable characteristic of a strategic alliance is that it is an association between equals. (Choudhari 2009: 14)

## **US-India Partnership after the Cold War**

“Strategic” has been overused in international relations literature and has caused debate over its meaning. Although it means many things, it generally connotes “the method of victory.” Nevertheless, in a relatively narrow way, it is also deployed to explain the “security relationship and military cooperation” (Mansingh L1, 2006:1).

Strategic Partnership is not static but dynamic as it considers transitions in the geopolitical order. The changing realities of international politics also compel states to change their strategic behaviour. The current trends have set Russia, India, and China in a transition phase, where they are put together to accept the basic principles of the global order. Compared to the Cold war years, Russia no longer remains a staunch enemy of the United States. Likewise, China’s growing influence has made it a key player in the international domain; therefore, to have a stable Asia-Pacific, it is necessary to take China into account. Lastly, the developments with and within India have made it an important regional power in Asian (The National Security Strategy of the US 2002: 1-31; Flanagan et al., 2008: 203-205).

The United States “National Intelligence Council Report”, “Mapping the Global Future”, explains how the international system is undergoing changes, which will bring drastic changes in the status quo. Russia and Japan would have reached their saturation point and are bound to decline. However, the rising powers in Asia, China, and India will shape the global order. They would re-define the concepts and render traditional notions of the Global North and South obsolete. Ancient geographic groupings will increasingly lose relevance in the international arena. As against relatively fixed positions in the past, the competition in the present will be more open for alliances (Mohan 2006: 18).

Hence in the post-Cold War years, relationships and interactions between countries seem to be based on issues of interests and potential cooperation. The above phenomenon favors the US because smaller countries naturally seek friendly ties with the sole world superpower.

The newly developing US-India relationship does not merely reflect the traditional concerns such as economy, polity, and social order. Instead, their constant association

with democratic and liberal values helps them stick together. This partnership also encompasses security cooperation, frequent joint military exercises, counterterrorism cooperation, defence cooperation, and technological cooperation. The mutual interests between these two countries must be aligned with long-term prospects for their strategic cooperation to be sustainable. Such alignment of interests must be based on a mutual faith in shared values. India does not have equivalent experience in managing alliances or strategic partnerships compared to the US. While in an alliance, the dominant nation lays down its terms, in a partnership, each side must consider the other partner's concerns if relations are to be sustained. Since relations between India and the US are still developing, both countries are apprehensive about each other's intentions and are still experimenting with different ways to develop a concrete and mutually beneficial relationship (Subrahmanyam 2006: 3).

Although many positive developments exist, US-India strategic relations have faced difficulties. Similar to America's allies in Europe, India has expressed concerns over the US's conduct of the "War on Terror". Moreover, the US presence in the Gulf, especially in Iraq, received significant backlash for US allies. It has had a negative impact on America's image abroad. Other states have expressed concerns over the aggressive use of military force around the world. Due to this action, relations between the US-EU suffered particularly with regard to Iran (Flanagan et al. 2008: 206-274).

### **Alliance Politics and US-India Relations**

Alliance-making is an age-old and often practiced strategy by nations to develop a strategic and diplomatic advantage over a potential adversary. Such alliances can also be both offensive and defensive, depending on the nature of the circumstances of their making. Alliances are useful as they help defend against threats and are beneficial in building countermeasures to deal with them. However, alliance-making is difficult without a well-defined adversary as the underlying motivating factor gets weakened. Since ancient times, states have understood the value of cooperation and the treaties that served their mutual interests. Such treaties dealt with the economic, legal, and political aspects while focusing mainly on crucial matters such as mutual defence. Scholars have concluded that many of these treaties had a solidarity clause declaring that, "you must be an enemy to my enemy and ally to my ally," and they were

constituted with various aims that included uniting against a common enemy and formalizing a balance of power (Tigay 1970: 182).

Alliances have a crucial role in theory as well as in the practice of international relations (Owen 2005: 73-99). They constitute a universal component of relations between political units, irrespective of time or place. The ubiquity of alliances in global affairs has led to substantial conceptual ambiguity in the international relations theory. If viewed in a broader spectrum, an alliance roughly means the relationship that two or more states share and develop, either formal or informal, to maintain the status quo or achieve stability, security, and cooperation (Walt 1981: 1).

The most important implication that can be drawn is that alliances provide for more significant space in peacetime military cooperation than during collective security groupings. Alliances identify threats and devise strategies to counter potential adversaries. Though states that are part of a collective security arrangement can cooperate politically in peacetime, meaningful military collaboration is difficult to maintain without well-defined adversaries and common threats. In the past, alliances could not consider the advanced dimensions of the new emerging geopolitics and geo-strategic realities of the post-Cold War era because of the peculiar and confusing position in which many countries often found them. Hence, the US especially devised the concept of “strategic partnership” to forge relationships with such countries, which though not wholly amounting to an alliance but exercised many attributes of it (Hagerty 2006: 16).

In this regard, US-India relations were defined by many scholars in different ways and under several rubrics like “estranged democracies” (Kux 1993), “distanced powers” (Cohen 2002: 269), and “distanced democracies” (Khare 2002: 245-96), “engaged democracies” (Bajpai and Mattoo 2002), and finally as “natural allies” (Datta-Ray, 2002: 16). During the Cold War, US-India relations have alternated between periods of friendship and hostility. Though the two countries recognized each other’s importance, particularly during the Cold War, a strong positive relationship was not established until the end of the Cold War. Despite several ups and downs in the relationship, the occasional instance of cooperation between the two countries provided glimpses for the possibility of a lasting alliance. For a long time,

US-India relations suffered because of India's turbulent relations with Pakistan and America's global competition with the erstwhile Soviet Union (Talbot 2004: 7).

An often cited description is that the US is the oldest and most powerful democracy and India is the largest democracy in the world (Limaye 2002: 5). Both countries hold democratic institutions and international law in high regard, which led many observers to conclude that an enduring relationship between the countries could be established. However, the US and India view the global world order from different perspectives due to their position in the international system. Thus, in the past, particularly during the Cold War, establishing a meaningful partnership proved challenging. Relations between the two countries has changed in the post-Cold War years, particularly as both face common threats from state and non-state actors.

#### **Trusted Partnership a Binding Principle of Cooperation between US and India**

The 9/11 attacks compelled the US to reassess its global and regional interests. The US and its allies declared the "Global War on Terror" (GWOT). India has long faced the brunt of "Cross-Border Terrorism" for over a decade. It finally found hope in its long-standing desire and efforts for international action against global terrorism. India persuaded the US to exert considerable pressure on Pakistan (responsible for cross-border terrorism in India) to act against terrorist groups based in Pakistan. India also declared its support for US anti-terrorist policies and cooperated with the US in its operations against the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda network around the world (Chadha 2008: 63-64).

The 11 September 2001 attacks resulted in new challenges and opportunities for the evolution of the US-India strategic partnership. Strobe Talbot, the former US Deputy Secretary of State (1994-2001) and author of *"Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb,"* supported an improvement in US-India relations. In Talbot's opinion, India offered the best of its support and assistance and even gave the US access to air bases, its airspace, refuelling, and port facilities, along with other technical and on-ground assistance (Talbot 2004).

Former "Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh" and former "US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot", held several meetings between 1998 and 2000 to

discuss “security, non-proliferation, disarmament, and other issues.” It was during these meetings that the US and India established the “Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism”. While relations between the two countries went through a difficult period, particularly after India’s nuclear tests in 1998 and the Kargil war in 1999, counterterrorism cooperation emerged as an important aspect of US-India relations.

In the following years, during the George W. Bush administration the National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and India’s National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra later had more focused discussions on finding ways to shape a new partnership that also included the area of high technology cooperation (please cite source and what was discussed in detail). When the meeting was held between Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Bush in November 2001, Mishra and Rice met separately to further build upon the new agenda. This interaction became known as the “Rice-Mishra Process,” which focused on taking relations in three areas - civilian space, high technology trade, and civilian nuclear cooperation (Mohan 2006: 21-22).

The US strongly condemned the attack by terrorists on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi on 13 December 2001. They called it an attack on “freedom and democracy” (Cite who said these lines). The US also backed India’s policy and efforts against terrorism. The Bush Administration repeatedly pressured President Pervez Musharraf not to support cross-border infiltration into India (Kux 2002: 20).

In September 2004, President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met, and both leaders expressed satisfaction with the pace of progress in Indo-US relations. The two countries committed to cooperating closely to complete phase one of the NSSP in a joint press release from this conference, titled “Next Steps in Strategic Partnership”, which was issued by India and the US. As part of this programme, steps were taken to resolve concerns about nuclear proliferation and guarantee adherence to US export regulations. This assertion emphasised how developments brought about by NSSP have increased technology exchanges between two nations.

In March 2005, Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state at the time, travelled to India. Rice stated that “the United States recognised India's position as a developing

democratic force in a dynamic Asia that will promote international security, enhance energy security and environmental protection, foster economic and technological development, and help reshape their strategic alliance”, (Kazi 2009: 78). When Indian Defense Minister Praban Mukherjee visited the US on June 29, 2005, a new framework was inked to extend the US-India defence relationship for an additional ten years.

### **George W. Bush administration and Next Steps Strategic Partnership**

The 9/11 attacks have been a breakthrough moment in the timeline of the US-India relationship. India’s quick response, timely action, and aid to the United States, from intelligence reports to military cooperation, were received with appreciation and gratitude from the US. In return, the US rescinded its long-standing nuclear sanctions against India, and diplomatic ties were bolstered. India’s NSA (National Security Advisor), Brajesh Mishra, and the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh visited America within a week of the attacks, and this gesture was reciprocated by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld visited New Delhi for further dialogue (Hathway 2002: 17, please use US State Department or US Defence Department sources).

All of these actions prepared the way for a successful relationship, especially after the 2004 announcement of the “Next Steps in Strategic Partnership”. The leaders of both nations explained in their joint statement how the NSSP will help fight terrorism and restrain the spread of WMDs. Additionally, this partnership strengthened the cooperation. It involved working on high technology trade, civilian space programmes, and nuclear energy cooperation. Additionally, it imposed export control measures to prevent the smuggling of volatile compounds. (Banerjee 2006: 73).

At the core of the president Bush strategy in South Asia was to keep US relations with India separate from US relations with Pakistan. This plan for South Asia became known as America’s “de-hyphenation” policy. The prime hurdle in sustaining friendly relations between the US and India during the Cold War was America’s economic and political support for Pakistan as an indispensable ally against the Soviet Union and its allies (Carranza 2008: 469).

With the end of the Cold War the US and India had the opportunity to foster closer ties; however it was not until the George W. Bush administration (2001 to 2009) that relations between the two countries grew considerably. During the George W. Bush years, the US recognized and forged stronger relations with India, particularly on defence and counter terrorism cooperation. The threat of terrorism and the rise of China were two areas of concern for the US. Both these issues had been a significant concern for India's security. President Bush strongly believed that India would help counter a growing China in Asia, and help in the US agenda of non-proliferation, democracy promotion, and maintaining security and stability in Asia (Tellis 2006: 127).

### **President Obama and India**

At the start of the twenty-first century, the US placed more emphasis on South Asia. The US's involvement in Asia also rose as the "Global War on Terrorism" grew in scope. Southeast Asia was designated as the "Second Front" in the war against terrorism during this time. The United States engaged closely with its allies Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand, as well as with other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, to put various efforts to curtail terrorist activities in the Southeast Asian region. Meanwhile, after the Asian economic crisis, China's economic and political interests in ASEAN increased rapidly. Trade and investment from China in Southeast Asia led some scholars to argue that a rising China is a clear indicator of a declining US influence in the region (Sutter 2009: 189-192).

China has been a cause of concern for both India and the US. However, many have noted that India prefers to make use of "hedging" as a tool for balancing China's rise. India has taken several steps to promote cordial relations with China, which is visible in the military and diplomatic engagement between the two countries. Secondly, India has attempted to counter the threat from China by using diplomatic measures aimed at normalizing relations. Lastly, India is increasing its defence partnerships with other regional powers to pursue a regional form of balancing (Pant and Joshi 2015: 89-114).

The joint statement during President Obama's 2015 visit to India highlighted how the "India-US Delhi Declaration of Friendship" has enhanced the bilateral relationship



between the two nations and expressed “pleasure at the qualitative reinvigoration of strategic relationships”.

It also considered the “Act East Policy” launched by India as a win-win situation for both the states that allowed the countries of Asia-Pacific to promote greater regional cooperation with India. According to President Obama, “the rise of India is also in the interests of the US, regional stability, and global security”. Under the bilateral “High Technology Cooperation Group”, which also included licencing requirements in dual usage technologies, both countries also pledged to resolve any problems or obstacles to trade in high technology items. As a result, the United States established a specialised fast reaction team focused only on expanding DTTI, which became known as the “Defence Trade and Technology Initiative” (DTTI) (Sibal 2015: 109).

Since the beginning of the strategic engagement between the US and India in 2010, the bilateral relationship between the two countries has shown phenomenal growth and expansion. The fifth session of the Strategic Dialogue was held in India in July 2014 and set a roadmap for the two sides to discuss further cooperation. Therefore, in the past few years, there have been several meetings of the “High Technology Group”, “the Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group”, “Homeland Security” and “Trade Policy Forum dialogues”, and the “CEO’s Forum”, (Vijayalakshmi 2015: 134).

After an extensive review of the literature, it was found that there is no comparative study of counterterrorism under the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations. The research found this to be a significant gap in the literature. Thus, the study has focused on counterterrorism cooperation as the binding principle of cooperation between the US and India. Therefore, a comprehensive study of all the issues is required.

### **Definition, Rationale, and Scope of Study**

The research examined US-India strategic relations from the George W. Bush to the Barack H. Obama administrations. During these two presidencies, US foreign policy significantly changed particularly after the 9/11 attacks on America. In addition to the terrorist attacks on the US, the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian parliament,

and the terrorist attacks in Mumbai (2008) changed the US perception of terrorism and the security challenges faced by India. According to US Federal regulation, terrorism is defined as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any portion thereof, in support of political or social objectives”. A focused analysis of the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations, particularly on their collaboration in combating terrorism, was necessary due to the on-going significance of this aspect of the “US-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”. It was during the Bush and Obama years that the counterterrorism cooperation between the US and India significantly increased and flourished.

The research addressed the subject of cooperation on Counter-Terrorism as it is perceived as one of the foremost challenges faced by the US and India. The research surveyed the developments and changes that began after the end of the Cold War. As both countries reset their relationship after the nuclear test by India in 1998 and moved swiftly to further cement bilateral ties, the research also elucidated how the gradual but steady movement in relations led to a strategic partnership dialogue.

Further, the study contextualized the growing cooperation between the US and India within the “strategic partnership” announced in 2004. It focused on counterterrorism cooperation as a binding principle of this partnership and examined the strength of this partnership by analysing the various agreements that reveal the nature and scope of the overall relationship. It addressed a significant gap in the available literature that broadly examines the comprehensive framework of the Indo-US partnership. By focusing on counterterrorism cooperation, the study attempted to enhance the understanding of whether it was a fundamental factor in improving or deteriorating relations between the two countries.

Another critical aspect of the study focused on the US’s failure to pressurize Pakistan on the grounds of terrorism, despite criticism that Pakistan had sponsored terrorism in Kashmir, with US intelligence reports confirming it. It was a well-known fact in US that Pakistan’s government knew about the terrorist groups had bases in their country from where they had carried out their terror campaign in Kashmir. However, this changed in the post-9/11 years, when the George W. Bush administration declared the

Global War on Terror. Subsequently Pakistan's military and intelligence services came under greater scrutiny and the country's links with terrorist groups impacted its relations with the US still. At the same time, Indo-US security cooperation increased significantly. This development was due to the 11 September 2001 (9/11) attacks on the US and the 26-29 November 2008 (26/11) attacks in India. Several agreements were struck between the US and India throughout the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, which was the study's main emphasis.

The research also examined how US-India strategic relations matter to the US in securing its desired foreign policy goals in Asia. How US-India strategic relations will help US rebalancing Asia strategy and US War against Terrorism were also examined.

### **Research Questions**

1. What factors are responsible for the changes in US-India relations from 'Estranged Democracies' to 'Defining Partnership'?
2. What were the fundamental differences between George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations on the US counterterrorism policy?
3. What are the drivers of US-India counterterrorism cooperation?
4. How much is Asia's rebalancing strategy responsible for improved US-India strategic relations?
5. How far is the counterterrorism cooperation the lynchpin of the US-India strategic partnership?
6. Does the congressional role significantly influence the executive approach to cooperate with India?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Despite the ideological differences between George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations, the US approach to US-India strategic relations revealed greater continuity than differences.
2. Differing regional imperatives were the drivers of increased cooperation between the US and India, along with international imperatives such as the rise of China and China-Pakistan nexus.

## **Research Methodology**

The study examined the changing contours of United States foreign policy towards India and the overall United States and India strategic relations and studies its determinants, objectives, successes, and failures.

The study was conducted with a qualitative method based on descriptive, deductive, triangulation and analytical methods as well as content analysis. It analysed how the issue of terrorism provided a major foreign policy challenge to the world's superpower. The 9/11 attacks on the US and the attack on the Indian Parliament were pivotal in changing America's approach towards global terrorism.

The sources used are both primary such as speeches of the heads of states, government officials, diplomats from the US and India, archival documents, and Presidential speeches, Task Force Reports, Congressional Hearings, records and reports from the White House, Department of Defence and Department of State. It also includes Indian governmental publications such as Ministry of External Affairs Reports, Parliamentary Debates, Atomic Energy Reports, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Commerce, and Army reports. Secondary literature includes relevant books and articles from journals and newspapers.

## **Brief on Chapters**

1. **Introduction.** This chapter begins with a discussion on why and how nations cooperate in counterterrorism. Further in this chapter, a survey of US-India relations and its progress during successive administrations in the aftermath of the Cold War has been discussed. The chapter established how events in the post-Cold War years provided the impetus for US-India strategic partnership. It also assessed the overall US policy of Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with a particular focus on South Asia.

2. **US-India Strategic Partnership in the aftermath of Cold War.** This chapter discussed the post-Cold War partnership between the US and India and the cooperation that resulted after the 9/11 attacks. It also covers counter-terrorism cooperation as the guiding force of the US-India Strategic Partnership.

**3. US-India Strategic Partnership and Cooperation on Counterterrorism under George W. Bush.** This chapter has analysed the evolution of US-India counterterrorism cooperation during the George W. Bush administration. It assesses how these years were landmarks in counter-terrorism cooperation. The chapter also examined the domestic dynamics of the formulation of counter-terrorism cooperation policy in the US.

**4. US-India Strategic Partnership and Cooperation on Counterterrorism under Barack Obama Administrations.** The chapter examined the Obama administration's efforts in maintaining the Strategic Partnership and Counter-Terrorism Cooperation. It also focused on the main drivers and imperatives that drove the policy on counterterrorism cooperation. Additionally, it mapped and traced the US policymaking process, including the bureaucracy, Congressional lobbying, and pressure groups.

**5. Conclusion.** It has analysed the various facets of US-India relations discussed in this study and presents a validation of the hypotheses. The chapter is an analytical summation of the overall US-India strategic partnership and cooperation in countering terrorism.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**US-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE**  
**COLD WAR**

The United States and India relations have undergone periods of convergence and divergence on various issues since relations were formally established during the Eisenhower administration. Despite numerous opportunities to build a strong partnership, there was mistrust between the two nations. India's focus on charting an independent foreign policy path and United States strategy to contain the spread of "Communism" (Soviet Influence) during the Cold War often took the two countries towards divergent paths. However, the end of the Cold War brought about significant structural changes in global politics that impacted how these two democracies perceived each other.

The post-Cold War years witnessed circumstances that changed India's outreach to America, and vice-versa. Across the political, economic, and security realms, India and the United States seemed ready to take initiatives commensurate with the new world order. There was also a change in the various dimensions of international politics, be it geo-economics, geo-strategy, or geopolitics. These inevitable changes further triggered alterations regarding the "balance of power" in global politics. It led to an amalgamation of the US-India interests in diverse paths. The roots of the decision of the US to make India a nuclear exception lay in a more extensive acknowledgment of the changing nature of the "balance of power" worldwide and the significance of maintaining sustained friendship and cooperation with India. As it clarified its new power potential on the global stage, India quickly comprehended the chance of increasing its rise through friendship with the United States.

In the post-Cold War years, the structure of international politics changed significantly. The rise of geo-economics as the primary factor governing politics among states as opposed to geopolitics or geo-strategy has been a hallmark of international relations. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the US became the sole superpower in the world. In terms of military-political power, it had no equal or even near equal. The US has an unmatched capacity to project its military power to any part of the world. The global distribution of economic power is much more diffused than military-political power. The global power structure resembles an inverted pyramid, with a political face resting on a much narrower base than its economic face. According to former Ambassador Chandrashekar Dasgupta, "the United States is at

the apex, but the slope is much gentler on the economic side than on the political side. Viewing power in composite terms, the United States must be regarded as the only superpower in today's world" (Dasgupta 2007: 93). The fact that India is the second fastest growing economy has generated a positive impact on US interests. In 2021, total US-India bilateral trade in goods and services was \$ 157 billion (US State Department 2022).

The "Strategic Partnership" between India and the United States has also evolved due to the two countries being democracies with shared concerns regarding the threat of global terrorism and the impact of China as a rising global power. It is evident from the numerous joint statements made by both nations after every summit meeting since 2004 which emphasized the criticality of this partnership as well as its potential to widen the nature and scope of Indo-US relations.

When the world order altered in the 1990s, India re-evaluated its approach to foreign policy, and a number of new elements emerged that were significant in determining the direction of its foreign policy. It has been observed that there were eight key drivers of contemporary India's foreign policy, "India's quest for strategic autonomy, its aspiration to transform its status in the world, its desire to play a greater role in shaping the global system, its need to access technology and bypass technology denial regimes, its hunger for energy, its regional imperatives, its search for a continental role, and its diaspora policy". (Sahni 2007: 21). The direction of India's foreign policy has been impacted by additional significant elements. India's foreign policy is multifaceted and has the ability to simultaneously advance several interests. The most major influences on the current course of India's foreign policy, however, are three factors. The "balance of power" is still dominated by the United States due to India's position in the world, despite China's preparations to overtake it. There will also be changes to the international nuclear order as world powers learn about a nuclear India and India's desire to find energy security that will secure its path to economic prosperity. In terms of its bilateral relations with regional powers in the international system, these variables are what form India's strategic interests in various parts of the world. (Pant 2008: 19).



India's focus has been on inclusive economic progress, making its defence stronger and robust to keep aggression away as much as possible, ensuring peace and stability in its region. India has been trying to develop cordial and mutually advantageous relations in Asia and establish strategic ties with all the important powers in the world, especially the US, Russia, the European Union, Japan, and China (Sinha and Mehta 2007: 22-23).

According to researchers, India's connections with the US continue to be important in defining its foreign policy toward a variety of other powers and on a range of topics. While there are many areas where Indo-US interests overlap, India has made an effort to strike a balance in its internal political environment where a vocal and potent minority continues to oppose close ties with the US. Even while India's ambition for "strategic autonomy" will make it a challenging partner for the US, it will continue to establish deep political and economic relations with the country. (Pant 2009: 20).

Washington's increased interest in India since the late 1990s has taken into account both India's economic growth and its position as a rising force in Asia. New Delhi, on the other hand, was getting used to the end of the Cold War. Therefore, both democracies thought that sustained cooperation would be beneficial to them. Schaffer claims that for "Washington, the benefits include a significant regional ally in India at a time when the region is experiencing instability, as well as a stronger position to assist in defusing any nuclear concerns in the region. Trade and investment growth benefit both nations and are necessary for better US relations with India. (Schaffer 2002: 31).

The former "Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs" (1997 to 2001) Karl F. Inderfurth and others have argued that the US believes India could play a greater role in international affairs. According to them, greater US engagement with India would strengthen "emerging democracies along with maximizing India's alliance with one of the world's biggest economies." It would also "facilitate non-proliferation and increase India's combined attempts on immediate global concerns like human trafficking, narcotics, and terrorism to work together to deal with problems to regional balance." Moreover, cooperation to safeguard the global environment with clean energy and other similar activities benefits greatly from India's active participation. In

addition, cooperating on common challenges such as the global fight against AIDS and other public health predicaments; improving access to the world-class Indian companies in the IT sector; boosting ties in culture, education, and person-to-person exchanges (Inderfurth and Ridel 2009: 24).

As a democratic nation with a pluralistic society, a multicultural and multi-religious state with an expanding economy, India's significance on the world stage and its participation in global affairs are pivotal for the US. This realization was particularly evident during the George W. Bush administration, as the US began to increase ties with India (Blumenthal 2007: 307). According to Condoleezza Rice, who served as the US secretary of state at the time, "India is a developing economy and growing power in the world system. It is, in my opinion, a natural ally for the United States. We spend a lot of time on that relationship because I believe it has the potential to be a very stabilising and uplifting influence in international affairs. (Quoted in Subrahmanyam 1 2006: 2).

Since the 1990s, India's foreign policy has recognized the importance of dialogue with the US regarding its future status in the global system. Some US experts pointed out that India's nuclear power capability and its aspirations for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council manifests its great power objectives. India's successful integration of its diversity rather than its alienation defines India as a "major" soft power. India's military strength, economic resources, social mobilization and cohesion, technological potential, quality of governance, and diplomatic and intelligence acumen have reflected India's emerging great power (Perkovich 2003: 129-144).

The huge size and population, strong democracy, rising information technology industry, and scientific and technological expertise of India, according to economists, all contribute to the country's positive international image. India is one of the world's powers thanks to its rapidly growing middle class, nuclear and conventional military prowess, crucial position in global governance, and geostrategic location. (Virmani 2006: 49-68).

India shares common interests and beliefs with America and is therefore a potential ally for the US. However, as an emerging power, India has different priorities to fulfil, which may not be in congruence with the US. These competing interests are likely to determine the region's geopolitics. Bhonsle stated that "the US could thus be developing the strategic alliance with India to undermine possible Chinese influence much as it has been cooperating with other nations in the region such as Japan, South Korea, countries in Southeast Asia, and Australia, over the years. The emerging power of Indian state deems it necessary to include it in the US orbit as a collaborator rather than a competitor" (Bhonsle et al. 2007: 18).

In reference to this, Robert D. Blackwill, a former US ambassador to India from 2001 to 2003, noted that the US's top foreign policy priorities are the fight against terrorism, the spread of WMD, managing China's growth, and guaranteeing energy security. In his view, with these prevailing priorities of US foreign policy, India may emerge as a critical ally (Blackwill 2005: 12). In a similar spirit, Henry A. Kissinger, a former secretary of state, claimed that "one of the really wonderful things that are happening is the relationship with India. We can collaborate with them on both a strategic and ideological level. The new administration will inherit it as one of its lasting legacies (Inderfurth 2008: 253).

After the end of Cold-War, India became aware of the need to reinvent its relationship with the US and did manage to shift its policy to focus on strengthening links with the US. The relations did indicate marked betterment, but as some have pointed out, it also revealed the limitations to the growing relationship. The biggest roadblock was how much more India needed the US than the US needed India. According to scholars, "India has no choice except to pursue tighter connections with the US fighting others seeking a seat on the same bandwagon in a hegemonic globe". (Rajagopalan and Sahni 2008: 15). Indian foreign policy experts also argued that "the US relationship might be more imperative for India than links with New Delhi are to Washington. Whether it is regaining ingress to nuclear technology, fighting terrorism, stabilizing South Asia, dealing with the emergence of China, increasing India's economic and trade development, or modernizing India's military potential, India has no option other than Unites States" (Bajpai 2006).

Former Indian ambassador to the US, Lalit Mansingh also enumerates several reasons for India to engage with the United States. According to him these are - more investment, higher trade, access to high technology, energy security, fighting international terrorism, access to advanced military technology, balancing China, reforming the UNSC, maintaining peace, and a global role for India (Mansingh 2006: 23-24). But on the other side, according to former US National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, "the geopolitical objectives of India, which they are pursuing in a pretty hard-headed fashion, [and] which are fairly comparable to ours," there is potential for improved US-Indian relations (Blackwill 2005:12). Scholars have proposed the following areas of shared interest: safeguarding the global commons, particularly the sea lanes of communication; ensuring that energy security is preserved; protecting the global environment; safeguarding Asia from the dominance of any single power; safeguarding against the threats posed by state-sponsored terrorism; preventing the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; spreading the growth of democracy; and safeguarding economic development. (Tellis 2 2005: 2).

In Tellis's view, there had never been such a robust alignment of the interests between the US and India in these critical areas. India was increasingly viewed as a crucial US partner to achieve these objectives. However, India and the US may not always collaborate on each problem that arises. Thus, "the different power capabilities between the two countries remained a significant impediment that could lead to differences in tactical strategy, even when there is an agreement on the broader interests. Past the differentials in power, competing national interests and policy choices also had the potential to obstruct bilateral relations (Tellis 2 2005: 2).

Thus, there was a rising convergence of interests in the post-Cold War era, but it wasn't always followed by notable and beneficial results. Second, avoiding divisions in national interests that would cause either side to issue grave threats against the other or would cause either country to undermine the other's basic objectives on any topic of strategic importance are necessary to create improved relations between the US and India. (Tellis 2 2005: 3)

### **Growing ties between the US and India**

US-India relations underwent a transformation in the post-Cold War period as both countries had common interests. However, in the 1990s, the emerging Indo-US ties were not just due to their bilateral interest and hence developed economic, political, and military relations. Other important areas of the strategic partnership between the US and India is counterterrorism cooperation, combined military exercises, defence cooperation, and technological cooperation. However, the mutual interests between the two countries must align with long-term prospects for strategic cooperation to be sustainable. Such alignment of interests must be based on mutual faith in shared values and interests. India does not have commensurate experience in managing alliances or strategic partnerships compared to the US. In an alliance, the dominant power lays down its terms, however in a strategic partnership, each side gives due consideration to the concerns of the other if the partnership is to be maintained. Since this was a new relationship for India and the US, both countries were uncertain about each other and still experimenting with ways to develop a solid and mutually beneficial relationship (Subrahmanyam 1 2006: 3).

In the early 2000s, Indo-US relations grew significantly as America recognized India's centrality in maintaining stability in Asia and fighting terrorism. The signing of the "New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship" on June 28, 2005, was a key evidence of the growing ties. It was signed by Pranab Mukherjee, the Indian Minister of Defence, and Donald Rumsfeld, the then-US Secretary of defence. According to the agreement, the US-India defence relationship has advanced in a short time to extraordinary levels of collaboration unthinkable before. The broader "US-India strategic partnership" will be supported by and comprised of this defence alliance. (New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship 2005). These trends continued to push the partnership steadily towards a closer relationship. However, it is noteworthy that a few decades earlier, the situation was very different. The Cold War years witnessed many irritants in what was supposed to be a promising Indo-US relationship. Hence, such a transformation was remarkable. The following section briefly discusses Indo-US relations during the Cold War years in order to understand the factors that led both countries towards establishing a strategic partnership.

## **US-India Relations during the Cold War**

During Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's time, Indo-US relations had developed some links. However, the Indian leadership leaned towards the then Soviet Union. America did not like the increasing Indo-Soviet ties and India's decision to pursue a policy of non-alignment. For this reason, the US decided to support Pakistan which had joined the US bloc in 1955. In the US's view, a relationship with both India and Pakistan given the international order during the Cold War was impossible (Chadha 2008: 20-50). American attitude 'either you are with me or against me' could not reconcile with India's Non-Alignment movement.

India was reluctant to join the US led Western Bloc during the Cold War particularly as India's economic policies were significantly influenced by socialist ideas (Desai and Bhagwati 1975: 213)

In the 1950s, despite India's contribution to the allied effort during WWII, it refrained from sending Indian troops to support the US led United Nations (UN) force during the Korean war. India pursued a policy of non-alignment that often placed it odds with the US. While India's relations with the Soviet Union began to develop considerably in 1955, India perceived the US support for Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir as against its national interest (Gupta 2005: 1-2; Rubinoff 2006: 40-44). The relationship between India and US during Cold War was thus marked by misperception and mistrust, however there were few instances of cooperation. In 1962, the US provided India with military and diplomatic assistance during the Sino-Indian War (Tellis 1 2005: 232). The significant material aid to India during and after China's aggression established the basis for improving Indo-US relations. However, India did not abandon its policy of non-alignment. Prime Minister Nehru firmly declared that India acknowledged and appreciated aid from all countries, however, India would continue with the policy of non-alignment (Kux 1993: 181-226).

When India signed the "Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation Treaty" with the USSR and subsequently assisted the people of East Pakistan in their quest for independence, Indo-US relations deteriorated significantly. The Indo-Soviet Treaty was seen by the US as a clear shift in India's foreign policy toward the former USSR, although the US allied with Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pak War. The US criticized India for interfering

in Pakistan's domestic affairs and strongly opposed India's decision to pursue a military solution to support Bangladesh's independence. These events brought US-India relations to its lowest point during the Cold War (Gupta 2005: 2; Kux 1993: 279-325; Banerjee 2006: 67).

Relations between the US and India deteriorated further, when India a non-signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) went ahead with nuclear tests in 1974 (Kux 1993: 315). Although India claimed that the aim of the test was peaceful, sanctions were imposed on India that targeting its economy, missile technology and its space program. Simultaneously, the Indian diaspora in the US saw a growth in numbers. They were primarily professionals with good technical degrees, and their per capita income was very high among the various ethnic groups who had settled in the US. This could have led to laying the foundation of altering perceptions regarding the Indians in the US. In January 1978, US president Jimmy Carter visited India intending to renew Indo-US relations.

However, the visit almost failed to produce any concrete result. On the contrary, profound Indo-American differences developed, particularly over the NPT issue. In June 1978, Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to California, helped remove some of the misunderstandings between the two countries, but no agreement could be reached on the issue of NPT (Dixit 2003: 122-127).

In 1980, there was a change of leadership in India as well as the US. In India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power, while Ronald Reagan assumed office as President in the US. The relations between the two countries were friendly and cooperative but lacked warmth, depth, and vigour. The differences over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the supply of highly sophisticated arms and warplanes to Pakistan, the issue of Diego Garcia, the issue of recognition of Cambodia, and India's nuclear policy continued to act as irritants of Indo-US relations (Kux 1993: 386-395). Indo-US differences became very deep during the Vietnam War in 1968. By several accounts, Indian efforts at peace-making during the war did not yield results leading to Washington's disappointment.

The intervention of the USSR in Afghanistan led to the end of detente and intensified the Cold War. America harshly criticized Soviet intervention in Afghanistan while India declined to rally with the United States. However, India supported a cessation of hostilities through negotiations and secured a peaceful withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan (Hagerty 2006: 17). In June 1982, Mrs. Gandhi visited the US and held talks with President Reagan. Both leaders agreed to establish more cordial and cooperative relations between the US and India, and work towards bringing peace in Afghanistan (Mansingh 1986: 185-195).

In June 1985, a highly successful tour of the US of then Indian Prime Minister (PM) Rajiv Gandhi gave rise to new hopes and renewed interest in improving Indo-US relations. The US continued to view India's connections with the Soviet Union with a great deal of distrust despite acknowledging India's growing importance in South Asia and as a potential significant player in international politics. Further, PM Rajiv Gandhi's visit did not produce significant results. The points of convergence between the US and India were less than the points of divergence, and hence the attempts made by both sides to produce substantial results was only partially successful (Dixit 2003:168-171).

In a joint statement issued by leaders of the two countries, both called on all governments to combat the new danger of organized terrorism as a threat to peace and democracy. The statement emphasized the mutual collaboration in science and technology. In October 1987, PM Rajiv Gandhi visited the US briefly and tried to improve Indo-US relations (Hagerty 2006:17-18). Scholars have argued that "a half-century of relations between the US and India have been uneven, friendly, sometimes hostile, but more often, just estranged. Given their different historical, social, and economic positions, both countries were almost certainly destined to adopt conflicting policies on many issues. In the 1980s, US relations with India gradually improved, but the legacy of mistrust and suspicion persisted." (Kux 1992: 447-450).

India and the United States drew varied lessons from their long and generally estranged relations during the Cold War. Cohen argued "that with India and Pakistan unable to settle their differences, there were never many prospects for a strategically united South Asia." Sometimes, Americans tried to select between Pakistan and India



to contain China or the Soviet Union. However, no administration could bring itself to make such a choice and stick with it, although Kennedy was ready to do so during his term in office. During the Cold War, US support for one country was partly offset by treaties with the other country as the United States continued to react to a perceived “zero sum mentality” prevalent in New Delhi and Islamabad (Cohen 2002: 281).

### **Differences between the US and India during the Cold War**

During the second half of the 20th century, India and the US shared a democratic ethos but not the same vision. Relationships between the US and India were strained for the majority of the Cold War over a number of issues, particularly in the economy and strategic-international affairs. There were three main areas of disagreement in strategic affairs. The first was that each side had a unique perspective on the Cold War and engaged with the Soviet Union in various ways. The US adopted the policy of containment to prevent the spread of Soviet influence around the world, whereas India pursued economic cooperation and welcomed military assistance from the USSR. The view in India that despite Pakistan's dispute with India over Kashmir, the US actively armed and provided implicit support to Pakistan was the second point of contention. The attitudes concerning nuclear weapons and proliferation were the third major point of disagreement. (Adhikari 2005: 3).

### **US-India Relations in the Post-Cold War Era**

After having remained engaged in a relationship that had many ups and downs from 1947 to 1991, Indo-US relations normalized and improved steadily in the post-Cold War era. The disintegration of the Soviet Union along with its disappearance from the global strategic framework drove India to seek closer ties with the US. Further, in the early 1990s the near collapse of the Indian economy was followed by a policy of liberalization that created conditions for greater economic cooperation with the West. Similar to India's economic transformation, the 1990s also witnessed significant changes around the world. These changes transcended all geographical and ideological boundaries and questioned long-established perceptions and theories. The Cold War that lasted for over four decades between the two superpowers ended and ushered in the so-called “new world order.” What made the world order new and different was the following set of events: the collapse of the USSR and the consequent end of the bipolar world order; the emergence of the “Commonwealth of

Independent States” (CIS), entirely redrawing the map of the world; the emergence of a multipolar world where there are various new centres of power, though the US still had the dominant power status; the emergence of geo-economic considerations as the primary factor governing politics among states, as opposed to geo-politics or geo-strategy; globalization; and the loss of manoeuvrability for the Nonaligned Bloc as a consequence of fading “bipolarism” (Balis et al. 2008: 1-87; Mohan, 2003: xi-xxii; Nayar and Paul 2004: 203-210).

The end of the Cold War also caused significant changes in global and regional security alliances. India’s defence and security was reoriented to tackle new problems and issues. Along with many countries around the world including the US, India reassessed its economic and political situation particularly as its closest international benefactor in terms of trade and military assistance had disappeared. In the early 1990s, there was a major shift in India’s economic policy, and the realization that the US could become a more stable and prominent source of economic and technological assistance for India. The economic and political upheaval in the erstwhile Soviet Union (Russia) meant that India had to face China and Pakistan alone in the 1990s. The ascendancy of a unipolar world order made closer relations with the US imperative for India as Russia, the successor state of the USSR, could not fully meet India’s security, economic, and trade requirements. Additionally, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were required to provide money to and help India. India was forced to improve relations with the US in addition to its need for economic assistance and its quest for a permanent place on the UN Security Council (UNSC). (Ganguly 2003 41-47).

According to scholars, the US viewed India as an expanding market, and changes in world politics in the 1990s prompted India and the US to cooperate on a number of topics, including counterterrorism, expanded trade, concerns related to global security, and nuclear cooperation. Although some opposing ambitions persisted in upsetting US-India relations, “cooperative engagement,” “strategic cooperation,” and other optimistic developments emanating from both New Delhi and Washington in the 1990s” gradually strengthened relations in the following years (Bertsch et al. 1990: xiii-xiv).

After the Cold War, the US engaged with various countries, particularly with those it had estranged relations during the Cold War. As the sole superpower in the world, the US In this regard, the US regarded India as a possible lucrative economic friend as India had chosen liberalization and had enacted economic policy reforms as per the path of globalization. During Prime Minister (PM) Narasimha Rao's term in office, India welcomed closer ties with the US. In May 1994, P.M. Narasimha Rao visited the US for six days to dispel misconceptions and establish bilateral relations between India and the US. PM Rao and President Clinton agreed that India, and the US were heading towards a new partnership. The US and India had several areas of agreement particularly on economic liberalization and human rights. Both leaders gave a call for increasing the pace and scope of exchanges on all aspects of their relations as well as for discussing ways and means for meeting the challenges before the world (Nayar and Paul 2004: 211-212).

In 1991, Commander of the US Pacific Command, Lieutenant General Claude Kicklighter had proposed the establishment of contacts between the three branches of the US armed forces and their Indian counterparts. This became known as the Kicklighter proposals (Sood 2020).

This was a major development because India began to develop a military understanding of the United States. However, differences continued between the two countries on many other issues. The US forced India to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Between 1995 and 1998, the issue of CTBT tested India's nuclear policy. Although there was mounting pressure from the international community, including the US, India refused to accept and sign the CTBT. India criticized the treaty as a discriminatory and hegemonic measure designed to legitimize and perpetuate the nuclear weapons capabilities of nuclear weapon holders and enable them to pursue a form of nuclear imperialism over non-nuclear states. India argued that the treaty made a permanent distinction between the haves and have-nots of nuclear weapons technology. India also argued that denuclearization was a permanent solution to the global nuclear threat. Between the years when the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was signed by several countries in September 1996 and May 1998, Indian political leaders and foreign policy experts concluded that to safeguard India's security it needed nuclear

technology. The question was not if but when India would conduct nuclear tests (Frey 2007: 155).

India conducted five nuclear tests (Pokharan II) in May 1998 while the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) was in power, declaring the country to be a nuclear armed state. The United States reacted strongly. It announced its decision to apply economic sanctions against India and denounced these nuclear tests. Indian-American ties started to deteriorate. The US termed the India's nuclear tests as unjustifiable, which had the potential to create instability in South Asia. Further, the US also announced punitive measures and compelled other nations to impose economic sanctions against India. In response to India's refusal to embrace its status as a nuclear weapon state, the US decided to put more pressure on India. India responded with the proposal to open a high-level bilateral dialogue with the US, expressing a willingness to discuss the contentious nuclear issues, including the CTBT. The first round of negotiations between US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Mr. Jaswant Singh, the special representative of PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee (who later went on to become the Indian Minister of External Affairs), took place on June 12, 1998. Both the countries engaged in a high-level exchanges and discussions on the nuclear issues. Both countries successfully narrowed the differences over a range of issues through their discussions on disarmament, security, and non-proliferation. During the discussions between Talbott and Singh, the focus was on four major areas of contention, India's plan for the least but credible nuclear deterrence, US stress on the CTBT, regulation on the export of nuclear material, and terminating the production of fissile materials. Talbott and Singh held meetings almost every month from 1998 to early 1999, and then it became less until early 2000 (Mohan 2003: 89-96). As the discussions progressed, the Kargil War between India and Pakistan significantly worsened Indo-US relations. In June 1999, the US adopted an objective approach to the Kargil war.

President Clinton's role in resolving the Kargil war strengthened relations, this was followed by military to military contacts between the US and India, there were discussions on defence, science, and technological cooperation. These discussions signalled a new chapter in Indo-US relations (Gaan 2007: 285). In 1999, Washington's diplomatic response to the Kargil War, and its policy towards India turned out to be the biggest asset for India. The US managed expressed its position to

India regarding the Kargil issue, and this was shown via its action including intelligence sharing, and eventually, this led to the development of a new direction in Indo-US relations (Talbot 2004: 154-169).

The two countries came closer when President William J. Clinton (Bill Clinton) visited India in March 2000. President Clinton's visit to India was a major step in the relations. He extolled India's pluralism and multicultural society which was a strong basis for establishing stronger Indo-US relations. Experts observed the convergence of geopolitical interests between the US and India under the Clinton administration. President Clinton's visit to India helped to dispel the mistrust that had grown as a result of the Cold War (Mohan 2007: 103). Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that the visit of President Clinton marks the beginning of a new adventure in a new century by two countries that have all the potential to become natural friends in his speech to the Indian Parliament. (Vajpayee 2000).

President Clinton's visit to India in 2000 helped reconcile differences between the two sides (Cohen 2002: 291). In September 2000, a more significant shift came in Indo-US relations in when PM Vajpayee visited the US for five days and conducted high-level discussions with officials in the US government. Both countries made joint agreement to cooperate on counterterrorism and contain the narcotics trade. Despite differences over Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT, Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and issues related to Indo-Pak relations. Despite these challenges, India made efforts to increase economic and trade relations with the US. This development was not only due to the economic transformation during the Narasimha Rao government but also because the US recognized India's potential as an economic powerhouse. A joint statement was issued by President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee which provided a roadmap for areas of cooperation between the two countries. Not only was it positive in tone, but it was also detailed and comprehensive, which signalled a fundamental breakthrough in relations.

In addition to its economic rise, India's successful nuclear tests had transformed its military capabilities. However, it also impacted South Asian security relations as Pakistan also possesses nuclear weapons. However, India has attempted to promote cordial relations with countries in Asia. In 1991, the "Look East Policy" was

introduced by the Narasimha Rao government to improve economic and strategic relations between India and countries in South and Southeast Asia. This initiative had a positive impact on US perceptions of India's intentions in the region. An official from the MEA had stated that the "Look East Policy" was an important element in transforming India's foreign relations. In the 1990s, some countries in Asia called the "Asian Tigers" had made considerable economic progress and technological advancements. These countries attracted foreign investment which also promoted export-led growth. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gave them a forum for regional cooperation. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao recognized that cooperation with this region would improve India relations with countries in the region and help accelerate India's economic growth and development (GOI 2016). India's policy towards its eastern neighbours was part of a larger foreign policy shift which included forging better diplomatic and economic relations. While India pursued closer ties with the US, it also supplemented its economic rise in the 1990s with greater cooperation with other countries in Asia which continues to this day.

One of the most important changes in post-Cold War global politics is India's continued rise to the ranks of the world's major powers. This development has undoubtedly changed how the US views the world's political scenario, especially in the context of South Asia. The National Intelligence Council (NIC) stated in a December 2004 report titled "Mapping the Global Future" (MGF) that "the likely emergence of China and India, as well as others, as new major global players similar to the advent of a united Germany in the 19th century and the powerful US in the early 20th century-will transform the geopolitical landscape, with impacts that may be as dramatic as those in the previous two centuries" would change the geopolitical landscape (MGF Report 2020 Project 2004). The 21st century, which is dominated by China and India, is known as the Asian Century, much as how scholars once referred to the 1900s as the American Century. It has been noted that the foundation for both countries' quick increase in economic and political power is a mix of stable economic growth, growing military prowess, and a sizable population. (MGF Report 2020 Project 2004: 13).

There were significant turning points in US-India ties starting in 2000. It was deliberative and resulted in many agreements, particularly in the defence sector.

## **Defence Cooperation**

The US envisions a defence partnership with India based on shared national standards and goals, such as thwarting terrorism, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and preserving regional stability. Many commentators believe that the strengthened US-India security ties provide a "hedge" or "counterbalance" to China's growing power in Asia. However, Washington and New Delhi have insisted that no such plan is in place. It is not difficult to envision a convergence of Indian and US national security objectives, according to the findings of a Congressional Research Report (CRR). In areas including standard norms, the emergence of a new balance of power in Asia, nuclear non-proliferation, energy security, and the rise of international terrorism, the US and India share common interests. (Kronstadt 2009: 53).

In the early years of India's independence, priority was accorded to industrial developments and the adoption of social programs to support social welfare. Not much emphasis was placed on defence. However, the 1962 war with China and the 1965 war with Pakistan highlighted the need for modernizing India's armed forces. India's ties to the US could have helped it do this. However, Pakistan's solid relationships with the US had opened the door for the transfer of defence technology, which in turn had led to military parity between India and Pakistan. US-India ties suffered greatly as a result of the delayed development of India's defence sector infrastructure, particularly during the Cold War. Thus, in 1971, India signed a major cooperative venture with the Soviet Union through "Indo-Soviet Treaty Friendship and Cooperation." In the post-Cold War years, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union Indo-US relations entered a new phase in relations. In 1991, Indo-US military and defence cooperation reached a high benchmark, Lieutenant General Claude M Kicklighter, Commander of the US Army Pacific Command proposed a series of military exchanges and exercises between the armed forces of the US and India. The Kicklighter proposals, as they came to be known, made a significant contribution to enhancing bilateral relations. These proposals encompassed military-to-military exchanges and increased Indo-US defence cooperation (Malik 2006: 85).

Deeper defence relations between the US and India were made possible by William Perry's trip to India in January 1995. Parry signed defence agreements with his

counterpart in India, Mallikarjun Khargehe, the Minister of State for defence. Based on this agreement, both sides established a defence working group to explore possible areas of cooperation. An important aspect of Indo-US relations led to more cooperation between civilian and military sectors on technology (Banerjee 2006: 70). India's decision on May 11-13, 1998, to test nuclear weapons as part of its national security policy impacted Indo-US relations. The US perceived India's decision to procure nuclear weapons technology as an unnecessary step toward nuclear proliferation. The US imposed military and technological sanctions on India. Once again, bilateral relations were marked by mistrust and lack of confidence between the two countries (Malik 2006: 87).

Despite the significant progress that was made during President Bill Clinton's second term in office, it declined after India's nuclear test in 1998. It was only after the Kargil War that defence cooperation was restored. The Defence Policy Group (DPG) was established, and the first two meetings took place before 9/11 (Nanda 2004: 128).

A confluence of interests between India and the United States during the closing years of the Clinton administration boosted bilateral ties. These interests included closer cooperation with India rather than Pakistan. As the new millennium approached, the US and India agreed to cooperate on various issues. India and the United States agreed in a joint declaration issued on March 21, 2000 that they would be partners in peace in the new century, with a shared interest in and complementary roles in preserving regional and global security. They will hold frequent talks and collaborate with others to promote strategic stability in Asia and beyond. To combat terrorism and other threats to regional peace, we will step up cooperation. (US Department of State Report 2001). This statement was, in many ways, an acute recognition that combating terrorism in a globalized world was a significant focus in the relationship. Indian concerns, however, remained on the issue of cross-border terrorism from Pakistan. The articulation of the focus on terrorism led to many levels of cooperation, especially in strategizing jointly to combat it.

In the aftermath of 9/11, global challenges focused on combating terrorism. India benefited from the US policy to remove the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, but in Indian's view, American action was not directed at cross-border terrorism faced by



India. Counterterrorism was an important component of the US National Security Strategy. Many of India's foreign policy goals were in line with it, including promoting human rights, combating international terrorism, resolving local conflicts, preventing the spread of WMD, and promoting trade-based economic growth. This has allowed the US and India to work on global problems particularly as India's economic and political capabilities has grown significantly (Jaishankar 2006: 786-787).

The US and India also addressed humanitarian and security issues through combined and coordinated action, there have also been significant cooperation on disaster management, conservation, human trafficking, and protecting maritime trade from piracy. The "Global Democracy Initiative", which aims to enhance democratic institutions and advance democracy globally, was another noteworthy achievement. Due to this, the two nations launched the "UN Democracy Fund" in September 2005. (India-US Joint Statement, 2 March 2006). Indo-US defence cooperation have undergone periods of intense cooperation and mutual suspicion, however, despite periods of non-cooperation between the two countries, the final years of Clinton administration witnessed greater defence cooperation. Further, there was also a recognition that the spread of democracy and supporting democratic institutions would help accelerate peace and stability worldwide.

### **Technological Cooperation**

President Harry S. Truman launched a technical aid initiative for developing nations in his inaugural address on January 20, 1949. The phrase "Point Four Program" refers to the fourth foreign policy aim that the US President had announced. (Truman 1949).

Between 1950 and 1951, India received significant technological assistance. The construction of the Tarapur Atomic Energy Power Station in 1963 was a significant event in Indo-US technological cooperation. The "science and technology" programme that the two nations agreed to in 1982 was another important step. In accordance with the new plans, France agreed to take over as the US's primary supplier of enriched uranium. The Indo-US friendship was greatly improved by this programme. A Memorandum of Understanding on Sensitive Technologies,

Commodities, and Information pertaining to Military Equipment was signed between India and the US in 1984. (Nanda 2004: 138-142).

In the 1990s, steps toward increased bilateral strategic trade, that is, trade in dual-use technologies, did not improve. The US had given India control over the “export of dual-use technologies” since the beginning of the 1980s, after Pokhran-I. These export controls were hindered considerably because of sanctions on India after India’s Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. The Clinton administration was swift to impose a series of sanctions on India which severely impacted its technology sector (Sahni 2006: 176). However, these impediments in Indo-US relations were removed and relations improved during the George W Bush administration.

### **Economic and Trade Relations**

The United States was one of India's major trading partners in the 1950s and early 1960s. The US provided India with a third of its requirements. However, economic relations soon subsided when India went ahead for closer links with the Soviet Union, and due to this, the share of US imports dropped to around one-tenth in 1980. During this time, exports to the US as a percentage of overall exports stayed constant at 14%, while relations between the US and India on the economic and political fronts were tepid. (Martin and Kronstadt 2007: 5-39).

US-India economic ties in the form of bilateral trade and investments made up a significant aspect of bilateral links, especially because India is the second fastest developing economy in the world and the world’s largest economy is the US. India’s economic liberalization in 1991 drastically changed its economy. The economic reforms impacted investment and trade ties with the United States. Since 2000, both countries have been trying to make robust institutional linkages to enhance bilateral economic cooperation, mainly through the “India-US Economic Dialogue.” Since the 1990s, Indo-US relations have improved significantly evidenced by the increase in trade and investment between the two countries.

### **Priorities of Contemporary India’s Foreign Policy**

India’s foreign policy is multidimensional, with the potential to pursue various interests simultaneously. However, certain variables have the most critical impact on

foreign policy direction. For instance, India's position in global affairs, particularly as a significant regional power, is crucial for the US as it tries to balance itself against China in Asia. Additionally, the international community has accepted that India has nuclear weapons and is looking for energy security to meet its security needs. These elements influenced how India defined its strategic interests in diverse regions in terms of its bilateral relations with the major world powers. (Pant 2008: 19).

### **A New Distribution of Global Power**

Post-cold war international politics is wedged between the balance of power and cooperative security extremes. Nations seem to be progressing through an interlocking grid of cooperative interests in various fields such as economy, energy, trade, information, and defence cooperation, while simultaneously engaging each other in a complex interaction of balance of power. An example of this global trend is seen between the US and China. These two countries are the largest trading partners with each other. However, they also pursue policies that undermine each other's interests, particularly in conventional and nuclear armament (Bhonsle et al. 2007:17).

The end of the Cold War, growing global interdependence, and the transnational nature of many threats, according to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, have rendered strategic notions created in a bipolar environment relatively obsolete. A new paradigm of security cooperation that is appropriate for an evolving multipolar world where global threats receive global responses must be developed (Singh 2005). The Prime Minister's statement made clear India's desire for stronger bilateral security ties with the US and placed it in the context of more general concerns about international security.

After the Cold War, India realized it needed assistance in several areas to achieve development goals. Thus, India focused on establishing stronger links with the US beginning in the 1990s. Some experts claimed that India needed the US much more than the US needed India as relations between the two countries increased dramatically and as global circumstances changed. According to academics, India has no choice except to pursue tighter connections with the US while battling those who want to go on the same bandwagon. (Rajagopalan and Sahni 2008: 15).

Other scholars have also argued that “the US relationship might be more imperative for India. Whether it is regaining ingress to nuclear technology, balancing South Asia, fighting terrorism, tackling the emergence of China, increasing economic development and India trade, or modernizing the military capabilities of India, India is left with no option other than the United States” (Bajpai 2006). A former Indian ambassador listed ten reasons for India’s need to engage with the United States. These are: more investment, higher trade, access to high technology, energy security, fighting international terrorism, advanced military technology, balancing China, reforming the UN, keeping peace in the neighbourhood, and a global role for India (Mansingh 2006: 23-24). Henry Kissinger suggested that a cooperative US-India cooperation is feasible due to the regional objectives of India, which they are pursuing in a pretty hard-headed fashion, which are quite comparable to ours because of the mutually beneficial nature of the developing relationship. (Blackwill 2005: 12).

According to some scholars there are eight common ambitions between the US and India. These include opposing the unification of power in Asia, reducing the threats posed by state-sponsors of terrorism, halting the spread of WMDs, promoting the spread of democracy, and promoting "economic development, safeguarding the global commons, especially the sea lanes of communications, protecting the energy security and the global environment. (Tellis 2 2005: 2). The difference in economic and military power between the two sides is broad, and differences in national interests have caused disagreements even when their goals and objectives converged. Further, the bilateral relations could still be hampered by national security interests particularly when either side pursues policies to realize specific goals (Tellis 2 2005: 2).

### **Factors Governing US Engagement with India**

Since the late 1990s, Washington has taken a greater interest in India as a result of its economic growth and position as Asia's new emergent power. For its part, New Delhi welcomed the US's efforts to build stronger ties. As a former US diplomat argued, both democracies foresaw that they could benefit from persistent cooperation. An ex-American official who was commenting on US-Indian relations said, “For Washington, the advantages include a key regional ally in India at a time when the region is experiencing instability, as well as a stronger position to help calm potential

future nuclear concerns in the region. Trade and investment growth benefit both nations and are necessary for better US relations with India". (Schaffer 2002: 31).

Other influential observers have pointed out that since the 1990s; India's foreign policy has deepened its deliberation regarding its future status in the global system. The nuclear power potential and India's search for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council mirror its significant power objectives. India has been defined as a 'major' soft power particularly due to its diversity and democratic character. India's 'military' power, mobilization and social cohesion, technological ability, economic resources, quality of governance, and diplomatic and intellectual capabilities reflect India's emerging great power status (Perkovich 2003: 129-144).

### **The Emergence of China as a Regional Player**

The emergence of China as a global power in economic and military spheres has undoubtedly added a new dimension to relations between India and the US. There is an increasing perception that China, which plays a dominant role in the Asian security scenario, has increasingly become part of the security dialogue between India and the US. Many observers have stated that Indo-US strategic partnership is intended to contain China. Both India and the US do not want to endanger their separate trade and economic links with China, despite China's rise and its challenge to both nations. Hedging against China is how the US National Security Strategy described its approach. Furthermore, the 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review noted that China stands alone as a military rival to the United States and exhibits behaviours that indicate Washington will work to maintain its superiority. (Mansingh 2006: 24).

These US concerns were heightened particularly as China's influence has expanded in Asia and its diplomatic and economic engagement in areas like Latin America and Africa have increased considerably. Further, China's nuclear weapons capability along with its second-strike capabilities and rapidly modernizing conventional military forces continued to shape America's thinking (McMillan et al. 2008: 152). The US strategy towards China has two features. The first focuses on including China in international institutions to affect China's attitude and political rise in positive directions. The second focus is on maintaining US military alliances and capabilities to hedge against the possibility of China becoming dangerous or hostile. The

difficulty is to balance the two elements so that it does not leave the US in an unfavorable position. The George W. Bush Administration thus frequently used to improve US military potential in Asia through greater security cooperation with countries like India, Japan, and Taiwan (McMillan et al. 2008: 153).

Similar strategic goals for the stability of the Asia-Pacific are shared by the US and India, and they work together politically and militarily to prepare for a wide range of regional crises. India and the United States have not publicly identified China as a mutual military threat out of concern that the volatile relations might deteriorate (Hagerty 2006: 27). In the current century, the last strategic challenge has been China's ability to become a superpower. Since the 2000s, China is the fastest growing economy in the world and is the single peer competitor to the US. Policymakers in the US have expressed concerns about the motivation behind China's accelerating military modernisation and economic expansion as the country embraces technology. Politicians in the US are becoming more wary of China due to its potential to undermine their standing on the world stage. (McMillan et al. 2008: 166).

Some believe that Washington and New Delhi have a shared interest in preventing China from becoming a dominant force that would disturb the balance of power in Asia. Both India and the US want a stable Asia (Hagerty 2006: 27). As a counterbalance to China's inevitable rise and the necessity to preserve a regional balance of power, the US has been forging closer ties with India. Since the 2000s, the US has tried to include India a regional partner as part of its containment strategy or as a strategic partner in managing China's ascent. Whether preference is given to containment or managed ascent, India is critical for achieving either outcome (Fair 2009: 143). Thus, US recognition of the need to balance China's rise and its future ambitions coincided with India's concerns. The China factor is thus a primary focus of both countries.

### **China Factor in Indian Strategic Thinking**

The China factor in India's strategy merits serious consideration in the overall understanding of US-India security relations. Some policy experts have argued that

while India and China have an unresolved boundary issue, shows intractable problems. The most important concern for all sides is that peace prevails in Asia and cordial relations are maintained (Bajpai 2007: 87).

After India's independence, Sino-Indian ties have been in upheaval, primarily because of a boundary dispute. It is well known and generally acknowledged that India's relations with China have improved since Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's trip to Beijing in 1988. However, China's policies have harmed relations between the two countries, and India has some concerns about them. These include the reported construction of port facilities by China in the region surrounding India, specifically in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan, as well as the transfer of missile and nuclear technologies from China to Iran and Pakistan. (Mansingh L2 2006:24).

India was also suspicious about China's growing influence in Sri Lanka and Nepal. This was because China supplied arms to Sri Lanka during its military conflicts with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). India was suspicious of Nepal's Prime Ministerial visit to China and the military build-up in Tibet. India is also distrustful of China's presence in Pakistan, Myanmar, and the Indian Ocean region (Blackwill 2005: 14).

Nehruvians, neoliberals, and hyperrealists have diverse perspectives on China, according to experts. Since Independence China and Pakistan are countries with whom India shares a common border and occasional conflicts have occurred in the past. The fact that differences on the border question persist, future conflicts are a distinct possibility. India continues to have outstanding border issues with China, however, China's growing financial and economic power together with its trade relations with major world powers means that it cannot be ignored. India has made an effort to foster a climate of harmony and collaboration with China. Neoliberals have maintained that improving relations with China can be achieved through economic cooperation. Indian authorities have taken a practical stance on the border dispute that may result in a stable relationship with China. In the years following the Cold War, India thought that the US could help to restrain China's growing power. Furthermore, "Hyperrealists feel that only Indian military strength and other emerging Asian

nations can put Beijing in check since they perceive a rising China as aggressive and expansionist". (Bajpai 2007: 822).

Indian policy experts view China's construction of naval bases in Myanmar and in Pakistan as a means to further China's military ambitions in the Indian Ocean. Such developments cannot be dismissed as it could pose grave obstacles for India in future. Thus, China's ambition as an emerging power and its impact on Asia will have an impact on Indo-US interests (Bajpai 2007: 87).

### **Economic Interests**

In the immediate years following the end of the Cold War, India's economy was weak. During Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's government, India decided to liberalize its economy. This decision not only changed India's economic growth but also impacted the course of Indo-US relations. At the same time, opening the Indian economy meant enormous economic opportunities for the US especially given the size of India's economy. The annual growth rate of the Indian economy has consistently been in the 6 to 8 per cent, at times as high as 10 per cent post liberalization in the 1990s. The information technology sector (IT) has led to this boom, coupled with measures taken to remove some of the economic policies formulated during PM Nehru's time (Macmillan et al. 2008: 189).

Economic cooperation is an essential part of Indo-US relations. India is an alluring market and significant production house for US multinationals. The US investments have helped India considerably and the transfer of technical knowledge from the US to India has created opportunities in the burgeoning IT sector in both countries. The impact of the US on the global financial sector also attracts greater economic cooperation.

The economic interests of both India and the US gave a new outlook to Indo-US relations. Their respective perceptions of each other made for better understanding (Nanda 2004: 515). President George W. Bush's commitment to free trade was the centre of interest in defining a new economic relationship with India. The Bush administration recognized the economic shift that was taking place in the world as traditional economic and financial centres in Europe and Japan was slowly being



replaced by countries like India and China. Further, it recognized that the new challenges could not be met by protectionism. The US realized that it would lead to either “sourcing labour” or outsourcing of work (Mohan 2006: 82). This process is likely to expand to cover new areas, including advanced research and development irrespective of political debate that took place in the US during Barack Obama’s election campaign.

The long-term strategic partnership between the United States and India is premised on an entangled system of economic ambitions, enlarging investment and trade leading to stable constituencies in India and the US. Significant economic stakes in each other's economies can aid in reducing the conflicts, irrationality, sensitivity, and misperceptions that frequently cloud people's perceptions of one another. Mutual understanding of regional and global events can be stabilised by shared economic interests. These interests can also make it easier to work together on international platforms and foster a positive dependence on one another's economic well-being. This is true between America and Europe, where political disagreements are frequently settled amicably and on shared economic interests. (Adhikari 2004: 164).

### **The Role of the Indian-American Community in Indo-US Relations**

The role of Indians in the US is vital for influencing the opinions of US policymakers and the decisions that they make. The impact of diaspora depends on its socio-economic character, size, and incorporation within the power structure in the country of origin. During the Cold War, the Indian community in the US was just a handful and not educated, and its impact on foreign policy was minimal. It changed in the mid-1980s as income and education among Indian Americans increased substantially. The Indian American community grew in prominence and their impact on Indo-US relations began to grow. The presence of Indian Americans in large numbers particularly in the IT and medical sectors has elevated their position in American society (Rubinoff 2005: 169-169). In the post-Cold War years, economic wealth has given way to political interests as Indian businesses in America are concerned with Indo-US trade. In the 1990s, there was a considerable acceptance that the policy of President Clinton on India was, to a certain extent, reflective of the leverage of the Indian American community in Washington (Mishra 2005: 91). This factor continues to be a major one to date.

### **Evolution of Indo-US Strategic Partnership**

The evolution of US-South Asia ties till the end of the last century was guided by Cold War security considerations. Pakistan was a ‘frontline’ state in the US-led Western Bloc alliance against communism until the 1990s. US policymakers regarded Pakistan as a strategic ally that assisted the Americans in containing the spread of Soviet and Chinese influence in South Asia. As the Cold War came to an end, US interest in Pakistan started to wane. While Indo-US ties improved in 2000 as a result of discussions between the then-Indian Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, and the former US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, on topics including nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, international terrorism, and security concerns (Fair 2009: 131-132).

Before 9/11, there were indications that Pakistan was not high on the agenda during the George W. Bush administration. Security issues have been a key component of US policy in South Asia since 9/11. Pakistan has once again become a “frontline state” in the US-led “Global War on Terrorism”. However, this did not lead to a zero-sum US-South Asia policy. US relations with Pakistan and India functioned on very divergent paths, and the days of “hyphenation” have now ended. De-hyphenation meant that the US approached India and Pakistan separately without trying to balance every initiative with one country against the other. This action achieved success during the George W. Bush administration, resulting in US support for India’s economic prosperity (Asia Society 2009: 16). Scholars have argued that “Indian officials understand share the US’s preference for Pakistan to become a peaceful democracy”, (Fair 2009: 142). The starkest display of the hyphen being broken was during the visit of US President George W. Bush to Pakistan in March 2006, where he made it clear concerning parity in the nuclear deal that both India and Pakistan have different histories, needs, and realities. Thus, the administration planned to approach their relationship differently (Chadha 2008: 227).

The former “US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs” (2005 to 2008), claims Nicholas Burns, the US took significant steps to recognize the strategic importance of South Asia and seek closer ties with India as an essential partner particularly as Indian and American priorities have aligned in the post-9/11 years. The relative peace in

South Asia particularly in the 2000s was disturbed only due to the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. South Asian security concerns cannot be considered without comprehending the severe complications arising from the Kashmir dispute. It is still a big concern between Pakistan and India and no American strategy to the region can be substantial without considering the Kashmir issue and its effect. However, as a policy the US chose not to intervene in this regional rivalry over Kashmir. Without US involvement, the bilateral “composite dialogue” between Pakistan and India managed to bring peace in South Asia for more than four years (Asia Society 2009: 17).

On broader issues such as South Asian geopolitical stability, modernization, and economic development, commonalities exist between India and the US, but Washington has been cautious of pushing Islamabad on the territorial issue. However, a closer relationship with the US has made India more willing to rely on Washington (Sridharan 2009: 73). Even with the increased focus of President Barack H. Obama on Afghanistan, India was not included in the US’s Af-Pak policy. India and the US agree that fighting increasing fundamentalism and terrorism in the region is a priority, and India perceives that the US is interested in destroying terrorist havens in Pakistan and Afghanistan. After the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, the FBI helped India by sharing information about the perpetrators with India’s intelligence agencies. In addition to sharing a common threat, India supported America’s interest in promoting stability and security in South Asia, a democratic Afghanistan and a stable Pakistan (The Hindu, 30 March 2009). US South Asia policy has seen considerable changes that India has cautiously accepted.

However in 2005, there were significant concerns in India after the resurgence of the Taliban. For this reason, New Delhi significantly increased its support for the Karzai government to help support stability in Afghanistan (Inderfurth and Riedel 2009: 9). India has played a significant role as an essential donor in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and has donated \$ 600 million toward infrastructure projects, including road construction to power lines and schools. Many formal agreements were signed in August 2005 between the India and Afghanistan, in areas of education, health, and agriculture. Finally, President Hamid Karzai and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed to take joint action against militancy, and the role of Pakistan’s government in

harbouring terrorist groups that have caused security concerns in India and Afghanistan (McMillan et al. 2008: 196-197; Tellis 2005: 46-47).

Afghanistan sees India as its most important ally in the region. In general, India's role in Afghanistan has been welcomed by Washington (Fair 2009: 142). India's initiatives in Afghanistan have supplemented US assistance programs and helped to achieve development goals in that country. "Considering our enduring interests in Afghanistan, we should exchange ideas with India considerably more frequently, and certainly more honestly", the Asia Society's report "Delivering on the Promise Advancing US Relationship with India January 2009" stated. India and the United States have been collaborating to achieve their shared goal of a stable, peaceful Afghanistan. (Asia Society 2009: 16).

However, it would be wrong to conclude that the scope of Indo-US cooperation in South Asia covers Pakistan as it does the other regional countries. It is unlikely for the US to involve India in issues that directly concern Pakistan. Such a move would significantly harm US-Pakistan relations. Pakistan is still the exception to the approach adopted by India and the US to address domestic problems in South Asia. There is little chance of India and the US cooperating to stabilize Pakistan because "[the] Pakistanis will reject any Indian advice. The US has so far not found it necessary or prudent to engage India in its dealings with Pakistan. Instead, it has merely urged India and Pakistan to settle their differences peacefully and stabilize the region" (Sridharan 2009: 66).

The US is now more involved in the South Asian region than it has been in the past. India is now less cautious of the US presence in the region. The demand by the US for observer status in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), backed by India, revealed a discernible change in attitude from a country that had conventionally discouraged the encroachment of extra-regional powers in its backyard. The US and India helped each other in attempting to bring the Maoist insurgency in Nepal to an end. Both countries tried to work together to pursue permanent peace in Nepal and to stabilize Bangladesh from internal political difficulties (Inderfurth and Riedel 2009: 28-230; McMillan et al. 2008: 196).

In a press conference held in 2006, the US Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, and the then-Indian Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, reaffirmed the joint efforts India and the US had made to help Nepal achieve democracy and end its civil war. India and the US also keenly observed the political situation in Bangladesh. They adopted identical diplomatic positions on issues of common concern in Bangladesh. In 2005, a US delegation visited the country and highlighted the need to support the Bangladesh government's initiative to promote democracy and establish lasting peace and security. Indian and US aims in Bangladesh are similar, both countries prefer that Bangladesh to retain its democratic character and resist the spread of Islamic terrorism (Sridharan 2009: 72-76).

Though South Asia alone does not constitute a significant basis for the United States and India's cooperation, the region is located at the epicentre of the geopolitical area with economic and strategic interests. The two countries are interested in reducing China's influence in the region, promote regional economic cooperation and increase strategic partnerships (Chadha 2008: 214-215). China criticized the July 2005 Indo-US civilian nuclear energy deal, and its foreign minister's spokesperson Qin Gang said, "India should sign the NPT and also dismantle its nuclear weapons" (Malik 2009: 179). With scepticism, China views India's legitimized nuclear status and its strategic partnership with the US. China's missile and technology transfers to Pakistan had the objective of tying down and containing India. However, a crisis-ridden Pakistan could no longer keep India in check. China perceives the current Indo-US partnership as a part of American efforts to contain China's global ambitions. India has rejected the view that its cooperation with the US is directed against Russia, China, or any other country, but Moscow and Beijing remain sceptical (Mansingh 2009: 184).

India was virtually boxed into the South Asia region for a long time. This was effectively contested by the US commitment to assist India in becoming a major world power. According to the former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, the US is dedicated to strengthening ties with India and supporting its emergence as a regional and global force. (Rice 2009). The Indo-US nuclear deal raised concerns in China, particularly as a nuclear capable could rival it in Asia. Despite Indian claims that Beijing had endorsed the Indo-US nuclear agreement, comments from China reflected

deep-seated hostility to the US decision to make India an exception to the NPT rule. Beijing has opposed the deal because of fears that it would upset the region's strategic balance and lead to a renewed arms race in the region. China also wanted India to sign the NPT and CTBT before the deal was made (Sridharan 2009: 109).

Although it has not been explicitly stated, the US initiative to support India's progress is connected to the shifting power balance in Asia, where all of the major economies would be inextricably interconnected. Those who view the US strategy in the light of China's containment, particularly military containment, have failed to comprehend the US strategy. The Soviet Union was a military rival of US power throughout the Cold War. The US adopted the strategy of containment, advocated by US diplomat George Kennan in the 1940s. It was aimed at containing the USSR politically, economically, technologically, militarily, and ideologically. Promoting stronger relations with China, USSR's ally, was part of the US's "containment strategy." The policy of the US to tackle China, which is a foe and not an adversary, is not similar to its Cold War policy regarding the USSR. The US strategy with China is engagement rather than containment. Though the US ignored the economic and trade relations with Russia, it is the biggest China's biggest trading partner. Its investment in China's economy has been heavy and has been victorious in convincing the Chinese to slowly renounce communism and reform its economy (Subrahmanyam 2005). However, China has successfully managed to maintain its political system while adapting and integrating itself into the global economy.

Since the economic reforms of the 1970s, China's economy has expanded tremendously, and its military has quickly modernised. China, meanwhile, is becoming increasingly concerned about Indo-US defence collaboration. To maintain peace between the two nations, India has a strategic interest in forging relationships with China (Perkovich 2005: 6). Good relations between India and China were established, notably during Vajpayee's trip to China in June 2003. In 2005, Premier Wen Jiabao reciprocated, saying that "China attaches enormous significance to India's status in international affairs" during his visit. This shift in perspective might be an effort to maintain India's equal distance from the United States and balance India's growing proximity to it in the event of an emergency.

China's changing equation with India, which saw it accept India's growing role and importance internationally, is because of growing Indo-US relations (Chadha 2008: 207). America's decision to promote stronger relations with India is understandable. It sees New Delhi as the linchpin of its rebalance to Asia strategy. The two countries have converging interests, but their cooperation cannot be taken for granted, which means that a convergence of Sino-Indian interests is also possible (Sridhanan 2009: 114).

According to researchers, there "is a belief that both India and China can work together as partners in this region, rather than being perceived as adversaries" to build a more loosely structured infrastructure. Some have countered by saying that "the goal for India is not an alliance against China, but rather sustaining its 8% economic growth and development with US aid over one or two decades so that India can genuinely be sovereign". (Frankel 2005).

Another area where Indo-US strategic partnership could have a significant impact is Central Asia. The region is a new theatre in the fight against terrorism and access to energy has become two major geostrategic imperatives in today's world. The importance of Central Asia lies in its vast hydrocarbon reserves, the potential for the development of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, and its strategic location in drug trafficking. There is a massive competition going on between the major powers in this region. The US, the EU, Russia, China, and India are trying to secure energy supplies from the region. Engagement and diplomacy concerning energy politics have been dubbed "The New Great Game". Access to the energy from Central Asia is vital to ensure a diversity of supplies to America and its allies. On the other hand, energy availability will be a limiting factor in Indian and Chinese growth stories implying that the stakes are very high for either side (Blank 2009: 277-304).

Russia had been the most influential power in Central Asia. However, the formation of the "Shanghai Five" conceded that Russia could not maintain exclusive influence in Central Asia. Russia was apprehensive of US interests due to US backing of change of governments in Central Asian nations through revolutions. At that time, Russia did not see China as a competitor in the region. Through its participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was founded to counteract the influence of

the US in the region, China is becoming a major actor in Central Asia as a result of Russian support during the past 10 years. Energy, trade, counterterrorism, and the avertance of drug trafficking are all reasons why the United States and India are interested in the area, but more crucially, they want to counterbalance China's expanding influence in Central Asia. The strategic alliance between India and the US affects China in the area in significant ways. (Sokov 2006: 1-6).

Three determinants have influenced Indian interests in Central Asia. The region is rich in “energy resources” and the future capability of the Central Asian market have attracted significant interest from the US and India. However, other countries like China and Pakistan are also interested in the region. India has tried to countervail the prevalence of Pakistan and China in the region, and stop the proliferation of radical Islam from the region into India (please cite from credible source here). India has improved its partnership with the Central Asian states, primarily Tajikistan, where there are reports that the two countries have jointly set up an air base (Gupta 2005: 38). An oil and gas pipeline from Central Asia to India has faced considerable hurdles due to India-Pakistan relations. Indian investment and military cooperation in Central Asia have increased in the post-Cold War years. Countries in Central Asia have also diversified their foreign relations which have contributed to economic and political reforms. The US and India have offered governments in these countries’ incentives and close cooperation with international banks to help energy exports from Central Asia to South Asia (Smith 2008: 121-22).

The Indo-US strategic partnership has had an impact on another oil-rich region, the Persian Gulf. Even as the region is the largest supplier of the global energy demand and enriched countries in the region, it remains a location for terrorist activities and a concern for the US and India. The oil that is produced and exported from the Gulf is critical for the US and India’s energy needs. Indo-US interest in the region and cooperation with the Gulf states is also crucial in the fight against terrorism, ensure stability, support democratic institutions, and neutralize the proliferation of WMD (Chadha 2008: 257). In the Gulf region, where about four million Indians live and send money back to their families in India, that has accelerated India’s interests in the Gulf (Blank 2005: 37). Despite all these aspects, both the US and India have not given a concrete shape to their shared approach to the West Asian peace process or the



nuclear crisis regarding Iran. Indo-US differences in the Persian Gulf were far more intense and pronounced during the Cold War. Now, as India seeks close political, economic, and strategic relations with the US in the post-Cold War era, there are some areas where India has taken a position similar to the US, such as voting against Iran at the IAEA (Fair 2009: 149-150).

### **India and the US: Common Values and Interest**

The contemporary Indo-US relationship is characterised by the concept of shared values and interests. Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state at the time, stated that “the alliance is based on shared principles and mutual objectives”, which she cited as “democracy, security, and prosperity”, (US Congress, Senate 5 April 2006).

Similar interests like the promotion of security and peace and support for democracy and its value system give the US and India a mutual premise to become close partners in the post- 9/11 years. US perception of India’s place in global affairs changed as it recognized India’s potential; the US wanted to encourage India’s global engagement and support its rise not just as a regional power but also as the US’s partner in international politics (Nautiyal 2006: 6). According to Bajpayee, “both countries have important interests in Asia, from the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to East Asia. But it will be some time before the United States and India enter a full-fledged strategic cooperation. To go toward deeper engagement, New Delhi and Washington must establish mutual understanding, connections, and a basis of military and non-military cooperation”. (Bajpai 2001: 83).

The growing perception that India and the US are natural allies because of the shared values, which include a commitment to democracy and support for the rules-based international system. India is the largest democracy while the US is the oldest in the world. Due to the democratic values that the two countries share there has been significant cooperation to promote democracy worldwide. On 18 July 2005, the US and India launched the “India-US Democracy Initiative” to promote “Democracy and Development” (MEA 2005).

India’s adoption of diversity as a critical element of multiculturalism makes it like the US. A former US ambassador to India stated: “one can’t think of another nation

which is so close to the United States in a comprehensive way and with the same kind of depth, important democratic values and national interests” (Blackwill 2005: 14). Both countries share common interests which have strengthened bilateral relations. Indian businesses and the large human capital joined with America’s higher institutions of learning, and its technological capabilities have produced noticeable results in joint ventures in space and civil nuclear cooperation. These have led to hiring the brightest young minds from India, which has ameliorated the relations despite differences between the two countries (Singh 2005). American and Indian aims have converged on human rights issues, counterterrorism and promoting trade and economic prosperity worldwide. However, there are areas of divergence in Indo-US relations. Even though the two countries share similar obstacles like the challenge from an increasingly assertive China in Asia and the Indian Ocean, both sides have made considerable efforts they minimize differences and focus on cooperation in various fields (Mcmillan et al. 2008: 195).

India is the largest democracy, with a population of one billion people, situated in a part of the world where very few countries are democratic. Democracy in India has maintained a multilingual, secular, and heterogeneous society. Before becoming President, George W. Bush, had praised India’s democracy, while receiving massive financial support from Indian Americans during his campaign.

India’s ability to maintain its democratic character, its economic and military capabilities have made it an effective and essential partner for the US. That has become characteristic of the foreign policy establishment of America, particularly during the George W. Bush administration when the US emphasized the importance of democratic states as a bulwark against instability and terrorism. In addition, the spread of democracy worldwide was an opportunity to promote greater cooperation among likeminded states to ensure peace and security. It is in this backdrop that the growth of US-India Strategic partnership and cooperation on counterterrorism must be seen and understood.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**US-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND COUNTER-**  
**TERORRISM COOPERATION UNDER PRESIDENT GEORGE**  
**W. BUSH.**

The seeds of the strategic alliance between the United States and India were planted in the final years of the Clinton presidency, and it continued to grow under George W. Bush. During the Bush administration, Indo-US relations improved, notably as a result of the threat posed by international terrorism and the implications of a rising China. With its new strategic reorientation, the Bush administration began to recognise India's strategic significance. The 9/11 attacks, which took place in the early months of the Bush administration, significantly altered US foreign policy priorities and objectives. Following the assaults of September 11, 2001, the US followed a military foreign policy designed to identify, combat, and eliminate threats from international terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, which was instigated the attacks on America. The US acknowledged the serious threat posed by international terrorism. It caused a fundamental shift in its strategy and attitude toward India's worries about transnational terrorism coming from Pakistan. However, following 9/11, Pakistan joined the US as a key ally in the war on terrorism. Pakistan provided major cooperation and support to the US, which aided in the US invasion of Afghanistan. Despite the US and Pakistan's rekindled relationship, relations between India and the US did not worsen. Particularly in their efforts to combat international terrorism, the two nations discovered points of agreement. As a result, since 2001, cooperation in counterterrorism has been a crucial part of Indo-US relations.

An examination of US-Indian relations over the past ten years reveals a strengthening strategic alliance between the two nations. Despite on-going difficulties, the two nations have made tremendous progress in their cooperation on a range of areas. The US and India pursued separate paths in foreign policy throughout the Cold War due to their differing goals. Both nations have been successful in developing a mutually beneficial partnership since the end of the Cold War. The two countries' bilateral ties have evolved into a "strategic partnership" based on shared respect for democracy and the rule of law as well as shared anxieties about local, national, and international issues. As the era of globalisation crept in, it also brought non-traditional security challenges, including the emergence of global terrorism, which is seen as the most dangerous threat to a state's sovereignty and security, as well as crimes like human trafficking, drug smuggling, money laundering, and climate change. With the end of

the Cold War came a chance to refocus US-India relations and forge deeper relationships with more modern aspirations. Due to the Indian-American diaspora's growing influence, the India Caucus' assistance in influencing US Congress, the IT revolution in India, and the expansion of business ties between India and the US, there is hope that relations may improve. India changed its foreign policy in the 1990s to keep up with the changes in global politics as a result of economic liberalisation and the US's status as the only superpower. With these adjustments, India would continue to cooperate with the United States on its most important goals. (Kux 1994).

The relationship between India and the US did not significantly change until the latter days of the Clinton administration and the first years of the George W. Bush administration. For the United States to further its global interests, the creation of a democratic and rising-powerful India constituted a singularly favourable transition, since there were significant strategic benefits to its growing involvement with India. One of the United States' main worries for the future was the process of developing a strong cooperation with India because it represented a rare opportunity with genuine commitment for the global balance of power. Both India and America share economic, political, and military ambitions and each have open society's that faces similar threats from and terrorism. Presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush acknowledged these commonalities and moved to set up an entirely new base for Indo-US relations. There was an increased trust between the two countries; a watershed deal on civil nuclear energy, greater cooperation scientific technology, expanding trade and commercial relations, and accelerating US-India efforts to promote democracy worldwide.

In addition to the effects of terrorism, the spread of "weapons of mass destruction" has prompted the United States to work with India to address these threats on a worldwide scale. The two nations have joined forces to condemn terrorism as unjustified and have fought to combat it. Particularly, India and the US shared concerns about terrorism and needed to develop a coordinated strategy to stop the spread of terrorism. The increase terrorist attacks on sovereign soil, particularly the 9/11 (2001) attacks on America and the 26/11 (2008) attacks in Mumbai, have united the two countries to cooperate and fight terrorism both at the regionally and globally (Rotella 2011).

The complex task of tackling terrorism is a challenge for governments around the world. Even though cooperation between the US and India has existed since the 1990s, opinions on averting terrorist attacks and each country's policies have differed (Curtis 2009). This is partly because of the hesitation against intensifying intelligence links from the India side and the US bureaucratic establishment (Haniffa 2009). However, the danger posed by terrorism to both countries required India and the US to disregard their past mistrusts and acknowledge that they were now in a position to make the most out of the new collaboration (Curtis 2008). The mistrust between the two states and their diverse geopolitical situations has been a hurdle to ameliorating the counter-terrorism alliance. New Delhi is not convinced of US strategy towards Pakistan regarding the Kashmir issue as India believes that the US has indirectly helped Pakistan train their military, provide logistical and financial assistance which has in turn assisted terrorist groups that operate in Kashmir. The increase in terrorist activities in South Asia drew the US and India together. Both countries have intensified information sharing and accelerated security cooperation and partnership in cyberspace. Maritime security was also one of the areas of joint counterterrorism collaboration between the two countries.

### **Post-Cold War US-India Strategic Partnership**

The frequent use of the word "strategic" has made it hard to define. The term 'Strategy' emanates from a military dictionary that explains the art and science of achieving success in the war. Due to this, strategic planning itself was derived from everyday tactical deployments. Today it is quite common in international relations worldwide to describe the long-time relationship between two partner states. In common sense, it also signifies a security partnership, including defence cooperation (Mansingh L1 2006: 1). Strategic alliance is not fixed but dynamic as it considers changes in geopolitical order. Many capable powers are now in the middle of change within the global order - especially India, China, and Russia. In all the above three examples, the latest instances have heightened tendencies for global consensus about rudimentary principles. This has impacted US India's strategic partnership, particularly as Russia is already setting up new strategic alliances premised on the factuality of the twenty-first century.

Relations between the US and Russia have not improved despite the conclusion of the Cold War. Similar to the former Soviet Union, Russia is in competition with the US for geopolitical influence around the world. This competition has become heightened under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin. Russian aggression in Europe and other parts of the world has been resisted or countered by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which has continued to be a stronghold with US support. In the years following 9/11, they paid particular attention to West Asia. However, controlling China became a key component of the US policy to preserve political and economic stability in the Asia-Pacific region under the Obama administration. Even as Afghanistan and Pakistan became as crucial allies in the war against terrorism, the US established a Strategic Partnership with India. (The National Security Strategy of the US 2002).

In 2004, the US National Intelligence Council report “Mapping Global Future” (2004) put forward the impact of the tectonic shifts in the world politics in the post-Cold War years. It stated that Russia, Japan, and West European powers were on the path of relative decline and that India and China were emerging as the new global powers. The arguments put forth in the report was that emerging powers like China and India can render categories such as North and South, developed and developing as obsolete. In addition, scholars have argued that old or traditional alliances would give way to new ones as countries compete for economic, political and military powers (Mohan 2006: 18).

Hence, in this new world order, relationships and interactions between countries seem to be based on particular issues of interests and potential mutual cooperation between countries. The above phenomenon favours the US because smaller countries naturally seek friendly ties with the sole superpower. While this point of view explains the US recalibration of its policy of strategic partnership with India. Further, both countries have agreed that the emerging US-India partnership was not just a result of interest in the development of their bilateral economic, political and military relationship but was also premised on mutual norms of democracy and liberalism. This partnership is marked by security cooperation, regular combined military exercises, counter-terrorism alliance, defence cooperation, technological cooperation, and increasing convergence on global democracy and peace.

Despite the deepening relations, sustainable cooperation is achievable only when the mutual interests of both countries are aligned. Such alignment of interests has to be based on a mutual faith in shared values. India does not have equivalent experience in managing alliances or strategic partnerships with the US. While in an alliance, the dominant nation lays down its terms, in a partnership, each side has to consider the other partner's concerns if it has to be sustained. Since this was a new relationship between India and the US, both countries were apprehensive about each other's intentions and were still experimenting with different ways to develop a concrete and mutually beneficial relationship (Subrahmanyam 2006: 3).

Against these positive regional developments, many other reasons complicate US security partnerships' adaptation globally. Many allies and partners have felt that Washington has primarily concentrated on fighting terrorism and has a highly militarised foreign policy particularly after the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Hostility against US policies towards Iraq and the broader Middle East has led to a sharp decrease in favourable public attitudes in favour of the United States. The range of the US Armed Forces also tends to widen the gap in potential areas of cooperation between the US and allied partners, making combined operations more challenging. There have been some concerns among some allies that the realignment of US military deployments and changing global interests could hamper bilateral security relations or could unwittingly get them involved in regional conflicts and challenges, like the differences between the US and EU on the matter on Iran (Flanagan et al. 2008: 206-274). Amidst such broader concerns, the relationship between India and the US became more promising and positive, especially under the George W. Bush administration.

### **Indo-US Relations during President Bush's Administration**

In 2001, when George W. Bush became President, he expressed a strong desire to expand Indo-US relations. The Bush administration intensified and enhanced the progress that was made during the Clinton years. Even before President George W. Bush's Presidency, his advisors suggested ways to change Indo-US relations on a lasting foundation based on common and mutual interests. Then Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee called "India and the US as natural allies" and declared,



“both countries has developed a roadmap to accomplish the strategic basis of the bilateral relationship based on their mutual interests” (Asia Society 7 September 2000).

India has one of the world's fastest expanding economies.. It's flourishing information technology sector and its success as a democratic, stable, and reliable nuclear power in South Asia. The George W. Bush administration sought to develop deeper relations with India, and defence cooperation between the two states. During the election campaign, Bush lauded India for being a responsible regional power. After Bush became President, the then US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice underscored the strategic imperativeness of India in an article in Foreign Affairs. She noted that the United States had to focus more on India's part in the regional stability. During the Bush years the US wanted to minimize the Indo-Pak rivalry with regard to Kashmir and reduce tension between the two nuclear states. India is yet to be a superpower; however, it can evolve as one (Rice 2000: 45-62).

President George W. Bush emphasized the mutual commitment toward democracy as the main force behind closer relations with India. In May 2001, President Bush proposed a new global strategic framework. During discussions between the Indian External Affairs Minister and US Deputy Secretary of State (2001-2005), Richard Armitage, the effort was made to identify the different elements of the new security framework proposed by President Bush.

In a statement, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that Prime Minister Vajpayee received a letter from President George W. Bush accepting his offer to visit India from Armitage. In the framework of attempts to deepen ties between the United States of America and India, President Bush has told the Prime Minister that he is looking forward to the visit. Additionally, he stated that he intended to collaborate closely with Prime Minister Vajpayee to advance shared interests in Asia and the rest of the world. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 2001)

Reviewing the bilateral relations between India and the US was the aim of the trip. Additionally, it examined regional problems and difficulties in addition to bilateral

ones. Naturally, during the discussions between the two parties, some important international concerns came up and were handled. Different topics of interest were discussed in the conversation. Both the US and India expressed a desire to quickly engage on all of these problems toward the end of the sessions. (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2004).

According to political analysts, because of the prevailing geopolitical shift, the US was looking to forge closer military ties with India. In the post-Cold War years, particularly after 9/11 the global political system changed significantly. This change allowed India and the US to think differently about their global and regional interests. India came closer to the US after the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York on 11 September 2001 and the US and its allies' announcement of war on global terrorism. India, which has faced cross-border terrorism for more than many years, was relieved that there would now be an international effort to combat it. It compelled the US to put Pakistan under pressure to take action against terrorist organisations that operate out of Pakistan. India likewise supported US anti-terrorist efforts, supplied help, and extended full cooperation to the US in its battle against international terrorism.

The US saw India as a rising force with which it shared common strategic interests in its first big declaration of its grand strategy following 9/11. “The United States has set out to bring about a metamorphosis in its bilateral relations between the two largest democracies in the world and undertake programmes that champion democracies with representative governments”, according to the US National Security Strategy of 2002. The trajectory of India is premised on a realization that US ambitions need stronger relations with India. The other areas of cooperation between the US and include greater economic cooperation. Both countries are interested in the unhindered flow of trade and commerce, which includes the critical sea lanes of communication in the Ocean. Apart from these, both are committed to fighting terrorism and establishing a peace and security in Asia (National Security Strategy 2002: 27).

The devastating 9/11 attacks brought challenges and opportunities for ushering in greater Indo-US strategic partnership. Building on the steady improvement of relations established by the Talbott Singh talks, India agreed to support the US in combating terrorists groups based in South Asia. India's support encompassed access

to its air bases for refuelling of US aircraft and maintenance, intelligence sharing, access to its airspace and docking privileges for US warships (Mohan 2003: xi-xii).

India made the decision to support and cooperate with the US in its fight against terrorism. The bilateral relations began to feel positive and in excellent health as a result of frequent high-level encounters between Indian and American officials and leaders. Both nations began discussing forming ties in the security and defence sectors. A significant area of collaboration also evolved in the fight against terrorism. While Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott engaged in lengthy discussions to understand one another's perspectives, Rice and Mishra's discussions with regard to national security were more concentrated on methods to forge a new alliance, particularly in the field of high technology collaboration. Following the November 2001 meeting between Prime Minister Vajpayee of India and President George W. Bush, Brajesh Mishra of India and Condoleezza Rice of the US met individually to further the new agenda. The dialogue between them became known as the "Rice-Mishra process," which aimed to advance the agenda on three issues: high-tech commerce, civilian nuclear cooperation, and civilian space programme. (Mohan 2006: 21-22). The terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001, was severely condemned by the US as an attack on freedom and democracy. India's anti-terrorist policy and efforts were supported by the US. The Bush administration continued to exert pressure on President Pervez Musharraf by implying that the US may stop providing aid because of cross-border infiltration, among other reasons. (Kux 2002: 20).

Throughout 2002, while Indo-US relations remained cordial, America viewed the Pakistan's role as a vital security partner in the Global War on Terror. Thus, the US decision to maintain a sort of balance between Indo-Pak relations. High-level diplomacy initially remained confined to the US desire to reduce Indo-Pak border tensions. During their statements to the UN General Assembly in September 2002, "Prime Minister Vajpayee and US President George W. Bush" both brought up the problem of international terrorism.

In addition to references to the threat of terrorism, PM Vajpayee and President Bush discussed Indo-US cooperation in five key sectors, high technology, space research,

civilian nuclear technology, economic and defence cooperation, and regional and global issues (CITE). Prime Minister Vajpayee emphasized the need for global and comprehensive action against terrorism. In November 2002, USA and India signed the historical statement of “Principles on High Technology Cooperation”. This ushered and promised capability for high technology commerce, the importance of tackling systematic and economic challenges that inhibit such trade encompassing tariff and non-tariff hurdles, and among other things, the requirement to involve both these countries for the promotion of trade. There was also realization and acceptance from both sides and a commitment to increase cooperation in sensitive technologies and goods and realized the need to bring about the hi-tech trade, keeping in mind the national security, laws, and foreign policy objectives.

In 2013, Richard Hass, “director of policy planning” at the “US Department of State”, advocated for the two nations to improve their diplomatic ties to strengthen their relations and strategic alliance. This proposal, in turn, will also benefit the military relationship between the two countries (Hass 2013).

Then Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani visited the US In June 2003, and held wide-ranging talks with US Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, and US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice regarding Indo-US relations. Advani regarded relations between the two countries not merely as a marriage of convenience but that of strategic importance. He said that the relations between the two countries were moving in the right direction, particularly in joint defence exercises. On 24 September 2003, Indo-US relations improved when “PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee” met “US President George W. Bush” in New York. Besides exchanging views on Kashmir, terrorism, Indo-Pak relations, Iran, and China, both the leaders discussed such issues as civilian nuclear energy, the non-military space program, and dual-use technology. Such exchange of views was felt to be essential because of continued Indo-US differences in approach towards the issue of nuclear proliferation. However, the momentum in the relationship saw a minor setback with the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. There were expectations in the US that India would contribute to coalition forces in Iraq. India felt it essential to participate only as a part of a United Nations force and not as part of the US coalition (Blank 2005: 41-45).

While developing relations with the US, India did not want to become a pawn of the US. It wanted to develop a mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation essential for securing India's national interests and limiting the US-Pakistan relations (Malik 2006: 91). Recognition of mutual core interests paved the way for further developments between the two countries. Amongst these, the 2004 agreement on the NSSP was the most significant as it changed the relationship substantially and enhanced counterterrorism cooperation between the United States and India.

### **Aiming for a Strategic Partnership**

Kickleigher's suggestion was accepted in the "Agreed Minutes on Defence Cooperation" in 1995, which helped to establish the US-India defence alliance throughout the post-Cold War era (Ganguly, 2008). The advantageous relationship was given even greater weight by the "US-India Defence Policy Group", which was led by the US Defence Secretary and the Indian Defence Minister. However, the Pentagon and the George W. Bush administration reassessed the strategic alliance with India.

The Pentagon and the White House saw the strategic importance of India as a potential ally in bringing about a new balance of power in Asia and ensuring stability in the Indian Ocean. US-Indian relations significantly improved following 9/11. Robert Blackwill, the US ambassador to India, reiterated the consistency of US foreign policy in front of an audience in New Delhi. Since no country can promote itself at this point, the US-India alliance had begun to recover from the consequences of the US-Pakistan relationship, and this was credited to significant changes in perception both in Delhi and Washington, the speaker claimed. He added that "President Bush has a positive approach to US-India relations, consistent with the rise of India as a world power." The Pentagon received India's assistance for President Bush's offer of a missile defence system and its overall collaboration with the US following 9/11 extremely favourably. Top political and military figures from India and the US began travelling frequently between their respective capitals, focusing on formal discussions of a defence partnership. (Blackwill 2001).

### **Next Steps in Strategic Partnership**

One of the important first-term diplomatic achievements of the George W. Bush administration, "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership", (NSSP) which was unveiled in January 2004, was made possible by the preparation of the road. This accomplishment was made possible by a string of small-scale victories in the bilateral relations, including collaboration in counterterrorism, military-to-military interactions, and public diplomacy. The NSSP agreement, which was announced by President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee, stated a shared objective of halting the spread of WMD and other weapons that could be used by terrorists. They announced that the new steps they planned to change Indo-US relationship. There has been agreement on both sides to increase cooperation in particularly in "civilian space program, civilian nuclear energy, missile defence, and high technology trade" (Vajpayee 2004). This agreement allowed India greater access to US high technology in exchange for instituting export control measures to prevent the proliferation of WMDs. These technologies can also not be diverted toward India's strategic programs (Banerjee 2006: 73). According to Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, US-Indian ties are increasingly built on shared interests and principles. We are collaborating to advance wealth and peace on a global scale. We cooperate with one another in the fight against terrorism and in preventing the spread of WMDs and their delivery systems. (Vajpayee 2004).

Following Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the US in 2005, India's nuclear status was acknowledged. US President George W. Bush visited India on March 1, 2006, with a focus on giving the "US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement" a tangible form. United States and India relations focussed on strategic/defence; energy security; and economic and financial cooperation, including trade (Kronstandt 2009: 4-8). This was accompanied by India declaring it would reorient its relations with the US substantially. PM Singh had stated that, Indo-US Strategic Partnership reached a level where it began to be reflected in diplomatic cooperation between the two countries to see the "nuclear deal" through the "Nuclear Supplier Group." The agreement also got support in the US Senate, which passed 123 agreements with a substantial majority reflective of the priority of Senate members to a strategic partnership with India.

Terrorism is a problem that the US and India are dealing with, and they have been working together to tackle it for a while. The early Indo-U.S. discussion on combating international terrorism began in the 1980s, during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Earlier, the US help in capacity building was furnished via aeronautical safety that aimed to stop the hijacking of civilian flights. Since then, collaboration has expanded to include areas like the forensic examination of explosive devices (Raman 2010). Even though Washington took a few steps to assist India in the 1980s with the Sikh militancy, greater US assistance was provided in the middle of the 1990s to deal with problems in the battle against terrorism. Soon after the Soviets left Afghanistan, the United States started combating the threats posed by Islamic terrorist groups. These threats manifested in attacks on American citizens by these groups. The 1993 World Trade Center explosions, the 1998 attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and the 2000 attack on the USS Cole were among the spate of attacks. Many dialogue exchanges were done between the countries' officials after the abduction of six European tourists in 1995 in Kashmir.

The foremost incident of cooperation between India-U.S. in fighting terrorism was visible in 1996 when the US averted the crowd funding initiatives of Sikh terrorist groups taking part in the US. The consensus among counterterrorism specialists at the time was that the political influence of the Sikh community in the US made it impossible to grasp the full potential of the two countries consensual cooperation on the Sikh insurgency (Nayak 2010).

Due to the 1997 signing of the US-India extradition deal, US-wanted Sikh extremists in India were deported. The US and India worked together to combat terrorism in this way. Additionally, the hijacking of Indian Airline Flight 814 on December 24, 1999, strengthened ties between the two countries. In January 2000, a Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism was formed. The organisation concentrated on stepping up global efforts to combat terrorism. The Joint Working Group met for the first time in February 2000 in London with Talbott, the US Deputy Secretary, and Jaswant Singh, the foreign minister of India. The offer was acknowledged by the Indian government of the US on aid programs to do with anti-terrorism; they agreed that the "Joint Working Group" must continue to have regular meetings and develop into a valuable tool for the two parties to exchange their experiences, share crucial information, and

strengthen their cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Strengthening a regime that attempts to combat global terrorism is a shared goal of the US and India. Such an alignment of interests added to the ideal foundation for a robust and improved relationship between India and the US. The “Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism” offers a multidisciplinary viewpoint to the alliance fighting terrorism and periodically assesses the alliance’s progress (Pillai, 2000).

### **Counter-terrorism Cooperation between India and United States post 9/11**

The 9/11 attacks, revealed the serious impact terrorism had on global security and stability and on national security. As soon as the 9/11 attacks took place, the US security establishment adopted a militaristic security posture. This development was particularly evident with the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. On its part, India provided considerable assistance to the US in fighting terrorism worldwide. In the history of India, for the first time, India allowed the US access to its military base, which was not offered to the Soviet Union, thus signally a new phase in Indo-US relations (Tellis 2005).

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee travelled to the US in 2001 to reiterate India's support for bilateral counterterrorism cooperation. The visit opened the path for profound sharing of intelligence between the US and India, with New Delhi giving a lot more strategic aid to the areas of South Asia and the Indian Ocean. When the visit took place, the countries’ leaders declared many policy statements on the extent of the counter-terrorism alliance. On November 9, 2001, the two leaders emphasised the need for a joint declaration (US Department of State, 2001). It stated that following 9/11, India and the US have decided to work together to combat terrorism. As victims of terrorism, particularly in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the US and the 1 October 2001 bombing of Kashmir's legislative assembly in India, both nations believed that terrorism not only posed a threat to their own security but also to efforts by other nations to “establish democracy, sovereignty, stability, and global safety”. As the two largest democracies, leaders from both sides highlighted that “those who connect terrorism with religion are as mistaken as those who use religion to support, encourage, or excuse terrorist crimes”. It was agreed by “President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee” that defeating terrorism would require setting up global



partnerships and securing the cooperation of each nation to share intelligence on terrorist havens and coordinating efforts to counter the spread of terrorist activities.

Both leaders in the US and India agreed that they would take advice from each other often regarding Afghanistan's future. They also accepted the steps defined in the UNSCR 1373 and requested that every country accept and exercise prevailing UN Conventions on fighting terrorism. In order for the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to improve them, they asked the Indian draught of the "Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism" for assistance and requested that the unresolved concerns be rectified. President George W. Bush and PM Vajpayee agreed that events in Afghanistan could have a negative impact to its neighbours. They revealed that the Al-Qaida and Taliban links had changed Afghanistan into a haven for terrorist groups, drug traffickers, and other extremists. The two leaders also agreed that Afghanistan needed significant and on-going foreign assistance for its development and economic restructuring. In addition to providing Afghans with financial assistance to rebuild their country, supporting an Afghan government that represents all religious and ethnic groups and is friendly with all neighbouring countries was another priority. India and the US worked together with international organizations and other countries to achieve these objectives. In 2002, Lal Krishna Advani, the then Indian Home Minister, and George Fernandes, the then Defence Minister, visited the US, which was soon followed by the meeting between the US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Sinha. In tandem with the other key US diplomats, the US defence and State Secretaries also visited New Delhi in 2002. In 2003, a lot of confidential exchanges occurred (Kronstadt 2003).

Between 2000 and 2002, the "Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism" met four times, highlighting the imperativeness that the two countries needed to focus on especially fighting terrorism. In the ensuing years, this has been a landmark for both democracies in tackling the problems of terrorism. It paved the way for both the countries to have gained much through their partnership in counterterrorism ("US Department of State, 2002").

Both countries have firstly enlarged their evaluation and information exchange in the regional and global terrorist situation. Second, robust cooperation of investigation and

intelligence was incorporated. Third, the counterterrorism training exercises for the Indian law enforcement personnel were increased significantly. Fourth, they established a bilateral Cyber Security Forum with a well-defined action plan to monitor information security and cyber terrorism. They also established the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. Five, both countries established a military-to-military anti-terrorism partnership to support the efforts of the India-US Defence Policy Group. Six, they collaborated on several anti-terrorism measures, such as implementing “UNSC Resolution 1373”. Finally, they began discussions on issues like homeland/internal security, border management, security financing of terror, forensic science transportation, and have taken imperative measures to find and tackle the pursuits of organizations/individual terrorists of concern to India and the US.

Discussions between the Indian counterpart of the "US Technology Support Working Group" and it have expanded cooperation on improving counter-terrorism technology, tools, and equipment, which is essential for better border management. Another important turning point was the establishment of the "U.S.-India Cyber Security Forum," which happened following the events of September 11, 2001. This forum's second meeting took place in Washington, DC, in November 2004, after its first meeting in New Delhi in April 2002. Identifying the expanding interdependence between the US and India in the IT sector was on the agenda of the first meeting. The utilisation of Indian IT companies by US corporations and governments, worth roughly \$9 billion annually, is driving bilateral cooperation. The United States and India, who affirmed their commitment to assisting in the protection of cyberspace by establishing five combined working groups and outlining action plans for each, provided the conference's backdrop. Other initiatives included workshops in New Delhi and Washington. (Indian Embassy, Washington, DC, 2004).

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> “US-India Cyber Security Forum” meeting, representatives from private sector from various countries and the government representatives convened to discuss collaborative efforts to fight cyber-crime, intelligence sharing and defence cooperation, cyber security development, and research, and managing cybercrimes (United States Department of State, 2004). The “US-India Cyber Security Forum has great promise for future cooperation”, said the Secretary of State for Political Affairs following the forum's second meeting, which was presided over by Marc Grossman.

At the time when the meeting was held, emphasis was placed on the significance of the counter-terrorism cooperation proposal. The following statement was stated by Arvind Gupta (“Head of the Indian Delegation and Joint Secretary at the National Security Council”), Securing cyberspace will continue to be one of the greatest challenges facing the international community for years to come, and this Cyber Security Forum has emerged as an important bilateral mechanism to address such issues, said J.N. Dixit, India's National Security Advisor, at the forum (Ganguly et al. 2007).

As President Bush was elected again, there was a substantial change in the ties between the United States and India. Forging closer connections between India and the United States thru the accelerated collaboration, including best practises exchanges, joint efforts in important international forums, and joint military drills, was the goal of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W. Bush in a joint statement released in July 2005. (US Department of State 2005). President Bush spent three days in India in 2005 to discuss ways to improve bilateral relations (Kronstadt 2007). Following the visit of the President, US authorities have reemphasized the significance of cooperation, links to a global alliance, improved bilateral counterterrorism alliances, and strong military alliances with defence sales. The Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative (CCI), which was signed by India and the United States in July 2010 in response to the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, aims to expand joint efforts and improve military and counterterrorism cooperation (The Hindu 2010). The commitment established by both governments to combat terrorism and uphold security is reflected in this agreement. These attempts included discussions with "law enforcement agencies," visits by senior officials at the same time to share lessons learned, performing joint drills for defence training, and cooperating internationally on crucial anti-terrorism issues. (The White House 2010).

New Delhi and Washington have been involved in strategic dialogues and have addressed many significant regional, bilateral, and global concerns. However, their opinions have varied on some concerns connected to counterterrorism (Sharma 1994). A significant impediment was the differences in the legal framework of the US and India, particularly India’s demand for the extradition of the Lashkar-e-Taeba (LeT) trained American citizen David Headley who played a role in the “26/11 Mumbai

attacks”. The US and India also disagreed on geopolitical matters like Iran and issues related to trade. However, US-India relations have been known to overcome various challenges, and the two sides have managed to cooperate on geo-economic and geo-economic objectives premised on democratic norms and values. This ability to cooperate can be seen in every sphere of bilateral ties, including the “US-India civilian nuclear energy cooperation,” and the “New Framework for the Defence Agreement,” regular combined military exercises, counterterrorism, defence ties, high-technology partnerships, and strong economic relations. However, this significant friendship is most crucial in the defence, nuclear, and security sectors. These concerns are crucial elements of the more substantial strategic, economic, and political links between the United States and India in the context of the shifting international order. According to the current trends, the two nations are the two most important allies in a bilateral security and defence relationship. Their partnership may have a long-lasting impact on the global "balance of power" in the twenty-first century.

### **Growing Military and Defence Ties**

The inter-military relationship between the United States and India has changed significantly since 2001, and it now manifests itself in joint military missions and exercises. There are more than fifty such joint exercises, such as the Malabar Naval exercise consisting of the Quad group nations (India, U.S., Japan, and Australia) in the Bay of Bengal. The practical and quick cooperation of the US and India’s naval forces following the tsunami tragedy in 2004 demonstrated their capacity to work together in conventional and unconventional security situations.

These initiatives aimed to bring about interoperability, the capability of Indian and American forces to synchronize and fight in unison to intensify their relationship of “cooperative security.” However, this synchronization has to surpass the “US Pacific Command” and encompass the “US Central Command” helped by the Pentagon institutionalization of dialogue. These drills show that India is gradually overcoming its reluctance to collaborate militarily with the US outside of the UN apparatus and is assisting in a broader range of issues that have an immediate or long-term impact on both the United States and India.

The partnership between US and India, yielding two watershed agreements structured to intensify nuclear and defence links, which was almost a decade old. The focus of the top Indian and American leaders lay on the significance of the countries' essential links. All these developments gave way to an improvement in US-India ties and diplomatic successes which transpired into the "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP)" (Joint Press Statement, Indian Embassy, 2004). This agreement allowed the two sides to cooperate in four areas: civilian space programs, high-tech trade, civilian nuclear energy, missile defence. The NSSP soon handled the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement and the defence negotiations. The decade-long "New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship" was an initiative in the year 2005 towards smoothening the partnership in diverse missions, expanding defence trade between the two countries, accelerating technological possibilities, and deepening of alliance linked to missile safeguard.

The agreement aimed to use tools to harness futuristic two-way defence industrial links and affordable research outsourcing and production to India. In a world where the defence industries of industrialized nations are becoming more globalized, this transaction offers opportunities for the Indian defence sector to improve its military capabilities. Apart from helping India's attempts to modernize its defence sector, it also expands the "sources of technology transfers and defence acquisition and co-production". It also highlights the need for India and the US to further their defence cooperation to maintain an even balance of power in Asia. Additionally, it opened up the Indian defence market to the American defence sector. It became evident that there had been a crucial development in the "commercial, military sales to India" sector of the defence industry. To access the booming Indian market, many companies like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and other multinational companies have established offices in India. However, there are many obstacles when it comes to the Indian defence industry, especially bureaucratic hurdles, coming out of an import oriented defence sector to having equal friendship for unified production in the field of defence while at the same time setting up its internal defence industry (Mohanty 2007). India is ready for foreign private investment in the co-production of an array of weapons. There has been an initiation by the Indian government of the slightest need for a 30 per cent direct counterbalance in the defence sector directed at widening the base of defence products for the private and public sectors. A significant sponsor,

a solid tech base with skilled workers, a well-built R&D facility, and a capable defence industry are the benchmarks for any defence power.

The Indian government has initiated a counterbalance of direct support in the defence sector. Widening the defence production facilities would be included for both the public and private sectors. A sound defence sector would have proper funds, a high technical base, and an efficient workforce. In addition, a structured R&D base had accompanied the defence sector. As an emerging power, India is doing well in multiple domains (Homi 2008). However, the India's ambition to be a reliable power can only be achieved if it has the ability for potential defence readiness to tackle its external security dangers which arise from competitors like China and Pakistan.

India's weak point had been in developing its indigenous defence capability. India depended on the Soviet Union's defence sector throughout the Cold War. However, as relations with Israel have improved in the post-Cold War years, India has acquired sophisticated technology. India also continues to rely on military hardware from countries like France, the UK, and other European nations. It has increased its defence purchases in the last decade. However, the most significant leap in India's defence purchase relies on its associations with the United States defence industry. Post-Cold War, there occur reformulation in the US defence industry and has shown considerable flexibility and a robust ability to win over the hurdles (Ghoz & Sapolsky 2007).

The Industry's power to attract, advance, and sustain workforce that is highly trained scientifically, as well as markets for its exports, will determine the future of the American aerospace and defence sector (Caron 2006). In this context, India, with its technologically sound, low-cost and skilled workforce, is becoming a lucrative hub for defence companies from the US. About 70–80% of India's defence market access goes to Russia, while just 20–30% goes to West European nations, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Israel (Singh 2001).

However, over the past ten years defence trade between India and US has expanded above \$9 billion, and in 2015 India's effort to modernize its military has created a market worth \$80 billion (Kanwal 2010). As a result, the American defence industry

has a chance to become one of the key competitors in India's defence market. Additionally, this joint venture in the defence industry is generally advantageous because it allows the US defence industry to benefit from India's soft power capabilities in the military and defence sectors as well as India's lower production costs, particularly for subsystems and constituent parts, and lower repair costs (The Times of India 2013). The US defence companies are interested in accessing India's profitable defence market. Given India's increased role and interests in Asia, it is not opposed to the idea of buying American weapons. Making the strategic and defence ties stronger between the US and India also benefits India's relationship with the US in general while improving its military capabilities. This crucial partnership between the two largest democracies in the world will significantly impact global governance and contribute to stable and peaceful world order.

### **The Civilian Nuclear Cooperation**

Since the 1990s, the nuclear issue has been an impediment in Indo-US relations. In the 2000s the Bush administration was responsible for this nuclear relations impasse, especially because of refusal by India to ratify "the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)" and due to the "US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978", which barred India from receiving high-tech or sensitive technology. However, on 18 July 2005, the Bush administration took a different step with the conclusion of "the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Non-proliferation Enhancement Act" which was a watershed event in US- India relations (The New York Times: 2010). This Civil Nuclear agreement tried to address issues like nuclear safety cooperation, energy security, and the incorporation of India into the global nuclear regime. The agreement also enabled India to have access to safeguards, advanced nuclear reactors and nuclear fuel (Sharma 2008). This agreement is part of a more significant set of measures between India and the United States, dual usage technology, encompassing space, advanced military technology and missile defence (Tellis 2005).

US-India defence and strategic cooperation have little chance without the nuclear agreement. Without the deal, defence relations would not have existed as US laws and non-proliferation policy denied defence cooperation with country's that have not signed the NPT while possessing nuclear weapons. Since the 1960s, US laws have strictly prohibited the sale and transfer of nuclear technology. The 2005 agreement

dismantled the nuclear non-proliferation act's technical rejection clause which had been put in place in 1974 after India initial nuclear test. "The Nuclear Non-proliferation Act of 1978's" technological denial regime placed US restrictions on transferring or selling significant dual-use technology to India and defence cooperation and nuclear energy (Tellis 2005).

The Bush administration upheld the "nuclear non-proliferation treaty", and "the US nuclear Non-proliferation Act of 1978". However, the US made an exception for India. In a broader sense, the nuclear agreement demonstrated the Bush administration's commitment to assist India's development into a reliable nuclear power by considering its expanding global military and economic importance. It signalled a shift in US- India relations and a readjustment to the balance of power in Asia. President Barack Obama announced the US's support for inclusion of India into the "Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)" in 2010. While most members of the NSG and other participating countries have voiced their support for India's inclusion in the NSG, China has thwarted every attempt to include Indian in the NSG. Despite this significant setback, the Indo-US nuclear agreement has helped India deal with its energy security issues, enhanced defence cooperation between the US and India, boosted India's global reputation, and helped counterbalance China (Squassoui 2012).

Aside from some criticism over India's nuclear status within the Obama administration, It is generally accepted that India is a responsible nuclear power. This conclusion is based on the fact that India, despite not being a party to the "Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty," has complied with the strict rules of NSG. Hence, there appears to be no distinction between New Delhi and Washington in the case of nuclear non-proliferation concerns. The "Civilian Nuclear Liability Bill", embroiled in a political standoff with the opposition parties that vehemently opposed several sections of the legislation, will be the immediate concern for the foreseeable future. The US is hoping to get approval of the measure so that American businesses can continue to compete for access to India's energy sector. Given that both the US and India have yet to gain from the nuclear agreement, it is crucial for both countries.

The Indo-US strategic partnership has varied from counterterrorism, cyber security, defence cooperation, education, agriculture, economics and trade, and technology and



science cooperation. Besides a convergence of interests, the ties were enhanced by the geopolitical changes taking place around the world. A common concern for New Delhi and Washington was over China's rise particularly due to its military assertiveness over territory in the South China Sea and its growing naval presence in the Indian Ocean. While these developments are alarming for India and United States, it also created opportunities for greater Indo-US security cooperation. However, despite the need for strategic cooperation and enhancing relations between the two countries cooperation is restricted only to a few areas.

Despite many domestic challenges, the US considers India as a rising power both geopolitically and economically. It has maintained political stability and enhanced its economic power. Although China competes with India in Asia, and the boundary issue between the two countries remains unresolved, in 2014 India accepted Beijing's invitation to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Since 2014, India has received substantial loans from the AIIB for its infrastructure projects. Further in 2014, India and China along with other BRICS nations established the New Development Bank. India has worked with China on numerous international and regional forums that has brought the two countries together in some areas. While actively participating in international organizations with China, India has continued to campaign for permanent membership in the UNSC.

Since the end of the Cold War, the US has attempted to establish closer ties with India. In the 1990s, the growth of the US was steady and was focused on the idea of a policy in South Asia which was India-centric, and as China emerged, it reviewed its policy approach concerning Asia. Beginning in the nineties, the US saw its partnership with India as a component of its plan to prevent the development of "WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction)" and ensure regional stability. As ten years ended, the US saw India as having the potential to share its interests concerning the growth of access to energy sources, counterterrorism, fighting for human rights, economic relations and ensuring that in Asia, there is a balance of power and stability.

US-Indian relations were strained during the Clinton administration due to India's nuclear test in 1998 and the Kargil conflict in 1999. But the US saw India's increasing

economic and military might as an asset rather than a potential adversary in Asia (US Senate: Congressional Hearing 1999). Visit in 2000 by President Clinton to India indicated the US's interests in establishing cordial relations with India despite the events that unfolded in the 1990s. This trend continued into the George W. Bush administration. During the Bush years, the US saw India as a potential ally in preserving peace in the Indian Ocean region, balancing China's rise in Asia and fighting terrorism. The 9/11 attacks led to closer military cooperation between the US and Pakistan, particularly as it shares a long border with Afghanistan. However, this time India was not side-lined by the US as it had during the Cold War. The Bush administration prioritized US-India relations and understood how crucial it was for the US to have a reliable partner in the region. Significant advancements have occurred in the US-India strategic alliance since 2004. The "National Security Strategy 2006", expressed that "America's relationship with Pakistan will not be a mirror image of our relationship with India" (US Government Document 2006). Hence, Congressional report mentioned, "the United States and India have since 2004, been pursuing a strategic partnership that incorporated numerous economic, security, and global initiatives" (Kronstadt and Pinto 2012). Records showed that significant attempts were made by officials from India and the US to forge an enduring and viable partnership while promoting peace and security between India and Pakistan.

Additionally, "India is now poised to carry global commitments in partnership with the United States in a style befitting a big power," the Bush administration's second national security strategy highlighted. The US also urged China to act as a cooperative partner committed to upholding the agreements and pledges made with the US and others to create the world order that has ensured its success (Kronstadt & Pinto 2012). The imperative modification was the distancing from the one-sided "National Security Strategy (NSS)" 2002, diplomatic replay, global legitimacy, and providing aid to allies as the strategy's main aim. It vividly indicated that India was right in the middle of amendments as the 2<sup>nd</sup> "Defence Framework Agreement" signed in 2005 made it possible to partner in weapons via accords on research and sharing of information, testing, and analysis.

The US Congress recognized the security partnership as a central pillar between the US and India. Thus, the US Congress supported bilateral defence cooperation, which was regarded as equipping a regional security partner with the means to protect against China (Martin et al. 2014). Following the 9/11 attacks, the US developed a counterterrorism strategy that improved relations with countries like India (US Government 2009).

Under the Bush administration, the US ensured governments in South Asia. In particular, India was not just a democracy that was growing economically, but Senior American officials also took note of India's potential to balance China. For example, US Secretary of State Colin Powell opined: "India can keep the peace and its fringes in the large Indian Ocean area. To support India on this journey, we must work harder and more consistently while keeping in mind our friends in Pakistan". (US Government 2001).

President George W. Bush lauded India as one of the largest democracies and stated that it had the potential of becoming allies against any dictatorial power in Asia. Soon after the 9/11 attacks, India was quick to provide assistance to the US. By providing intelligence information on terrorist networks in South Asia, India became a significant regional partner in the US's fight against global terrorism. However, Pakistan stayed as part of the equation. As a front-line state, Pakistan was indispensable to the US as it conducted missions in Afghanistan from Lahore. With the US decision to invade Afghanistan in 2001, America's cooperation with countries in South Asia intensified. Similar to the coalition that the US formed in 1991 during the first Gulf War, in 2001 the US engaged with several countries who offered support which indicated that terrorism was not just a concern for the US. With regard to Indo-US relations, the sanctions that were imposed on India in 1998 were also repealed around this time. In 2002 "The National Security Strategy" stated that the US accepted the changes in relations with India based on the understanding that US ambitions needed a robust cooperation with India (US Government 2002).

As a result, five areas of cooperation emerged as a crucial component of the expanding relationship between India and the US. In January 2004, India and the US expressed their commitment in the form of the "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership

(NSSP)” . A joint statement was released in 2004 by President Bush and PM Vajpayee, which called for a “Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP)” which stated that the Indo-US “strategic alliance increased cooperation in the areas of increase in civil space cooperation, smoothening limitations on dual-use technology export to India, and civil nuclear also expanding dialogue on missile defence”. US made effort to lift restrictions and grant India access in the areas of a space program, civilian nuclear technology and most crucially, dual-use technology. A former official US official stated that instead of treating India as an inseparable part of the predicament of increase as was done by each US administration for three decades prior to Bush, as a result, altered this attitude on its head. As a result, the president started working on an initiative to provide India greater access to controlled technologies even as India would formally withdraw from the international non-proliferation regime and continue its nuclear weapons program and (Tellis 2005: 5).

The Bush administration was divided over providing critical technological support to India given the threats of nuclear weapon programme. The objective was to observe Indian export regulation to global levels and not utilize the technologies made accessible under this to its weapons program. This planned reluctance in the NSSP to give India whole entry was not permanent as the complex arbitrations that India and the US had accepted “the Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement” was manifested. In the bilateral relations, it was a watershed moment. The restructuring of the Indo-US relations eventually came to be true in 2008, when the “Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement” was signed. For India, it means the end of nuclear apartheid and boosted its energy security. There were expectations of significant a hike in nuclear energy by 2030 (Vijayalakshmi 2017).

The Bush administration changed its approach to the region (South Asia) from a “US for non-proliferation policy to a post-proliferation policy” because it believed that nuclear proliferation among rogue regimes was undoubtedly undesirable and ought to be stopped, even if it meant using force (that was used in the Iraq War). Under the “Defence Agreement Framework” signed in 2005 stated that “strengthening the strategic dialogue” with India and reinvigorating the military alliance with Pakistan to fight the “war on terror”, and completely leaving the policy of early 1990s’ of rolling back landmark agreement was on the enlargement of defence trade” . According to

the agreement, security would be strengthened and the strategic partnership would be restarted by going beyond the defence restriction. The statement revealed that the objective was to expand engagement between the armed forces and set up a better comprehension between defence departments by organizing exercises and exchanges, making an alliance in multinational functions “when it is in their common interest”. Objectives other than this included strengthening the potential to fight the increase in WMD, improving military capabilities to fight terrorism and strengthening alliances in missile defence. Further, to encourage discussions in fields of mutual interest, priorities for defence cooperation were set by DPG, reviewed the progress every year, and directed accommodations as imperative. It was reported to Congress by the US Department of Defence that “under the DPG umbrella, we have seven subgroups to discuss and advance service-to-service cooperation, technology security defence trade, and technical cooperation” (US Government: 2011).

“The 2006 Indo-US Framework for Maritime Security Cooperation” stated that the two sides would cooperate against an array of nautical dangers, including international felony crime smuggling, trafficking, and piracy; acceleration of maritime WMD; dangers to the security of naval crew and property, maritime security; natural and environmental catastrophes.

In December 2016, a defence agreement was signed between India and the US. The US delivered 145 M777 howitzers to India at a cost of approximately \$732 million (US Government 2016). Therefore, in the initial years of the Bush presidency, the President’s conviction, the impact of 9/11, and resolution of the administration of domestic obstacles to providing India with an anomaly from the policy of non-proliferation of the US support of the Pentagon for growth of the defence alliance while taking into account India’s opinions on coproduction, emphasizing the nautical sphere, and avoiding unilateralism brought about the new aspect in US involvement with the world.

### **Counter-terrorism as a Binding Principle of Cooperation between the US and India**

India-US relations became closer, especially after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. India, which has long been a victim of cross-

border terrorism, finally found hope in its long desire and efforts for international action against global terrorism. It persuaded the US to exert pressure on Pakistan to take action against terrorist organisations that are located and thriving there. India also declared its full support to the US anti-terrorist policies and provided full cooperation to the US in its operations against the Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan (Chadha, 2008: 63-64). The post-9/11 years offered new challenges and opportunities for the evolution of the US-India strategic partnership.

Building further on the Talbott-Singh discussions which laid the foundations for improving Indo-US relations, India offered to support America's counterterrorism initiatives in South Asia which encompassed aircraft refuelling, access to Indian airbases, port facilities for US warships, and intelligence corporation (Mohan 2003: xi-xii). In the 1990s, Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott held talks to ensure better cooperation between the two countries, in the 2000s, the former US National Security Advisor (NSA), Condoleezza Rice and India's "National Security Advisor (NSA)", Brajesh Mishra held more focused discussions on finding ways to shape a new partnership that also included the areas of high technology cooperation. When the meeting was held between PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President George W. Bush in November 2001, Mishra and Rice met separately to further build upon the new agenda declared by the two leaders. This dialogue came to be known as the 'Rice-Mishra' process that focused on taking forward the decided agenda on the so-called "trinity 11 issues - civilian nuclear cooperation, high technology trade, , and civilian space" (Mohan 2006: 21-22).

On 13 December 2001, the Indian Parliament was under the terrorist attack. It was vehemently denounced by the US as an assault on freedom and democracy. The US also backed India's policy and efforts to fight terrorism. There was repeated pressure from the Bush administration on President Pervez Musharraf to stop "cross border infiltration" to India (Kux, 2002: 20). In September 2004, Manmohan Singh, the then PM of India, met with President Bush of United States. Both leaders agreed that their "To complete Phase One of the NSSP, governments collaborated closely. This has included taking action to address concerns about proliferation and ensuring adherence to US export prohibitions." ("Joint Press Statement: NSSP between India and the United States, 17 September, 2004"). This assertion demonstrated how the

improvements brought about by NSSP had increased technology exchanges between the two countries. The then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited India in March 2005, she recognised and stated that “India’s position as a rising democratic power in a dynamic Asia will strengthen enhance energy, international security, security, help transform their strategic partnership, foster economic and technological development, and environmental protection” (Kazi 2009: 78).

On 29 June 2005, Rice’s visit to India was followed by a visit from the then Defence Minister of India , Pranab Mukherjee. His visit to the US resulted in the establishment of a framework for enhancing Indo-US defence cooperation over the following ten years.

President George W. Bush strongly believed that expanding US-India relations was essential to realizing US goals and objectives. The 9/11 attack on WTC and the fight against international terrorism created a new and more significant platform for the US-India partnership. India’s had offered military support and intelligence to the US . The US in turn removed 12 remaining sanctions that had been imposed on India in 1998. As the sanctions were lifted, financial assistance to India and humanitarian aid to India resumed, the ban on export of specific technologies and defence material was lifted, and American credit and credit guarantees along with opposition to lending by IMF also ended. Subsequently, the frequency of high-level visits increased on both sides including India’s NSA Brajesh Mishra who visited Washington following the 9/11 attacks in 2001. This important visit by a high-ranking Indian official was followed by visits by the then US Secretary of State Colin Powell and then US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld to New Delhi (Hathway 2002: 17).

Following several areas of cooperation including military-to-military cooperation, and counterterrorism cooperation, Indo-US relations entered a new phase. The two nations announced their "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership" on January 13, 2004. (NSSP). PM Vajpayee and President Bush released the NSSP declaration, which affirmed the shared goals of preventing the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems. They also announced that the new steps they decided to take encompassed a crucial step in changing the Indo-US relationship. Both the US and India agree to cooperate on a civilian space program, civilian nuclear energy, high technology, missile defence, and

improve trade relations (Vajpayee 2004). In exchange for implementing an international export control measure to prevent the illegal sale of weapons technologies, the NSSP agreement granted India greater access to US high technology (Banerjee 2006: 73).

The primary focus of the administration under George W. Bush in South Asia was to approach India and Pakistan separately. The biggest obstacle to a long-lasting good relationship between India and the United States during the Cold War was Pakistan's role as the US's ally (Carranza, 2008: 469). While the Clinton administration took significant steps to promote better relations, it was only in 2001 that the George W. Bush administration firmly established ties based on defence and counterterrorism cooperation. When George W. Bush assumed office, he was determined to strengthen US dominance in the face of potential geopolitical unpredictability caused by emerging powers like China. Bush and his advisors felt that there needed to be a change in Indo-US relations because of the widespread perception that it is essential to manage significant power interactions well. India, in the eyes of the US, would not only be an important counterweight to a rising China, but it could also help the US preserve regional security and advance democracy around the world.



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**US-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND PRESIDENT**  
**OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION**

During the eight year administration of the George W. Bush, ties between the US and India were positive. When President Barack H. Obama took office there was pessimism on both sides over the course of the relations. However, such misgivings did not last for long, and very soon, India's strategic position and its economic capacity particularly in America's "grand strategy in the Asia-Pacific" continued to hold significance in Washington. The Obama administration came in with the mandate of ending the long-drawn conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to shift its focus towards managing the ramifications of China's rise in the Asia-Pacific region. To achieve this objective, India was looked at as a major power balancer to China in the region. This understanding on the part of the Obama administration paved the way for the burgeoning defence and security partnership between the two countries. President Obama not only visited India twice during his tenure, but was also the first US President to receive an invitation as the "Chief Guest at the India's Republic Day celebration" in 2015. Indian Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi also were received warmly and ceremoniously in the US during the Obama years. Many new grounds were laid during these important and high-level visits and working groups were established on several key areas including security, economic and political relations. The onset of the Obama administration also came close on the heels of the devastating 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, bringing forth much closer working relationship between India and the US, particularly in intelligence information sharing and counterterrorism.

Further, the US-India strategic partnership envisioned a fusion of defensive, security cooperation, political, technological, and economic during the Obama administration. The strategic partnership between the two nations has increased, with the US seeing India's growing economy as a lucrative market, which has put new life the relations. In the post-Cold years, and during the Presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama the US and India defined their relationship as one that has triumphed over history's hesitations. More than ten years of constructing US-Indian relations, many policymakers in both countries hoped for a better relationship between sole superpower of the world and the rising power in Asia. India's geography, its democratic traditions, its increasing devotion to rules-based market economics, suggests a strong basis for friendlier ties with America. In the post-Cold War years the US's political influence, technological pre-eminence, economic power and its

willingness to cooperate with other democratic nations offered an opportunity for India to foster stronger relations and enhance its geopolitical and economic status in the world. Through the efforts of successive US and Indian leaders, the US-Indian relations flourished so well, that even most positive advocates would have been hesitant to forecast.

Today, the United States and India hold regular summit meetings that have led to greater cooperation between the two sides. Foreign policymakers and defence officials from both countries regularly consult and cooperate on a wide set of issues. The militaries of the two countries have participated in joint planning and exercises. The American business community has also invested significantly in India and led to burgeoning commercial relations. An astonishing degree of cooperation has developed in a short period. The fact that the US and India shared similar values is another important reason for the strategic partnership. As the scope of relations has increased in the post-911 years, there are multiple areas of convergence which has helped to strengthen the partnership. India was included in multilateral export control regimes, for combatment of terrorist threats its active participation in Afghanistan, , and a partnership to lead global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and “Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)” have been main priorities in several joint statements made by the US and India. This area of consensus between the two countries has made a significant contribution to the partnership's success in pushing for long-term stability and strategic growth, despite the change of leadership and differences between the political parties in both countries.

The strategic partnership established during the George W. Bush administration between the US and India. It was regarded as the prime years for progress in US-India relations. The two of the largest democracies (the US and India) of the world, have used their mutual belief in democratic institutions, and pluralistic societies to improve the relationship at an unparalleled pace. Hence, the bilateral relations laid the basis for deeper understanding and cooperation on a broad range of issues regarding nuclear energy, defence, high technology, trade, the space program, and economic cooperation. Both the governments have made additional efforts to declare their commitment on the future of relations and restate the fundamental factors that make the partnership vibrant. A roadmap was laid out by the “Strategic Partnership

Agreement” of 2005 for both the countries in the promotion of trade and economic growth, environment and energy, development and democracy, security and non-proliferation, and space and high technology.

During the Obama administration, India was not the only country in South Asia to cooperate extensively with the US. The US South Asia policy included discussions and cooperation with other countries in the region, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. In Obama’s second term in office, many developments indicated objectives of Washington in South Asia. Elections in India, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, in tandem and the removal of the “International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)” from Afghanistan, increased the seriousness of restructuring the “Obama doctrine.”

President Obama strongly believed that the US needed to establish stronger ties with all the countries in South Asia. While India’s economic and political rise was unmistakable, the economy of other countries in the region had not improved (Hiddleston 2011). Given the economic condition of these countries the US attempted to improve its relations by providing economic and financial assistance. The administration under Obama had hoped to increase US influence in the region and form partnerships in the region. Further, security and defence collaboration and trade and investment becoming crucial factors in securing partnerships in the region. In addition to these steps “senior Pentagon officials assured New Delhi that the United States is dedicated to intensifying ties via the enhancement of the defence relationship made newly substantive under President George W. Bush” (Kronstadt & Pinto 2012). To help New Delhi, President Obama significantly eased export restrictions to India and provided more access to cutting-edge US military equipment to accept strong ties with that country (US Congress, Senate 2014).

### **The US Pivot to Asia-Pacific Strategy**

In January 2009, when Barack H. Obama became the 44<sup>th</sup> US President, foreign policy experts in the US and India were pessimistic about Indo-US relations believing that the pace set up by the bilateral relations established during the George W. Bush administration was difficult to maintain. During Obama’s election campaign promised that he would bring drastic changes by adopting policies different from his predecessor. He asserted that a new approach to terrorism, nuclear proliferation,

climate change, and other issues was urgently needed to restore American leadership in the international community. The Obama administration gave signals that it would chart a new course in its foreign relations. Many observers in India were unsettled and apprehensive about relations with the US as the signals coming from Washington following Obama's victory was significantly different from the previous administration. Further, during his Senate years, and his campaign for the Presidency, Obama's statements revealed that India would not receive priority from his administration. Moreover, many in India assumed that the Democrats in the US Congress were inclined toward interventions compared to Republicans. As traditionally believed, Democrats had always been resorted to the strategies of intervention in the regional conflicts, it was apprehended that they would adopt a more interventionist attitude towards Kashmir issue.

The US interest in the region developed in the initial years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, particularly after the declaration of the "global war on terror." In the post-9/11 years US involvement in Asia expanded and intensified considerably. During which time, Southeast Asia was dubbed the "second front" in the US war on terror. The US collaborated closely with regional partners and allies like Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand, as well as other countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, to combat terrorist operations in the Southeast Asian region. Simultaneously, regional Asian organizations like the "Association of Southeast Asian Nations" (ASEAN) successfully recovered from 1997 Asian economic crisis and stabilized their economies. Many observers in Asia saw China's rise in the region as comparative decline of America's influence which worked against US interests (Sutter 2009: 189-216).

India emerged as a key partner in the US strategy to expand its influence in the Asia-Pacific region, which aimed to counterbalance China's economic and political rise. Since the 1990s, China's expanding military power has become a strategic challenge for India. However, Indian foreign policy appears to follow three different approaches as part of a hedging approach. At first, New Delhi is getting closer to Washington DC., visible through the increasing engagement in the US-India defence relations. Second, New Delhi is more focused on normalizing its relations with Beijing rather than trying to balance China through outside assistance, which has not been very

successful. Third, India is increasing its defence partnerships with other regional powers to pursue localized form of balancing (Pant and Joshi 2015: 89-114).

When President Barack Obama visited India in 2015, he emphasized how the India-US “Declaration of Friendship” had improved the bilateral relationship between the two nations and expressed “satisfaction with the qualitative reinvigoration of strategic ties” (White House Archives, 2015). The President also praised India’s “Act East Policy” and highlighted the “United States’ rebalance in Asia” as providing opportunities not only for the US and India, but also other Asia-Pacific countries to strengthen regional security partnerships. President Obama stated that “India’s rise is also in the interest of the US, regional, and global interests”. During the Obama administration both sides strengthened defence partnership through programs like the “Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)”. The United States also established “a dedicated rapid reaction team focused exclusively on advancing DTTI” between the two countries (Sibal 2015: 109).

Since the process of strategic conversation between India and Pakistan began in 2010, and the bilateral relations between the two nations has grown and expanded exponentially. During the fifth session of the Strategic Dialogue held in India on July 2014 there was renewed focus to discuss to take the relations to the next level. Thus, in the past few years, several meetings of “the Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group”, the CEO’S forum, ministerial-level “Homeland Security and Trade Policy Forum dialogues” and as the next round of the “High Technology Cooperation Group” held regular meetings during the Obama administration (Vijayalakshmi, 2015: 134). However, the progress made during the first strategic summit in June 2010 and visit by Obama’s to India in November 2010 strengthened the strategic alliance between the US and India.

In the first six months of his administration, Obama scarcely mentioned India in public. India did not figure prominently among President Obama’s priorities. The foreign visits by both President Obama and then Secretary of State, signalled India’s strategic position. However, these visits were not followed by other important visits to finalize agreements. Although the President and the Secretary of State’s foreign visits covered 27 countries, no US official visited India for six months of Obama

administration. Further, the Obama administration took considerable time considering an ambassador to send to India (Matthew 2010).

In 2009, Vice President-elect Joseph R. Biden, visited Islamabad but did not include India during his visit before the Obama administration formally took office. In India political leaders and policy experts were displeased because the Obama administration ignored India which had deepened relations on numerous fronts with the US during the George W. Bush years. In addition, there was an attempt to bracket India along with Pakistan and Afghanistan as part of Obama's new strategy to fight the Taliban and Al Qaeda. During his visit to Islamabad, Biden praised Pakistan's Government for its cooperation in fighting terrorism, while there was hardly any mention about Mumbai 26/11 by US officials nor were there concrete efforts from the US to support India (Mahapatra, 2009).

Following six months of reticence, the Obama administration began to show some signs that it was reengaging India. From July 17 to 22, 2009, Hillary Clinton visited India for five days. Her visit focused on reviving the Strategic Dialogue and furthering the Indo-US strategic partnership. The Strategic Dialogue was an initiative to sustain and intensify their cooperation in spheres like disarmament, counterterrorism, non-proliferation, investment and trade, technology and science, investment in infrastructure, sustainability of the environment, mitigation of "climate change, agriculture, energy security, food security, education, healthcare, empowerment of women" (The Hindu, 20 July 2009).

Another meaningful achievement during Secretary Clinton's visit was the controversial agreement regarding the End-User Monitoring Agreement (EUMA) signed between two nations. As India is the largest importer of conventional weapons, the EUMA allowed American companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman to enter in Indian defence market. The EUMA opened the door for large-scale purchases of sophisticated US military technology and further strengthen the security partnership between the two nations. The agreement also allowed the US to verify whether India was using the weapons for the stated purposes or not and on its part, India ensured that acquired US military technologies would not be transferred to third party buyers (The Tribune 2009). The "Singh-Obama Summit"

in Washington was the next turning point in US-Indian relations during the Obama administration. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was one of the first foreign leaders to visit the US during the Obama administration. During the meeting, both leaders announced the “Obama-Singh Initiative” to broaden educational exchanges, which was a significant outcome of the summit (Mahapatra 2009).

President Obama’s visit to India from November 6-9, 2010, gave further momentum to Indo-US bilateral cooperation by establishing a long-term framework for their global strategic partnership. It was the longest visit to any country since Obama took office in January 2009. During the visit, President Obama lifted the restrictions on organizations like the “Development Organization (DRDO), Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Defence Research and and Bharat Dynamics”. He announced that same efforts were being made for the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). In fact, these restrictions were the main obstacles in the way of cementing strategic cooperation between two countries. In addition, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs, Michael Froman assured America’s assistance for India regarding full membership of the “Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement; the Missile Technology Control Regime, and the Australia Group.” America’s support in this regard greatly aided India’s integration into the non-proliferation regimes without having to sign the NPT (The Indian Express, 19th November 2010).

President Obama reiterated his administration’s support for collaboration between the two states would be the “defining partnership of the 21st century” on November 8 in a speech to the members of both Houses of Parliament. He claimed that India had already made a name for itself as a major Asian power. Additionally, he reiterated America’s support for India's permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). With this announcement, the US joined France, the United Kingdom and Russia in endorsing India's permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. While approving request by India’s candidature as permanent member in the Security Council of UN, President Obama emphasized that it would increase India's responsibilities in global concerns. President Obama suggested that the international community, especially India and the US, had a duty to condemn developments like the political unrest in Myanmar and Iran's nuclear



program. The two sides released a joint-statement in which India welcomed growing relations between the two biggest democracies of the world. The two leaders tried to intensify their cooperation to spread democratic values worldwide, enhance global security, cooperate on advanced technology, and enhance global economic prosperity. Both sides emphasised the India-US strategic alliance for global development and security in the twenty-first century (The Hindu, 9 November 2010).

Both leaders also emphasized the removal of safe havens for terrorists and extremist groups in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. They rejected terrorism and agreed that all terrorist links including “Lashkar-e-Taiba” needed to be removed. They put pressure on Pakistan to apprehend those responsible for the Mumbai attacks. It was agreed by both the countries to set up a “Homeland Security Dialogue” concluded between the Home Ministry of India, and Homeland Security counterparts of the United States to further deepen operational abilities on counterterrorism, capacity building and technology transfers. The US encouraged India’s participation, and membership in all the four multilateral export control regimes, they also decided to move further to grow Indo-US cooperation in, defence, civil space operations and other high end technology sectors (The Hindustan Times, 9 November 2010). President Barack Obama commented that “as nuclear powers” both India and the US would strengthen their efforts to check the increase in nuclear weapons worldwide and work together to build a nuclear weapons free world. Importantly, both leaders expressed commitment for full exercise of the Civil Nuclear deal (The Indian Express, 10 November 2010).

### **Engagement through Strategic Partnership and Dialogue during the Obama Administration**

The Strategic Dialogue between India and the US is another important initiative that helps remove doubts and solve outstanding issues between the two countries. The Strategic Dialogue process inaugurated in 2009 has provided an effective deliberative forum for discussing the full range of Indo-US cooperation on bilateral, regional, and global issues. It is a highest-level, generally scheduled bilateral trade-off between the two countries. The objective of the Strategic Dialogues was to review developments in the relations, formulate policy and advocate new levels of cooperation between the two nations. The Dialogue process takes a significant step toward addressing long-

term challenges and to clear the ground for a robust strategic alliance between India and the USA.

US-India strategic dialogue was reintroduced in June 2010, with renewed interest in ‘government to government, people to people, and business-to-business’ relationship to strengthen global peace, security, and prosperity. Both the countries identified the ten areas to work along: Countering terrorism and strengthening global security being the primary areas of focus, disarmament and non-proliferation, trade and economic relation, and cooperation on advanced technology (Mahapatra, 2013).

Through this Strategic dialogue process, both nations deepened their cooperation on crucial issues present in other regions. The two parties held strategic talks on cooperation with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean during the second session of the Strategic Dialogue, which was held in India. At the same time, the two nations had already introduced a “Central Asia Dialogue” in New Delhi (2011) and a West Asia Dialogue in Washington DC (July 2011). They also agreed to plan trilateral dialogue among India, the United States, and Japan at the senior official level. The two sides restated their dedication to working in unison to ameliorate election management possibilities in intriguing countries (The Hindu, 20 July 2011).

These Strategic Dialogues proved helpful for India’s bid for entry into the international organizations like the UNSC and others. During the third annual “Indo-US Strategic Dialogue” that took place in June 2012 at Washington DC, the US extended its full-fledged support to complete India’s membership in the four control regimes on multilateral export, like “Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Arrangement, and Nuclear Suppliers Group.” The US also identified the proposal of permanent membership in the Security Council (The Hindustan Times, 14 June 2012).

During the fourth Indo-US Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi in June 2013, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to maritime security, free flow of trade, peaceful solution to maritime conflicts, and “freedom of navigation,” according to international law. Both the countries supported each other concerns in international affairs. The United States joined the “Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional

Cooperation (IOR-ARC)” as a Dialogue Partner in the year 2012. Similarly, the US acknowledged status of India in the Arctic Council in 2013. Both sides supported each other’s efforts to transform defence. They emphasized that technological collaboration in the joint production and development of defence equipment had been introduced into the defence interactions, which were no longer limited to buyer-seller relationships. (The Tribune, 27 June 2013).

The fifth round of Indo-US strategic dialogue concluded during Secretary of State John Kerry’s visit to New Delhi on 31 July 2014. The meeting was important because the Indo-US strategic relations entered a turbulent time due to the Devyani Khobagrade episode in 2013 and President Obama’s policy toward Iraq, Afghanistan, and West Asia. Both the nations were dedicated to strengthening efforts to fight terrorism, WMD proliferation, and nuclear terrorism. Kerry’s visit reset the relationship between the two countries and lay the preliminaries for signing some crucial agreements during the meeting of Modi with Obama (The Tribune, 3 August 2014).

Therefore, these Strategic Dialogues provides a platform for both nations where they meet annually and deliberate on their shared concerns, potential challenges, problems, and issues. The dialogue process included a wide range of issues. Subsequently, it put a significant contribution in cementing the strategic relationship of both countries. The Obama administration’s attitude towards India is not as enthusiastic as his predecessor’s; the statement of the two nations through strategic dialogues was an appreciable step.

In the initial days of his first term in office, President Obama showed a strong commitment to implement the “Nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT)” and “Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)” that caused anxiety among many in India. Obama gave significant attention to restricting nuclear weapons. In 2009, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his dedication shown over nuclear non-proliferation. Obama stated “his intention to seek a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons” during his speech in Prague, Czech Republic, on 5 April 2009. He also claimed that because the US was the “only power to have used a nuclear weapon”, he and the people of his country had a “moral responsibility to act” by

advancing the disarmament agenda. This goal “will not be achieved fast, probably not in my lifetime,” he added (Obama 2009).

Further, President Obama had appointed supporters of nuclear proliferation in his administration and ardent supporters of the CTBT. James B. Steinberg served as Assistant Secretary of State, John Holdren as the President’s Scientific Advisor, and Antony Blinken served as the National Security Advisor to the Vice President. These appointments were a clear indication that disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation were high on the foreign affairs agenda during the Obama administration (The Indian Express, 9 January 2009). President Obama had hoped to bypass the US Senate and receive support from the UNSC to enforce the CTBT. Obama made several diplomatic attempts to bring other states whose ratifications were needed to enforce the treaty.

After Obama’s Prague speech, the UNSC had called on the global community to adopt measures to strengthen the CTBT. These developments raised apprehension among policymakers in India. The Indian government reiterated its earlier stand and endorsed that it would not sign the CTBT until there was a ban on all other tests. India argued that the treaty would be meaningless if all the nuclear-power states did not back it with a pledge for complete disarmament. S.M. Krishna, the former Indian Minister of External Affairs, stated that India would not ratify the CTBT and that there was no reason for changing its position. India recognized that acknowledging the CTBT was not an easy affair. India said the CTBT ignored and overruled its legitimate objections on nuclear disarmament (Lalengkima, 2012).

Terrorism is the gravest threat to India and US. Both nations have been impacted by terrorist attacks. International terrorist groups, especially those linked to Pakistan, such as Al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba, pose a significant risk to the peace and security of both nations. Over the last decade, both sides have taken various initiatives to fight against terrorism. They have also strengthened their efforts to deepen institutional connections leading to closer cooperation and involvement in counterterrorism. In November 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Washington, where he concluded the Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative (Earlier, both countries had already signed two important agreements on counterterrorism;

“US-India Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism, 2000” and “Indo-US Cyber Security Forum, 2001”). Later, to foster close and efficacious cooperation in counterterrorism, capacity building, and information sharing, both governments signed the ‘Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative’ on 23 July 2010 (Hazarika, 2012).

The initiative provided a platform for both the countries to work together on a wide range of issues like counterfeit currency, financing terrorism, money laundering, border security, transport security, maritime port, megacity policing, and cyber security (The Hindu, 23 July 2010).

Further, in May 2011, India, and US launched “the Homeland Security Dialogue”. Under Homeland Security Dialogue, both the nations showed eagerness to extend cooperation in global supply chain management, cyber security, unlawful cyber security, decisive infrastructure safeguard, technology advancement, and capacity building. They resolved to consolidate their efforts on counterterrorism cooperation via intelligence sharing, operational cooperation, exchange of information, and obtaining the advanced counterterrorism technology and apparatus. The armies of both nations have taken up joint manoeuvres on counterterrorism, which is a compulsory part of their combined military exercises (Lokanathan, 2012).

Apart from these initiatives, counterterrorism was one of the five pillars decided during the Strategic Dialogue during the Secretary Hillary Clinton’s visit in 2009. This visit was followed by PM Narendra Modi’s visit to the US in 2014, where both nations decided to work together to destroy the tactical and financial help received by terrorist groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed, Al-Qaida, Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Dawood Ibrahim’s D Company (The Tribune, 4 October 2014).

However, there are various obstacles in the way of counterterrorism efforts between the two nations. In the beginning period of the Obama administration, the general perception or rather fear was that India would be bracketed along with the US’s Af-Pak policy (Sharma 2010). Pakistan was also in favour of trapping India in this strategy. Islamabad wanted to club Kashmir into the Afghanistan problem so that pressure could be built on India to concede the Kashmir dispute. Another motive was

to restrain India from supporting Afghanistan in rehabilitation and reconstruction (Kalim, 2010).

Further, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested David Coleman Headley (Chicago-based American of Pakistani origin) in 2009, a key conspirator in the Mumbai attacks. Initially, the US refused to furnish the information regarding David Headley. The United States ruled out his extradition to India, but later due to India's repeated requests, the US State Department agreed to allow full access to question Headley, with the condition that it would be done on American soil (Ray, 2010). Although terrorism is a common challenge and threat for both nations, there is still misunderstanding and a lack of sincere cooperation on this complicated problem. India dislikes the US approach to categorizing terrorism into regional terrorism and international terrorism. Obama administration also made the difference between moderate Taliban and the more extremist Taliban group. He suggested the Afghanistan government integrate moderate Taliban into the government. India was unhappy over the US soft approach toward Pakistan, which has supported insurgent groups operating in India. Though the US is well acquainted with the issue that Islamabad is sponsoring terrorism in the region and beyond, it feels that it is impossible to resolve the Afghan problem without the help of Pakistan due to its proximity to the region.

Another issue of contention between India and the US under the Obama administration was Iran's nuclear program. Both nations disagreed on Iran's alleged nuclear program for over a decade. The problem was that India and US had different approaches to resolve the Iran nuclear issue. While the US favoured keeping all options open and attempting all possible actions against Iran. Including a two-track policy encompassing diplomatic pressure and sanctions along with talks, without dismissing a military solution. At the State of the Union address, President Obama reaffirmed that the US would use all available means, including military force, to stop Iran from pursuing its nuclear program. The Obama administration tactfully applied global financial sanctions and pressured the nations to reduce oil imports from Iran. On 31 December 2011, the US legislation approved imposing sanctions on foreign banks that had to do with the Central Bank of Iran. Within weeks, the European

Union (EU) also imposed sanctions on oil imports from Iran. On 1 July 2012, these sanctions became effective (Parthasarathy, 2012).

The US pressured India to cease its economic and financial ties with Iran, including reducing oil imports. India opposed US and EU sanctions on Iran. New Delhi supported Tehran's pursuit of nuclear energy and its use for peaceful purposes. However, India was also interested in stopping the rise of other nuclear power in the area. Though India asserted that Iran should clearly state nuclear ambition, India was not quick to remove its economic and trade ties with Iran. New Delhi had agreed with Washington in going against Tehran's nuclear ambition but opposed the ways the US tried to achieve its goal. India believed that putting too much pressure on Tehran would intensify hostilities with the US and despite India's attempts to persuade Tehran to fulfil its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations and observe international norms failed (Tourangbam 2012).

India and Iran have a centuries-old history of close relations. In recent years, India pursued a course that deepened its ties with Tehran for many reasons; firstly, India has energy interests in Iran (About 12% of India's oil needs are imported from Iran). Iran is its second-largest oil source after Saudi Arabia. With its surplus oil refining capacity, the exports of refined petroleum products in India reached around \$40 billion in 2011. Refined petroleum products are India's biggest foreign exchange earner in foreign trade (Pant 2012). Secondly, India wants to strengthen its partnership with Iran in Afghanistan (India and Iran both have convergent interests in Afghanistan, and India, with the help of Iran, may check Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan), thirdly, India has a greater interest in energy rich Central Asia and Iran is a gateway for India to approach this region. International North-South Corridor has manifested India's ambitions in Iran and Central Asia. The INSTC is the multi-modal transportation network project that aims to connect the ports of India to the ports of Iran, which stretches towards the Caspian Sea through overland connectivity. (The Tribune 22 March 2012).

The US had warned New Delhi that it would be subjected to American sanctions if New Delhi tried to bail out Iran from challenging economic situation. Due to US pressure, India reduced its import of crude oil and export of refined oil to Iran. Iran is

a massive importer of refined petroleum products from India. The exports to Iran from the Reliance Oil Refinery in Junagadh decreased progressively and halted in the face of American sanctions on exports of refined petroleum products to Iran. India significantly reduced its oil import from Iran, which jumped down to around 13 million tons in the financial year 2012 from 21.2 million tons in 2010. After acknowledging that India had decreased its reliance on Iranian oil in a significant way, in June 2012, the US announced that it would waive sanctions against India, irrespective of its persistent dependence on oil imports from Iran (Parthasarathy, 2012).

India has significant energy interests in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf, which do not impede its relations with the US. However, Indo-Iranian bilateral relations do not favour America's interests. Thus, Iran's alleged nuclear program has affected Indo-US relations.

There is no significant difference between Washington and New Delhi regarding their objectives in Afghanistan. Both seek a politically stable and democratic Afghanistan. Both the nations want to see a strong central government in Kabul, which can administer the rule of law and tackle the spread of terrorist networks worldwide. India supported the US's war on terror after the 9/11 attack and welcomed the NATO military presence in Afghanistan. However, President Obama's announcement to pull back its forces from Afghanistan raised concerns in India. To reassure the American people and keep his campaign promise, Obama announced that "US troops will be coming home". After stating the timetable for the drawdown, he assured the American public, "the US had brought back 10,000 troops last year and another 23,000 would leave by the end of summer". This was followed by his statement that "reductions would continue at a steady pace and most of the forces would be home by the end of 2014" (The Tribune, 2012). On 1 May 2012, President Obama reiterated his administration's commitment to reduce foreign troops in Afghanistan while signing a strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan during his surprise visit to Kabul. However, military advisors remained along with a small contingent of Special Forces to help the Aghan government battle Al-Qaeda through counterterrorism missions (Pant, 2012).



America's military operations in Afghanistan strongly favoured India's economic and geostrategic interests. As there is no stable democracy in Afghanistan, fundamentalists, and terrorist groups were able to establish a stronghold after the withdrawal international troops. Moreover, India invested over \$2 billion in various infrastructure development projects in Afghanistan. More than 400 Afghan nationals entered India for various reasons like education, business transactions, and medical treatment. India has tried to access the Afghanistan's mineral deposits like copper and iron. India has already been active in the iron ore mines of Hajigak. By giving stiff competition to Western companies, India was triumphant over three of four Hajigak iron deposits. India also seems to be trying for at least three copper mines, one close to Iran and one near Pakistan. India is engaged in dialogue with Afghanistan to secure an agreement for the routes through which the transportation of the mined minerals would take place (The Tribune 2012).

Furthermore, when President Karzai visited India in 2011, India established a strategic alliance with Afghanistan. India thus entered another potential conflict with China and Pakistan because both nations have an interest in setting up a foothold in Afghanistan. Moreover, the withdrawal of the US and the NATO forces allows Pakistan the opportunity to establish its hegemony with the help of terrorist outfits like the Haqqani network (Bedi, 2011). For this reason, India has long wanted the presence of American forces in Afghanistan. India was unhappy over the withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan. Indian strategic analysts criticized the US for not considering India's security concerns sufficiently while taking big strategic decisions concerning Afghanistan. A clear example is that India was not consulted and even informed prior to the June 2011 withdrawal. However, in a joint statement issued in June 2012 by Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, and S. M. Krishna, India's External Affairs Minister, at the third "US-India Strategic Dialogue" where they discussed their mutual concerns and discussed their approach regarding Afghanistan. The two leaders emphasized the need for on-going international support for Afghanistan as it takes full responsibility for government, security, and development (The Hindu 2012).

Following the economic recession in America, President Obama focused on stabilizing the economy. However, when Hillary Clinton visited India in 2009, an

effort was made to keep the pace that accelerated during the Bush administration regarding Indo-US strategic partnership. The defence relations between both nations, particularly in strategic dialogues, joint military exercises, and defence trade, have achieved remarkable achievement. Most importantly, their defence relations have not only been limited to the buy-seller relationship but have been entered into co-production and co-development. The US has brought significant changes in its licensing laws regarding technology transfer to boost the defence trade. However, the Obama administration was unable to achieve level of cooperation in Indo-US relations seen during the George W. Bush administration. Some issues like the NPT and the CTBT, the Nuclear Liability Act, Iran's alleged nuclear program, the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, and terrorism were a cause of disagreement between the two nations during the Obama years.

### **Defence Cooperation**

Another significant aspect of the strategic engagement is in defence cooperation. It is clear that India has made efforts in recent years to improve its standing in South Asia, where it has established itself as a formidable rival to China both economically and militarily. In the 1990s, India was in the process of modernizing its military, as it saw China's rise as a possible threat. To modernize the Indian armed forces that were becoming obsolete, the Modi government began to invest heavily in the military establishment. To achieve this objective, India approached foreign arms manufacturers. The level of defence partnership between India and the US intensified particularly during the Bush and Obama administrations. The Indo-US defence partnership has developed through many institutional mechanisms, people-to-people contacts, infrastructure, and security partnerships (Kronstadt and Ilias 2017).

To make it more robust, many deals were signed between India and the US which expanded the scope security cooperation, for instance, the joint monitoring of the Indian Ocean, and improved naval cooperation. India has purchased from the US military weapons worth more than \$10 billion since 2004. These purchases included sophisticated equipment like the "P-8, CH-47 Chinook, maritime monitoring, and Apache attack helicopters anti-submarine warfare aircraft, transport airlines, transport helicopters C-17 and C-130" (MEA 2017).

Both countries had also signed a defence agreement in 2005, which expanded “the New Framework for Defence Cooperation” for another decade and the 2012 “U.S. Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)” (Rosen and Jackson, 2017). The DTTI 2012 has shaped India-United States defence cooperation from simply being buyer-seller to an alliance of co-production and co-development (Shah 2016). The defence bureaucracy of both countries further enhanced and developed defence cooperation between the two countries (Centre for Strategic and International Studies 2016). Even though the DTTI heightened India’s defence sector, it started an arms race in Asia. India simultaneously invested in building indigenous systems and bought systems from other countries, which are very effective (MEA 2017).

The DTTI has focused on the following six projects known as ‘pathfinder,’ which are “Development of the Joint Biological Tactical Detection System” “Digital Helmet,” “Intelligence and Surveillance Module for Transport Aircraft” and “Chemical-Biological Protective Ensemble for Troops” while also forming two joint working groups on the development of aircraft carriers and jet engines. (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2016).

The US has agreed to become a “major defence partner” of India. They have given a significant green signal for the “\$ 618 billion America’s defence budget for 2017” (Indian Express, 9 December 2016). To make the relationship more robust, the Pentagon set up an India Rapid Reaction Cell (IRRC), which focused on increasing contact between the Indian armed forces and the US. The IRRC was an attempt to take up all types of DTTI programs (The Hindu 2016). In addition, the US sought a partnership with India to line up common measures agreed by both the countries to verify the defence services’ security and connected technology like accurate cyber security and not encourage the utilization of observing arrangements in continuation with the U.S. export control policies and laws. Considering the Indo-US nuclear deal, India’s Nuclear Power Corporation Westinghouse and American companies consented to begin with the designing site and engineering work on six nuclear reactors in India to be completed with the contractual arrangements by June 2017 (The Times of India, 7 June 2016).

The India-US defence relationship emerged as one of the centre pieces of their strategic partnership. During the Obama administration, the most significant milestone of the Indo-US strategic partnership was that the defence relations between the two countries had been transferred from being the buyer and seller to joint development and production. When Hillary Clinton, the then-secretary of state, came to New Delhi in 2009, Deepak Kumar, India's Chief of Army Staff went to Washington, D.C. He visited US military institutions, including the Central Command headquarters. His itinerary included meetings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Chairman, Admiral Mike Mullen, George Casey, U.S. Army Chief, and even Defence Secretary Robert Gates. They held meetings on various issues with United States defence experts and other officials like the Af-Pak strategy, combined military exercises and training, defence trade, and exchanges of military officers. The India Army Chief visit to the United States strengthened cooperation between defence policymaking bodies of the two countries at the highest levels. It included the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, increasing dangers in East and West Asia, and other critical issues posing grave challenges to the security of the globe. It was important for the USA' and India to partner on defence strategies and strengthen cooperation to counter the mutual dangers (Mahapatra, 2009).

During the Shangri-La Dialogue 2009, Defence Secretary (Robert Gates) stated that "India is a strong partner and provides security in the Indian Ocean region." Further, it was mentioned by Hillary Clinton stated in Foreign Policy stated that the "United States is making a strategic bet on India's future that India's greater role on the world stage will enhance peace and security" (The Times of India, 26 April 2012).

While various tracks of defence cooperation exist between the two nations, defence sales have remained a significant focus. India is one of the biggest importers and users of traditional defence equipment and occupies a position among the top 10 nations in the world when it comes to military expenses. As defence procurement spending in India rose to US\$42 billion by 2015, it will emerge as one of the most attractive defence markets in the world.

Though India is looking forward to achieving self-reliance in defence production, nearly 70 per cent of its defence needs are met through imports, and only 30 per cent are met via domestic production (The Economic Times, 15 February 2013).

Relations in the area of defence between the US and India have developed to previously unheard-of levels under the Obama administration, which peaked at \$9 billion, this increase was due to the P-8I Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft and the procurement of 99 jet engines for the LCA Tejas aircraft. President Obama authorized the “Security Cooperation Act 2010 (P.L. 111-266),” which allowed the transfer of two “Osprey-class coastal mine hunter ships” as well as the 145 Howitzer guns worth \$560 million (Purushothaman 2013). The key goal is to develop a joint development and manufacturing model on the Indian side (The Tribune, 19 June 2013). The maritime surveillance aircraft has been an asset for the Indian Navy by enhancing India’s surveillance capabilities, while the induction of “C-17 And C-130J aircraft” in the Indian Navy is instrumental in elevating the Indian military’s transport capabilities. Further, Boeing’s offset program in India is calculated at many billion dollars. Other programs include deals concerning Harpoon missiles; Chinook heavy lift helicopters, and Apache helicopters (Manmohan 2013).

Between 2007 and 2012, India imported about ten per cent of total arms worldwide and emerged as the most significant global arms importer. A report by “The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)” on the transfer of arms and ammunitions in the world from 2009 to 2013 showed the reality that India alone made up about 14 per cent of the entire sales place. China which comprised around 5 per cent of all the imports was falling back. In 2013 itself, India imported around \$4.6 billion worth of equipment (The Tribune, 10 August 2014). In its defence budget for the fiscal year 2012–2013, India set aside \$35.16 billion, of which more than \$17.5 billion was used to purchase cutting-edge weapons and military equipment. India is anticipated to spend between \$100 billion and \$200 billion on defence equipment between 2020 and 2025, respectively. On the other hand, the US is eager to seize this enormous opportunity due to severe domestic defence cuts (The Economic Times, 16 March 2012). Thus, India is a good and profitable market for American weapons manufacturers. U.S.’s arms trade with India is not limited to the commercial benefits but also to creating many jobs at home. It relieves the government, which is under pressure due to the increasing unemployment in the economic recession.

To accelerate trade in high technology items and strategic relations with India, the “US Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)” on 25 January 2001, modified the “Export Administration Regulations (EAR)” and from the Entity List took out nine space and Indian defence organizations. This amendment also added India to the country group “A: 2 in the EAR, which has members of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)”. In addition, the US reiterated its aid to India’s entry into the multilateral export-control regimes like “Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Australia Group (A.G.), Wassenaar Arrangement (W.A.),” it requires the revise of the U.S.’s export restrictions (Muralidhar et al. 2013).

An important step in Indo-US defence deals was the “Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)” signed between India’s one of the wealthiest \$76 billion Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and the US \$80 billion aerospace company Boeing. Reliance Industries obtained an important military aviation tie-up with Boeing. As per the deal, Reliance would provide 30% of components worth INR 100 crore to Boeing. Since India’s technological capability in aerospace production was significantly weak, it was anticipated that this MoU could enhance India’s abilities. Reliance had already signed a similar Memorandum of Understanding with Dassault Aviation (French aerospace giant) in 2012, just after a week after the announcement made by the Indian government on 31 January that the French fighter Rafale was the taker in the “Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA)” deal (ManMohan 2013).

In April 2012, both nations held their first political-military meeting in the New Delhi after a gap of six long years. The two countries deliberated on many bilateral issues, including counter-piracy, defence trade, and regional political-military concerns (The Hindu 14 April 2012).

Another landmark was achieved in the “Indo-US strategic partnership” on 27 September 2013, when PM Manmohan Singh and President Barack Obama made a declaration at the White House, which paved the way for the transfer of advanced and sophisticated technologies to India, which the United States earlier denied. It was an important decision to clear the way for enduring strategic partnership, and both the nations decided to cooperate in the domain of production and research of defence

projects and development. A few days after this path-breaking announcement, on 2 October 2013, US Deputy Secretary of Defence, Ashton Carter declared that India had been included in the group of eight nations that received the best technologies without export control (The Tribune, 3 October 2013).

In 2013, under the Defence Technology Initiative (DTI), the US offered a chance for Indian defence companies to come into collaboration with U.S. partners in five co-production ventures, in which the Indian companies would be furnished with the guidance and technology for constructing the five weapon systems in India which included, the Raytheon/Lockheed Martin Javelin anti-tank missile, the Sikorsky naval multi-role helicopter, the BAE systems 127mm naval gun and two other projects. The products manufactured in India could also be sent to other nations (Kukreja 2014).

A significant shift in India's policy was witnessed after the general elections of 2014 as the NDA led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi formed the government. Modi's government hiked FDI in the defence sector from 26% to 49% to attract foreign defence investors into the Indian defence market. Significantly, Cabinet approved this hike on the eve of US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel's visit to India. During Hagel's visit, both the nations agreed to conduct military exercises, co-development, co-production, increase defence trade, and research on new technologies for defence.

After visiting the US in September 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought new energy to the Indo-US strategic partnership. The most important outcomes of the visit were that both nations renewed the "New Framework in the India-US Defence Relations" of 2005 in the light of new priorities and aspirations, which are set to expire in 2015. The United States endorsed its support for India's planned "National Defence University." Both leaders committed to improving work on naval technology cooperation and maritime security. They also recognized important areas where cooperation was necessary: analysing extradition agreements, cybercrime, tackling counterfeit currency, and counterterrorism. Further, India-US-Japan trilateral discussions were elevated to ministerial level meetings to deepen cooperation between the three countries. The US and India also agreed to begin a new discussion on "maintaining long-term security and sustainability of the outer space environment, including space situational awareness and collision avoidance" (CITE).

The United States also re-emphasized its support for India's phased entry into the non-proliferation regimes. Obama also stated that India had met the prerequisites to be a part of the "Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)". These steps have enhanced India's position as a nuclear state and Indo-US defence cooperation in technologically sensitive matters (The Tribune, 1 October 2014). Chuck Hagel, the U.S. Defence Secretary, said that the Prime Minister's visit was enormously successful and laid the premise for strengthening the alliance between the two countries (Hindustan Times, 2 October 2014).

### **Joint Military Exercises**

The strategic partnership has been elevated to another level by "Joint Military exercise," both the countries have been successfully conducted military exercises. Further, the service level exercise like "Shatrujeet" is also a crucial part of this strategic conduct. At the same time, conducting the Malabar Naval exercise witnessing the participation of more than 7,000 personnel (Sen 2016).

The US is also interested in cooperating with India to provide training in Africa and other countries particularly for peace keeping purposes. The US and India share a mutual interest in Afghanistan's stability when it comes to counterterrorism. Since 2010, the US has consulted India on the security situation in the Af-Pak region. There are regular visits by US officials to India to discuss common interests in Afghanistan (US India Security Cooperation). In 2016, the US-India-Afghanistan Trilateral Dialogue was started. This dialogue between the three countries was aimed at exchanging ideas and sharing information regarding Afghanistan, and cooperates on economic concerns, security, and development.

Despite being a critical ally of the US, Pakistan has been and denials, while the US not only helped India but also aided its strategic expansion. The alliance works more than just meetings of senior officials or military exercises. High level exchanges are also conducted among lower-level officials. Such interactions and sharing are done by the U.S. via 1.3 million USD in "International Military Education and Training (IMET)" funding annually, utilized to help "attendance of the Indian officers and officials" at the US educational programs that the "Department of State's educational



institutions” and “Department of Defence” and (US India Security Cooperation) had organized. Even as a decade of friendship has gone by, it still views Pakistan with suspicion. The success in Indo-US relations grew during the Obama administration and set the tone for continued relations during the Trump administration. In the current Biden administration, Indo-US relations were defined as “partnership of trust” (Economic Times, 24 May 2022).

The India–US counterterrorism cooperation is a significant component of relations between the two countries. However, there has existed less tangible developments when it comes to policy. A primary factor for this emanates from “America’s threat perception,” which influences its policy decisions when it comes to counterterrorism. Hence, it is important for India to recognize the US’s evolving security interest and work to align its interest with the US. To achieve this objective, the Indo-US strategic partnership holds joint military exercises which include all branches of the military from both countries. These exercises have cemented the defence ties between India and US. India now conducts one of the most wide-ranging military exchanges with the US. These exercises have grown in frequency since the 9/11 attacks and helped develop interoperability between the two forces. Further, these exercises have helped to develop professional relations and familiarity between the armed forces of the US and India, created trust and comprehension by sharing processes, technique, tactics, and related logistics help between different wings of the between the militaries of both countries. These also emphasized civil military operations, community operations and logistics support operations. These exercises ran the range from naval warfare, air and missile defence, and anti-surface warfare (*The Hindu*, 26 October 2009).

While the defence cooperation has a strong focus on military exchanges, a significant component also included enhancing and learning how to conduct peacekeeping operations, disaster management and humanitarian assistance. The Indian armed forces have greatly benefited from the Indo-US joint military exercises. The Indian military lacks familiarity with high-tech equipment and cutting-edge weaponry compared to the US military. Military exercises with an advanced and highly trained military force have helped the Indian military to improve its operational capabilities. As defence purchases and the incorporation of advanced weapons systems have

increased, the Indian military war fighting doctrine has also changed to meet the demands of modern warfare. Further, joint partnership, rapid deployment and even higher defence management are also areas of collaboration. The Indian Navy could also learn how rescue operations could be carried out for submerged vessels and amphibious warfare training from the US Navy. The Indian military, on the other hand, has crucial operational experience in a variety of environments, dealing with sub-conventional conflicts, fighting in communities with multiple ethnic groups, and international peacekeeping missions.

The Indian military has extensive experience in non-combat operations like assisting civilian agencies on humanitarian aid, disaster relief and peacekeeping missions. According to a report by the MEA, since the time India joined the UN it has contributed more than 200,000 troops to peacekeeping missions around the world (MEA 2019).

While the US has one of the largest and most advanced military forces in the world, India has more experience in UN operations. The US has benefitted from India in conducting peacekeeping and enforcement operations. Indo-US military exercises have infused cooperation and interoperability between the two militaries. Interoperability is one of the important aspects of the joint military exercises. It enables militaries of two nations to function more unified way to handle with global challenges such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal arms trade. It helps the armed forces of India as well as the U.S. to know each other's tactics, systems, processes, and methodologies. Both nations have convergence security interests such as anti-piracy operations and securing "sea lanes of communication" in the Indian Ocean Region from other threats as well as countering international terrorism. Critics said that these joint military exercises provide a platform for the major arms manufacturers of the United States to displaying their sophisticated and ultramodern weapons hoping to create more leverage towards increasing defence sales to modernizing and expanding Indian military. Thus, many strategic experts pointed out that the US exhibits its weaponries to sale during exercises (Tourangbam 2013). These exercises are one of the significant ways to check the Chinese activities in the Indian Ocean and beyond. These drills are safeguarding the seaways that carry more than half of the oil and gas in the world.

## **Cyber Security and Technology Cooperation**

The space and cyber security program of India is robust, however engagement in cyber security linked issues between the US and India began in the early 2000s, with the setting up of the Indo-US Cyber Security Forum. This forum brought both governments and private players to discuss and work together on important issues in cyber sphere (MEA 2017). Unfortunately, the program received criticism when India authorities apprehended three of its nationals who had taken part in the forum for being an agent of the US intelligence services (Nair 2010). Despite obstacles, both nations acknowledged the growing importance of cyber security in 2011 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to build connections between the US “Department of Homeland Security” and India's “Department of Information Technology” (“US Department of Homeland Security”, 2011). This MOU started a new series of security partnerships between India and the US, as it expanded the scope of security cooperation and information sharing along with cooperation in other areas such as cyber-crimes.

In addition, both nations have resolved to hold an annual commercial dialogue that addresses issues related to cyberspace and runs concurrently with the current Cyber Security Forum. (US Department of State, 2015). In June 2016, both countries announced a joint framework to a structure for cyberspace partnership. The framework delineates the two country’s commitment on Internet governance regarding rules policies and standards in global cyberspace (White House Press Release, 2016).

America has increased collaboration on satellites and sensors, to improve its engagement with India in space. The space program includes intense space exploration efforts, monitoring of climate change, missions to Mars, and research on the earth's oceans and worldwide precipitation. Like China, India likewise employs its space operations for uses in military, and several of its projects that are space-based produce real time command and control data.

Both the countries have established agreements between the “Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)” and the “National Aeronautics and Space Administration

(NASA)” (US India Security Cooperation). More of space program partnership also brings about a possibility to share technology for the US, for scientific and military works. Both the countries have cooperated on space a flight, which raised the level of India’s space program and encourage India’s “correct earth-sensing” technology. However, there are limitations on how India and the US can exchange commercial space launch technologies. The main areas of cooperation between the two nations have been the US’s use of Indian rockets to launch satellites into space.

### **Maritime Security Cooperation**

Another important area of cooperation between the US and India was maritime security. The Maritime Security Dialogue between the US and India was launched in 2016 and the same was organized the next year as well in the U.S. The objective of this dialogue was to make the maritime forces stronger.

India and the US both agreed to cooperate on “white shipping” technical setup to ameliorate the exchange of information on traffic of commercial ships and navy-to-navy contact with respect to the “safety of submarine and anti-submarine warfare” (CITE). India has stated that China is trying hard to make its presence felt as an economic power in the Indian Ocean region (IOR), Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe, which are traditionally viewed as area where India has significant influence. As China progresses with “the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)”, there will be growth of the Chinese military presence right from the Mediterranean all the way to Guam (Peri 2016).

### **Continuity in Indo-US Strategic Partnership**

A significant foreign policy shift occurred from the Bush to Obama administrations in 2008. Presidential campaign by Obama established around the idea of change, particularly in light of his predecessor’s foreign policy. After the elections, the attention of American grand strategy increased. Like the Bush administration, Obama continued to concentrate on enhancing America’s leadership as a part of US grand strategy. During Bush’s administration the National Security Strategy NSS (2006) was an important aspect of US foreign policy. This strategy emphasized effective action entirely on American leadership as the international community is more cooperative and willing in when it is led by the United States (National Security

Strategy 2006: 22). In its 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS), the Obama administration emphasises "America's global leadership" by asserting that international security depends on strong and responsible American leadership. (National Security Strategy 2010:17, 7).

The focus of both administrations was working with allies as well as others to address the problems confronting the world. The Bush Administration's focus was to make alliances strong to avert terrorist attacks against the US and allies. The counterterrorism efforts of the US led to cooperative action with assistance from other regional powers. The Obama Administration used "comprehensive engagement" as a part of its strategy which was a significant departure from the Bush administration's unilateral actions. However, the Obama administration disregarded Pakistan's sovereignty when US Special Forces entered its airspace to apprehend Osama Bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The US Secretary of Defence during the Bush administration Robert Gates held the same post during the Obama administration. By retaining Gate's in the same position implied that Obama's defence policies would stay the same, particularly in areas where the President and Secretary of Defence agreed (Baker and Shanker 2008).

The Bush Doctrine was largely premised on realist considerations. Its foreign policy concentrated on recognition of America's exceptionalism and the idea of the predomination of America's power, particularly hard power, premised on economic and military power. Such a foreign policy course had significantly diminished US's image abroad and increased anti-American feeling worldwide. On the other hand, Obama's foreign policy strategy targeted at reaffirming the leadership of the US in a world where America's pre-eminence had been challenged by new players like China in Asia (Dimitrova 2016).

Smart Power was the main idea behind Obama's foreign policy, which was utilized to change America's image abroad. The administration forged partnerships with other regional powers which allowed the US to maintain its preeminent role in the world regarding political, economic, and security issues. Smart Power consists of hard and soft power. The US has attempted to balance between diplomacy and defence (as well as development aid) to achieve its foreign policy objectives (Baker 2012).

The Bush administration reacted to the 9/11 attacks by declaring “the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)” which significantly influenced its foreign policy decisions. Terrorism and Iraq became two of its foremost issues. When it came to the danger and threat of terrorism, the Bush administration did not make a distinction between various terrorist organizations. During Obama’s presidential campaign, he wanted shift from the Doctrine of Bush. Since the start he avoided the term GWOT, however, this did not suggest that the US was to no longer interest in defeating terrorism. In fact, the Obama administration continued the fight against terrorism particularly “Al Qaeda” and its allies. The Obama administration reframed the approach of United States to the war on terror by keeping it in a lower profile since it did not want counterterrorism to overshadow other important foreign policy objectives. It wanted to give more priority to foreign policy areas like non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Although the GWOT dominated foreign policy under President Bush, in his second term in office a shift was already occurred in foreign policy priorities, taking a more liberal approach. The promotion of democracy became an important part of US foreign policy especially as a long-term solution for winning the GWOT (Lindsay 2011).

When it came to fighting the war, both administrations regarded Pakistan as an important partner particularly when it came to US aims in Afghanistan. However, each administration’s approach towards Pakistan was different. Scholars have argued that the Bush administration did not have a clear policy on Pakistan and that Iraq was a distraction, hence, the US did not focus on the security issues emanating from Pakistan. The lack of focus on Pakistan led to the resurgence of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the tribal regions of Pakistan. Relatively, the Obama administration knew that the actual danger to the U.S. was found in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hence, the US reoriented its focus back to region where the terrorist groups first began which led to the US’s Af-Pak strategy. Thus, this action by the Obama administration indicated reengagement with Pakistan different from the Bush administration (Jone 2009).

The Bush administration left office with an all-time low in the popularity ratings, and with domestic news agencies and a majority of countries welcoming Senator Barack Obama’s election as President, there was widespread belief that US foreign policy

would significantly change. Obama's popularity came largely from world leaders who welcomed the US President's preference for soft power as a tool in US foreign relations. Obama also had a strong desire to re-establish the moral grounding, and credentials of America. While still on the campaign trail, Senator Obama stated that he wanted to "restore our moral standing so that America is once again that last best hope for all who are called to the cause of freedom" (Democratic National Convention, 2008). Political analysts in the US regarded Barack Obama's speeches as an attempt to depict him as the one who aspires to bring change, however it also exposed the US's reduction in global standing.

Pew survey conducted in September 2008 revealed that almost half of the people interviewed were concerned about America's declining influence in the world, while seven out of ten believed that America was not as well regarded as it once was (PEW Research Centre 2008)

By campaigning on a national forum where he stated that he wanted to reform America's global image, engage in negotiation and diplomacy with adversaries and global competitors. Obama wanted to send a message hope, and re-establish the bilateral and regional relations with partners. President Obama appointed experts from President Clinton's time, who were experienced diplomats who shared the President's worldview. During the Clinton administration, Richard Holbrooke was the "chief negotiator" during the crisis in Bosnia as and acted as the "special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. Dennis Ross was President Clinton's Middle East peace envoy", who advised the President on the Middle East and was also special US envoy to Iran. President Obama also appointment Hillary Clinton as the Secretary of State, and Robert Gates as Secretary of Defence who also served in the same role during the George W Bush administration. Other officials from the previous administration were John Brennan who was appointed Obama's "counterterrorism policy expert and advisor."

In the first few months of Obama's Presidency the "change" he had promised did not materialize immediately despite the fact that Obama appointed many foreign policy experts. Unlike his predecessor, Obama's upbringing in Indonesia and Hawaii together with his Kenyan ancestry, and his personal experiences gave him a broader

world view. As a student during the height of the anti-apartheid and civil rights movements, Obama had developed a “sensitivity to the potential disconnect between US rhetoric and US actions” that had a huge influence in molding his foreign policy” (Pederson 2009). President Obama strongly believed in a “soft power approach” to US foreign policy. For Obama soft power was not linked to winning popularity, it was more about achieving results through negotiations and diplomatic relations, building reverence and the trust of allies and other partners to achieve America’s objectives.

### **Counter Terrorism Cooperation during President Obama’s Administration**

Since the past few years, there has been acceleration in the US-India security cooperation and a significant aspect of that partnership is counterterrorism. In 2001 “The India-US Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism” was set up. It has encouraged sharing of intelligence on terrorist financing and finding the sources of aid for terrorist organizations. Further the cooperation between the two countries has led to border management, rapid response to terrorist activities and surveillance. Through the “Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) Program”, US federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have given training to Indian security agencies regarding counterterrorism (Kaura 2017). After the 9/11 attack, counterterrorism became significantly important for the US and India.

After the 2010 Mumbai attacks the objective of the India-US counterterrorism cooperation was to share capacity building measures and intelligence (*The Hindu*, 24 July 2010) which ultimately contributed to the setting up of the “Homeland Security Dialogue” in the year 2011 (CSIS, 2013). Reinvigorating this discussion and making sure that it is held every year has proved to be important for setting and maintaining attention on this imperative point. In the meantime, cooperation in domains like border observing technology that consisted of software premised imagery analysis and sensors to detect “chemical, nuclear and radiological, (CBRN)” materials became ways in helpful alliance between the U.S. and India (US India Security Cooperation). The two countries signed agreements on how to fight terrorism and reducing the threat of future attacks. Both the countries also share common interests in defence cooperation like averting China’s military rise and the withdrawal of US troops in Afghanistan and heightened interest in maritime security concerns in Asia (Shah



2016). The two countries already had introduced a formal “Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group (CTJWG)” which meets every year since 2000, even though informally both the states aided each other before 2000 (Curtis 2009). However, there are a few outstanding political concerns in India that has Indian policy experts to question Washington’s willingness to help in fighting terrorist activities which poses a threat to India.

India has already expressed frustration over what it sees as non-commitment by the US to publicly condemn the terrorist groups that have threatened India from bases in Pakistan. Indian officials observed that the US kept intelligence on alleged terrorist activities thought to have links to terrorist groups in Kashmir (India). Additionally, they saw that the United States was unwilling to support the investigations by the government of India to check terrorism in the states of Jammu and Kashmir because they wanted to cover up Pakistan's support for Kashmiri militant groups, many of whom have ties to Al Qaeda (Curtis 2009). However, both Washington and New Delhi attempted to settle their differences, and work together on mutual goals. The partnership in law enforcement and counterterrorism has paved the way to many measures, mechanisms and working groups and countering terrorism has been considered vital in US-India relations (India United States Security Cooperation).

### **India–US Strategic Dialogue (Joint Statement, 2010)**

In 2011, the India’s External Affairs Minister and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held talks on the “Indo-US strategic dialogue” with the objective of giving stability and security a push in Asia, particularly through the emergence of inclusive, open, and balanced relations. Secretary Clinton acknowledged the role of Indian leadership in aiding to influence and shape the emergence of a prosperous and stable region. They expressed their perceptions on South Asia ; Southeast and East Asia and , Central Asia, the region of the Indian Ocean and the Middle East and promised to increase regular high-level exchanges on regional matters of similar matters.

Minister Krishna and Secretary Clinton restated their country’s mutual interest and dedication to an independent, pluralistic, and democratic Afghanistan. They restated imperativeness of a durable global dedication to Afghanistan which establishes local abilities via the Afghan-led measures. Hilary Clinton embraced India’s important

effort to reconstruction, development efforts, capacity works in Afghanistan and its recommendations in this direction. A pledge was made by both the countries to explore chances for coordination on projects assisted by civilians that forge ahead Afghan self-sufficiency and establish civilian ability.

The two countries decided to hold frequent discussions on Afghanistan and consult one another on various issues concerning the country. Both India and the US affirmed their commitment to support the Afghan people rebuild their country and provide development assistance. Afghanistan's prosperity is critical for the region's peace and security. US's Secretary of State and S. M. Krishna External Affairs Minister of India shared great concern over recent events in India and the US, which reinforce the notion that violent extremism and terrorism know no bounds and continue to pose a persistent threat to global, and regional, internal security.

They recognized the significance of persistent alliance in trying to combat terrorism. They restated the important idea that no reason or complaint justifies terrorism in anyway or kind. They agreed to take immediate and concrete efforts to destroy safe havens of terrorists, pledged to increase global awareness and stop regimes that supported terrorism. They also agreed to adopt a "Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism" that took steps to combat terrorism. Secretary Clinton and her Indian counterpart both began the unrivalled and ever-evolving India-US counterterrorism alliance, which was bolstered by the "US-India Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative" for promote capacity building, information sharing, and cooperation. Secretary Hilary reaffirmed US commitment to fully assist and cooperate in on-going counterterrorism operations, on-going information sharing between relevant agencies, and not letting the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks go free.

Minister Krishna and Secretary Hilary also discussed cyberspace's global significance, the growing reliance on IT (information technology), and important developments in the "Information and Communications Technology industry (ICT)". When it came to the "Indo-US Working Group", it was emphasized that building on this momentum is essential in order to combat growing international cyber-security concerns as well as to promote cooperative actions in the ICT department generally.

EAM Krishna and Secretary Clinton also expressed their gratitude in making defence cooperation stronger in recent years and laid stress on the point that security deliberations, transfer of technology, service-level sharing, trade partnership on mutual conditions were a survival part of the imperative partnership and that the relation should only be made more robust. They gave a positive gesture to the usual involvement of Armed Forces of the two states, including the operation of combined military exercises. They agreed on defence trade that benefitted the US and India that was mutually beneficial for both sides. The two countries pledged to keep working together in areas of convergence including counter piracy, maritime security, disaster relief and response and humanitarian aid. These were the areas of cooperation between the countries during the Bush and Obama years and continue to be important components of Indo-US relations.

#### **India–US Homeland Security Dialogue (2011)**

Improving relations after the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks continued. Homeland security and counterterrorism, enhancing bilateral relations and also global security through regular dialogues, and multilateral agreements like the “Global Counter-Terrorism Forum”, capacity building programs were the areas where India and US also expended their cooperation.. The MHA in tandem with the Homeland Security Department plan to conduct a third “US-India Homeland Security Dialogue” to improve cooperation in homeland security, cyber security, structural safeguard, tackling illegal finance, mega city planning, science and technology and world supply chain security.

These exchanges at the senior-level reinforced the strategic homeland security alliance and brought about operational alliance in investigations, countering threats and capacity building. Future law enforcement engagement plans include exchanging learnt lessons and best practices in SWAT team training and reacting to casualties at a mass level, ameliorating abilities of both the nations to respond to natural calamities and dangers. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in January 2014 sent back three recovered stolen sandstone sculptures to India which belonged to eleventh century B.C., surpassing the value of \$1.5 million.

### **Homeland Security Technology**

The US Department of Commerce intends to establish a “Homeland Security” division under “High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG)” of the two countries, in a bid to furnish accelerated access to technologies linked to homeland security. The HTCG, which is made up of an industry component, decided to meet at Washington in 2014. Today less than 0.02 per cent of exports by United States to India need a license in that regard, as contrasted to 24 per cent in 2004.

### **Counterterrorism Joint Working Group of India and the US**

The “State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Department of Homeland Security’s Under Secretary Francis Taylor and Ambassador Tina Kaidanow” held meetings with his counterpart in Government of India to further the “Counterterrorism Working Group” process, focusing more on exchanges of senior experts from both countries. Indo-US cooperative attempts encompass partnership in the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the UN and agreements to take up measures for more bilateral cooperation. Moreover, the United States reiterated that it would stand beside India in the fight against terrorism. In addition, both sides called for concentrated efforts against terrorist organizations listed in UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee. This included organizations like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Al-Qai’da, ISIS, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT).

### **Law Enforcement Collaboration**

Through existing partnership and discussions between the “Ministry of Home Affairs” “India’s Ministry of External Affairs” and the US “Department of Justice”, “State Department’s Office of the Legal Adviser”, the US and India progressed significantly in making agreements on legal matters including extradition particularly in the interest achieving justice. This includes existing contributions by the National Investigative Agency and the “Federal Bureau of Investigation” Agency to making sharing of electronic proof stronger to combat cybercrime and reduce the dangers of counterterrorism.

### **Urban Policing**

For the time in December 2013, the Indian Government conducted the India-US police conference. The conference saw the participation of Indian and US police chiefs and other officials from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. The conference laid emphasis on tackling gender-based bias, building effective partnership between police agencies and diasporic communities particularly in the US. In 2014, “the International Association of Chiefs of Police” saw the participation of more than 80 senior police officials from India who took part in a study tour headed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, information exchange on important incident command, rising trends in policing and transnational crime.

### **Regional Safe Cities Program**

“United States Agency for International Development (USAID)”, the Indian state governments, and the Japanese government, collaborated with the UN to create the “Safe Cities” program for women in New Delhi. The program helped set up safe urban spaces for young girls and women by working with municipality leaders, NGOs, law enforcement officials, to monitor occurrences of violence premised on gender, ameliorate systems to avert and respond to this belligerence, and strengthen the confidence of women in the system of justice.

### **Making Travel Legitimate and frequent**

Every year the visits by the citizens of both countries in each other surpass one million. The Department of Homeland Security of USA strives to work with Indian partners so that Indians can participate in DHS’s Global Entry program. The idea of the trusted traveller program is to increase the entry of frequent travellers, primarily reducing their wait times. The United States has “Global Entry partnership” with a small number of countries.

### **India-US Counter Terrorism Initiative (2011)**

The US and India both signed the “India-US Counter Terrorism Initiative” in 2011, based on the agreement made during “Prime Minister of India's” visit to the United States in 2009. Ambassador Timothy J. Roemer of the United States and Mr. G.K. Pillai (Union Home Secretary) of India were the signatories. Ms. Nirupam Rao, the Foreign Secretary, was also present at the signing.

The “India-US Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative” aimed to strengthen the two nations' counter-terrorism partnership. The objective of this initiative is to fight terrorism by sharing information regarding the modernization of techniques and also finest practices on topics which had similar interest; forging alliance between forensic science laboratories; setting up processes to gain common investigative aid; enhancing abilities to act against a lot of crimes like counterfeit currency exchanging ,funding of terrorism, money laundering organizing more exchanges between the Navy and Coast Guards on maritime security; sharing expertise and experience on border and port security; providing training and contact between professional Counter-Terrorism Units, such as the National Security Guard, and their American counterparts.

During the visit to the United States by the “Union Home Minister” in September 2009, the Union Home Secretary indicated that various regions for “Counter Terrorism Cooperation” between the India and US had been recognized, as evidenced in the paper concurred. The MoU signed between the two countries is an example of successful counter-terrorism collaboration between the US and India.. The union Home Minister credited Ambassador Timothy J. Roemer for his role in helping to make the agreement possible.

#### **US and India’s law Enforcement Alliance via Combined Antiterrorism Seminar**

The “Bureau of Diplomatic Security under the US Department of State”, in collaboration with the “Indian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)”, completed a fourteen-day program on the role of police leaders in counterterrorism on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The program was arranged by the CRPF Academy (Central Reserve Police Force Academy) in Gurugram, with teachers from the “Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA)”. BPR&D (Bureau of Police Research and Development) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) selected high-ranking officials from Indian law enforcement including state and federal agencies all over India to attend the workshop. As the seminar ended, Timothy J. Roemer the U.S. Ambassador to India stated: “Since terrorism is an international crime, training seminars like this one provide a great chance for the United States and India to forge the professional partnerships and personal ties that can be essential in a crisis. This conference is one

of numerous similar exchanges frequently held between the governments of India and the U.S. that concentrate on enhancing our joint counterterrorism capabilities and battling transnational terror groups”.

### **India-US Joint Declaration on Combatting Terrorism (2015)**

In 2015, the following crucial points were made in the discussions between Smt. Sushma Swaraj then EAM of India and US Secretary of State John Kerry during the inauguration session of the “India-U.S. strategic and commercial dialogue”:

1. Reiterate the commitment and promise of India and the US to combat terrorism in all its forms
2. Reaffirm the vision of President Obama and PM Modi to ameliorate the U.S. – India relationship so that they can fight terrorism better as partners.
3. Call for Pakistan to punish the culprits of the 2008 Mumbai attack.
4. Recognizing danger of ISIL/Da’esh posed to the world security and affirms attempts to defeat and degrade this insecurity and recall the U.S. India Counterterrorism Initiative (CCI).
5. Reiterate the MoU signed in January 2015 to bring about partnership against money laundering and funding of terrorism.

The futuristic political communication between India and the US in tandem with other regional, global, and domestic factors has in fact showed a defining movement between “India and the United States on counter-terrorism alliance”. Although there are significant changes in America’s role in Pakistan, it continues to receive financial assistance from the US. However, India and the U.S. hold military exercises, share covert intelligence, and regularly hold meetings between high-ranking government officials on areas of common interest, including counterterrorism.

Increasing terrorist activities in the region (South Asia) piracy, cyber security dangers, and similar security concerns gave India and the US more reasons to boost counter-terrorism cooperation, particularly as the Al Qaeda and Taliban jeopardize the interest of both the countries. Both Washington and New Delhi have acknowledged that they need each other’s assistance to remove the security threats, and collaborate extensively in Afghanistan. US investment in Afghanistan has been astronomical especially in conducting military operations and trying to bring about stability in the

country. India has also provided financial and material resources toward infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. It is vital for both the countries to make sure that Afghanistan does not, become a haven for extremism and terrorist groups. What has also become important has been safeguarding sea lanes of communication from terrorist attack. Cooperation on the high seas is another integral part of the partnership. India plays a critical role in the Indian Ocean region from which the US has benefitted greatly. Despite the differences in opinion over the role of Pakistan in assisting the US in counterterrorism, New Delhi has attempted to influence Washington in placing significant pressure on Pakistan on the issue of cross-border terrorism.

The nature of terrorism underwent a change with advancements in information technology, and for any country it has now become difficult to safeguard its people from unpredictable attacks. India and the US also need to consolidate partnership against cyber-terrorism. There can be no success in attempts towards strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation in the absence of common efforts and trust to address each other's issues. What needs to be seen is whether the divergences that have disturbed the partnership in the past can be overcome, to establish a more effective structure of Indo-US partnership against the accelerating danger of terrorism.

As can be discerned from the discussions in this chapter, US-India relations have grown by leaps and bounds since the last days of the Clinton presidency that continued through the Bush years to Obama's Presidency. Simultaneously, on the Indian side, this partnership has been nurtured by both the BJP led NDA (National Democratic Alliance) and the INC (Indian National Congress) led UPA alternate coalition governments. Based on a strategic background of managing the ramifications of China's increasing rise in the "Asia-Pacific region" and now the Indo-Pacific, governments on both sides worked towards bringing together the two democracies in ways not seen before. From the political, security and economic realms, the US-India partnership touched new heights. During this new understanding, the developments relating to common concerns regarding global terrorism reached a new convergence hitherto unseen. Although differences of operationalization were present, there was a broad consensus on how both countries saw the impact of terrorism post 9/11 and the later in the 26/11 attacks. On the backdrop of a great security and defence partnership, both countries engaged in



multiple levels, convening joint training and exercises in areas and expertise related to counter terrorism. As the two democracies move ahead into the 21<sup>st</sup> century filled with strategic uncertainties and threats from state and non-state actors developing new complex dimensions, it was imperative for both countries to explore new vistas of cooperation to counter the multifaceted threats emanating from terrorism.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**CONCLUSION**

There is a clarity from the research conducted that how the relations and constructive engagement between the US and India got unfolded since the end of the “Cold War.” Although, US-India relations prevailed despite India’s proximity to the Soviet Union during Cold War period, after the end of Cold War and opening of the Indian economy relationship gained momentum. The Clinton administration witnessed greater political, economic and military cooperation but it was President George W. Bush administration during which the real progress in trust building happened and ‘Strategic Partnership’ started. The study focused on the strategic partnership as significant component of US-India relations particularly during the George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama administrations. The study revealed that since the Clinton years, there has been a strategic convergence between the two countries. It has been found that since 9/11, relations between the two countries have improved significantly. After 9/11, India became increasingly crucial for the US, whether on counterterrorism or reaching a consensus on potential important areas relating to strategic convergence. Indo-US cooperation on other global issues such as Indo-Pacific region has also been stressed.

The end of the Cold War provided geopolitical space to both countries to understand each other’s perception on matters related to global peace and security and start afresh. The emergence of India as a huge commercial market was perceived by the US as a major reason for changing the perception. However, during post-9/11 periods, recognizing the threat posed by terrorist networks to global and regional security, the US pursued a more rigorous foreign policy that emphasized on counter-terrorism. This change in US foreign policy on counter-terrorism helped accelerate the bilateral relations between the US and India since India has been a victim of cross-border terrorism since a long time. Earlier the United States did not recognise terrorism. Both countries found common ground for cooperation, and India became a crucial partner for promoting mutual interests.

When George W. Bush was elected president in 2001, he vowed to strengthen ties with India. After President George W. Bush took office, his advisers proposed strategies for transforming US-Indian ties in a way that would be based on shared and overlapping interests. During the George W. Bush administration, the US adopted a

more nuanced foreign policy which was a significant departure from the Clinton Administration. As the largest democracy in the world, India was increasingly seen as a part of the solution to a number of global problems.

During the Bush administration, relations between the US and India had improved significantly. The Bush administration made it one of its priorities to improve relations with India. This shift in US foreign policy toward India included closer economic ties and cooperation on counter-terrorism cooperation as well as strategic partnership. Both countries augmented partnership through civil nuclear cooperation, collaboration on space technology and exploration, military to military exchanges and cooperation on high technology.

Since India's independence, the Cold War period and the global superpower competition had impacted the bilateral relations. After India liberalised its economy, economic growth witnessed an upward trajectory. India's economic growth coupled with India's potential as a responsible nuclear power helped India and the US come closer. However, counter-terrorism cooperation remained a critical lynchpin of US-India relations since 9/11 event in 2001.

During President Bush period US foreign policy reflected assertiveness throughout his tenure and global war on terrorism continued with a greater focus. How the tone and tenor of the US got changed after the 9/11 attacks became a part of the debate. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 drew condemnation against the perpetrators from a number of countries including Iran. The Bush administration adopted an assertive foreign policy to achieve its objective of rooting out Al Qaeda and its supporters around the world. President Bush did get considerable support in making it a global war on terrorism. However, the policy the US adopted, particularly during the invasion of Iraq, unsettled allies and partners in many parts of the world did not produce much dividends.

How the US was uneasy about China's expansion in Asia, and how it raised US interest in India has also featured prominently as a part of analysis. India's importance grew in the world because of its consistent growth in economy, reflection of strategic potential and as a responsible nuclear power. President George W. Bush had taken

decisive action to maintain good relations with India. Further 9/11 attacks provided an opportunity for greater US-India ties in the positive direction for fight against terrorism formed a major part of research. How President Bush's strategy got unfolded towards India also has been explored in a comprehensive manner.

The terrorist attack of 9/11 presented chances for advancing the Indo-US strategic cooperation. India committed to assist the US in fighting terrorist organisations with bases in South Asia, building on the steadily improving relations established by the Talbott-Singh talks.

The 9/11 attacks made clear the serious challenge that terrorism had on both US national security as well as global security. The US national security apparatus immediately embraced a militaristic security posture after the 9/11 attacks. India contributed significantly to the US's efforts to combat terrorism around the world.

India agreed to support the US initiatives in combating terrorism. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee travelled to the US in 2001 to reiterate India's support for bilateral counterterrorism cooperation. The visit paved the way for close intelligence information sharing cooperation between the US and India. Leaders of the world's two largest democracies emphasised that "those who believe that terrorism is equal to religion are as incorrect as those who utilise religion to commit, support, or justify terrorist activities" were wrong. President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee concurred that in order to defeat terrorism, it would be necessary to get the cooperation from all nations, and coordinate efforts to stop the spread of terrorist operations.

The study further found that, first; both nations have increased their review process and intelligence information sharing regarding global terrorism scenario. Second, there was strong integration of intelligence and investigation cooperation. Third, there has been a huge increase in the number of counterterrorism training exercises for Indian law enforcement personnel. Fourth, they created a bilateral Cyber Security Forum with a clear action plan to keep an eye on cyber terrorism and information security. The Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty was also established by them. Fifth, both nations formed a military-to-military counter-terrorism alliance to aid to the US-

India Defense Policy Group's initiatives. Sixth, they worked together to implement "UNSC Resolution 1373" and other related anti-terrorism measures.

The "Joint Working group on Counter Terrorism" was established in 2000. Between 2000 and 2002, the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism convened four times, underlining the necessity for the two nations to concentrate in particular on combating terrorism. This has been a turning point in the fight against terrorism for both countries in the years that have followed. It opened the door for both nations to have greatly benefited from their cooperation in counterterrorism.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to the US in November 2001, when he was the Indian Prime Minister, played a significant role in establishing the strategic ties between the two countries that later led to the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP). In order to advance cooperation in high-tech trade, missile defence, civilian space cooperation, and civil nuclear cooperation, the NSSP was eventually launched in January 2004. The NSSP has advanced collaboration since January 2004 by taking a series of mutually beneficial actions that build upon one another. Increasing participation in nuclear regulatory and safety concerns, greater missile defence cooperation, uses of space technology in the Pacific, and attempts to create the ideal environment for increased high-technology trade were some of these initiatives.

Building on the two nations' shared democratic values and common interests in maintaining stability in Asia and beyond, combating international terrorism, and preventing the spread of WMD and their delivery systems, President Bush aimed to create a successful and long-lasting long-term strategic partnership with India. It was an NSSP effort. In particular, the NSSP allowed the US to modify the export licence requirements for some items going to be safeguarded in civil nuclear facilities, remove export licence requirements for most end users of unilaterally controlled nuclear items, and broaden the scope of bilateral commercial satellite cooperation.

With the help of these activities, the US was able to change its export licencing laws in a way that promoted cooperation in commercial space programmes and permitted some shipments to nuclear power plants under safeguards. The removal of the "Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)" from the Department of Commerce Entity List

was one of the adjustments made, and it is totally consistent with the US government's objectives, commitments, and non-proliferation laws. The majority of the technology sanctions in place have been waived. The entities list was updated to remove the strategic institutions.

Further the “Civil Nuclear Cooperation” cemented the “US-India partnership.” In October 2008, the US and India formally unveiled the Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative. The “International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)” Board of Governors accepted India's safeguards agreement on August 1, 2008, paving the way for the Nuclear Suppliers Group to consider India as a part of an exception. With the accompanying agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation, US and Indian businesses can work together to advance the growth of India's civil nuclear industry, create a clean energy source that benefits the environment, and give India greater energy security by providing dependable energy sources for its sizable and expanding economy.

In a joint statement released on July 18, 2005, then-US President George W. Bush and then-Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced the “US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative.” This Initiative strengthened the non-proliferation system by bringing India closer compliance with international non-proliferation rules and practises while simultaneously providing a method for fostering civil nuclear cooperation to assist in meeting India's expanding energy needs.

The US Congress enacted the “Henry J. Hyde US-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act (Hyde Act)” in December 2006, creating a legal framework for fostering civil nuclear cooperation with India. The “Nuclear Suppliers Group's (NSG)” consensus decision to approve an exception to its full-scope safeguards requirement to permit civil nuclear supply to India was another milestone in Indo-US convergence.

The so-called 123 Agreement was the result of an extraordinary three-year dialogue process between the US and India. The Agreement's approval strengthened relationship between the oldest democracy and largest democracy in the world. It also opened up opportunities for trade and investment for the US economy and aid India in

meeting its rapidly rising energy needs in an environmentally responsible manner while containing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The US-India 123 Agreement represents a shared commitment to share both the advantages of the international system as well as the duties and responsibilities of preserving, bolstering, and protecting it. The US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation offers significant benefits, including the strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two countries, increased energy security in the face of rising energy demand, aid in environmental protection, increased trade, new job and investment opportunities for American businesses.

The bilateral relationship was strengthened during the eight years of the Bush administration, culminating in the creation of the “Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism,” the de-hyphenation of India and Pakistan, the “Next Steps in Strategic Partnership,” the “Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement,” and lobbying efforts in support of India in the US Congress and for a waiver from the “Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).”

The Obama administration came in with the mandate of ending the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict, and to shift its focus towards managing the ramifications of China’s rise in the Asia-Pacific region. India was seen as a key regional power balancer to China in order to accomplish this goal. The Obama administration's understanding opened the door for the developing defence and security collaboration between the two nations. Obama made two trips to India while in office and in 2015 he became the first US president to be invited to be the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebration.

Foreign policy experts in the US and India were not sure about Indo-US relations in January 2009, when Barack H. Obama became the 44th US President, thinking that the momentum in the bilateral relations established during the George W. Bush administration would be continuing. President Obama pledged during his election campaign to implement policies that were different from those of his predecessor in order to bring about radical change. He claimed that in order to re-establish American leadership worldwide, a new strategy was urgently required to address concerns such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism.



The Obama administration sent out indications that it would change the direction of its foreign policy. Many Indian observers were uneasy and concerned about US-Indian ties as a result of the very different signals coming from Washington after Obama's victory than those of the previous administration. Obama further indicated that India would not be given priority by his administration during his time in the Senate and during his presidential campaign.

The Obama administration started to signal that it was reengaging India after six months of hesitation. During her five-day trip, Hillary Clinton was in India from July 17 to July 22, 2009. Her visit was aimed at strengthening the Indo-US strategic alliance and renewing the Strategic Dialogue. The Strategic Dialogue was an effort to continue and step up their cooperation in areas like disarmament, counterterrorism, non-proliferation, trade, investment in infrastructure, technology and science, sustainability of the environment, and mitigating “climate change, agriculture, energy security, food security, education, healthcare, and women's empowerment”.

The End-User Monitoring Agreement (EUMA) that was negotiated between two countries was another significant accomplishment during Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit. The EUMA permitted American firms like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman to enter the Indian military industry because India is the country that imports the most conventional weaponry. The EUMA paved the way for significant acquisitions of cutting-edge US military equipment and strengthened bilateral security cooperation. The agreement paved the way for heavy lift helicopter Chinook and Attack helicopter Apache.

By building a long-term framework for their global strategic relationship, President Obama's visit to India from November 6–9, 2010, gave the bilateral collaboration between the US and India further intensification. Since Obama's inauguration in January 2009, it was the longest visit to any nation. The restrictions on companies like the “Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), and Bharat Dynamics” were eased by President Obama during the visit. He declared that the Department of Atomic Energy was receiving the same attention (DAE). In actuality, these limitations posed the biggest challenges to solidifying strategic collaboration between two nations.

Both leaders highlighted the need to get rid of terrorist and extremist group's safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They put pressure on Pakistan to apprehend those responsible for the Mumbai attacks. The Home Ministry of India and their American counterparts in Homeland Security agreed to establish a "Homeland Security Dialogue" to further develop operational capabilities in counterterrorism, capacity building, and technology transfers.

Another significant endeavour that helps dispels misunderstandings and resolve unresolved issues between the two countries are the Strategic Dialogue between India and the US. An effective deliberative venue for discussing the complete range of Indo-US collaboration on bilateral, regional, and global concerns has been made available through the Strategic Dialogue process, which was launched in 2009. It is the two countries highest-level, regularly planned bilateral trade-off. Reviewing relationship developments, developing policy, and promoting new levels of cooperation between the two countries were all goals of the Strategic Dialogues. To address long-term issues and prepare the way for a strong strategic alliance between India and the USA, the dialogue process has made tremendous progress.

The Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative was completed during "Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's" visit to Washington in November 2009 (the US-India Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism and the Indo-US Cyber Security Forum had already been signed by both nations). Later, on July 23, 2010, both governments signed the "Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative" to promote tight and effective cooperation in counterterrorism, capacity building, and information sharing. The initiative gave both nations a platform to collaborate on a variety of challenges, including money laundering, terrorism funding, border security, transport security, maritime port security, megacity policing, and cyber security.

The Homeland Security Dialogue was also started by the US and India in May 2011. Both countries demonstrated a desire to expand their collaboration under the Homeland Security Dialogue in the areas of international supply chain management, cyber security, illegal cyber security, critical infrastructure protection, technological progress, and capacity building. They decided to focus their efforts on enhancing

counterterrorism collaboration through intelligence information sharing, operational coordination, information exchange, and acquiring cutting-edge counterterrorism equipment. As a required component of their joint military exercises, both countries forces have begun counterterrorism joint manoeuvres.

The DTTI has concentrated on the following six initiatives, collectively referred to as “pathfinder,” including “Development of the Joint Biological Tactical Detection System, Digital Helmet, Intelligence and Surveillance Module for Transport Aircraft, and Chemical-Biological Protective Ensemble for Troops.” Additionally, two joint working groups on the development of aircraft carriers and jet engines have been established.

After the 26/11 attacks in 2008 in Mumbai, India and the United States signed the “Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative (CCI)” in July 2010 to expand cooperation and improve military and counterterrorism exchanges. This agreement mirrors the commitment made by both governments to fight terrorism and maintain security. These attempts covered exchanges between “law enforcement agencies,” simultaneous senior-level visits to discuss lessons learnt, conducting combined exercises on defence training, and joining forces in the world coterie on imperative anti-terrorism matters

On September 27, 2013, PM Manmohan Singh and President Barack Obama made a declaration at the White House that paved the way for the transfer of sophisticated and advanced technologies to India, which the US had previously denied. This was another significant milestone in the “Indo-US strategic partnership.” It was a crucial choice to pave the road for a long-lasting strategic alliance, and both countries opted to work together on defence project development and manufacturing.

The strategic cooperation between India and the United States has been revitalised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The “New Framework in the India-US Defence Relations” of 2005, which was due to expire in 2015, was renewed by both countries as one of the visit's most significant outcomes in light of new goals and aspirations. Both the leaders made a commitment in advancing the collaboration on naval technologies and maritime security. They also identified crucial areas where

cooperation was required, including the examination of extradition agreements, combating cybercrime, dealing with counterfeit money, and counterterrorism.

The US emphasised that it was in favour of India gradually joining non-proliferation systems. Obama added that India had completed the necessary requirements to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). These actions have strengthened “India's status as nuclear power” and Indo-US defence collaboration in highly sensitive technological areas. The visit of the Prime Minister was extraordinarily fruitful, according to Chuck Hagel, the US Defence Secretary, and it prepared the way for strengthening the two countries' relationship.

An important area of collaboration between the US and India was maritime security. The Maritime Security Dialogue between the US and India began in 2016, and it was also held in the US in 2017. This discussion was meant to bolster the marine forces. India and the US both decided to cooperate on "white shipping" technology setup in order to boost information exchange on commercial ship traffic and navy-to-navy interaction with reference to “safety of submarine and anti-submarine warfare.”

Since the beginning of the India-US strategic dialogue process in 2010, the two countries' bilateral relations have grown and expanded dramatically. There was a renewed emphasis on talking about moving the relationships to the next level during the fifth session of the Strategic Dialogue, which was held in India in July 2014. The Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group, the CEO's Forum, ministerial-level Homeland Security and Trade Policy Forum discussions, and the next round of the High Technology Cooperation Group have held frequent meetings throughout the Obama administration.

Further to strengthen Indo-US relations, the “Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement” (LEMOA), which was inked in 2016, set even another high bar. It opened the door for procuring emergency spare parts and refuelling capabilities. In June 2016, the United States designated India as a “Major Defence Partner”. India has been participated in several military drills with the US as a result. India was granted Strategic Trade Authorization tier 1 status in 2018, which enables it to license-free access to a variety of defence and dual-use technologies governed by the Department

of Commerce. The Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), was signed on September 6, 2018, during the first 2+2 ministerial meeting between India and the US. The purpose of this agreement is to share and safeguard communications between the two countries during operations and training. Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) that was signed in October 2020 makes it possible to give top-notch tools as well as real-time intelligence and information, enabling India to use American geospatial data to hit hostile targets with extreme precision.

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