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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "IMPACT OF POKHRAN-II ON INDIA'S DIPLOMACY TOWARDS CHINA, 1998-2004" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASSOCHAM	The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CBM	Confidence Building Measure
CICIR	China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations
CIIS	China Institute of International Studies
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
G8	Group of Eight
IDSIA	Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
IIC	India International Centre
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
JSG	Joint Study Group
JWG	Joint Working Group
KMT	Guomintang
LoAC	Line of Actual Control
LoC	Line of Control
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non Aligned Movement
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NFU	No First Use
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
PRC	People's Republic of China

R&D	Research and Development
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TAR	Tibet Autonomous Region
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World trade Organization

# CHAPTER 1.

## INTRODUCTION

The Indian diplomacy never enjoyed such primacy in the contemporary times as it is enjoying in the post 1998 period. India has often been marked as a weak nation, which is marred by rampant poverty, technological backwardness and weak military. These factors have not allowed Indian diplomacy to play a pivotal role in the international politics. But the end of cold war in 1991 with the disintegration of Soviet Union forced India to change its economic as well defence policy. India adopted economic liberalization and strengthened its military capability by conducting five nuclear tests at Pokhran, Rajasthan on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1998 which was later called Pokhran-II.

The Pokhran-II brought new challenges to Indian diplomacy. As diplomacy was entirely a new arena for then National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government it becomes interesting to study the impact which Pokhran-II made on India's diplomacy, especially towards China, with which India shares a complex relationship. Except that of little experience of Atal Bihari Vajpayee who was India's External Affairs Minister during the Morarji Desai government from 24<sup>th</sup> march 1977 to 28<sup>th</sup> July 1979, the entire NDA fraternity was inexperienced in diplomacy. But this inexperience generated noblest of view on diplomacy. Jaswant Singh who became the External Affairs Minister in Vajpayee government said "after all, diplomacy is mostly about improving relations between countries, obviously without compromising national interest" (Singh 2006: 146). This matched the classic definition of diplomacy given by eminent scholar Harold Nicholson who said "diplomacy is neither the invention nor the pastime of some particular political system, but is an essential element in any reasonable relation between man and man and between nation and nation" (Nicholson 1969: 4).

Diplomacy, however involves relations that are reasonable and meaningful. Reasonable relation guarantees positive result, essential for development of nations. Nicolson quoting from Oxford English Dictionary defines diplomacy as “the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatist” (Nicolson 1969: 4-5). The relation between states is managed by negotiations. In international system each independent state acts as an independent entity which looks for its self interest. Therefore negotiations become essential. If the negotiations fail the states go to war bringing the scope for coercive diplomacy. War brings destruction and can prove counterproductive for the victor. So states prefer dialogue to settle issues. Therefore, Adam Watson says that “by diplomacy I mean the dialogue between independent states” (Watson 1982: 10-11).

In terms of its institutional infrastructure, diplomacy does not merely mean the activities of the diplomats emanating from the embassies. It is rather the sum total of the activities of people of one state towards other. It is very wide and interlinked with various issues. Diplomacy can never be tied to embassies but it “flourished before these useful institutions existed; they themselves have changed their character many times since their beginning in Renaissance Italy; and states will continue to negotiate with one another and work out imaginative solutions to their difficulties if, for instance, resident embassies lose their importance or are completely transformed in character” (Watson 1982: 11). Embassy works only as a nodal agency that provides logistic support to diplomacy but its importance is limited by other high yielding activities between two states.<sup>1</sup>

According to former diplomat Kishan S. Rana, diplomacy is also not the foreign policy of the state. Sometimes authors use foreign policy and diplomacy interchangeably. For example Henry Kissinger has used it as title for his book “Diplomacy”. Foreign policy in a democracy is made by the cabinet which

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<sup>1</sup> Other activities such as trade, cultural exchanges and sports, play important role in relation between two states. Embassies play a scant role in these activities.

represents political leaders and is responsible to parliament (Rana 2000: 25). This foreign policy is implemented by the career diplomats who work for the government through the diplomatic apparatus (Rana 2000: 25). When the foreign policy is implemented it gets modified by the activities of diplomats and often gets altered from the original plan (Rana 2000: 25-26). “Diplomacy deals with the articulation of foreign policy in the real world, where high principles and objectives set out in the policy are fleshed out and put into effect” (Rana 2000: 26). Therefore diplomacy is wider and complex than foreign policy.

Diplomacy is also associated with tact and intelligence. As Sir Ernst Satow in his classic “A Guide to Diplomatic Practice” state that “diplomacy is the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent States, extending sometimes also to their relations with vassal States, or more briefly still, the conduct of business between States by peaceful means” (Rana 2000: 27). In international relation the conduct of states are maneuvered to elicit maximum gain through negotiations and tactful alliances. Realism for example explains how weaker states enter into alliance to counter stronger state.

Nevertheless, Diplomacy never becomes as narrow as foreign policy. If the interests of the state has to be safeguarded, mere carving of a foreign policy does not suffice. The implementation of the foreign policy through different activities speaks about the diplomacy. If a foreign policy has to be worked out: it has to be multifaceted. Therefore in the course of diplomacy several activities come in. A simple football match between two countries could hold significant meaning to the relation between two countries for it would involve diplomats as well as common people. Therefore the NDA government treaded cautiously and shaped India’s diplomacy to achieve cooperative partnership with prominent countries of the world.



## **DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA**

Notwithstanding their ancient civilization the knowledge of historic diplomatic ties between India and China<sup>2</sup> is curtailed by the lack of available literatures. This is not amazing, for humans are always unable to determine historical facts due to their limited capability of looking back into darkness of knowledge where evidence has been transformed into fossils. However there are enough evidences to show that China- India relationship had existed throughout centuries which had witnessed different frequencies of “give and take” involving mutual and peaceful cohabitation. The spread of Buddhism to China from seventh century AD is seen as most important and flourishing example of ancient diplomatic ties.

The earliest evidences of China-India diplomatic relations dates back to the pre Aryan period of India during which rice, water buffalo and fowl found their way to China either through Burma route or other routes. Unfortunately evidences to show diplomatic relationship between pre Aryan India and China are not available. Despite the constraints of evidences it can be said that pre Aryan India was not oblivious of China and a considerable relationship existed between them which might have played a symbiotic role in the augmentation of there ancient civilization.

References have been made about Chinese people in the Indian epic, Ramayana and Mahabharata<sup>3</sup>. According to Ramayana the Chinese (Cinas) as well as the Hunas, Yavanas, Sinhalas, Mlechchas were created by sage Vashistha. The Mahabharata also refers to “China” which may be derived from the Qin state which later became Qin dynasty (221 BCE – 206 BCE). Relationship between India and China began to be evident in historical records with the popularity of Buddhism in India. Being a

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<sup>2</sup> India and China with there present boundary and nature of polity did not exist before 1947. However, this two countries have lived here since ancient times and nation- states of India and China have inherited there tradition, language and culture. Moreover nation building is an evolutionary concept.

<sup>3</sup> The Ramayana and Mahabharata are Indian epic believed to contain the events of the period 2850 BC to 850 BC but were written during 540 BC to 300 BC.

missionary religion Buddhist monk travelled long distances to spread the message of Lord Buddha. Monk Buddhahadra (Batu) traveled to China in 464 AD and established the famous Shao-lin monastery in Henan province of China. Bodhidharma another Indian monk went to China in 527 AD and introduced fighting skills in the Shao-lin monastery.

Kautilya (350- 280 BC) in his book Arthashastra has also mentioned about “cinamsuka” (Chinese silk dress) and “cinapatta” (Chinese silk bundle). On the other hand Chinese historians like Zhang Qian (d 113BC) and Sima Qian (145- 90 BC) have made references to “Shendu” probably referring to the Indus Valley which in Sanskrit is called “Sindhu”.

The India- China relationship, after the emergence of Buddhism has been marked by the continuous visit of monks, pilgrims and travelers from China eager to decipher Buddhist texts and translate it into Chinese and visit the places associated with Buddha. These monks were often patronized by the Kings and enjoyed considerable hospitality in courts. So apart from providing religious literature they have also provided account of polity in India. As a Good Samaritan they also acted as envoy in India and China.

The earliest known diplomatic ties between India and China came to be established in the 3<sup>rd</sup> C BC. This was the period when Fa Xian (Fa Hein) (342-424 AD) came to India and visited several places and collected several Buddhist texts. Fa xian later compiled *Fa guo ji* (Accounts of Buddhist Country). 250 years after Fa xian another Chinese traveler Xuan Zhang came to India and stayed through 600- 614 AD. Xuan Zhang set up diplomatic ties with the King Harsha Vardhana of India and the Chinese emperor. Xuan Zhang later compiled his experiences of India in his book *Da tang xi yu ji* (Journeys to the West.)

Buddhism played an important role in the establishment of diplomatic contacts in the entire South Asian region leading from Sri Lanka to Afghanistan and China.

The Indian Ocean was widely used to commute between China and south India resulting in the introduction of south Indian style of dance and music to China. Apart from this Indian astronomy and calendar found its place in China while silk and paper was introduced in India by the Chinese.

The travelers and pilgrims along with merchants used several routes to commute between India and China. Oldest being the Assam- Burma- Yunan route, the busiest was the Bectria, Kapisi, Kabul, Peshawar, Taxila upto Mathura and Ujjain along with the Gilgit route in the medieval period. The sea route of Indian Ocean via Sri Lanka, Java and Cambodia to Shandong in China was also widely used. The Nepal-Tibet route which gain prominence in the 7<sup>th</sup> C AD was also used for the spread of Buddhism.

The ancient and medieval India- China contacts indicate that both India and China were known to each other and India- China relationship was always a “two-way-traffic” (Singh 2003: 20). The spread of Buddhism along with cultural and commercial exchanges, took their relationship towards mutual cohabitation.

## **BEGINNING OF THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP**

The relationship between India and China started to become complex during the colonial period with the appearance of the British. While both India and Chinese revolutionaries supported each other's cause for independence and integration, differences emerged in the ideological domain to achieve independence from the British colonizers. Many of the Indian revolutionaries, like Rash Behari Bose and Lala Lajpat Rai shared personal relations with Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen who advocated the overthrow of China's Qing Emperor, in order to end the dominance of British in China.

The Indian and the Chinese revolutionaries often interacted and helped each other in their planned operation against the British. The coordination between the

members of Ghadar movement in India and the Chinese revolutionaries was well known. This coordination received a set back with the collapse of China's United Front in April 1927 resulting in the emergence of *Guomintang's* (KMT) vengeance against the communists, leading to mass killings (Singh 2003: 32).

As China moved towards confrontation between communists and non communist India under the influence of Gandhiji well adapted itself to non violence. Both Gandhi and Nehru was pacifist and they jointly steered India towards nonviolent revolution thereby integrating the people of India to form a nation. China, on the other hand, had to bear the onslaught of the Japanese invasion in the 1930's. The Japanese raid and the sharp ideological difference between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao and the compelling events during the Second World War transformed the Chinese society in to a militant country. However the Indian pacifism considerably modified the Chinese national and international policy. Notwithstanding the beginning of differences in the Indian and Chinese ideology, India and China kept their cooperation intact. In 1938 the Indian National Congress sent a medical team led by Dr. D. S. Kotnis, who became a martyr while attending the wounded Chinese soldiers in the China- Japan war. Dr. Kotnis's selfless service to Chinese soldiers is seen with great regard by China even today. President Hu Jintao during his visit to India during November 2006 met Dr. Kotnis's family in Mumbai and offered his regard.

The China policy of the British during the colonization era proved instrumental in shaping the India-China relationship for the future. The opium war and the British Tibet policy were seen as a larger design of the colonizers to keep China under its dominance. Tibet which had played a buffer role in the relation between British India and China later became a bone of contention between both the countries, leading China into a sense of insecurity. The British had tried to interfere in Tibet since they were granted permission to enter Tibet by the Chefoo Covention of 1876 with the ruling monarch in Peking. When Tibet refused to honour it the British

established their suzerainty by the treaty of 1906 and 1908 forcing the Dalai Lama to flee to Mongolia.

The British India established telegraph lines to keep their trade alive with Tibet; nonetheless they were not interested in retaining their hold on Tibet. However China tried to regain the lost influence over Tibet and began its expedition to regain control over Tibet in 1905. By 1910 the Chinese army for the first time entered Tibet without the invitation from the Dalai Lama. Dalai Lama fled Tibet and took refuge in British India. Owing to the Chinese republican revolution of 1911 Dalai Lama declared Tibet's independence. However the issue was tried to be resolved in Shimla conference of 1913-1914 which did not produce any agreement. Tibet issue triggered a new dynamics of Chinese thought and policies which was guided by sense of national insecurity. So when Mao was able to establish communism in China in 1949, he sent the Chinese troops to Tibet on pretext of "Liberation of Tibet" in 1950. The Chinese forced the Tibetan Governor of Chamdo to sign a 17- point Agreement on 23 May, 1951 curtailing any kind of sovereignty for Tibet.

Nehru realized the growing dangers from China but given the situation of Indian army, was unable to counter Chinese action in Tibet. China, on the other hand, started to make structural reforms in Tibet while trying to integrate Tibetan people in its fold. Unable to counter China militarily, Nehru initiated diplomatic efforts to engage China. China, on the other hand, wanted legitimacy of its Tibet action. This resulted in the signing of the historic *Panchsheel* agreement between India and China in April 1954. The *Panchsheel* espoused non interference in each others matter and peaceful cohabitation.

But the reforms made by the Chinese on cultural and social level in Tibet gave rise to stiff resistance from the Tibetans. China also demanded to solve the boundary issue with India. But when India insisted on accepting Macmohan line as the China-India boundary, the Chinese saw it as an erosion of their authority over Tibet. So,

when Dalai Lama was given asylum in India in 1959, Chinese declared it as a breach of the *Panchsheel* agreement. The growing animosity between China and Russia and beginning of friendly ties between India and Russia made China suspicious of India's design. To increase its influence, China befriended Pakistan. The suspicion and mistrust grew to such an extent that India and China ended up fighting a war in 1962 which metamorphosed their diplomatic equations.

### **PARADIGM SHIFT IN INDIAN DIPLOMACY**

The 1962 China-India war affected a shift in the mindset of Indian leadership from pacifist approach to the realist approach. Though the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence remained intact in peoples psychic, need was felt to modernise the armed forces and increase the war capability. From perspective of diplomacy it was a backward march towards history when the Indian kingdoms were highly militarized. Contrasting India with China eminent historian A. L. Basham says that due to intense militarism of ancient India, permanent empire building never took place while China through 3<sup>rd</sup> C BC onwards was ruled by a single empire except for some exception (Basham 1967: 123). Nation building was a new experience for India while China remained historically consolidated. Aggression in China's attitude towards its neighbour was new, largely generated by fear of security. India, on the other hand, became a nation widely through nonviolent national movement and pacifist international policy often misinterpreted by China as India's preponderance. Nehru's dream of world leadership was somewhere attach to the historical conquest of Mauryan or Gupta empires. However Nehru used pacifism as a tool to consolidate India's diplomacy in international politics.

The 1962 China-India war attack created a permanent distrust and insecurity in the relationship between India and China. This was then followed by China's atomic tests. As a result India expedited its nuclear programme under the tutelage of an able and ambitious scientist Homi Jehangir Bhabha. Just after the independence of India Homi Bhabha had approach Nehru seeking his support to built nuclear

reactors. But giving to his pacifist nature Nehru was reluctant to pursue the policy of nuclear ambition as it would have been tantamount to distant India from the Gandhian policy of nonviolence. He however, also had equal conviction in promoting scientific temper and allowed creation of Atomic Energy Commission in 1948.

However, the global order too did not guarantee India's security. As the world was deeply involved in cold war politics after the end of the Second World War in 1945, India's call to ban on nuclear testing in 1954 was not heeded by the world. China conducted its first nuclear test in 1964 aggravating India's security vulnerability after the 1962 war. In 1965 India called for a treaty on non proliferation but the superpowers continued to develop there nuclear arsenal. Again in 1978 India called for treaty on non-use of nuclear weapons. But the world still under the cloud of cold war did not pay attention to India's call. Taking a moralistic viewpoint and to end discriminatory attitude of the superpowers India called for a nuclear freeze in 1982 and complete elimination of nuclear weapons in 1988. "Unfortunately, most of these initiatives were rejected by the nuclear weapon states, who still consider these weapons essential for there own security. What emerged, in consequence, has been discriminatory and flawed nonproliferation regime that damages India's security" (Singh, 1998: 44). India meanwhile found out that its security could be enhanced by possession of nuclear weapons. Waltz says that "the presence of nuclear weapons makes war less likely" (Waltz 2003: 33).

But the nuclear regime created by the nuclear weapon countries did not pay attention to India's diplomatic initiatives, nor did they try to understand the India's security concerns. Instead they, the nuclear weapons countries, brought in Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. India refused to sign the NPT as it forbid the countries like India to conduct nuclear tests while the countries who have gone nuclear prior to 1967 were allowed to conduct nuclear tests. However the NPT came into force in 1970. For India it was a case of isolation in the international politics. At the same time, the nuclear weapon countries continued conducting

nuclear tests. They also refused to provide India with nuclear umbrella as was the case of Japan. “The repeated failure of the great powers to address India’s security concerns and the emergence of a different brand of political leadership within India<sup>4</sup> caused important, if subtle, shifts in its nuclear policies” (Ganguly 1999: 158). India expedited its nuclear programme and conducted its first nuclear test in Pokhran, Rajasthan in 1974 (Pokhran- I) for “peaceful purposes” that was described as “peaceful nuclear explosion” (PNE).

The Pokhran I did not provide India the necessary prerequisites to become a powerful country nor could it provide India a nuclear status. Nevertheless, the Pokhran- I was seen as a breach of the nuclear regime and a stumbling block to nuclear disarmament for which the United States imposed several sanctions. Even the South Asian neighbours like Pakistan and Nepal saw Pokhran- I as an Indian attempt to dominate the South Asia region with its size and nuclear capability. Apprehensions about India to play a “big brother” role in the South Asia region grew with the induction of Sikkim as a state of India in 1975.

Despite India’s successful nuclear explosion in 1974, India’s position in the international politics did not improve. It was not granted a “nuclear weapons state” status in the world order. Indian security did not improve. The division of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 saw India’s spectacular military victory in the conventional warfare and it also saw the India’s diplomatic victory by keeping away the superpowers and China from any kind of involvement in the war. But 1971 India- Pakistan war also resulted into further strengthening of friendship between Pakistan and China. This hastened the process of covert cooperation between Pakistan and China on nuclear issue with China transferring nuclear technology to Pakistan and helping it to develop nuclear reactors and nuclear know-how that ultimately enabled Pakistan to build nuclear weapons.

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<sup>4</sup> Indira Gandhi the daughter of India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru became prime minister of India in 1966 after unexpected death of Lal Bahadur Shastri.



The China- Pakistan nuclear collaboration had tactical support of the United States which never opposed it for sake of United States friendship with China and later due to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1990's. India again saw nuclear testing by the permanent five (P-5), United States, Soviet Russia, Britain, France and China who also enjoy permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and the power to veto. While the P-5 conducted nuclear tests with impunity, they deplore any idea of nuclear tests by other countries. Being a non signatory of the NPT India always challenged the discriminatory clauses of the NPT which forbade countries other than the P-5 to conduct nuclear tests. The NPT was extended indefinitely in 1995 without any changes.

By 1995 the P-5 had perfected there nuclear capability and in 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was brought for signature. The CTBT has provisions for ban on future nuclear tests. India opposed CTBT and did not sign it because it was discriminatory. The CTBT allowed the nuclear weapon states to develop new nuclear weapons through laboratory research and subcritical tests and computer simulation and allowed the nuclear weapon states to retain there stockpile of nuclear weapons. No time frame was mentioned for complete nuclear disarmament. Arundhati Ghose, the Indian Ambassador to Geneva talks on June 20, 1996 in her speech said that "today, the right to continue development and refinement of their arsenals is being sought to be legitimized through another flawed and eternal treaty" (Perkovich 1999: 379). Signing the CTBT would have been a complete compromise on India's security which India did not wanted as Ghose declared that "our national security considerations" will be "a key factor in our decision making" (Perkovich 1999: 379).

The discriminatory treaties on the nuclear issue and inability of the world community to check nuclear proliferation in India's neighbourhood caused by China- Pakistan covert nuclear cooperation made India firmly believe that India has to take the path of self help regarding nuclear matters. So India never stopped its nuclear programme though there was a period of lull in the late 80's and early 90's.

India, despite its moralistic position on nuclear weapons and despite its rich notion of Gandhian non-violence philosophy continued its nuclear programme.

## **SECURITY CONCERNS AND CHINA- PAKISTAN NEXUS**

India since its independence has to face a hostile neighbour in form of Pakistan. The division of India and subsequent formation of two sovereign states India and Pakistan in 1947 was a watershed in the history of the South Asia. India perplexed by its size, history, philosophy and population strived to achieve global leadership. Nehru emerged as a global leader of the developing nations. The formation of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) was a step to cast India as a global player. Post independence India's diplomacy was overshadowed by Nehru's overwhelming personality who envisaged becoming a global statesman.

So when Pakistan Rangers, supported the tribal chiefs succeeded in capturing the large chunk of land in Kashmir in 1947, Nehru brought the matter to the United Nations hoping a decision in his favour. Raja Hari Singh of Kashmir (then Princely State) had given his consent to join the Indian union. But taking a moralistic view Nehru stopped any military action into Pakistan. In the United Nations the Kashmir issue entangled into the cold war politics and instead of any formidable solution the issue is lingering till now with the formation of Line of Control (LoC) which divide Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Indian Kashmir.

Since then India and Pakistan fought several wars in 1965, 1971 and most recently in 1999 and the issue of Kashmir has been central to these wars. The Kashmir issue evolved into a religious movement with several organizations supported by Pakistan, carrying *Jihad* against India resulting in several terrorist attacks.

Also, India's leadership of developing countries did not go well with China. Mao saw India's call for unity of developing countries as India's attempt to gain world leadership. The insecurity generated by Tibet issue cautioned China to see India's international activities for garnering support for formation of NAM as a threat to

China's stability and status in global order. This is the main reason that China was not able to develop a trustful relation with India. Mao who was a communist revolutionary, and remained the undisputed leader of China till his death in 1976 and this period witnessed problems in China- India relations.

Relation between Pakistan and China had been friendly since 1950 when Pakistan became the third non communist country and first Islamic country to recognize the Peoples Republic of China. The China- Pakistan relationship grew stronger with the increasing hostility between India and China in the late 1950's. Soon after the 1962 Chinese attack on India, Pakistan secede a portion of land in northern POK to China in 1963, which was used by China to build road connecting its Xinjiang province to that of Tibet. This treacherous act of Pakistan made Indian security more vulnerable and unveiled the cooperation between its enemies- Pakistan and China.

In 1963 China and Pakistan signed agreements on the border relations and the construction of road from Xinjiang- Uygur province of China to that of the northern regions of Pakistan had preceded it by a decade, if not more. China and Pakistan also signed trade agreements in 1963. Since then the diplomatic relationship between both China and Pakistan became stronger and both side showed reciprocation. The China- Pakistan relationship further developed into a strategic tie with China beginning to covertly help Pakistan build its nuclear reactors. The covert nuclear proliferation by China was against any international treaty. But the world community did not show any concern about it. The China- Pakistan nuclear nexus produced severe threat to India's security.

India's security was not only threatened by China and Pakistan but also by the activities of several nuclear weapons state in the Indian Ocean. India has large coastline which stretch to thousand of miles in the Indian Ocean. During the first gulf war Indian Ocean witnessed several nuclear submarines carrying nuclear weapons. Further the US nuclear base in the Diego Garcia situated some 1600 km south west of India acts as a constant covert threat to India. And then this nuclear

weapon states were also tightening the noose on India in international forums as also trying to influence opinions inside India.

## **DOMESTIC POLITICS AND CHANGE OF GUARD**

Since the “peaceful nuclear explosion” (Pokhran-I) in 1974, India’s nuclear programme moved with a rather slow pace. India had defied the world by conducting the nuclear test in 1974. So India had to face several sanctions which cost India the technical aids for setting up nuclear power plants and purchase of reactors. This for instance stepped up the cost of indigenously designed nuclear reactors. Also the stoppage of monetary aids from financial institutions like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank put pressures on the Indian economy.

The world reaction on Pokhran I regenerated a debate in India on nuclear policy. India is the only country in the world which had openly and vociferously debated the nuclear issue and for so long. The groups opposing the nuclear weapons clubbed non-violence view with economic backwardness and demanded rolling back of the nuclear programme. The groups which supported India’s nuclear programme cited threat to India’s security. The supporters of nuclear programme included scientists and security analyst and military and those opposing included social workers, academicians and politicians.

The early 1980’s saw a brief lull in the nuclear programme. This was generally due to the unstable political conditions in India and for pacifist leanings of the Janata Party that ruled India during late 1970’s. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who ordered nuclear test in 1974, imposed national emergency from 1975 to 1977 due to political reasons. The Congress party was defeated in the 1977 general elections which paved the way for Morarji Desai of Janata Party to become the Prime Minister of India. Morarji Desai remained Prime Minister from 1977 to 1979 till the coalition at the centre ended. Morarji Desai was a staunch Gandhian, therefore he

opposed the nuclear programme. Though the nuclear programme was not stopped, it suffered due to Morarji Desai's government indifferent attitude.

Indira Gandhi came back to power in 1981 which again revived the nuclear programme but this time her tenure was overshadowed by Sikh militancy in Punjab. Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984. Rajiv Gandhi who succeeded her mother became the Prime Minister from 1984 to 1989. Rajiv Gandhi took a pacifist view on the nuclear weapons. In the United Nations general assembly in 1988 he said "we urge the international community to immediately undertake negotiations with a view to adopting a time-bound Action Plan to usher in a world order free of nuclear weapons and rooted in nonviolence" (PM Rajiv Gandhi's speech, 1988). The nuclear programme did not get much attention during his tenure.

The period between 1989 to 1991 show political instability with two Prime Ministers, V. P. Singh and Chandrashekhar coming and going in quick succession. The nuclear programme was expedited with the Congress party coming to power in 1991. The congress Prime Minister P. V. Narashimha Rao took keen interest in nuclear security of India. The nuclear tests were scheduled for 1995 but detection by the American satellites and subsequent pressure by the U S government force India to postponed the nuclear tests.

The Rao government saw the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP was formed in 1980 as apolitical outfit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Propagating the concept of "Hindutva", the BJP espoused the theory of "one nation", "one culture" and "one religion". BJP's quest to build Ram Temple at Ayodhya saw the destruction of Babari Masjid which engulfed entire India into communal flames in 1992. Nevertheless the BJP emerged as a hardcore nationalist political party which talked of national security and nuclear weapons. The 1998 election manifesto of the BJP said-

"The frenetic pace of military expansion and modernization by some of our neighbors and the growing pressure and power of foreign navies in

the Indian Ocean compel us to take the state of our defence preparedness very seriously. We also cannot remain oblivious to the new developments in weapon technology and the induction of very advanced conventional weapons systems in the region by some power. These must be neutralized. We are, therefore, committed to:

1. Establish a National Security Council to constantly analyze security, political and economic threats and render continuous advice to the Government. This Council will undertake India's first-ever Strategic Defence Review to study and analyze the security environment and make appropriate recommendations to cover all aspects of defence requirements and organization;
2. Re-evaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons;
3. Expedite the development of the Agni series of ballistic missiles with a view to increasing their range and accuracy;
4. Increase the radius of power projection by inducting appropriate force multipliers such as battlefield surveillance systems and air-to-air refueling;
5. Enhance the traditional and technical capabilities of our external intelligence agencies and also to increase the interaction and co-ordination with user departments;
6. Place para-military forces in sensitive border areas under the full control of the Indian Army." (BJP's Election Manifesto, 1998).

The BJP became popular among the masses, and it projected itself as a "party with the difference". It tried to capitalize on the corruption charges on the Rao government and promised people to give India nuclear security. Despite its best efforts it could not gain majority in the 1996 general elections. The BJP government in 1996 under the Premiership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee lasted for only thirteen days. The period 1996 to 1998 was again the period of political instability. H. D. Deve Gowda who became the Prime Minister in 1996 was followed by I. K. Gujral in 1997. The nuclear programme again took a setback due to non interest of Deve Gowda and the pacifist attitude of I. K. Gujral. During the Gujral government

“Gujral Doctrine” became popular which talked about generating friendly relations with neighbouring nations by supporting them in their development works.

The Bharatiya Janata party came to power in 1998 by making a rainbow coalition of thirteen parties which was called National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and Atal Bihari Vajpayee who had become more popular in the preceding years became the prime Minister on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1998. As the BJP had promised to “exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons” in the 1998 election manifesto it became mandatory for the party to display that its promises are not empty vessels. Atal Behari Vajpayee who commanded great respect in the party secretly with his few colleagues gave the order to make preparations for the nuclear tests. The nuclear tests further became necessary with Pakistan testing its intermediate-range ballistic missile, Ghauri, on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1998. Ghauri which was built with Chinese or North Korea help had a range of 1500 kilometers which was capable of carrying a payload of 750 kilograms. It was a severe threat to India’s security.

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Sumit Ganguly (1999) says that “acquisition of the capability to manufacture nuclear weapons” necessitated the nuclear tests in 1998. Secondly he says that the nuclear programme was affected by the changing thought of political leadership as sometimes the political leadership advanced the nuclear programme. Thirdly he says that the external security threats mostly perceived from China and Pakistan necessitated nuclear tests in 1998.

The domestic factor also affected the conduct of nuclear tests. The BJP wanted to consolidate its position in the national politics. This was evident by the huge support it received from the public who celebrated the nuclear tests by coming out in the road. Public support again brought the BJP lead coalition government to power in the 1999 general elections.

## DIPLOMATIC MANEUVERS

The Pokhran-II was a watershed in the history of independent India. It suddenly brought India into limelight. Numerous countries criticized India for the nuclear

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tests. India had earlier shown its indifferent attitude by not signing NPT and CTBT claiming it to be discriminatory and against its security. By conducting nuclear tests in 1998 India was projected by big powers as having defied norms of non-proliferation and even the world community. Though the NPT and CTBT are discriminatory but most of the countries in the world have signed it. Since the CTBT draft coming into being in 1996 no non-Asian except India, Pakistan and North Korea have conducted nuclear tests. The much talked about nuclear capable countries like Israel, Iran and South Africa have maintained restraint. Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998 in response to that of India while North Korea conducted its nuclear test in 2006 to strengthen its position in the “six party talks”.

Indian diplomats and politicians were not ready to counter any offensive response by the world community to Pokhran-II because entire nuclear tests was planned in secret by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and few of his cabinet colleagues and few top officials. The Pokhran II was conducted in so much secrecy that it was not detected by the US Satellites unlike in 1995. The world along with the US was literally shocked by Pokhran-II.

As the NDA government was inexperienced in conduct of diplomacy its initial acts were immature. After the first three nuclear tests on 11th May 1998, Vajpayee wrote a letter to President Clinton of US, explaining the reasons behind the nuclear tests. In the letter Vajpayee cited China as a security threat for India. This letter was intentionally leaked to the media by the US government pushing India into a diplomatic standoff with China. After May 11 tests China had merely expressed its “concern” on the India’s nuclear tests but when the Vajpayee’s letter got leaked in the New York Times, China “condemned” India after the two more nuclear tests on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1998.

China’s reaction further charged the global atmosphere. Countries like Australia, Japan and England criticized Pokhran II and threatened to cut economic aids to India and place sanctions. The United States took the needed steps to place sanctions on India. In May 1998 the US government postponed \$1.17 billion



international lending to India and in June 1998 US announced ban on export of all nuclear- or missile- related dual-use items to India.

To minimize the impact of the sanctions and to placate the world outburst, Vajpayee decided to send the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Jaswant Singh, who had been a trusted friend of Vajpayee and one of the few persons, who knew about the Pokhran-II to United States in June 1998. Singh's journey was planned amidst opposition in India by the hardliners in the BJP and officials in the Clinton administration. However, Singh was received by Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton administration.

The talk between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott was held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1998. The details about the talks were not given; it was only informed that India gave reasons to the US for conduct of nuclear tests. Both India and US "recognized that the tests had reinstated nuclear issues as the major obstacle that had to be negotiated before bilateral relations could move forward again" (Perkovich 1999: 436). The Singh-Talbott talks became a routine affair and India and US moved closer to clinch strategic partnership.

The improvement of relationship between India and US was effected by the rise of China, search of US for new allies, global terrorism and by the continued spread of globalization. The rise of China was the most important factor in the US- India relationship. United States realized that, to counter the rise in power of China, India has to be given some leverages. Therefore it tried to improve its relation with India. President Clinton visited India in March 2000 and several agreements were made. In the Joint India- U.S. Statement (2000) it was said that "the United States believes India should forgo nuclear weapons. India believes that it needs to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent in keeping with its own assessment of its security needs. Nonetheless, India and the U.S. are prepared to work together to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery." This indicated that the US had accepted India as a nuclear power and was ready to do business with it.

Courting United States, the sole super power proved beneficial for India. It became difficult for China to keep its relations strained with India after the Pokhran-II. China had played a key role in bringing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1172 (1998) that condemned the nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May 1998. The not so punitive action by the US towards India restrained China to take any drastic steps against India. During the meeting between Jaswant Singh and Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan in the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1998 in Manila, Tang “suggested that as India ‘had tied the knot it had better untie it also’ and as India had created the problem it had better find the exit route” to which Singh replied that “you actually need two hands to untie a knot. It is very difficult to do so single- handed. You give your hand, I will give mine. And together with both hands, we will untie the knot.” (Singh 2006: 150). Since then the step wise rapprochement between India and China started.

India not just tried to improve its relation with the powerful countries like United States or China but it also tried to quell the neighbouring countries fear about India’s preponderance. In February 1999 Vajpayee took a bus journey to Lahore, Pakistan and signed the famous Lahore declaration with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The relation between India and Pakistan improved until the Kargil war started in May 1999. In 2001 Vajpayee held talks with President Musharraf of Pakistan at Agra but the talks failed. But the relation between India and Pakistan never deteriorated to the level of war since 1999.

Pokhran II no doubt created a place in the world history for the NDA government and especially Prime Minister Vajpayee. It also ushered India into a new era of self reliance and effected a major shift in India’s relationship with other countries. From political ostracism, India emerged to forge a strategic relationship with major power of the world. This happened due to India’s improving economy and the nuclear power status gained by Pokhran-II.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **INDIA'S POST 1998 DIPLOMACY**

The disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 brought an end to the cold war. However it “transformed the nature of the international system from a bipolar order to a semi-unipolar one that was now presided over by the US as the sole superpower” (Nayar and Paul 2003: 203). It also marked the beginning of the US primacy in the world with US trying to dictate its terms on the major issues of the world. Since then US had tried to become a global hegemon and at the same time retain its position of dominance in the international system. The US has adopted the policy of “containment of the second tier of the major powers, existing or aspirant, until they are willing to bandwagon with the US as subordinate allies” (Nayar and Paul 2003: 203-204).

US want to shape the world according to its national interests. Therefore it has supported Japan to emerge as an economic power and has friendly relations with Britain. But the countries like China, France and Germany has challenged the entire concept of unipolarity. These countries have often called for multipolarity in the world. Russia which is fast recovering from the political upheaval has also joined its voices with the countries demanding multipolarity. But the US due to its economic and military advance from rest of the world continues to dominate the world.

Indian diplomacy should be seen in this context. The support which India enjoyed due to the superpower status of Soviet Union ended after 1991. Before 1991 India had a sort of nuclear guarantee from the Soviet Union which also upgraded India's weapon system vis-à-vis Pakistan or China. But Soviet Union's disintegration changed India's position in the world. India did not enjoy permanent membership in the United Nation's Security Council nor was it able to defend itself in the

multilateral forums. China was blocking its participation in ASEAN and in the SCO. At the same time China tried to encircle India by constructing “String of Pearls”. According to Lt. Col. Christopher J. Pehrson, of the US Air Force “String of Pearls” is a nexus of Chinese geopolitical influence or military presence (Pehrson 2006: 3). Therefore China’s construction of container shipping facility in Chittagong, Bangladesh, construction of deep water port in Sittwe, Myanmar, and the construction of navy base in Gwadar, Pakistan is a pearl (Pehrson 2006: 3). These pearls have threatened Indian security and posed a colossal challenge to the Indian diplomacy.

The Pokhran- II provided an opportunity for India to safeguard its national interests and increase its military power to deter any unwanted action whether in the form of military action by other countries or political ostracism. Pokhran-II made India the focal point of international politics and provided it to breed friendly relations with major powers of the world.

As a major challenge to India’s diplomacy the Pokhran-II received world wide criticisms. A renewed debate on nuclear proliferation started when the Pakistan conducted five nuclear tests on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1998, in the Chagai Hills, Balochistan, in retaliation to that of India’s nuclear tests. The last minute effort of Clinton administration to forbid Nawaz Sharif government of Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests produced no result. This increased the quantum of criticism over Pokhran-II.

India had to face particularly strong condemnation from China and also in the United Nations Security Council. India was severely affected by the sanctions on trade and supply of nuclear technologies. To counter the global retaliation, India took the course of diplomatic maneuvering. Being a soft power neither India possessed the audacity to use its military strength nor was it an economic giant to bring changes in the world economy. Nevertheless, constraints of military and economic strength lead to the unique diplomatic maneuvering especially with

China. In a discussion with panel of experts of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyse (IDSA) then External Affairs and Defence Minister Jaswant Singh said that “indeed, we have made a determined effort to fashion a new diplomacy for India in keeping with the new post-Cold War world and as also India’s status derived from the events of May 1998” (Strategic Analysis 2001). In the same discussion Jaswant Singh said that “this new diplomacy is a requirement of our times” (Strategic Analysis 2001).

However, Pokhran-II had sure inflicted an adverse impact on the China- India relation. The initial outburst from the Indian side indicated that India was threatened by China and the nuclear tests could counterbalance China’s military capabilities. The Chinese “condemnation” of Pokhran- II was to only make matters worse it was only gradually that both sides were to reformat their diplomatic interactions. Confrontation with China or balancing China could have increase the cost of sustaining military security. The fear of global backlash also forced India to shift its initial China bashing and move towards rapprochement.

The nuclear tests no doubt had announced India’s advent in the international scenario but it also presented a major challenge for maintaining friendly relations with countries like china. Since India had blamed China for its nuclear tests, it took cautious steps to convey that India did not want confrontation. Taking into account the capabilities of India and China, it is imperative that India in real terms could not have borne the burden of any arms race or any hostile action by China. To counter any hostile actions India started its diplomatic steps with portray of its traditional image of peace loving country.

Relations with China also assume significance because India could not shun the memories of 1962 defeat. The Chinese aggression in the midst of “Hindi Chini, Bhai Bhai” spirit destroyed the bonhomie between India and China. Since then no significant breakthrough in improvement of relations between both the countries took place. Time to time steps towards rapprochement took place but in the absence

of specific reciprocity the relation between India and China remained a low key affair.

Also the growing influence of China in South Asia through its various economic activities and implicit defence collaboration played a pivotal role in continuity of mistrust between India and China. However the Pokhran-II changed the geo-strategy of South Asia. Since 1962 India and China for the first time confronted each other explicitly. This confrontation evolved towards a two fold opportunity, either for rapprochement or for the escalation of tension. But the Vajpayee government adopted a pragmatic policy and chose to improve relations with China.

It had also become clear by the leakage of Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton that India can not play China card and get US support. India understood that the US was shrewd enough to pitch India and China against each other. However this incident made the Indian diplomats bolder to tackle the fallout of Pokhran-II on their own grit and finesse.

### **ASSURING THE NEIGHBOURS**

India swiftly moved to slay fears of India's preponderance, assuring the world community especially China and Pakistan that the nuclear weapons would never be used for any offensive purposes. Elaborating the themes and reasons for Pokhran II the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1998 in a statement in the Lok Sabha said that "we do not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country, these are weapons of self-defence, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. We do not engage in an arms race" (Statement by Prime Minister Vajpayee on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1998).

Vajpayee assured the international community that India will remain a peace loving nation. By mentioning "arms race" Vajpayee also clarified that India did not want to militarily compete with China. To prove commitment towards peace Vajpayee

also stated that the “government has already announced that India will now observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting underground nuclear test explosions. We have also indicated willingness to move towards a de jure formalization of this declaration” (Statement by Prime Minister Vajpayee on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1998). By announcing the moratorium on nuclear tests Vajpayee clearly indicated that the nuclear tests were complete and India was a formidable nuclear weapon state which did not need further nuclear tests.

In his entire statement Vajpayee did not show any regret on the Pokhran- II, instead Vajpayee said that the nuclear tests “have given us a renewed sense of national pride and self-confidence” (Statement by Prime Minister Vajpayee on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1998). Vajpayee indicated that India was willing to counter any international sanctions than negotiating under pressure. This could be observed in the diplomatic relations between India and China where India negotiated with China from the position of strength and concessions were made on the basis of reciprocation.

Immediately after the Pokhran-II, China cancelled the scheduled JWG meeting on the border issues and indicated that it would stop cooperation with India on other matters also. China also played a pivotal role in condemning India in the UNSC for its nuclear tests. However, without any support from the US, India was ready to formalize a cooperative relation with China taking an independent line. When China did not notice further escalation of tension from Indian side, it restrained from taking any harsh step against India. Thus leaving a space for cooperation and reconciliation with India.

## **BEGENNING OF TALKS**

First high level meeting between India and China after the Pokhran-II took place in July 1998 in the sidelines of Association of South East Asian Nations “ASEAN” summit when Jaswant Singh met Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan. Jaswant Singh mentions that the Chinese Foreign Minister behaved roughly and blamed

India for the deteriorated China- India relations. The Chinese Foreign Minister said that it was upon India to improve the relationship for which Jaswant Singh replied that India needs Chinese help equally to normalize the relations. Through this meeting India realized that the China too did not want further deterioration in relations, instead China was looking for rapprochement.

One more reason for the ease of tension between India and China was the effect of unipolarity of the world order, where the US enjoys the sole superpower status. Any escalation of tension resulting in arms race or military intervention would have proved costly for both India and China and which would have resulted into intervention of the US. Realizing this India and China moved towards reconciliation of relationship. Also the Pokhran- II had changed India's position in the international system and India too was sufficed with the achieved glory. Pokhran- II gave India the desired attention in the international system and brought opportunities to reshape its relations with the various countries of the world.

India did not let the indication of Chinese desire for rapprochement, during the meeting at the sideline of ASEAN summit, die. But it aimed its diplomacy to improve its relation with China by engaging through various cooperative measures. China too reciprocated appropriately on India's gesture.

Apart from the Track I<sup>5</sup> diplomacy, Track II<sup>6</sup> diplomacy too played an important role in normalization of relations between India and China. The visits of academicians and journalist to China helped in finding out China's concern over India's nuclear tests and the extent of Chinese willingness to cooperate with India. Journalistic reports and comments highlighted the problems in normalization of relations. It also exposed the Chinese viewpoint on India. At the same time journalism also suggested the ways to improve the relations.

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<sup>5</sup> Diplomacy conducted through officials is called Track I diplomacy.

<sup>6</sup> Diplomacy conducted through academicians, experts and officials (in non- official capacity) expected to provide inputs and influence official policy is called Track II diplomacy.



The eleven day visit of N. Ram a well known journalist and editor of the *Frontline* in August 1998 produced a detailed report on China- India relations in *Frontline* (Vol. 15, No. 19, 12-25 September 1998), exploring the official as well as unofficial reaction of the Chinese about India's nuclear tests. The report also suggested the measures that were needed to be taken for the normalization of bilateral relations. N. Ram met important officials and experts like Zhu Bangzao, official spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and scholars like Professor Ma Jiali of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), Ye Zhengjia of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), Sun Peijun, General Secretary of the Chinese Association of South Asian Studies.

In the press conference cum dinner party, Zhu Bangzao opined that it was wrong for India to "seek great power status" through nuclear explosions, and to cite China as an excuse was also wrong (Ram, 1998, "Sino- Indian relations: What lies ahead?"). Elaborating reasons for Chinese nuclear test in October 1964, Zhu said that China conducted the nuclear test during the cold war to break the monopoly of the nuclear weapon states and develop a deterrent but the situation has changed now and there is no need for India to conduct nuclear tests. Zhu also indicated that China would have not condemned India if Vajpayee did not write letter to President Clinton citing China as a threat. For the Vajpayee's letter Zhu said that "*it was a strongly worded statement. Why? We didn't understand why India blamed China*" [Emphasis Original] (Ram 1998 a). It became clear that the deterioration of relations was clearly due to the mess generated by India by playing "China threat" card. Zhu reiterated the UNSC resolution 1172 (1998) which demanded rolling back of nuclear programme and unconditional signing of CTBT by both India and Pakistan. Zhu also suggested that the "*Indian leaders should stop their accusations against China*" [Emphasis original] (Ram 1998 a). In the press conference Zhu clearly displayed Chinese displeasure on Indian leaders' accusation. China had always wanted to be seen as a responsible power. So accusation by Indian leaders irked Chinese leadership who also had to constantly defend western leaders' accusation

on human rights violation and dictatorial polity. China was also pained by the anti Chinese sentiments in Indian press.

Addressing India's concern Zhu denied any nuclear collaboration with Pakistan and pointed that "China has undertaken the obligation of not exporting any missiles capable of reaching a range of over 300 kilometers, with a payload of over 500 kilograms" (Ram, 1998 (a)). Zhu called China- Pakistan nuclear collaboration as "rumours" (Ram 1998 a).

Veteran scholar Ma Jiali in an interview to N. Ram pointed out that China did not want confrontation with India (Ram 1998 b). He also suggested that after the issues of boundary, Tibet and Pakistan the nuclear issue along with CTBT would be prominent in India- China relations. Therefore he suggested that India should sign CTBT, which will bring India international respect.

The inputs from the scholars and information gathered through the Track II diplomacy suggested that China was willing to normalize its relations with India. By the end of 1998 the China- India relations went on a positive note with each side showing willingness to improve bilateral relationship. However no significant breakthrough took place though both the countries were preparing to establish a formidable relationship.

The year 1999 witnessed many diplomatic parleys between India and China. On 22nd February, 1999 in an address to the joint session of Parliament President K. R. Narayanan said that "our bilateral relations with China continued to gain momentum and diversify" (President K. R. Narayanan's address to the Joint Session of the Parliament, 1999). India certainly wanted to send message to China that India wanted to further improve relationship. The Presidential address was the formal position of the government of India on China. Reciprocating this gesture Zhou Gang, the Chinese ambassador to India on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1999 at a seminar on China- India relations in New Delhi stated that "China is full of sincerity and

confidence in developing its relations with India. We believe that it is also the aspirations of the Indian people” (Deccan Herald 1999) . Clarifying Chinese stand on nuclear collaboration with Pakistan Zhou Gang stated that “all cooperation between China and Pakistan in the field of nuclear energy was under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards” (Deccan Herald 1999).

The year 1999 was very crucial for India and therefore crucial for China- India relations. Domestically India headed towards political chaos. The thirteen month old Vajpayee government was defeated in a no-confidence vote on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1999. The All India Anna Dramuk Munetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party which supported the Vajpayee Government withdrew its support. With no other political party capable of garnering enough support to form a government, elections were announced. But in a sudden turn of events, intrusion by alleged Pakistani army in form of Talibanised Mujahiddins was detected in May 1999, in the Kargil sector of Kashmir. Elections were postponed to deal with the situation. Meanwhile as a caretaker Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee enjoyed all governmental powers without any responsibility to the parliament.

Though the Pakistani leadership denied any intrusion into the Indian territory, the Pakistani army fully controlled the operations. The motive was to “cut off the strategic National Highway 1A, the Srinagar-Leh highway; to intensify insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir; to attract the attention of international community towards the Kashmir issue, and convince the world that Kashmir could be a nuclear flashpoint in the wake of overt India-Pakistan nuclearisation” (Deepak 2005: 384).

India in retaliation launched “Operation Vijay” and a limited war later called “Kargil War” between India and Pakistan started. The war had the potential to get converted into a full fledged war but several factors controlled the escalation. During the Kargil war the role of China was significant as it had the capabilities to change the course of war alike the US. The Kargil war came to an end with Indian forces flushing out of intruders from Kargil on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1999.

During the Kargil War Pakistan tried hard to get support from China. But China taking a realistic position remained neutral. Pakistan was so desperate to get China's support that it dispatched its Foreign minister Sartaj Aziz to China on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1999 just before Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaj Sharif's visit. However China declined to support Pakistan. Li Peng, the chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Peoples Congress told Aziz to end the war through peaceful means. Li asked both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint.

Disappointed by Sartaj Aziz's effort to convince China to help, Nawaj Sharif visited China and met Jiang Zemin, the Chinese President, Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Prime Minister and Li Peng. China declined to support Pakistan militarily and refused to intervene the Kargil War. China wanted India and Pakistan to settle the Kargil issue bilaterally without escalation of the war. Without promising to interfere in the matter China reassured Pakistan that China and Pakistan will remain friends.

Zhu Rongji remarked that "Kashmir issue was left over by the history and involves factors such as territory, nationalities and religion. The issue can only be settled through peaceful means, China hopes that both sides will reduce tension through dialogue" (Deepak: 2005: 386). China's nonintervention in the Kargil war showed that China was sincerely trying to normalize its relation with India.

Keeping out China from the Kargil War was a diplomatic triumph for India. At the same time it became clear that India and China were looking for cooperation. It is worth mentioning that during the Kargil war, Jaswant Singh visited China and reassured it that India did not perceive China as a threat and the Pokhran-II was not aimed at China. Kashmir issue has haunted India since its independence. A portion of Kashmir in the Aksai Chin was seceded to China by Pakistan in 1963. Kashmir being strategically important for China could have been a reason for Chinese intervention but China choosed to remain neutral. After the end of Kargil War the BJP and its allies became victorious and Vajpayee was sworn in as the Prime

Minister in September 1999, heading a coalition government. This prevented any shift in India's China policy maintaining continuity of rapprochement.

While China- India friendship had not produced strong roots, the relationship again came to test. On 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2000 the 17<sup>th</sup> incarnation of the Karmapa, Ugyen Trinley Dorje, the head of the large Tibetan Karma Kagyu Buddhist sect came to India. The Karmapa Lama born in Tibet in 1983 left the Tsurpu Monastery in Lahsa on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 1999 and came to Dhramshala in India. The teenage Karmapa was recognized both by the Dalai Lama and China.

The flight of the Karmapa Lama to India held significance for China because it directly related to the issue of national movement in Tibet. China did not pronounce Karmapa Lama as "traitor" as it did to the Dalai Lama in 1959 after his escape from China to India (Kranti 2000). Instead China claimed that the Karmapa Lama had gone to India to get the "black hat" and "musical instruments" (Singh 2000). As the "musical instruments of the Buddhist mass" and famous "black hat" are kept in the Rumtek monastery of Sikkim, Karmapa's coming to India was a matter of concern. In 1999 China had not recognized Sikkim as an integral part of India which made the matter complex.

India was surprised by Karmapa Lama's escape through Chinese territory. India thought that the Karmapa Lama might be "Chinese agent" who had arrived in India to claim Sikkim (Panicker, 2002). However India dealt the entire Karmapa issue with prudence. With mystery surrounding the Karmapa Lama, India denied him access to his spiritual seat in the Rumtek Monastery, in Sikkim. India meanwhile assured China that the Karmapa would not be allowed to indulge in political activities (The Tribune 2000). India did not drag the Karmapa issue as it was neither sure about Karmapa's intention nor certain about Chinese game plan. India did not

want to be seen as letting down the Tibetan cause nor did it want to annoy China. However both India and China tried to keep the issue in cold.

The year 2000 saw further improvement in India- China relations. India and China jointly celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2000. Embassies in both the countries organized special function to mark this day. The Indian President K. R. Narayanan visited China on the invitation of the Chinese President Jiang Zemin from 28<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2000. Narayanan's visit was important because he was only the second Indian President to visit China after president Venkataraman in 1993.

China gave a warm welcome to Narayanan. During his stay Narayanan met several top leaders of China, including President Jiang Zemin, Premier, Zhu Rongji, NPC Chairman, Li Peng and CPPCC Chairman, Li Ruihuan. Narayanan and Jiang Zemin agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in all areas, including at the highest level.

Though Narayanan's visit did not produce spectacular agreements between India and China, "the rapprochement had completed a full circle" (Narayanan 2003). Narayanan's visit formulated future course of action by both the countries. During the meeting Jiang Zemin put forwarded four point formula for improving bilateral relations. These were: to increase the momentum of personnel exchange in order to enhance mutual understanding and trust; to expand economic and trade cooperation; to strengthen cooperation and consultations on international affairs and strive hard for the establishment of a new international political and economic order; and to look to the future, seek commonalities while reserving one's differences and reach an appropriate solution to the problems left over by the history. Thus Narayanan's visit ushered a new era of friendship and trust between both the countries.

Strengthening India's relation with China, Jaswant Singh invited Tang Jiaxuan, the Chinese Foreign Minister to India. Tang visited India from 21 to 22 July 2000. During the meeting there was agreement between both the two sides to expedite the

process of clarification and confirmation of the Line of Actual Control (LoAC)<sup>7</sup> in the India-China border areas. India and China also agreed to raise the level of bilateral Security Dialogue to Assistant Foreign Minister and Additional Secretary level. The meeting became significant because for the first time the boundary issue was discussed between India and China after the Pokhran-II. India and China were now moving towards strategic relationship. India and China moved ahead to exchange maps of the Central Sector of the boundary in November 2000.

When Li Peng, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Peoples Congress visited India from 9-17 January, 2001 and India gave a warm welcome to him. Li Peng was the highest Chinese leader to visit India after Pokhran II. Li met several Indian leaders including the leader of the opposition and the members of parliament. Before coming to India Li expressed apprehensions about the border issue and “cautioned against expectations of a dramatic breakthrough on important issues” (Al-Rfouh 2003: 32). But after meeting with Vajpayee, Li expressed “satisfaction at the progress made on the clarification of the LAC and hoped that the process would be completed at the earliest” (Deepak 2005: 401).

Delivering a lecture “Deepening Understanding, fostering friendship and strengthening cooperation” on 13<sup>th</sup> January at India International Centre (IIC), Li Peng cautioned the audience about the dangers of globalization and talked about Chinese apprehensions on the unipolar world. Li was airing common concerns of both India and China. “The Chinese leader outlined five basic tenets of the Chinese policy towards, India that inter alia included a political commitment at the top in Beijing to intensify the relationship, expansion of economic cooperation, enhancing mutual understanding by addressing outstanding issues such as the border dispute, and an assurance that China stood for peace and stability in the subcontinent” (Al-Rfouh 2003: 32). Li Peng also talked about China’s readiness to cooperate with India and other countries on international terrorism. “This was the first ever such

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<sup>7</sup> LoAC is Line of Actual Control which divides India and China militarily since 1962 the China-India war of 1962.

statement on terrorism made by any senior Chinese leader” (Al-Rfouh 2003: 32). China had earlier abstained from voting on UNSC resolution to impose sanction on Afghanistan<sup>8</sup> in 2000. But the increased terrorist activities in the Xinjiang province which got support from the Afghanistan based Taliban rule made China to change its view on the Taliban regime. Cooperation on terrorism with China was a great diplomatic win for India which has to fight terrorism in Kashmir and other parts of India.

According to B. R. Deepak at least “three factors seemed to be prominent that prompted China to re-engage India. China seemed to take note of India’s ‘big power diplomacy’ in the past year that enabled New Delhi to overcome the post-Pokhran international isolation. Beijing was reluctant to lag behind in this respect and hence had to bring itself up to expedite its move to re-engage New Delhi. Second, India’s burgeoning economic growth and advances in information technology hold vast potential for China, which the latter did not want to lose. Finally, the changing international situation, and the downward trend in Sino-US relations, also prompted China to review its approach towards India” (Deepak 2003: 32). Li Peng’s visit reassured India that China also wanted constructive cooperation with India. Getting assurance from the top Chinese leader was a win-win situation for Indian diplomacy.

Though China was moving towards improvement of relation with India it did not abandoned Pakistan. When terrorists attacked Indian Parliament on 13th September 2001, India launched “Operation Prakram” mobilizing its troop at the India-Pakistan international border. General Musharraf during his visit to China from 20-25 December 2001 urged China to intervene on Kashmir issue. China declined to intervene and asked Pakistan to resolve Kashmir issue bilaterally with India. However in September 2001 China gave both financial assistance and defence supplies to Pakistan amounting to about half billion dollar. According to Michael Yahuda, China while engaging India was also pursuing balance in South Asia by

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<sup>8</sup> Afghanistan was ruled by the Talibans.



helping Pakistan because it had a “strategic interest in the survival of Pakistan” (Deepak 2003: 410).

Chinese collaboration with Pakistan had always been a matter of concern for India. India wanted concrete negotiations and agreements with China so that peace and tranquility could prevail and India could focus on its economic development. The time to enter into concrete agreements came during the visit of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji to India from 13-18 January, 2002. On his arrival in India a written speech released at the airport (Peoples Daily Online, 2002) Zhu said that “he expected to exchange views with Indian leaders and personages from all walks of life “in a broad and candid manner” on bilateral relations and other issues of mutual concern. He also expressed confidence that his visit would help further enhance friendship and exchanges between the two peoples, promote mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries and “inject new vitality” for sound development of the Sino-Indian Constructive Partnership in the new century” (English People,s Daily Online 2002).

The government of India gave a warm welcome to Zhu Rongji. It was after eleven years that a Chinese Premier was visiting India since Li Peng visit in 1991. Welcoming Zhu Ronji; the Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee at the banquet given in the honour of the Chinese Primier said: “it is a great pleasure to welcome to India the Prime Minister of a friendly neighbouring state and the representative of a great Asian civilization. A Chinese Prime Minister is visiting us after a decade. We welcome the resumption of dialogue at the highest level between the world’s two largest developing countries” (PM Vajpayee’s speech, 2002). Vajpayee admired the development in China- India relations and at the same time focused on the common challenges faced by both the countries in the globalized world. He said; “the rapid economic and social development of one third of humanity has a critical impact on peace and stability in our vast continent and on international relations as a whole. Notwithstanding the difference in our political systems, the commonalities of our challenges drive us to work together and to learn from each other’s experiences. It

offers great promise to our peoples in a rapidly globalizing world” (PM Vajpayee’s speech, 2002).

Mentioning “new momentum” in bilateral relations in his speech Vajpayee gave stress to the boundary issue, economic cooperation and terrorism. He said; “the good progress in the process of clarification and confirmation of the line of Actual Control signals this intention. We have agreed to further strengthen our economic cooperation. The direct air flights between Beijing and New Delhi from the end of March will enhance people-to-people contacts and promote tourism and business exchanges. Cooperation against terrorism is at the top of the agenda of all peace-loving countries, and I am happy that we have agreed today to jointly counter this menace” (Prime Minister Vajpayee’s speech, 2002).

India and China signed six agreements on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2002. Two of them were on Science and Technology and the others on cooperation in outer space, tourism, phytosanitary measures and supply of hydrological data by China to India in respect of the Brahmaputra during the flood season. It was also agreed to resume direct flights between Beijing and New Delhi. Zhu also invited Indian businessmen to invest in India and sought similar opportunities for Chinese businessmen in India. Zhu also visited Infosys Technologies, the leading software manufacturer, in Bangalore where he talked about India- China partnership in Information Technology sector.

India and China also decided to establish a bilateral dialogue mechanism against terrorism. Zhu offered to “share intelligence with India on the developments in the north-east and Jammu and Kashmir. On its part, India expressed its readiness to appraise the Chinese with information about the Ughyur insurgency in the Xinjiang province of China” (Al-Rfouh 2003: 33). The cooperation in terrorism was crucial for India. India faces heavy terrorism in Kashmir and insurgency in north east states.

Zhu's visit to India was also a success for China. He also invited Vajpayee to visit China. China was wary of the increasing US influence in Asia due to its operations in Afghanistan. Cooperation with India could counter the US influence. For India, Zhu's visit signaled for the constructive and strategic partnership with China. As Zhu's visit gave a boost to trade ties and anti-terrorism mechanism, India inched towards stronger partnership with China.

Without letting the tempo in China- India bilateral relations to die, India sent its Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh to China after Zhu's visit. Jaswant Singh visited China from 29<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002. He boarded the inaugural flight of China Eastern Airlines between New Delhi and Beijing on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> March marking the creation of a direct air corridor between India and China. Jaswant Singh held extensive talks with Zhu Rongji, Tang Jiaxuan, Quian Qichen, the Chinese Vice Premier and Dai Bingguo, the minister in the International Department of the CCP.

During the Jaswant Singh's visit decisions were taken to accelerate the process of demarcation of the LAC and exchange the maps of the Western and Eastern sectors. It was also decided to initiate bilateral dialogue on terrorism and enhance economic cooperation. Jaswant Singh also interacted with the Chinese academicians. In his speech at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies he argued that "it is not necessary for the two countries to agree on everything" (Deepak 2005: 415). Singh clearly indicated that the cooperation between India and China was manageable without solving the historic issue of border or the contentious issue of Tibet. Singh maintained that India and China have partnership in defence and economy despite the contentious issues. Singh hinted that India was ready to keep the issue of border and Tibet in backburner if cooperation between India and China increase on trade and military affairs. Singh's visit threw a difficult gamut to China. India was clearly showing its strength achieved by Pokhran II and economic reforms, through its strategically calculated diplomacy (Deepak 2005: 416).

In November 2002 there was change of leadership in China. Hu Jintao became the President replacing Jiang Zemin and Wen Jiabao replaced Zhu Rongji as the Chinese Premier. The new leadership was pragmatist and believed to be more liberal than the old guard. India watched the change of leadership carefully. It did not lose time to convey the new leadership of China that India wanted strategic and constructive partnership with China.

In a seminar where many Chinese academicians and experts were present held in IDSA (Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses) on 'Asian Security and China in 2003-2010' in 2003 the Defence Minister George Fernandes said that India and China "have a common strategic objective. To ensure the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of a billion people in the domestic context, and to retain the requisite degree of responsible autonomy in relation to the global systemic" (Fernandes 2003: 12-13, "Asian Security and China"). This positive outburst from the Defence Minister who once called China as "potential threat number one" was a clear signal from the Indian side that India was ready to leave the contentious issue to generate strategic partnership with China.

Later the Indian Foreign minister Yashwant Sinha who replaced Jaswant Singh also aired positive note in that seminar. He stated that India's approach to relation with China "is and will remain forward looking-looking and infused with a sense of optimism" (Sinha 2004: 4). He pointed out significant developments and trade as India had removed all quantitative restrictions on Chinese goods in 2001. Most importantly he said that India's economic integration with China was not hostage to boundary question and other differences.

## **SOFT DIPLOMACY**

Soft diplomacy is the diplomacy conducted through the means of trade and cultural exchanges. As a gesture towards China- India Confidence Building Measure (CBM), George Fernandes visited China on the invitation of General Cao

Gangchuan, the Chinese Defence Minister from 21-28 April 2003, defying the World Health Organization (WHO) warning on the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in China. Fernandes met several Chinese leaders including Wen Jiabao. Fernandes during his visit allayed Chinese fear that India considered China as a threat. Though no major agreement was made both the countries agreed to expedite cooperation in defence matters. Fernandes visit was precursor to Vajpayee's forthcoming China visit.

The Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a historic visit to China from 22-27 June, 2003. He was accompanied by Yashwant Sinha, Brajesh Mishra, the Principal Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, the Foreign Secretary and other officials. Vajpayee was also joined by Commerce Minister Arun Jaitly, Information Technology Minister Arun Shourie and the 70 member delegation of senior businessmen from Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers and Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

Vajpayee was given a warm welcome. He personally interacted with President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jintao, NPC Chairman Wu Bangguo, Vice President Zeng Qinghong and CMC Chairman Jiang Jeming. The Chinese leaders conveyed to Vajpayee that "India's desire to expand the bilateral relationship and build mutual trust and confidence was reciprocated" and "the current global situation requires India and China to work together" (MEA Annual Report, 2003-04). Vajpayee also expressed his desire to develop a "long-term constructive and cooperative partnership" with China.

A Joint Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between India and China was signed between both the Prime Ministers of the two countries. The declaration outlined the "concepts underpinning the bilateral relationship between India and China and the lines along which this relationship will progress in the future" (MEA Annual Report, 2003-04). It also stated that the

“progress in bilateral relations between India and China is conducive also to regional stability and prosperity and that cooperation between our two countries will strengthen multipolarity at the international level”. The partnership between India and China which was gaining momentum in diverse field was not only inward looking but India and China looked forward to shape the dynamics of international relations by giving stress to multipolarity thereby challenging the dominance and influence of the US.

To strengthen there relationship India and China agreed to hold annual meetings at the Foreign Minister level. During Vajpayee’s visit nine agreements were signed with China which included a “MoU laying down liberalized procedures for issue of visas to ordinary passport holders; an MoU on cooperation in the field of justice; the first bilateral Executive Programme on Educational Cooperation and Exchange for the period 2003 to 2006, replacing the framework for education-related exchanges, including mutual scholarships, which earlier used to form part of the CEP; the Executive Programme of Cultural Exchanges India and China for the year 2003-2005; the Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for Exporting Mangoes from India to China; and an MoU for Enhanced Cooperation in the field of Reneweabal Energy. In addition, three MoUs were signed relating to the field of science and technology, envisaging greater cooperation and collaborative activities in identified areas in basic and applied sciences, and including one MoU relating to the promotion of development and cooperation in ocean science and technology” (MEA Annual Report, 2003-04).

Vajpayee who had taken a large delegation of businessmen interacted with the Chinese corporate leaders and several areas were identified for trade: “In the Joint Declaration, dairy, food processing and health were specifically identified as possible sectors for future cooperation, while both sides agreed that they would continue to work towards the enhancement of direct air/ shipping links and tourism, exchange of hydrological data in flood seasons on common rivers, and cooperation in agriculture and other sectors.” (MEA Annual Report 2003-2004). It was also

decided to set up a Joint Study Group (JSG) to report, within the next twelve months, on the potential complementarities in expanded trade and economic cooperation between India and China". Remarkable attention was paid to the development of trade and commerce. But without demeaning the importance of culture in bilateral relation both India and China also decided to establish cultural centers in Delhi and Beijing.

Vajpayee's visit to China brought a major shift in Indian diplomacy. Until Vajpayee's visit to China the Government of India held that the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was a disputed area in China which would someday get independence. India for the first time officially recognized Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as a part of the territory of the PRC. India also reiterated that it will not allow the Tibetans living in India to engage in anti-China political activities. China appreciated this gesture. In an action of reciprocity in October 2003 the Chinese Prime Minister said that that Sikkim no longer existed as an "independent country" in the Chinese government's official websites.

During Vajpayee's visit India and China agreed to work together to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas. Both the countries reiterated their commitment towards implementation of the agreements signed for this purpose. They also agreed to clarify the Line of Actual Control. However during Vajpayee's visit trade was given priority. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and China to reopen Nathu La pass in Sikkim for trade. This was a significant victory for Indian diplomacy as China recognized Sikkim as a part of India through this agreement.

Partnership between India and China was not mere the outcome of big visits but it was also complemented by the visits of ministers, bureaucrats, technocrats, academicians, businessmen and the military at various levels. The most significant was the military contact. In April 2001, a high level military delegation led by Lt. General HRS Kalkat held fruitful discussions with Chinese military leaders. The

visit held importance in India- China relations as China was still to resolve diplomatic standoff with US over the spy plane issue. India and China showed that their bilateral relationship was not subjected to US influence.

In February 2000, Murooli Maran, Indian Commerce and Industry Minister led a delegation to China and signed agreement on issues relating to World Trade organization (WTO) and also signed a MoU for setting up a Joint Working Group in the field of steel. Pramod Mahajan, the Minister for Information Technology visited China from 15-21 July 2001 and signed a MoU for cooperation in IT sector.

In May 2001 delegation from ASSOCHAM visited China which was followed by delegation from FICCI, CII and PHD Chamber Commerce in the later half of 2001. Indian companies like Ranbaxy Limited, DR. Reddy's Laboratory, Aurobindo Pharma, NIIT, APTECH, and Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) established joint ventures and representative offices in China.

In August 2003 a four member delegation comprising Gujrat Government officials and representatives of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and FICCI visited Shanghai to promote Gujrat as a destination for foreign investment. This kind of visits to China showcasing Indian state showed the determination of Indian government to build a strong relationship with China.

The momentum generated by Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to China did not die even after the coming of United Progressive Alliance Government (UPA) headed by the congress party at the centre in May 2004. The new Indian Prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh continued to strengthen the cooperation between India and China. India and China formally entered into strategic and cooperative Partnership during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2005. India and China signed an agreement "on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question" on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 (MEA 2005). In this agreement India and China decided the principles to solve the



boundary issue. “This is the first political document signed by the two countries since 1981 when the two countries started the negotiations to settle border disputes” (Huanxin 2005). Both the countries decided to maintain peace and tranquility in the border and decide not to use force.

To further strengthen the cooperation between India and China President Hu Jintao of China visited India in November, 2006. Both India and China decided work on the “ten-pronged strategy” (MEA 2006). The ten pronged strategy included early settlement of border issue. It was agreed that the special representatives on border question will strive to arrive at mutual acceptable solution. India and China also decided to boost trade and cultural exchanges. Both the countries expressed satisfaction on the developments made in bilateral relations, and cooperation in regional and multilateral forums.

The strategic partnership between India and China started to show signs after Vajpayee’s visit in 2003. Hectic activities between the two countries started in economic and military front which resulted in cooperation at the multilateral forums. The Indian diplomacy which got a wide exposure after the Pokhran-II while dealing the great powers of the world matured to achieve national interests despite adverse situation. Diplomacy towards China was no exception. The Pokhran-II which established India as a nuclear weapon state injected confidence in the national leaders and the general public. The status and recognition which India wanted to achieve came through difficult path of nuclear diplomacy. However, the shift in China’s attitude to engage India and forge a strategic and cooperative partnership with India was the triumph of India’s nuclear diplomacy.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

### **STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH**

As the diplomatic activity increased between India and China, the tension generated by Pokhran-II started to evaporate. Political leaders, seasoned diplomats, academicians, journalists and business representatives started to travel into each other's countries. With the increase in people to people contact, more views and thoughts were exchanged. The Chinese government and the Indian government encouraged this kind of interactions.

Though India never contemplated confrontation with China yet, China's rise had always been a matter of worry for India. China's large population, large standing army equipped with nuclear weapons and its collaboration with India's neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Myanmar has always threatened India. Even so, after the Pokhran- II India wanted to keep its apprehensions about China a secret. But, the leak of Vajpayee's letter to the New York Times generated more mistrust between India and China. China condemned India's 1998 nuclear tests and played pivotal role in bringing UNSC resolution 1172 in 1998.

Though in its immediate Pokhran-II brought negative consequences to the relationship between India and China, in long run it played a positive role in bringing India's "big power diplomacy" to the forefront. The Indian diplomats and political leaders became smarter and tactful. In due course they identified the issues on which negotiations through bargains could be made. Engaging China became easier with the improvement of relationship with the United States. Indeed, this new post- 1998 diplomacy has resulted in India, for the first time, having good relations with all major powers.

However India improved its relationship with China and gradually increased the cooperation across all sectors. China too did not want to keep an adversary at its

border and reciprocated to India's desire for strategic partnership. Strategic partnership was necessary for both the countries due to the nature of their developing economy and threats from the increasing influence of the US in South Asia and Asia Pacific region.

Cooperation between India and China has been mutually beneficial. Especially, India pushed for strategic partnership with China because India lagged behind China in military affairs and economic development. It was imperative for India to cooperate with China to end its global aloofness and benefit from the cooperation.

India and China realized that they can cooperate in various fields. For example cooperation in Information Technology has been imminent as China remains leader in hardware and India in software. Similarly various other fields like manufacturing sector, automobiles, science and technology also remains open for cooperation. As the world is rapidly changing into a "global village" more and more areas for cooperation between the states are opening up. So, Globalization has played a great role in motivating India and China to strategic and cooperative relationship. Also, the transformation in the economic policies of both India and China aggravated the cooperation in trade. Both the countries have adapted to the policy of economic liberalization. However, threat perception by India and China was important due to heavy dependence on security for survival as a sovereign state.

Therefore, it was necessary for India and China to develop trust. For this, a substantive assurance has to be generated on both the sides that the boundary issue would be settled with mutual cooperation. India also wanted assurances that China should stop the transfer of nuclear technology to Pakistan. China too wanted that India stop its propaganda of "China threat" and stop any collaboration with US or other country in "containment" of China. China feared that the US will prop up India to contain China.

As the disintegration of Soviet Russia has diverted the world's attention towards the reemergence of China as a world power capable of matching US military and economic power, the relationship between India and China becomes more significant. India can be encouraged by U S to develop its military capabilities so that it can balance China. This makes China suspicious of US global motives.

India had tried to play the "China threat" card to get support of US, the European countries and Japan. But in a diplomatic setback India did not succeeded in getting US support and at the same time antagonized China. India also could not prevent Pakistan from conducting the nuclear tests. The Pakistani nuclear tests made South Asia more volatile and India was blamed for it.

To escape the blame of instigating a nuclear race in the world it was necessary for India to take formidable steps towards normalization of its relations with its nuclear neighbors. India did not face real danger from Pakistan because Pakistan had always been weaker than India in the conventional warfare. But Pakistan's nuclear policy has always been directed towards India and this makes a fundamental difference in undermining the conventional asymmetry of India and Pakistan. However, China posed a threat to India whose nuclear programme is independent of India's influence and far more advanced to that of India. Engaging China therefore was a real challenge for the Indian diplomacy. The situation between India and China improved with mutual consent. Both India and China wanted to normalize there relations and forge a strategic partnership. So, India and China reciprocated each others effort to normalize the bilateral relations.

## **DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGHS**

As India and China reestablished normal diplomatic ties the strategic breakthrough in bilateral relations took place with the reconvening of the eleventh JWG meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1999 in Beijing. It was originally scheduled for November 1998. The meeting was attended by Foreign Secretary, K. Raghunath from Indian side and

Vice-Foreign Minister, Yang Wenchang from the Chinese side. However no substantial development took place in the meeting. Despite this it holds its importance, as the first JWG meeting after the Pokhran- II. It signaled that the relation between India and China was moving on a right track.

The border issue has been a contentious issue between India and China since their independence. So the reconvene of JWG meeting was an important event between both the countries. It displayed the desire of both the countries to resolve any issue through talks. Intervention of any third party was ruled out from the very beginning. The JWG meeting also indicated that China had formally accepted nuclear India and was ready to forge a strategic partnership without bringing in the nuclear issue. Despite any result from the JWG meeting it was clear that India's rise in power was not a hindrance in cooperation between India and China. The JWG meeting was also strategic in the sense that the border issue influenced the rise of military capability of both the countries. If the border issue is resolved, there would be little reason for military movement and modernization of weapons.

The JWG meeting became a continuous process and the twelfth JWG meeting on the border issue between India and China began on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2000 in New Delhi. The Chinese delegation was led by Vice-foreign Minister Yang Wenchang which included the Director-General of the Asian department, Zhang Jiujuan and officials from the PLA while the Indian side was led by Foreign Secretary, Lalit Mansingh. No major breakthrough in the border issue took place. However both sides expressed satisfaction over the talks. The twelfth JWG meeting proved to be a major Confidence building measure between both the countries. It was clear that the border issue was complex and cannot be resolved immediately. Both India and China claimed territory which was in each other's possession. However continuations of talks help build trust between both the countries. The talks held a cascading effect on other areas of partnership by generating confidence in the bilateral relations.

The thirteenth JWG meeting on border issues was held on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2001 in Beijing. India was represented by the Foreign Secretary while China was represented by Vice Foreign Minister, Wang Yi. Adopting a constructive and forward looking approach both India and China decided that the present momentum in bilateral relations should be maintained and enhanced through future high-level exchanges. India and China reviewed the work done by Joint Group on Economic Relations and Trade (JEG) on the clarification and confirmation of the LAC, and on the implementation of CBMs.

Apart from the border issues the Foreign Secretary and the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister also exchanged views on the international situation. India and China also agreed on the fact that improvement in relation between both the countries will bring peace and stability in the South Asia region. The foreign Secretary apart from attending the JWG meeting also held talks with Tang Jiaxuan, the Chinese foreign Minister and Dai Bingguo, the Minister of International Department of the CCP on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2001.

The JWG meeting of 2001 saw considerable development in the bilateral relations. Though the border issue was not solved, but India and China discussed and exchanged each others objections on the border demarcation. The meeting also saw the expansion of issues. The meeting did not limit to border issue but the meeting widens its scope to discuss global issues. This very development pointed towards global collaboration between India and China. The India- China partnership headed towards partnership in multilateral forums focusing on peace, stability and economic development.

The fourteenth JWG meeting which was held on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2002 in New Delhi was attended by India's Foreign Secretary and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Li. In the meeting it was decided that the maps of the Western Sector of the LAC would be exchanged in the next JEG meeting to be held in January 2003 in Beijing. While the maps of the Middle Sector had been exchanged before the maps

of the Western Sector was not exchanged since 1960. Spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs revealed that a detailed review of bilateral relations between India and China since the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the JWG on July 31, 2001, took place in the fourteenth round of the JWG meeting. The spokesman also said that both sides also viewed the functioning of the existing dialogue mechanisms such as on counter-terrorism and security. The usefulness of the dialogues on counter-terrorism and need to sustain and broaden them was reaffirmed in the meeting. Regional issues were also discussed. Also in the meeting China said that it did not see relations with India simply from a South Asian perspective.

The fourteenth JWG meeting was thus exhaustive and both India and China made a remarkable progress in bilateral relations. The meeting was also important as the Indian Prime Minister was to tour China in 2003. The bilateral relationship was moving towards strategic and cooperative partnership. Issues between both the countries were expanding and at the same time agreements on issue were also expanding. India and China now did not remain a hostile nation but became partners. The likely exchange of maps of the Western Sector indicated likely expansion of cooperation through the JWG meeting. Cooperation with China on border issue was great success for Indian diplomacy. Without diluting its stand on border India was able to engage China while trade between both the countries increased. Trade was not allowed to decline during the border talks.

## **TRADE RELATIONSHIP**

China started to liberalize its economy since 1979. This was a shift from communism towards liberal market economics. However Chinese polity remained communist oriented. China did not want to change its political system but it at the same time wanted to reap the benefits of liberal market economics. This was because communism was pushed back throughout the world and majority countries embraced liberal economy. Foreign capital and international trade became a necessity for the development. It was difficult for China to attract foreign capital

without changing its economic policy. Since China changed its economic policy, China started to witness high growth rate and become a major trading country. China's economy stand second to that of US at the present time quite ahead of many European countries. The rise in economy has changed China's outlook towards the world especially towards the neighboring countries. This is the reason that China did not engage in military actions or threatened militarily any country in the last decade. The market economy played an important role in shaping China's policy towards India. So trade did not decline between India and China though the bilateral relations between both the countries came to a low after the Pokhran II.

It was necessary for the strategic partnership between India and China that progress in economic relations be made. So it was imperative that the trade between both the countries increase, collaboration in multilateral foras such as World Trade Organization (WTO) take place, flow of capital in the form of Foreign Direct investment (FDI) happen and collaboration in research and development (R&D) take place.

Similarly, India had started to liberalize its economy since 1991. The foreign capital in the form of FDI and Foreign Institutional Investment (FII) came late. India missed out to China. Moreover FDI and FII were slow due India's bureaucratic hurdle and red tapism. Nonetheless India tried to improve its economic policy and attract foreign money by further liberalization. Since China was a large economy India not only wanted to attract Chinese money but also wanted to have colaboration with Chinese companies in the IT sector and manufacturing sector. India has been a leading player in computer software while China in computer hardware. India has abundant mineral resources and has cheap labour while China is advanced in technology. India wanted partnership in IT to gain heavy profit while partnership in manufacturing sector would bring employment and improve infrastructure.



It is interesting to note that Pokhran- II did not freeze the trade relations between India and China. But India did not enjoy substantive trade relation with China in 1998. Moreover the bilateral trade between government enterprises was lower than that of the private enterprises. So the insignificant trade did not affect bilateral relationship significantly. However because of trade relations India and China did not stop cooperation though China stopped to cooperate on border issues.

But to achieve a strategic partnership it was necessary for India and China to have a robust trade relation. Since Pokhran II the bilateral trade between India and China increased from US\$ 1.92 billion in 1998 to \$1.98 billion in 1999 which further increased to \$2.91 billion in 2000 and to \$4 billion in 2001 and it was \$ 24.9 billion for 2006. This indicates that the trade relationship has made progress despite Pokhran- II. India and China have been cooperating in trade leaving the other contentious issues to be solved later. In 1998 itself India's export to China amounted to US\$ 905.704 million having a growth rate of 0.9%. However China's export to India amounted to US\$ 1016.596 million, amounting to a growth rate of 8.9%. The overall trade between India and China witnessed a growth rate of 5% in comparison to 1997. In the fourth year in succession India became largest trade partner of China in South Asia in 1998 and by the strength of its export alone India improved its position to 9<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner of China in Asia and 22<sup>nd</sup> in the world.

However in 1998 China had a trade surplus of US\$ 110.892 million, from US\$ 35.8 million in 1997 while in 1996 India had a trade surplus of US\$ 29.6 million. "In 1992, 1993, and 1996, India enjoyed a trade surplus with China and in 1994, 1995, 1997 and 1998 the balance of trade was in China's favour" (Hameed 2000: 207). The trade deficit with China in 1998 could be "ascribed to growth of Indian imports in chemicals and allied products, silk and machinery (US\$ 329.17 million, US\$ 101 million and US\$ 147.66 million, respectively)" while "Indian exports, with the exception of oil cake of soymeal and chemicals, could not expand its share" (Hameed 2000: 207-208). This provides an important indicator towards

India- China relations. While China continued to implement its robust trade policy, India lagged behind China in trade. India wanted to have profitable trade relations but given the limited scope of trade relations it was not possible for India to have trade surplus with China. So India wanted to have trade cooperation on diverse fields so that a loss in any sectors could be compensated by profit in other sectors.

Despite India's trade deficit with China "there has been a significant increase in both exports to and imports from China in the last six to seven years. This has led to a steady increase in the share of China in the total global exports and imports of India. For instance, China's share in India's total global exports, which always remained much below 1 percent upto 1995, gradually has increased to almost 3 percent by 2000. Similarly, the share of China in India's global imports, which was far less than 1 percent in 1990, has increased to almost 4 percent by 2000" (Lama 2005: 86).

The given table shows India's trade deficit with China:

Year	India's Exports to the world US \$ Million	India's Exports to China US \$ Million	(b) as % of (a)	India's Imports from the World US \$ Million	India's Imports from China US \$ Million	(e) as % of (d)
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1995	30537.00	283.00	0.93	34484.00	811.00	2.35
1996	32325.00	542.00	1.68	36055.00	702.00	1.95
1997	33248.00	645.00	1.94	39017.00	1062.00	2.72
1998	36422.00	858.00	2.36	42140.00	1192.00	2.83
1999	38577.00	751.00	1.95	45038.00	1278.00	2.84
2000	44298.00	1230.00	2.78	49724.00	1717.00	3.45

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook, IMF, Various Issues. (Lama 2005: 88).

“India has had border trading agreement with China mainly conducted through Lipulekh pass (5200 m) in Uttarakhand and Shipkila pass in Himachal Pradesh. The Lipulekh pass trade route connects Dharchula in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand with Taklakot in the Purang county of Tibet autonomous region. The Shipkila pass trade route mainly caters to the people living both sides of the border” (Lama 2005: 93). But to give a boost to trade there had been long demand by the traders and local community to open up trade in Nathu La pass in Sikkim.

The Nathu La pass which is located at a distance of 54 kms. from Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim is considered to be the shortest trade route to Lhasa, which is 525 kms. away from the Nathu La. The route connects Phari, Guru, Gyantse, Karos, Chusiu and Lhasa on the Chinese side of the trading points. Trading through Nathu La provides relative easy access to more developed physical and institutional infrastructure in and around, the trading points (Lama 2005: 98). Trade through Nathu La also provides vast opportunity for the development of the North Eastern states of India and at the same time holds significance for the bilateral trade relations with Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Sikkim has been a contentious issue between India and China since 1974 when Sikkim decided to become an Indian state. China did not recognize Sikkim as a part of India. The Chinese official map did not show Sikkim as a part of India until 2003. The historic shift came when Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China from 22-27 June, 2003. The visit was India’s formidable attempt to forge a “long-term constructive and cooperative partnership” with China (MEA Annual Report, 2003-04). India succeeded in this.

A “Joint Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between India and China” was signed. An MoU was also signed “on expanding border trade through Nathu La on the India China boundary”. “This MoU has also started the process by which Sikkim will cease to be an issue in India-China relations” (MEA Annual Report, 2003-04). China’s consent to allow trade through

Nathu La pass was a great diplomatic victory for India. The MoU meant that China recognized Sikkim as a part of India. Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao on the sidelines of ASEAN Business and Investment Summit held in Bali, Indonesia in October 2003, after a lapse of four months since signing of the joint declaration said that Sikkim no longer existed as an independent country in the Chinese government's official websites.

The Chinese magnanimity and shift of its position vis-à-vis Sikkim did not come easily. To get Chinese recognition for Sikkim as a part of India too had to shift its position Tibet. Since 1950's India held that Tibet did not constitute part of China. India has also given refuge to the Dalai Lama and lakhs of Tibetans who run a parallel government. "India for the first time officially recognized Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as a part of territory of the PRC and reiterated that it will not allow the Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India" (Deepak 2005: 430).

The recognition of Tibet by India as a part of China and the recognition of Sikkim as a part of India was a significant strategic move by both the countries. Through this both the countries allayed each other's fear of future confrontation. This also generated the needed trust for long term constructive partnership.

During Vajpayee's China visit a decision was taken to appoint "Special Representative" to explore from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship the framework of a boundary settlement. From India side the national security advisor Brajesh Mishra was appointed as prime minister's representative while China appointed its senior most Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo as his counterpart. The work of the two Special Representatives was additional to the ongoing implementation of the 1993 and 1996 agreements between India and China on the process of clarification of the Line of Actual Control and on the continued maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas. Two rounds of cordial,

constructive and cooperative discussions between the Special Representatives took place on 23-24 October 2003 and 12-13 January 2004.

Just before the visit of Vajpayee in May 2003, the Defence Minister George Fernandes visited China from 20-27 April, 2003. Fernandes reiterated that India did not face any threat from China. This was a significant posture taken by Fernandes who just before Pokhran II named China as “potential threat number one”. Fernandes’ visit accelerated the cooperation between India and China on military affairs. In 2003 three Chinese delegations, one from the PLA Air Force Command College (July 2003), one from the Nanjing Army Command College (August 2003) and a delegation led by General Wu Quanxu, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA (December 2003) came to India.

From 10-14 November 2003 three Indian Navy ships paid a goodwill visit to Shanghai where they conducted, for the first time, joint search and rescue exercises with the PLA navy on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2003. The cooperation in military affairs continued with visit of GOC 4 Corps, Lt. Gen. Mohinder Singh to China which included Chengdu and Tibet from 17-22 November, 2003. A of Inter Services delegation led by Air Marshal GCS Rajwar, Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff and Chairman, Joint Training Committee, visited China from 14-21 December 2003.

Apart from the military affairs India and China also cooperated on counter terrorism. India is severely affected by terrorism in north eastern states and in Jammu and Kashmir. The second meeting of the India-China Dialogue on Counter Terrorism was held in Beijing on 13 June 2003 which was led by Joint Secretary (East Asia) from the Indian side and Acting DG, International Organisations Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry from the Chinese side. They exchanged views on the international and regional situation and possibilities for bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the India-China Expert Group on Clarification and Confirmation of the LAC was also held in Beijing on 12 March 2004 where the discussions on the exchange of maps in the Western Sector and on the draft CBMS protocol continued. Both India and China were discussing and gradually making progress in improvement of bilateral cooperation.

Apart from political and military and economic issues India and China also moved towards partnership in space research and science and technology. An ISRO delegation from India led by Dr. R.R. Navalgund, Director, NRSA, visited China from 1-4 December 2003 for the first meeting of the joint working group between ISRO and its Chinese counterpart CNSA, resulting in the signing of agreed minutes in which both sides identified areas of future cooperation, especially in the field of remote sensing. China and India are also in the ITER which is to demonstrate scientific feasibility of fusion energy.

## **MULTILATERALISM**

The China-India relation has grown into a larger canvass of cooperative and strategic partnership which showed its impact in the multilateral forums of the South Asian region. China was granted an observer status in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and India has become observer in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Certain issues such as globalization and international terrorism have forced SAARC to reinvent itself and focus on multilateralism. This also brings the focus on the nuclear power countries in SAARC which are India, Pakistan and China. The new “nuclear triangle” created by India, Pakistan and China has generated confidence building measures on regionalism in South Asia (Singh 2007: 29). This has further strengthened the cooperative and strategic partnership between India and China.

China- India strategic and cooperative partnership was revealed by not only cooperation on border issues, military affairs, Sikkim and Tibet, bilateral trade,

cooperation in international forums, science and technology but also in fields of tourism, culture, education, legal matters, policy planning and films and television. Both India and China has allayed fears of threat from each other. China and India both has denounced containment theory. The relations of India and China with other countries are free and without any pressure. It is not looked with suspicion. As the trade grows and cooperation increase, both India and China can emerge as a formidable block in the world system.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **LIMITATIONS AND TRENDS**

The relations between India and China are so complex that these can neither be categorized as that of a “friend” nor that of a “foe”. Both the countries carry the legacy of their ancient civilization and at the same time memories of the colonial rule. Both have an outward looking foreign policy while the domestic polity is centralized. Both India and China have large standing military and are expanding and modernizing their military capabilities. Both India and China are struggling to achieve a credible position in the world hierarchy and at the same time oppose unipolarity. But the most appealing concern about India and China is that both are developing countries, struggling to provide basic amenities to majority population and to find a space in the community of nations.

The relation between India and China does not involve mere a settlement of bilateral issues but a wider canvass of cohabitation of two ancient civilizations which want to play a dominant role in the world. This is why the factors such as cooperation in multilateral forums, relationship with the United States, Pakistan and other countries become important. In international relations no country is a permanent friend or a permanent foe. The relationship changes with the shift in geo-political calculus. Cooperation between India and China can be seen in this perspective.

Until Pokhran II, India did not count as a strong state in international politics. But the Pokhran II brought in India’s “big power diplomacy”. With the strengthening of military capability and reforms in economic policy India raised its power in the world system. China which until 1998 did not give much importance to India changed its policy towards India. The rise of India as an economic power and the unwillingness of the US to impose harsher sanctions after the Pokhran-II made China focus on opportunities of cooperation with India. India also wanted to have good relations with China as it did not want to become an international pariah. However, India wanted partnership with China on the grounds of mutual benefit



and the post Pokhran-II events show that both India and China have benefited with the normalization of relations.

## **RELATIVE GAIN THEORIES**

In an anarchic world where self help is the only mantra for survival, to what length can India and China cooperate. The prime aim of states in the international system is that of security and survival. Threats from other states always remain and the concerned state builds up its capability or form an alliance to counter the threats. Comparison of the military capabilities of India and China goes heavily in favour of China. Therefore India faces genuine security threats from China. Given this scenario cooperation between India and China becomes less durable. However, India and China as security seekers rather than power seekers are highly conscious of relative gains (Narayana 2003).

In Realism the states worry about relative gains and not about absolute gains while in Liberalism the states are concerned with absolute gains. Relative gain means power (military or economic) acquired by a state in relative to other state while having cooperation with that state. Absolute gain is the gain acquired during cooperation, which is not relative to other states. Noted realism theorist Kenneth Waltz says that

“in a self help system each of the units spends a portion of its efforts, not in forwarding its own good, but in providing the means of protecting itself against others. Specialization in a system of divided labor works to everyone’s advantage, though not equally so. Inequality in the expected distribution of the increased product works strongly against extension of the division of labor internationally. When faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states that feel insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not “Will both of us gain?” but “Who will gain more?” if an expected gain is to be divided, say, in the ratio of two to one, one state may use its disproportionate gain to implement a policy intended to damage or destroy the other. Even the prospect of large absolute gains for both parties does not elicit their cooperation so long as each fears how the other will use its increased capabilities” (Waltz 1979: 105).

Therefore the cooperation between India and China took place under the latent threat of using gains against each other. A state is more concerned about the gains of other state because the states can use the gain in destruction of the other states. Security being the prime concern of state, the cooperation between the states is hampered by the relative gains. Also the

“relative gains seeking can inhibit cooperation in two ways, the less important is by limiting the range of viable cooperative agreements because states will not accept deals that provide disproportionately greater benefits to others. This understanding of relative gains seeking does not clearly distinguish relative from absolute gains. Intense bargaining for greater absolute benefits also leads to a concern with the distribution of joint gains from cooperation. Indeed, in the pure zero-sum gain there is no analytical or substantive difference between seeking a greater relative share. More importantly, if distribution is the primary relative gains problem, states can alter the terms of a cooperative agreement or offer side payments until the distribution of gains is sufficiently proportionate. Ironically, this relative gains problem might even facilitate cooperation by narrowing the range of viable cooperative agreements and thereby reducing the absolute gains bargaining problems” (Snidal 1991: 703).

The second more general way, in which relative gains affect international cooperation, is

“by changing states’ incentives. Common interests created by the prospect of joint absolute gains become increasingly conflictual as relative comparisons are introduced. This alters the strategic structure of interstate structure relations and thereby decreases the prospects of cooperation” (Snidal 1991: 703-704).

Snidal, further says that states will violate rules for cooperation if there is a relative gain. Thereby, diminishing any chance of cooperation between the states. However Robert Powell says that “states as rational unitary actors do not exist. They are a theoretical construct. Thus, the question of whether states maximize absolute gains or are concerned about relative gains is empirically meaningless. The real question is, which assumption about state preferences is more useful?” (Powell 1994: 1316).

In the complex relation between India and China, it is not possible to determine whether India is seeking absolute or relative gain while forging strategic and cooperative partnership. Since 1962 India and China have not fought a single war but the vast presence of troops on both the sides of border, threaten the peace and tranquility of the region. Threats from China look large due to its superiority in weapon system. Though India has conducted six nuclear tests, this number is not enough to guarantee the precision and lethality of the nuclear weapons. India also does not have credible delivery system. India's nuclear deterrent vis-à-vis China remains yet in-the-making. So, threat always exists from China.

The trade between India and China, on the other hand, gives absolute gain to both the country. And at the same time warmth in their relations relation provides peace in the South Asia region. But both India and China use their economic gains to develop there military and technological capability. So the relative gain becomes important. It can not be completely ruled out that whether India or China will not use force against each other in future.

The Indian nuclear diplomacy which tried to achieve strategic and cooperative partnership with China, therefore, continues to have its limitations. It faced several constraints due to the unresolved agenda, pending since 1950's. During the 2003 Vajpayee's visit to China, India, for the first time, officially recognized Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as a part of the territory of the PRC and reiterated that it will not allow the Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India but the annual report of the Ministry of External Affairs (1 January 2003 - 31 March 2004) say that "regarding Tibet, it must be stressed that contrary to some media reports, there is no change in India's position either on Tibet or on the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or other Tibetan refugees in India, and that nothing new has been agreed to or said" (MEA Annual Report, 2003-04). India has make a backtrack from the position it took in China. Neither did India clarify its position on Tibet nor it explicitly mentions that it consider Tibet as a part of China.

So has Indian diplomacy been bluffing the Chinese and the Indian people. The indecisive attitude of Indian government vis-à-vis Tibet was neither harmful nor important for China as China enjoys greater military and economic capability than India. Show casting India during his China visit in 2003, Vajpayee quoting Deng in his speech said that “there is always a sense of competition between two close and equal neighbors”, the two countries need to “understand the difference between healthy competition and divisive rivalry” (Shahin 2003). Vajpayee was clearly speaking from the position of strength emanated by the Pokhran II. So was he mentioning the limitations of Indian diplomacy? Was India ready to “compete” with China? India nonetheless was trying to project its strength to contain China so that the “enemies” of communist China prop up India. In this circumstances India could gain.

But Vajpayee did not let the diplomacy to take backseat. He said that the “India China relationship needs to go back to the cooperation of the past, forgetting the “state of estrangement” and the “dead end of mistrust”. The China- India partnership needs to “transcend bilateral relations to encompass international issues”. Both countries have “overlapping concerns on globalization”, need “to restore the authority of international organizations which have been undermined in recent months”, and want to develop “a multipolar world order” (Shahin 2003).

Vajpayee’s demand to end the “estrangement” and “mistrust” indicate that the Indian diplomacy continued to face this problem. If there is mistrust between two states, the states cannot enter in to a strategic and cooperative partnership. Strategic partnership requires to share data and information regarding strategic locations, terrorist activities and military capabilities. Till now neither India nor China have shared data and information about there military capabilities.

The JWG meetings on the border issue are expected to exchange maps of the disputed area but no breakthrough have been made so far and the demarcation of the boundary. It appears as if neither India nor China wants to solve the border

issue. But China has negotiated the boundary dispute with Russia and settled it by mutual agreement. The post- 1998 does not show an accelerated momentum yet; China shows no inclination to solve the boundary question with India.

India too has not been pushing the matter further. Vajpayee during his China visit in 2003 did not mention the border dispute in which China occupies a large chunk of territory in Aksai Chin during the 1962 border war that India claims to be its own. Nor did he mention another equally sensitive issue - Chinese nuclear and military help to Pakistan, with whom India has already fought three wars and has been engaged in a low-intensity conflict for the past 13 years. The Chinese help to Pakistan in strengthening of its strategic capabilities, and the growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean is a great matter of concern for India.

China has also constructed road, rail, and air links to the Tibet Autonomous Region which continue to cause deep concern in India. India also fears that the 1,118 kilometres railway line linking Gormo in Qinghai province with Lhasa in Tibet will strategically benefit Chinese military by making the troops movement easier. The rail project connects Lhasa to four major Chinese centres, Gormo in Qinghai, Lanzhou in Gansu, Dali in Yunnan and Chengdu in Sichuan. This can severely impact the population of Tibet.

Vajpayee also did not mention about the “fears expressed by Indian strategist that Jiang Zemin’s “political project” is in fact not exclusively aimed at finding a “final solution” to the Tibetan problem” and “also absent from his speeches were Indian fears that China is engaged in a policy of encircling India through developing strategic and military ties with all its hostile and not-so-hostile neighbors, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Nepal” (Shahin 2003). Vajpayee did not rake up the controversial issue with China which had the potential of derailing the ongoing process of partnership. India was also not able to get a formidable assurance on Sikkim.

Commenting on the Vajpayee's visit Brahma Chellaney, strategic affairs analyst said "we have compromised on the central principle of diplomacy that is reciprocity, India has made concessions to China on major issues like Tibet, and on the border issue by agreeing to talk on the political aspect which the Chinese wanted" (Shahin 2003). Chellaney also wonders about the causes of change of mind on India's part as India forgot that reciprocity is the fundamental of diplomacy while agreeing to part with leverage India had upon China.

Chellaney also said that it is necessary that India keep a more refined viewpoint on Tibet as it has become necessary because of the Chinese unyieldingness and intransigence on Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh, as well as reluctance to settle the Indo-Tibetan frontier issue or define a line of control at least on maps, if not on the ground. In his view, the main reason is the boundary problem created during 1954 when India accepted the Chinese Annexation of Tibet. India at that time did not finalize the India- Tibet border with China. This encouraged the Chinese to lay claim on the other areas of India.

Chellaney also says that a reality check on Vajpayee's China visit is needed, first, because

"no breakthrough has been achieved or claimed on the core issues. China has neither agreed to present maps of its version of the full line of control nor has it pledged to forswear further weapons-of-mass-destruction transfers to Pakistan or stop strengthening its flank against India via Myanmar. Second, in the absence of political progress, India has settled for window-dressing to showcase the visit. Third, such is the uneasy state of relations that the visit has centered not on substance but on defining mere principles on how to move ahead. And the last-minute accords on general principles and Sikkim-Tibet border trade were sealed entirely because of Indian concessions" (Shahin 2003).

It seems that India has conceded more than what China has expected. Counting Chellaney's view Vajpayee's visit clearly shows the precarious position of Indian diplomacy. Indian diplomacy was neither successful in achieving a clear agreement on Tibet, Sikkim and boundary dispute nor it could mobilize Chinese firms to make

strategic investments in India. India looks Chinese companies with suspicion and has placed several restrictions on them. In these conditions neither a progress was made on the “core issues” or on economic partnership.

However the June, 2003 Vajpayee’s visit to China does not draw a bleak picture. Vajpayee’s visit marked a watershed in China- India relations. Commenting on the 2003 Vajpayee’s visit, eminent Chinese expert David Shambaugh says that

“the Sino-Indian summit represented the most recent success in efforts by China to turn one-time adversaries into productive partners. Taken together with China’s ongoing efforts to forge a strategic partnership with Russia and to increase bilateral cooperation overall, Beijing’s success in building ties with its former adversaries (including South Korea, Vietnam, and India) has not only benefited the countries concerned, but has also removed key sources of tension from the Asian region” (Shambaugh 2005: 82-83).

Being two large countries of Asia, India and China are capable of destabilizing the Asian region. Confrontation between India and China has the potential of creation of blocs in Asia with countries either aligning with India or China. This can hamper the development of Asian nations. It is necessary that relationship between India and China improves further. China has also shown immense interest in improving its relations with other countries.

But, China has not stopped its collaboration with Pakistan which is allegedly main source of terrorism in India and a “permanent”<sup>9</sup> threat to India. According to Surjit Mansingh the Chinese supply of arms, missiles, and nuclear technology to Pakistan, which has been consistently hostile to India and is waging a low intensity conflict against India in Kashmir since 1989, confirms two threats perceived in India. “First is the threat of nuclear blackmail or intimidation by a superior power and India’s own inferior international status. The second threat is external support that encourages Pakistan’s adventurism, discourages acceptance of ground realities in

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<sup>9</sup> Taking into consideration the Pakistani links with terrorism and its military adventurism against India and the pending of several complicated historical issues point that Pakistan pose permanent threat to India.

Islamabad, and alters the balance of power on the Indian subcontinent” (Mansingh 2005: 8).

Mansingh further says that

“those who underline this threat are not assuaged by China’s declaration that military transfers are part of the sovereign rights of independent states and that China seeks good relations with all the nations of South Asia. Nor are they greatly impressed by China’s gradually changing position on Kashmir, from outright (but little more than verbal) support of Pakistan in 1965, to emphasizing the bilateral nature of the dispute and the need to settle it peacefully, to Jiang Jeming pointing out while in Pakistan in 1996 that unresolved disputes can be put aside while constructing broader relations, to refusing to support or endorse Pakistan’s daring incursions into Kargil in 1999, and reiterating that sanctity of the Line of Control in Kashmir” (Mansingh 2005: 8-9).

The neutral position taken by China during Kargil war in 1999 in which the Pakistan had intruded into the Indian territory was not a diplomatic victory for India. By remaining neutral China supported Kashmir as a disputed territory. China never recognized Kashmir as an integral part of India. Instead linking it with Pakistani interest China wants to keep the Kashmir issue entangled.

Mansingh also says that the “the strong China-Pakistan link combined with Pakistan’s repeated military confrontation at varying levels is an effective method of tying down India and preventing realization of its potential as an Asian Great power. Pakistan’s geographic location and fragile polity also obstructs Indian access to the oil and gas resources of Central Asia and inhibits Indian membership in the Shanghai Cooperative Organization. Further, China’s diplomatic and economic activities throughout South Asia, especially in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, are read in New Delhi as evidence of malevolent intent and encirclement of India. Unsurprisingly, such attitudes openly expressed within the Indian security establishment make it easier for China to charge India with “hegemonism” and reinforce its own presence on the subcontinent” (Mansingh 2005: 9).



Not only China has security collaboration with Pakistan but has made inroads in Bangladesh and Nepal. China has also build up a military base in Cocos Island in Myanmar. This has been denied by both Myanmar and China but given the mistrust between India and China and the secretive method of Chinese operations, the issue cannot be overlooked. This however poses a serious threat to India.

The strategic and cooperative partnership between India and China is not substantive until China and India discuss nuclear weapons in possession. China has refused to discuss any nuclear topic with India. It has also not discussed the CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) and mutual NFUs (No First Use) on a bilateral basis. The bilateral India-China talks on security only became possible after India openly conducted nuclear tests in 1998. Since then, Indian officials and non-officials have been more willing than previous officials to pose hard questions about China's nuclear proliferation activities. But no information about installation of nuclear weapons has been exchanged between India and China.

India has since long demanding a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations. But the five countries which are permanent members of the UNSC and posses nuclear weapons have not allowed the expansion of permanent membership of the UNSC. Since India supported China for the permanent membership of UNSC it had hoped the same. During his visit to China in June 2003 Prime Minister Vajpayee tried to get China's endorsement of India's claim for the permanent membership of the UNSC but the Chinese did not give an explicit assurance. In the joint declaration between India and China it was only mentioned that "in reform of the UN Security Council. Priority should be given to enhancing representation of the developing countries" (MEA Annual Report, 2003-2004). The declaration did not even mention India's name. The expansion of UNSC was clearly marked with vagueness. It seems that China never want India to become a permanent member of the UNSC. This was a failure of Indian diplomacy. India could at least have tried to get its name mentioned in the declaration.

China- India relation is not devoid of the impact of US activities in the South Asia region. China is suspicious of the US activities due to its involvement in Taiwan and Korean issue. The Iraq war and the war against Taliban in Afghanistan have shown US world dominance. But the US sees China as an adversary in making. This makes China believe that the US wants to contain China. "The U.S. and any possibility of a strong U.S.-India partnership pose much greater challenges to China" (Mansingh 2005: 10). Therefore "China's policy makers are wary of "encirclement" or "containment" even if in the guise of "engagement" and have taken diplomatic and military precautions against any tightening of the noose, while acknowledging China's very favorable security environment since the early 1990s" (Mansingh 2005: 10).

China became more cautious about its relation with India since 1998. Pokhran- II saw India hobnobbing with the US. So "when the BJP-led government in India and the bush administration started exchanging compliments about democracies being "natural allies" and working towards establishing a "strategic partnership", Chinese strategist were jolted out of their habitual indifference toward India" (Mansingh 2005: 10).

Political leaders of China were more cautioned with the increasing warmth in relationship between India and the United States. China quickly moved to improve its relationship with India. It has been the prime motive of China to improve its relationship with India. Rollie Lal says that "amelioration of ties has been the primary policy, which could deter India from aligning with the United States to contain China while providing mutual beneficial economic relationship" (Lal 2006: 140).

Hawks in India and the US postulated a "China threat" theory and it has made considerable impact in the US-China and US-India relations. The reason why this has not been blown over is that the United States' shares a rather profitable partnership with China. However, "China threat" continues to alert India and the

US but considering US- China strong relations, China kept the threat perceptions emanating from India low (Mansingh 2005: 10).

The strategic partnership between India and China is also limited by the difference in social set up and ethos. While China is a less liberal country, India on the other hand enjoins considerable liberty in manifestations of thoughts and actions. This often set up a chaotic impression about the decision making process in India. “The Chinese love of order is confounded by apparent Indian comfort with disorder” (Mansingh 2005: 10). Japanese scholar Nakamura has demonstrated how the Mandarin language is conducive to concrete, practical thinking while Sanskrit encouraged the abstract. “Such infrastructural differences in political cultures are bound to impede easy cooperation between India and China, but the very process of overcoming difficulties augurs well for the cooperative ventures that are being created” (Mansingh 2005: 10). This is why the Indian nuclear diplomacy could move the India- China relations towards a strategic and cooperative partnership.

But China has prevented India from gaining an upper hand over Pakistan by maintaining a rough balance of power in South Asia (Pant 2006: 61-62). China has continuously assisted Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes to counter India’s development of new weapons systems. “India’s preoccupation with Pakistan reduces its ability to compete with China in regional and global power politics” (Cohen, 1983 in Pant 2006: 62). “Even as India and China share similar concerns regarding Islamist militancy in Kashmir and Xinjiang respectively, China has been rather unwilling to make a common cause with India against Pakistan” (Pant 2006: 62).

Moreover, China’s rapid economic growth in the preceding years has given China the capability to transform itself into a military power which is the main concern for India. China’s dependence on oil forces China to safeguard its supply line. For which it require “access to advanced naval facilities en route and forces capable of gaining and sustaining naval and air superiority” (Pant 2006: 62). “China’s

assistance to Myanmar in constructing and improving port facilities on two islands in Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea is the first step to securing military base privileges in the Indian Ocean” (Garver, 2001, in Pant, 2006, P- 62). “This can be used as a listening post to gather intelligence on Indian naval operations and as a forward base for future Chinese naval operations in the Indian Ocean” (Bhaskar 2000 in Pant 2006: 62). China’s naval presence in the Indian Ocean “can have serious strategic consequences as India’s traditional geographic advantages in the Indian Ocean are increasingly at risk due to deepening Chinese involvement in Myanmar” (Garver 2001 in Pant 2006: 62).

“China has also been actively occupying islands, reefs and islets throughout the highly disputed South China Sea, occasionally resulting in skirmishes with rival claimants. Though not of any direct strategic consequences for India, this shows that China is serious about making its military presence felt in Asia and would like to be taken seriously” (Pant 2005: 62). The Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean has increased security threat for India. But this issue has not been discussed between India and China. If India does not discuss this security threat with China or does not modernize its naval capabilities to counter Chinese threat then India could well be a victim of Chinese encirclement. India is also unable to employ diplomacy towards Myanmar to stop it from giving leverage to China. Either India modify its relation with military junta of Myanmar or discuss these issues with China. Then only it can make a correct estimate of threats from China.

China has also been an influence in blocking India’s membership to APEC. Although India became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) despite China’s opposition it has been noncommittal on India’s membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and has warned against India’s military presence in Central Asia. It was again China that drafted the highly one-sided UN Security Council resolution 1172 of 1998 that condemned India’s nuclear tests. China has played a role of hostile neighbour in the recent past. If a strategic and cooperative partnership between India and China has to take place then China has to give more

leverage to India. Or else mere agreements and declarations cannot produce reliable relationship between India and China.

The border issue also remains to be solved. The border dispute in Arunachal Pradesh has resurfaced with China claiming almost entire of the Arunachal Pradesh. The denial of visa to Indian Administrative Service officers from Arunachal Pradesh to visit China in May 2007 for a study programme has made the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Dorjee Khandu to request Government of India to take up the issue with China and clarify it (Government of Arunachal Pradesh 2007).

But the diplomatic initiative of the Government of India to maintain friendly relationship with China never dies. At the a plenary session of the sixth Asia Security Conference, organized in Singapore by the London based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in June 2007, the Indian Defence Minister A. K. Antony said that “whatever happened in the past, our relationship with China is improving considerably. We try to settle all our issues [with China] through negotiations” (Suryanarayana 2007: 13).

Equation has though changed since then. Nevertheless forging a strategic and cooperative partnership with China will continue to have limitations for Indian diplomacy as long as India faces threats from China. Either India increases its military capabilities or accepts a secondary role to China. Either way India can guarantee its security. But taking into account the strong cooperation between the US and the China, buck passing seems impossible. But the US also does not seem to counter China in an explicit form. So India is left with the single option of cooperation with China. In the China- India relationship India has not been able to get formidable concessions from China. While India has given great leverage to China on Tibet. It seems that India wants to keep all the controversial issues under the pit and move ahead with cooperation in trade and other economic issues.

## **FUTURE TRENDS**

During his visit to China in 2003, Vajpayee expressed his satisfaction that trade relations between India and China have improved. He said that

“India and China are among the fastest-growing economies. Though we have chosen different paths towards development, we have complementariness, created by technological development and human resources. Our trade is growing rapidly. It nearly touched US\$5 billion last year and, at the rate at which it is growing, can easily reach \$10 billion in the next couple of years” (Shahin 2003).

Vajpayee further said that “though it is from a narrow base, the recent annual growth rate of 30 percent in our bilateral trade relations is quite significant. In the first four months of this year, bilateral trade registered an astonishing growth of about 70 percent” (Shahin 2003). The growth rate in trade between India and China signify that India and China are more interested in development of trade than resolving the controversial issue.

New dimensions were searched to increase trade between India and China. In Shanghai addressing the biggest IT event ever held, Vajpayee proposed to build an “effective alliance between the two countries in the information-technology (IT) sector by channeling their “potent force” to bridge the digital divide that is stifling economic and social development in both the nations” (Shahin 2003). He further said that “while India excelled in the area of computer software, China has emerged as a major power in the computer hardware sector” (Shaheen 2003). The India-China relations have moved towards social and economic development of both the countries. Both India and China are fighting poverty. So upliftment of the people is there priorities. But given the defence expenditure in there annual budget it seems that economic development is one of the criteria of there national policy. So if India and China are not solving the “core issues” then it indicates about the new trend in diplomacy. Increased economic activities suggest that India wants deeper economic relations with China. For this it can put the issues of dispute in the backburner.

With the end of the cold war and the decline of Pakistan as a strategically significant country in war against USSR in Afghanistan, the “relative secure environment has provided India room to reshape its foreign policy around economic considerations, namely, to enhance the country’s access to foreign investments, high technology, and global markets” (Anderson 2001: 768). “There has been a new emphasis on gaining membership in such regional economic groupings as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum; moreover, India, along with South Africa, took a leading role in setting up the Indian Ocean Rim Association to foster trade among littoral states” (Anderson 2001: 768). To foster strong economic ties with other countries has become a general trend of the Indian diplomacy.

As earlier indicated that the world economy is integrating, the trade between India and China has also grown in the recent decade. Globalization has helped each other to discover themselves as trading partners. Many Indian businessmen are going to China and making investments in automobile sector, computer hardware and garment manufacturing. Similarly more Chinese companies are coming to India. India’s grey market is often flooded by the cheap Chinese goods which satisfy the consumerable appetite of the Indian masses who do not want to dole out more money. Sometimes it seems that “Made in China” is more popular in India than “made in India”.

Even during the height of post Pokhran- II animosity the trade between India and China did not suffer. The trade continued despite chill in diplomacy. The trade relationship between India and China is also encouraged by the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks where the India and China have ganged up with Brazil and South Africa in demanding deep cuts of farm subsidy to farmers in the developed countries, restriction on import of farm products and rise in ceiling on industrial goods.

But the larger question is about the nuclear issues. Pokhran- II has not only raised the stature of India in the world but has also empowered it. India now possesses several nuclear warheads<sup>10</sup> and is perfecting its delivery mechanism. Recently on 12th April, 2007, India tested nuclear capable Agni-III missile which has the ability to hit targets 3000 kms away. Few days before the Agni- III tests, Pakistan test fired Haft 2 Abdali a short-range ballistic missile capable of carrying “all types” of warheads on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2007 (Subramanian 2007: 16, “Pakistan test-fires short-range missiles”). But, China has always remained ahead of India or Pakistan. Demonstrating its technological superiority on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2007, China successfully hit an obsolete weather satellite Feng Yun IC more than 800 kms above the earth with a ballistic missile fired from the ground.

Whether this is a technological race or an arms race between India- Pakistan and India- China, is difficult to be determined. But it will be naïve to think that India is not noticing the technological advancement of its neighbouring China. Capability of destroying satellites severely threatens the Indian space programme and hence threatens India’s security. The satellites are used to produce valuable ground images; it also helps in navigation, interception, missile guidance and communication. To counter China’s threats to satellites, India is ill equipped at the moment. India is not known to develop any anti satellite programme at the moment. But India has on several occasions called for ban on weaponisation of outer space. This takes India back to the days of NPT and CTBT when India refused to sign these treaties while calling for elimination of nuclear weapons and ban on nuclear tests. The world did not listen to India and this time too India’s demand would be ignored until India acquires the capability to destroy satellites in space.

But India is continuously looking for deterrence. Defence Minister A. K. Antony while replying to a question on Agni- III said that the India’s missile tests were meant only to create “enough deterrence” and India is not aimed against any

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<sup>10</sup> Officially the number of nuclear warheads are not declared, but it is estimated that India possesses about 60 nuclear warheads.



country (Special Correspondent 2007: 10, “Missile tests only to create enough deterrence: Antony”). Surely these are the polite ways used in diplomacy to express nation’s enhancement in military capability. Defensive realist like Kenneth Waltz would like us believe that countries enhance their military capabilities in search of defence against the powerful adversary. But China is not powerful enough to defeat India militarily. So why does India and China are enhancing their capabilities. Offensive realist can provide some answer. According to John Mearsheimer

“the overriding goal of each state is to maximize its share of world power, which means gaining power at the expense of other states. But great powers do not merely strive to be the strongest of all the great powers, although that is a welcome outcome. Their ultimate aim is to be the hegemon- that is, the only great power in the system” (Mearsheimer 2001: 2).

Both India and China wants to dominate the South Asia region. If not the world hegemon, they definitely want to become a regional hegemon. This genesis can be tracked back to 1962 war when China wanted to settle the boundary problem through force. Again in 1969 China went to war on boundary issue with the Soviet Union (Russia). India on the other hand fought wars with Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and 1999. In 1971 war, India was able to divide Pakistan by creating Bangladesh in the east. China has intervened in Indo-China region and is giving tactical support to North Korea. India has intervened in Sri Lanka and in Maldives. Both the countries are vying for greater role in the South East Asia region. India finds its acceptance in the South East Asia region as a counter balancer of China and as a guarantor of sea lanes in the Malacca straits (Singh 2007: 34).

But the present structure of the world does not permit either India or China to become a hegemon. The United States which has been left as a sole super power of the world after the disintegration of USSR in 1991 has not allowed any country to challenge its hegemony. The United States had always tried to preserve its position in the world by making alliances to counter its rival countries. Since 1969 the US befriended China to counter the growing power of Soviet Russia. After the disintegration of Soviet Union, the United States has largely remained unchallenged

until the reemergence of China as a powerful country in the 1990's. The great leap made by China in the areas of economy, science and technology, military equipments, computer technology and human resource management has threatened United States' status as a superpower in the world. To contain the growing influence of China in the world, the US has started to forge a cooperative partnership with India. This is the reason that the US has made civil nuclear deal with India and further negotiations are still going on.

## **DESIRE OF HEGEMONY**

Nitin Gokhale, a senior editor in the NDTV says that

*“It's no secret that Beijing did not deign to look at India as a competitor for Asian hegemony till half a decade ago but of late China has been forced to sit up and take notice of India's drive for great-power status through diplomatic initiatives and a military buildup” (Gokhale 2007).*

China's views on India have changed since India conducted five nuclear tests on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, May, 1998 (Pokhran-II). Despite the world wide condemnation of Pokhran-II, India did not suffer much hardship by economic sanctions and ostracism. India played its diplomatic card properly and befriended United States by its soft diplomacy and presenting itself as a competitor of China. India's role fitted the designs of United States. India is neither as powerful as China nor is it so weak that it can not stand to China's power. The strategy of United States is not to openly confront China but bleed China by buck passing. India properly fits to this strategy. Given the tumultuous relationship between India and China, both will like to dominate other and in due course the beneficiary country would be the United States.

But India and China are not naïve enough to fall into the designs of the United States. Both the countries carry a legacy of friendly relationship since centuries which has seen strong diplomatic cooperation. Post 1962 chill in diplomatic ties cannot demean the historical ties. The chill in diplomatic relations can widely be

attributed to the weak power status of India. So after Pokhran-II the relationship between India and China improved dramatically.

India knew that it cannot match the military capability of China in case of any eventuality. So it found no reason to further antagonize China after the bad blood generated between India and China by the leak of Prime Minister Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton to the New York Times. Moreover diplomacy is not to antagonize a nation by confronting it openly or frightening a nation by making alliances. Diplomacy stands for the maximization of national interest and minimization of loss.

The NDA government did the same. Despite the provocative reaction of China by condemning the Pokhran- II and canceling the Joint Working Group meeting on border issue in 1998, India cautiously allayed Chinese fear that it considers China as its enemy. India never did anything to stop or reduce trade between India and China post Pokhran-II. So the soft diplomacy went on despite low in diplomatic activity between India and China.

The trade relationship brought more profits to India and China than ignoring it. The visits by top political leadership of India and China to each others country resulted into cooperative partnership. The JWG meetings on border restarted, China recognized Sikkim as a part of India while India recognized China's claim on Tibet, Nathu La pass was decided to be reopened, trade increased while joint ventures in business were launched, cooperation in science and technology increased, cultural exchanges increased and most importantly joint naval exercises between Indian and Chinese navy started.

In 2003 the signing of "Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation Between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China" by Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Chinese Prime Minister Wen

Jiabao set the foundation for strategic and cooperative relationship between India and China. This culminated into reality when Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao agreed to establish “strategic and cooperative partnership” during the four day visit of Wen Jiabao to India in April 2005.

The maturity in relationship between India and China took place only after Pokhran-II, which increased India’s military power and status in the global order. China realized the importance of cooperation with India and India did not let go the opportunity to build a strategic and cooperative partnership with China. Pokhran- II had a positive impact in the relationship between India and China. It brought both the countries into negotiating table which resulted into the generation of trust between both the countries.

India is a energy deficit country. It needs oil, nuclear fuel and hydro energy for its rapid development. It also needs fertilizers for agriculture. For this India has to conduct business with other countries. The scarcity of resources compels India to trade with other countries.

So the relation between India and China is growing faster on the economic front. The trend of increase cooperation in trade will last until India does not transform its economic gains to military capabilities, threatening China. Realism postulates that relative gains inhibit cooperation. So, until India or China face great security threat, strategic and cooperative partnership will continue.

## **CHAPTER 5.**

### **CONCLUSION**

*“China is our greatest neighbour, and it has been the constant endeavour of my Government to do everything in our power to cement this relationship”*

*-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh*

*(The Hindu, 08<sup>th</sup> June, 2007)*

At the sidelines of G8 (Group of Eight, developed countries) summit at Heiligendamm, Germany, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met the Chinese President Hu Jintao on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2007. Both the leaders expressed satisfaction over the developments made in China-India relations since they last met in November, 2005. During the meeting Hu praised Dr. Singh for his vision, insight and positive attitude that had contributed to a better understanding between the two nations and in response Dr. Singh said that “China is our greatest neighbour: Manmohan” (Venugopal 2007: 1).

Definitely, China-India relationship has started to show maturity and so has the Indian diplomacy vis-à-vis China. The maturity in China-India relationship is not the product of mutual willingness to reshape their relationship and increase cooperation so as to forge a strategic and cooperative partnership but it is the product of complex semi-unipolar international system dominated by the United States as also result of innovations in Indian diplomacy post 1998. India’s position in the international system is determined by its ability to forge friendly relationship with the powerful nations after conducting five nuclear tests in May 1998 (Pokhran-II). The power achieved by the Pokhran-II, helped India reshape its relationship with the major countries of the world including China.

While the rest of the world was not united in imposing common sanctions against India, the Indian leadership got an opportunity to reshape its diplomacy and tailor-

make its post 1998 engagement with each of these major power. India saw that Russia and France were opposed to impose heavy sanctions against India and had more tolerant attitude towards India. Countries like Russia, France and Germany vie for a mutipolar world. So to minimize the US influence they never allowed US to impose heavier sanctions. But China which supported multipolarity, wanted tougher sanctions against India.

This indicated the complex relationship between India and China. While China wanted to break the US dominance, it did not want its dominance in the South Asia and Asia Pacific to be challenged. So it wanted to punish India for Pokhran-II with harsher sanction. But this gave an opportunity to India to employ its diplomatic tactics and lessen the impact of economic sanctions and international ostracism. Pokhran-II was unique in sense that it attracted the attention of the world and India became the focus of world debate and politics. When Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in response to India's nuclear tests, the entire South Asia region became a hot topic and a focal point for world politics.

Due to the Pokhran-II India strengthened its credentials as a powerful country and a counterweight of China, with which India has a long history of boundary problem. The United States sees India as rival of China, capable to contain Chinese influence in the South Asia and Asia Pacific region in general. Countries like Russia and France see India as a regional power which could help in establishing a multipolar world. China sees India as a threat to its regional dominance while Pakistan considered India as a permanent threat.

The new situation which emerged as a result of Pokhran-II gave considerable twists in the course of Indian diplomacy. Post cold war, India did not get much international attention, as a result of which it continued to face nuclear apartheid and economic sluggishness. The world pressurized India to sign NPT and CTBT despite India citing nuclear discrimination and security threat as reasons for its refusal to sign those treaties. The relationship with developed countries did improve

marginally, when India adopted the policy of liberalization. But Pokhran-II changed India's relationship with other countries as if forever.

As the US saw India as a counterweight to China it did not press hard with its sanctions and it could not muster a unanimous world view. "And since the sanctions could not change the nuclear policy of India and Pakistan and reduced American influence on them, the Clinton administration had to back down" (Chou 2003: 42). On 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1998 the US Congress passed the Brownback Amendment that relaxed sanctions on India as well as Pakistan (Chou 2003:42). The US was more concerned about its influence on India. It wanted to influence India's diplomacy so as to use it against the China's reemergence which is considered as a potential future threat to the United States.

The several round of talks between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott also helped to pacify US anger on Pokhran-II. This started a new era of Friendship between India and The US. The new bonhomie generated between India and the US circumscribed the Chinese responses to India's diplomatic initiatives for cooperation. China had played an important role in bringing UNSC resolution of 1998 which condemned India for the nuclear tests. But the more than low reactions of the world community against India made China to rethink its policy towards India. Fearing greater US influence in the South Asia region China decided to improve its relationship with India. India too reciprocated in a similar fashion and decided to improve its relationship with China.

For India it was difficult yet a win-win situation. It improved its relationship with the US and at the same time began a new chapter of strategic and cooperative partnership with China. While India was able to play China card to the US, it was also able to arouse Chinese fear of US dominance in South Asia. This helped India to improve its relationship both with the US and China.

The NDA government which was considered a novice in international politics proved its worth by easing out the international tension generated by Pokhran-II. Its diplomatic maneuvers were largely shaped by Brajesh Mishra and Jaswant Singh. For Brajesh Mishra a famous story goes that when he was Indian charge d'affaires in China in 1970, Mao smiled at him. It all happened that "as Mao passed by the diplomats waiting for him in audience at Tiananmen Square, Mao is supposed to have stopped in front of India's man, smiled, and asked: "What's happening? India and China should have better relations." He then walked on" (Malhotra 1998). So when Brajesh Mishra who was considered close to Prime Minister Vajpayee, was made Principal Secretary in March 1998 by the NDA government, it was highly speculated that India will focus on China.

India blamed China for the Pokhran-II (Vajpayee's letter to president Clinton) and started to play the "China Card". India tried to make the world believe that it faces great security threat from nuclear China, which is also helping Pakistan to build its nuclear reactors. India was well aware that though "China threat" could antagonize the Chinese and sour the India-China diplomatic relations; nonetheless it could win US support which is crucial in the semi-unipolar world.

The NDA government well understood that after the disintegration of Soviet Union, it was only China, which could pose challenge to the US primacy in the world. US has also been cautious about the reemergence of China as a great power. India considered beneficial to align with the US than to antagonize both US and China at the same time. It was a well calculated move by the Indian's to play the China card which reminds of the cold war era when the cooperation between the US and China was largely based on the Soviet Union threat. Writing on the cooperation between the US and China during cold war period, Robert S. Ross says that "the most important factor affecting the cost to the United States and China of reduced cooperation, and thus their respective negotiation positions, was their relative security situation vis-à-vis the Soviet threat (Ross 1995: 4). More the threat



perception from the Soviet Union, greater was the cooperation between the US and China.

The Indian diplomacy tried hard to project India as a counterbalance of China's rising power. The impact of India's diplomatic maneuvers became evident when US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Jaswant Singh conducted chain of meetings resulting into softening of US stand on the Pokhran-II. China felt threatened with the increasing cooperation between India and the US. It perceived the US-India cooperation as the US design to encircle China. This security threat made China to soften its stand on the Pokhran-II. Nayar and Paul (2003) say that

“the anger and the chill in relation as a result of India's nuclear tests lasted the longest with China among the major powers. The process of normalization nonetheless began two months after the tests, when it was apparent that the US was already engaged with India in a serious dialogue” (Nayar and Paul 2003: 237).

China showed its inclination to normalize its strained relationship with India. This was a diplomatic victory for India for India could have friendly relations with the US and at the same time India could also have friendly relationship with China.

Being a neighbour it was necessary for India to forge a strategic and cooperative partnership. This could bring peace and stability to the South Asia region. India and China could also gain by increase in trade and cooperation in multilateral forums like the WTO where hectic parley is necessary to safeguard the interests of the developing nations. Also the dominance of the US could become counterproductive to the national interests of both India and China. The US has already made its intention clear to control the Strait of Malacca which is an important trade route for both India and China.

Therefore both India and China decided to increase cooperation in the bilateral issues. The land mark visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to China in 2003 further strengthened the ties between India and China. Special Representatives were appointed to find ways to solve the border issue which could be mutually accepted by both the countries. India recognized Tibet as part of China while China

reciprocated by recognizing Sikkim as part of India. India and China also decided to open the Nathu La pass in Sikkim for trade.

Now in 2007 India and China have made considerable progress in bilateral relationship. The trade between India and China has crossed \$11.4 billion in the first quarter of 2007. President Hu Jintao of China has extended invitation to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to visit China. Both India and China are vying for multipolarity in the world.

However it was a diplomatic triumph for India which could coerce China to improve its relationship with India. Because China and India had shared a relationship of suspicion and consider each other as a competitor, the improvement in relationship between China and India has brought peace and greater stability in the South Asia region. With India getting observer status in SCO and China getting observer status in SAARC, confidence in China-India relationship has catapulted their diplomacy from bilateral to regional and global issues and initiatives.

But improvement in relationship between India and China could not be achieved, had India not conducted nuclear tests in May 1998 as also had it not followed these tests by concrete diplomatic engagement with all major powers. The Pokhran-II therefore marks a greater shift in India's diplomacy by making India a fulcrum of regional politics, which India has used it as a means to forward its national interests. It has improved its trade relationship with the US, the European Union (EU), China, Latin American countries and the ASEAN nations. India has also improved its trade relations with its neighbouring countries like Pakistan. Apart from trade India has conducted military exercises with the US, China and other countries.

All this indicate that the Pokhran-II had considerably impacted India's diplomacy and created new opportunities for innovation which put together have raised India's position in the world hierarchy and has resulted into forging of strategic and

cooperative partnership with rising China which make China-India ties a subject of debate and interest worldwide.

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