

INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

*Thesis submitted to
the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

by

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the thesis entitled 'INDO – US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY' submitted by SAITHALAVI K. P., is the result of an authentic work carried out under my guidance. I also certify that neither a part of the work nor the whole of it has been submitted for a degree here or elsewhere. The thesis is hereby submitted to the University of Calicut for examination for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in POLITICAL SCIENCE in the FACULTY OF HUMANITIES.

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DECLARATION

I, Saithalavi K. P., do hereby declare that this Ph.D. thesis entitled 'INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY' is the summary of the research work carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. (Dr.) Zacaria.T.V, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science. I also declare that neither a part of the work nor the whole of it has been published anywhere except quotations and references which have been duly acknowledged at appropriate places. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI generated content.

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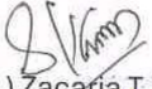
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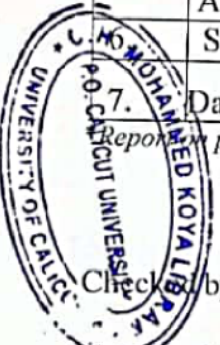

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ABSTRACT

The research titled "Indo-US Strategic Partnership in the 21st Century" provides an in-depth analysis of the Indo-US strategic partnership as it has evolved in the post-Cold War period. It primarily examines the context in which this partnership developed, the major areas of cooperation, its role in India's efforts to balance China, and the significant challenges it currently faces. Through this analysis, the study offers a nuanced understanding of how this partnership has shaped the geopolitical landscape and continues to influence global security dynamics.

The India-US strategic partnership has evolved in response to the shifting global and domestic priorities of both nations. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, India pivoted from strict non-alignment to pro-Western policies, seeking resources for economic and military growth. Meanwhile, the United States, confronted with non-traditional security threats such as terrorism and climate change, recognized India as a vital partner in addressing these challenges. Shared concerns over China's rise, the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, India's economic liberalization, and a post-Cold War recalibration of US foreign policy have been key factors in fostering this partnership. This mutual collaboration aims to address both regional and global security challenges while also enhancing economic and strategic ties.

One of the key areas of growth within the India-US strategic partnership is defence and military cooperation, which has strengthened considerably since the post-Cold War era. This expanding collaboration, particularly under the NDA government, encompasses increased defence trade, joint military exercises, and the signing of foundational defence agreements. Notable advancements in defence trade include India's purchase of advanced US military equipment, such as the P-8I aircraft and C-17 Globemaster, while joint military exercises like Malabar, Yudh Abhyas, and Cope India have improved interoperability between their armed forces. The signing of foundational agreements has further elevated the partnership, enhancing strategic cooperation and operational compatibility between their military forces. These developments underscore the deepening strategic ties between India and the US, particularly as the global security environment continues to evolve.

In addition to defence cooperation, Indo-US counter-terrorism collaboration has also evolved significantly since the 9/11 attacks. India's military support in Afghanistan bolstered US confidence in its partnership with India, and this cooperation grew stronger after the Mumbai attacks. This led to enhanced intelligence sharing, joint training, and law enforcement collaboration. Key mechanisms like the Joint Counter Terrorism Working Group, established in 2000, have enabled consistent dialogue and information exchange. Moreover, the

cooperation expanded into cybersecurity, with both countries forming the Cyber Security Forum in 2001, signing the 2011 Cyber Security Agreement, and creating the 2016 Framework for Cyber Space Cooperation. These efforts have strengthened both nations' capacities to protect critical infrastructure and combat terrorism.

The strategic partnership has also contributed significantly to India's ability to counter China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean and along its border. Through this partnership, India has enhanced its naval capabilities, with joint exercises like Malabar and advanced equipment like the P8I Poseidon aircraft. Diplomatic support has been another key aspect, particularly in recognizing and addressing the challenges posed by China. Foundational agreements such as CISMOA, BECA, and LEMOA have facilitated military cooperation, allowing India to access US military bases, advanced weaponry, and critical geospatial data. Additionally, defense acquisitions like the M777 howitzers, C130J aircraft, and Apache helicopters have modernized India's military, further strengthening its strategic position in the Indo-Pacific and improving its ability to respond to Chinese actions.

However, despite these advancements, India and the US face several challenges that strain their strategic partnership, which must be addressed for the partnership to thrive in the evolving Asia-Pacific order. First, India's underperformance in defence, primarily due to a lack of political will for reform, has hindered its ability to meet the expectations of the US. Second, insufficient interoperability between their armed forces, caused by low-frequency joint exercises, complicates cooperation. Third, India's pursuit of strategic autonomy stands in conflict with US expectations, as India resists becoming a subordinate ally. Additionally, India's longstanding defence ties with Russia, particularly its reliance on Russian weapons, poses challenges in terms of compatibility and security concerns for the US. Lastly, the Pakistan factor continues to strain the partnership, with the US needing to maintain ties with Pakistan, which conflicts with India's interests, particularly in defence and counter-terrorism cooperation. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure the continued success of the partnership.

Keywords: Maritime Security, Free and Open Indo-Pacific, Rise of China, Counter Terrorism, Strategic Autonomy, US-China Competition, Joint Military Exercises

സംഗ്രഹം

"21-ാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ ഇന്തോ-യുഎസ് തന്ത്രപരമായ പങ്കാളിത്തം" എന്ന തലക്കെട്ടിലുള്ള ഗവേഷണം ശീതയുദ്ധാനന്തര കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ വികസിച്ച ഇന്തോ-യുഎസ് തന്ത്രപരമായ പങ്കാളിത്തത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ആഴത്തിലുള്ള വിശകലനം നൽകുന്നു. ഈ പങ്കാളിത്തം വികസിച്ച സന്ദർഭം, സഹകരണത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാന മേഖലകൾ, ചൈനയുടെ വളർച്ചയെ നേരിടാനുള്ള ഇന്ത്യയുടെ ശ്രമങ്ങളിൽ അതിന്റെ പങ്ക്, നിലവിൽ അത് അഭിമുഖീകരിക്കുന്ന സുപ്രധാന വെല്ലുവിളികൾ എന്നിവ ഇത് പ്രാഥമികമായി പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. ഈ വിശകലനത്തിലൂടെ, ഈ പങ്കാളിത്തം ഭൗമരാഷ്ട്രീയ ഭൂപ്രകൃതിയെ എങ്ങനെ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ആഗോള സുരക്ഷാ ചലനാത്മകതയെ എങ്ങനെ സ്വാധീനിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു എന്നതിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സൂക്ഷ്മമായ ധാരണ പഠനം നൽകുന്നു.

ഈ രാജ്യങ്ങളുടെയും മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ആഗോള, ആഭ്യന്തര മുൻഗണനകൾക്കുള്ള പ്രതികരണമായാണ് ഇന്ത്യ-യുഎസ് തന്ത്രപരമായ പങ്കാളിത്തം വികസിച്ചത്. സോവിയറ്റ് യൂണിയന്റെ വിഘടനത്തെത്തുടർന്ന്, സാമ്പത്തികവും സൈനികവുമായ വളർച്ചയ്ക്ക് വിഭവങ്ങൾ തേടി ഇന്ത്യ കർശനമായ ചേരിചേരാത്തതിൽ നിന്ന് പാശ്ചാത്യ അനുകൂല നയങ്ങളിലേക്ക് തിരിഞ്ഞു. അതേസമയം, ഭീകരവാദം, കാലാവസ്ഥാ വ്യതിയാനം തുടങ്ങിയ പാരമ്പര്യേതര സുരക്ഷാ ഭീഷണികളെ നേരിട്ട അമേരിക്ക, ഈ വെല്ലുവിളികളെ നേരിടുന്നതിൽ ഇന്ത്യയെ ഒരു പ്രധാന പങ്കാളിയായി അംഗീകരിച്ചു. ചൈനയുടെ ഉയർച്ച, ഇന്തോ-യുഎസ് സിവിൽ ആണവ കരാർ, ഇന്ത്യയുടെ സാമ്പത്തിക ഉദാരവൽക്കരണം, ശീതയുദ്ധാനന്തര യുഎസ് വിദേശനയത്തിന്റെ പുനർക്രമീകരണം എന്നിവ ഈ പങ്കാളിത്തം വളർത്തുന്നതിൽ പ്രധാന ഘടകങ്ങളാണ്. സാമ്പത്തികവും തന്ത്രപരവുമായ ബന്ധങ്ങൾ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനൊപ്പം പ്രാദേശികവും ആഗോളവുമായ സുരക്ഷാ വെല്ലുവിളികളെ നേരിടാനും ഈ പരസ്പര സഹകരണം ലക്ഷ്യമിടുന്നു.

ശീതയുദ്ധാനന്തര കാലം മുതൽ ഗണ്യമായി ശക്തിപ്പെട്ട പ്രതിരോധ, സൈനിക സഹകരണമാണ് ഇന്ത്യ-യുഎസ് തന്ത്രപരമായ പങ്കാളിത്തത്തിലെ വളർച്ചയുടെ പ്രധാന മേഖലകളിലൊന്ന്. ഈ വിപുലീകരിക്കുന്ന സഹകരണം, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് എൻ. ഡി. എ ഗവൺമെന്റിന്റെ കീഴിൽ, വർദ്ധിച്ച പ്രതിരോധ വ്യാപാരം, സംയുക്ത സൈനിക അഭ്യാസങ്ങൾ, അടിസ്ഥാന പ്രതിരോധ കരാറുകളിൽ ഒപ്പുവെക്കൽ എന്നിവ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്നു. പ്രതിരോധ വ്യാപാരത്തിലെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ മുന്നേറ്റങ്ങളിൽ പി-8 ഐ വിമാനം, സി-17 ഗ്ലോബാസ്റ്റർ തുടങ്ങിയ നൂതന യുഎസ് സൈനിക ഉപകരണങ്ങൾ ഇന്ത്യ വാങ്ങുന്നത് ഉൾപ്പെടുന്നു. അതേസമയം മലബാർ, യുദ്ധ അഭ്യാസം, കോപ് ഇന്ത്യ തുടങ്ങിയ സംയുക്ത സൈനിക അഭ്യാസങ്ങൾ അവരുടെ സായുധ സേനകൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള പരസ്പര പ്രവർത്തനക്ഷമത മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തി. അടിസ്ഥാന കരാറുകൾ ഒപ്പിട്ടത് പങ്കാളിത്തത്തെ കൂടുതൽ ഉയർത്തുകയും അവരുടെ സൈനിക സേനകൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള തന്ത്രപരമായ സഹകരണവും പ്രവർത്തനപരമായ അനുയോജ്യതയും വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഈ സംഭവവികാസങ്ങൾ ഇന്ത്യയും യുഎസും തമ്മിലുള്ള ആഴത്തിലുള്ള തന്ത്രപരമായ ബന്ധത്തെ അടിവരയിടുന്നു. പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് ആഗോള സുരക്ഷാ അന്തരീക്ഷം വികസിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ.

പ്രതിരോധ സഹകരണത്തിന് പുറമെ, 9/11 ആക്രമണത്തിന് ശേഷം ഇന്ത്യ-യുഎസ് തീവ്രവാദ വിരുദ്ധ സഹകരണവും ഗണ്യമായി വികസിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. അഫ്ഗാനിസ്ഥാനിലെ ഇന്ത്യയുടെ സൈനിക പിന്തുണ ഇന്ത്യയുമായുള്ള പങ്കാളിത്തത്തിൽ യുഎസിന്റെ ആത്മവിശ്വാസം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയും മുംബൈ ആക്രമണത്തിന് ശേഷം ഈ സഹകരണം കൂടുതൽ ശക്തിപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഇത് ഇന്റലിജൻസ് പങ്കിടൽ, സംയുക്ത പരിശീലനം, നിയമ നിർവ്വഹണ സഹകരണം എന്നിവ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് കാരണമായി. 2000ൽ സ്ഥാപിതമായ ജോയിന്റ് കൗണ്ടർ ടെററിസം വർക്കിംഗ് ഗ്രൂപ്പ് പോലുള്ള പ്രധാന സംവിധാനങ്ങൾ സ്ഥിരമായ സംഭാഷണവും വിവര കൈമാറ്റവും സാധ്യമാക്കി. കൂടാതെ, ഈ രാജ്യങ്ങളും 2001 ൽ സൈബർ സെക്യൂരിറ്റി ഫോറം രൂപീകരിക്കുകയും 2011 ലെ സൈബർ സെക്യൂരിറ്റി കരാർ ഒപ്പിടുകയും 2016 ലെ സൈബർ സ്പേസ് സഹകരണത്തിനുള്ള ചട്ടക്കൂട് സൃഷ്ടിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തതോടെ സഹകരണം സൈബർ സുരക്ഷയിലേക്ക് വ്യാപിച്ചു. നിർണായകമായ അടിസ്ഥാന സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനും ഭീകരതയെ നേരിടുന്നതിനുമുള്ള ഈ രാജ്യങ്ങളുടെയും കഴിവുകൾ ഈ ശ്രമങ്ങൾ ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തി.

ഇന്ത്യൻ മഹാസമുദ്രത്തിലും അതിർത്തിയിലും ചൈനയുടെ വർദ്ധിച്ചുവരുന്ന സ്വാധീനത്തെ പ്രതിരോധിക്കാനുള്ള ഇന്ത്യയുടെ കഴിവിനും തന്ത്രപരമായ പങ്കാളിത്തം ഗണ്യമായ സംഭാവന നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഈ പങ്കാളിത്തത്തിലൂടെ, മലബാർ പോലുള്ള സംയുക്ത അഭയാസങ്ങളിലൂടെയും പിഷ്ചെ പോസിഡോൺ വിമാനം പോലുള്ള നൂതന ഉപകരണങ്ങളിലൂടെയും ഇന്ത്യ നാവിക ശേഷി വർദ്ധിപ്പിച്ചു. ചൈന ഉയർത്തുന്ന വെല്ലുവിളികളെ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്നതിലും അഭിസംബോധന ചെയ്യുന്നതിലും നയതന്ത്ര പിന്തുണ മറ്റൊരു പ്രധാന വശമാണ്. സിഐഎസ്എംഒഎ, ബിഇസിഎ, എൽഎംഒഎ തുടങ്ങിയ അടിസ്ഥാന കരാറുകൾ സൈനിക സഹകരണം സുഗമമാക്കുകയും യുഎസ് സൈനിക താവളങ്ങൾ, നൂതന ആയുധങ്ങൾ, നിർണായക ജിയോസ്പേഷ്യൽ ഡാറ്റ എന്നിവ ഉപയോഗിക്കാൻ ഇന്ത്യയെ അനുവദിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. കൂടാതെ, എം777 ഹോവിറ്റ്സറുകൾ, സി130ജെ വിമാനങ്ങൾ, അപ്പാച്ചെ ഹെലികോപ്റ്ററുകൾ തുടങ്ങിയ പ്രതിരോധ ഏറ്റെടുക്കലുകൾ ഇന്ത്യയുടെ സൈന്യത്തെ നവീകരിച്ചു. ഇന്തോ-പസഫിക്സിൽ അതിന്റെ തന്ത്രപരമായ സ്ഥാനം കൂടുതൽ ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചൈനീസ് പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളോട് പ്രതികരിക്കാനുള്ള കഴിവ് മെച്ചപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്തു.

എന്നിരുന്നാലും, ഈ പുരോഗതികൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നിട്ടും, ഇന്ത്യയും യുഎസും അവരുടെ തന്ത്രപരമായ പങ്കാളിത്തത്തെ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടിക്കുന്ന നിരവധി വെല്ലുവിളികൾ നേരിടുന്നു. ഇത് വികസിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഏഷ്യ-പസഫിക് ക്രമത്തിൽ പങ്കാളിത്തം അഭിവൃദ്ധി പ്രാപിക്കുന്നതിന് അഭിസംബോധന ചെയ്യണം. ഒന്നാമതായി, പ്രതിരോധ മേഖലയിൽ ഇന്ത്യയുടെ മോശം പ്രകടനം, പ്രധാനമായും പരിഷ്കരണത്തിനുള്ള രാഷ്ട്രീയ ഇച്ഛാശക്തിയുടെ അഭാവം, യുഎസിന്റെ പ്രതീക്ഷകൾ നിറവേറ്റാനുള്ള ഇന്ത്യയുടെ കഴിവിനെ തടസ്സപ്പെടുത്തി. രണ്ടാമതായി, കുറഞ്ഞ ആവൃത്തിയിലുള്ള സംയുക്ത അഭയാസങ്ങൾ മൂലമുണ്ടാകുന്ന അവരുടെ സായുധ സേനകൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള അപര്യാപ്തമായ പരസ്പര പ്രവർത്തനം സഹകരണത്തെ സങ്കീർണ്ണമാക്കുന്നു. മൂന്നാമതായി, ഇന്ത്യയുടെ തന്ത്രപരമായ സ്വതന്ത്രതപംത്തിനായുള്ള പരിശ്രമം യുഎസ് പ്രതീക്ഷകൾക്ക് വിരുദ്ധമാണ്, കാരണം ഇന്ത്യ ഒരു കീഴ്പ്പെടുന്ന സഖ്യകക്ഷിയാകുന്നതിനെ എതിർക്കുക. കൂടാതെ, റഷ്യയുമായുള്ള ഇന്ത്യയുടെ ദീർഘകാല പ്രതിരോധ ബന്ധം, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് റഷ്യൻ ആയുധങ്ങളെ ആശ്രയിക്കുന്നത്, അനുയോജ്യതയുടെയും സുരക്ഷാ ആശങ്കകളുടെയും കാര്യത്തിൽ യുഎസിന് വെല്ലുവിളികൾ ഉയർത്തുന്നു. അവസാനമായി, ഇന്ത്യയുടെ താൽപ്പര്യങ്ങൾക്ക്, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് പ്രതിരോധത്തിലും ഭീകരവാദത്തിനെതിരായ സഹകരണത്തിലും പാക്കിസ്ഥാനുമായി യുഎസ് ബന്ധം വെല്ലുവിളി ഉയർത്തുന്നു. ഈ വെല്ലുവിളികളെ നേരിടുന്നത് പങ്കാളിത്തത്തിന്റെ തുടർച്ചയായ വിജയം ഉറപ്പാക്കുന്നതിന് നിർണായകമാണ്.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALF	:	Animal Liberation Front
AMDR	:	Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations
ATAP	:	Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program
AWACS	:	Airborne Early Warning and Control System
BECA	:	Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement
CCI	:	Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative
CENTO	:	Central Treaty Organization
CERT	:	Computer Emergency Response Team
CISMOA	:	Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement
CTBT	:	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTCI	:	Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative
DRDO	:	Defence Research and Development Organization
DTTI	:	Defence Trade and Technology Initiative
ELF	:	Earth Liberation Front
EU	:	European Union
FDI	:	Foreign Direct Investment
FMCT	:	Fissile Material Control Treaty
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
IAEA	:	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAR	:	Indian Council of Agricultural Research
ISRO	:	Indian Space Research Organization
LCA	:	Light Combat Aircraft
LEMOA	:	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement

MMRCA	:	Medium Multirole Medium Combat Aircraft
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	:	Non-Aligned Movement
NDA	:	National Democratic Alliance
NDAA	:	National Defence Authorisation Act
NDU	:	National Defence University
NNC	:	Naga National Council
NSG	:	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OTCA	:	Omnibus Trade Competitiveness Act
PL 480	:	Public Law 480
PLA	:	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	:	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	:	People's Liberation Army Navy
RAW	:	Research and Analysis Wing
RIMPAC	:	Rim of the Pacific
SEATO	:	South East Asian Treaty Organization
SFTS	:	Special Forces Training School
SOCOM	:	US Special Operations Command
STI	:	Science and Technology Initiative
TCTI	:	Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative
UAV	:	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UNO	:	United Nations Organization
USA	:	United States of America
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	:	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In international politics, the weaker states usually seek and maintain stronger relations with the major powers as a part of their policy of externally balancing against their adversaries, especially if the adversary is a country with huge military and economic potential. For instance, Pakistan, ever since its independence, has been following this policy as an essential part for obtaining her foreign policy objectives. In fact, Pakistan's strong relations with the USA, during the cold war period, motivated the latter for taking an anti-India stance in the Indo-Pak wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971. However, India, despite the reality of her inability to counter serious challenges to the national security alone, followed a policy of non-alignment. As a result of following this increasingly idealistic foreign policy, the 1962 war with China was a total disaster for India. With no major power to support India in the war, Nehru was forced to seek help from America.

However, the foreign policy of Indira Gandhi took a pragmatic approach by signing a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation with the USSR. This treaty signalled a shift from India's policy of strictly following non-alignment to a realist policy of ensuring, at least, the probability of soviet assistance at the time of armed conflict with India's hostile neighbours.

Hence the primary focus of this study is to understand the importance of security relations with major powers – militarily and economically advanced states – for the purpose of securing the national security objectives of India. For this purpose, a detailed examination of India's security relations with the United States in the 21st century is done.

Both India and the USA politically follow common values: respect for individual freedom, representative democracy, and independence of the Judiciary. However, this was not enough for building strong and efficient relations between

them in the cold war period. Instead of furthering their relations by enhancing cooperation in various socio, economic and scientific spheres, both the countries were divided on various issues. The United States regarded India, because of the adoption of planned economy, support for communist countries and opposition to capitalist oriented development models, as a country with a potential to eventually become a communist country. India, on the other hand, followed a policy of non-alignment and anti-imperialism, which regarded the US as an emerging imperialist country. As a result, the relations got strained on various occasions: India criticized US' Vietnam war, protested against large scale military aid to Pakistan, and quick to recognize the formations of China and Cuba as communist states. India's assertion of independence in 1974, by conducting nuclear weapons, against the total opposition by America also caused serious negative impact on the relationship

However, Indo-US relations in the post-cold war era are different from the past. Several factors including the adoption of liberal economic policies by India, changes in the foreign policy orientations to a pragmatic and development one, made India a suitable partner for the United States. The fact that both India and the USA faces similar challenges to their national security – the rise of China and terrorism – resulted in both countries realizing the need for strengthening cooperation in the economic, political and strategic spheres. The emergence of China from a developing to a great power with the potential to act as an alternative to US' influence in Asia and beyond is a major security concern for the United States. To counter this, America is looking for other Asian powers to balance China. In this context, the US' strategic policy devotes much attention to establishing stronger relations with India as a balancer against China.

In pursuit of this US policy, both the countries have concluded multiple agreements so far, such as the 2015 Defence Framework Agreement and three foundational agreements. The framework agreement was a comprehensive agreement that provided a framework for India – US security relations and laid out the major objectives of the partnership. The foundational agreements formally

enabled the two countries to strengthen their defence cooperation, as they ensure the necessary legal backing to their cooperation. Both India and the US also actively engage in joint military exercises. The defence trade between the two countries also increased substantially in the last decade, especially since the US granted major defence partner designation to India.

In this study, the key argument is that the strategic partnership with the United States, as discussed above, has helped India to significantly counter national security challenges. Most importantly, the defence cooperation with the USA helped India in reducing the strategic gap with China.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the post-Cold War world scenario, the national interests of India and the US converges on variety of issues: balancing China, countering terrorism, and ensuring cyber security. As a result, both the countries took joint efforts to enhance strategic cooperation between them, which has been becoming stronger since the signing of Defence Framework Agreement in 2005. Though got some setbacks during the second term of UPA Govt, NDA Govt under the leadership of Narendra Modi has taken firm steps to restore the strategic partnership with the USA. Through enhanced defence, economic, and multilateral engagement, both countries have solidified their relationship, positioning themselves as key partners in shaping global security and governance.

This study is an effort to present an in-depth analysis of the three major areas of counter terrorism cooperation, military cooperation, and cyber security cooperation in India-US strategic partnership. It then examines the importance of this partnership for India to achieve its national security objectives, especially balancing China. This study also explores the major challenges to this partnership. This objective is achieved by making a detailed analysis of how the five major challenges, including India's defence ties with Russia, India's policy of strategic autonomy, Pakistan factor, gap between India's potential and performance, and

failure to achieve interoperability are preventing the full blossoming of India-US strategic partnership.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the major components and developments in Indo-US strategic partnership
2. To find out and explain the major factors that led to the strengthening of strategic partnership between India and the US
3. To understand the importance attached to India in the post-Cold War strategic policy of the USA
4. To study the importance of strategic partnership with the US for India for attaining the foreign policy and national security objectives of the country
5. To examine the major challenges and limitations of Indo-US strategic partnership

1.4. Hypotheses

1. The context of Indo-US strategic partnership is shaped by the rise of china and the growing menace of terrorism
2. The post-Cold War strategic policy of the USA considers stronger relations with India as inevitable for achieving its foreign policy objectives
3. The strategic partnership with the US is vital for India for attaining its national security objectives
4. India's quest for strategic autonomy, lack of enough economic strength to pursue its strategic ambitions and its defence cooperation with Russia are the major challenges of Indo-US strategic partnership

1.5. Significance of the Study

The India-US strategic partnership is a cornerstone of contemporary geopolitics, with profound implications for regional stability, economic development, and security in the Indo-Pacific. As China's influence grows through

initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its assertive posture in territorial disputes, India and the US have found common ground in counterbalancing its rise. This partnership underscores the shared objective of maintaining a rules-based international order and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region. India's strategic location, vast market, and growing military capabilities make it an indispensable partner for the US in addressing the geopolitical challenges posed by China.

The Indo-Pacific region has emerged as the focal point of the India-US collaboration through defence agreements like the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) and Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) as well as joint military exercises such as the Malabar Exercise, the two nations have significantly enhanced their defence cooperation. These measures are crucial for countering China's assertiveness in the region and ensuring maritime security in one of the world's most strategically vital waterways.

At the same time, challenges persist in fully aligning the strategic priorities of the two nations, as challenges like India's policy of strategic autonomy and its defence relations with Russia repeatedly prevents the full blossoming of the partnership. However, both nations recognize the importance of their partnership in addressing common challenges, including cross-border terrorism, cybersecurity threats, and regional instability fuelled by China and China backed states.

In sum, studying the India-US strategic partnership and the US's role in India's efforts to balance China is critical for understanding the shifting dynamics of power in Asia and beyond. This research sheds light on how strategic partnerships can influence global security, and regional stability in the 21st century, offering valuable insights for policymakers and scholars alike.

1.6. Research Methodology

This thesis, titled as "Indo-US Strategic Partnership in the 21st Century", is a qualitative study. In order to reach conclusions, this study makes use of historical,

analytical and descriptive research methods. This study possesses a qualitative character because it mostly depends on non-numerical data for description and analysis purposes. The major sources of qualitative primary data are: speeches by key political leaders and officials from both India and US, newspaper reports about key developments in Indo-US strategic partnership, joint statements issued from time to time by countries' top leaders, and public documents such as agreements as well as reports. For secondary qualitative data, this study relies on research articles and books written by scholars, opinion articles on newspapers written by experts and websites dedicated for discussing foreign policy and national security related matters.

This study is done under the framework of historical research, as it is solely based on the major developments that happened in Indo-US strategic relations since the end of Cold War. Within the historical method, this study employs both descriptive and analytical research methods. Descriptive research method is used primarily in this study in the form of thoroughly describing the evolution of Indo-US relations and the major components of Indo-US strategic partnership. Each major aspects of the partnership are properly described by covering the entire part of them. In addition to describing, this research draws its major conclusions by properly utilizing the analytical method. Analytical method is used to understand the context in which Indo-US strategic partnership evolved, especially how factors such as the rise of China led to the strengthening of the strategic partnership between India and the US. A proper application of analytical method is also done to explain how the partnership with the US has been helping India to balance China since the end of the Cold War.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study comprises one theory and two major concepts in international relations: theory of balancing and concepts of strategic partnerships as well as national security. Theory of balancing or balance of power theory is one of the most widely discussed theories in international

relations. Ever since the formation of the nation-state system, balancing has been an important aspect of state behaviour in international relations. India's efforts to get strategically closer to the USA can be rightly considered as part of its endeavours to balance against its primary strategic adversary: China, as it will enable India to acquire the most advanced military capabilities from the USA. Hence, the theory of balancing will help to bring more clarity to the arguments in this study. National security is also an important component of the discipline of international relations. It is the primary aim of all the states to secure their national security. In this study, the primary contention is that the strategic partnership with the US has been helping India to effectively counter the challenges posed by the rise of China and terrorism to India's national security. Unlike the theory of balancing and concept of national security, the concept of strategic partnership is new in international relations. States, at the present, instead of forming alliances, prefer to make a strategic partnership with other countries. This concept is an integral part of this study, as this research project is aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the strategic partnership between India and the US.

Although the theory of balancing is a widely debated topic within the discipline of international relations, scholars still differ on the precise meaning of the term. However, they agree that it operates not just in military relations of states, but in the economic and political relations as well. Neo realists, especially scholars like Kenneth Waltz, helped to bring conceptual clarity into the theory of balancing. He argues that "faced with unbalanced power states try to increase their strength or they ally with others to bring the international distribution of power into balance" (Waltz, 1997, p. 915). As explained by the neorealists, balancing can be defined as a state behaviour involving the efforts taken to bolster its military capabilities to prevent other's aggression or to effectively fight back in the event of deterrence failure. Two types of balancing behaviours are prevalent in the international system. One is external balancing and the other is internal balancing. External balancing behaviour of states occurs when one state forms alliances with

another friendly state to collectively defend against a common foe. Internal balancing as a strategy adopted by the major powers involves enhancing their military capabilities by allocating more resources for defence purposes and promoting defence research (Parent & Sebastian, 1997, p. 56).

The balancing behaviour of states in the international system indicates that no state can survive without possessing sufficient power, without which one state cannot act independently or cannot protect its territories from external aggression. Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of balancing behaviour states adopt to secure their national security objectives. These are hard, soft, and asymmetric balancing. Hard balancing is related to the strategies adopted by the states to build their military capabilities, and form alliances and counter alliances to reduce strategic vulnerability vis a vis more powerful state. The theory of balancing propounded by the realists and neorealists primarily deal with this form of balancing. This strategy was the most important component of state behaviour in the past. Since 1816, the states have regularly increased their military capabilities in response to the expanding military capabilities of their opponents. Land powers have promoted the development of land-based military capacity. Sea powers, on the other hand, improved their ability to dominate in the seas (Parent & Sebastian, 1997, p. 85). One can argue that in an anarchical international system where self-help is the norm, states have no other option but to make efforts to enhance their power by upgrading their defence potentials. Soft balancing is a relatively new form of balancing in which states, instead of forming alliances with other states against their opponents, engage in limited security understandings with one another to balance a rising power with the potential to threaten their security. Soft balancing as a strategy involves military exercises, signing of defence agreements, and enhancing cooperation in international and regional institutions. While these two balancing strategies are directed against state actors, asymmetric balancing is a strategy adopted by the states against non-state actors, such as terrorist groups. Since the states cannot effectively counter these threats using conventional

military forces. Asymmetric balancing involves all those efforts, other than using conventional military tactics, taken by the states to wipe out these threats (Paul, 2004, p. 116).

The national security policy of a state contains the policies and actions taken by that state to protect its core values, interests, people, and territory from internal and external threats. There are two major approaches prevalent in the study of national security: traditional and modern. The traditional approach to national security derives its origins from the writings of modernist political thinkers from Thomas Hobbes to Max Weber. To them, the primary function of a nation-state is to protect its territory from external and internal threats – creating and maintaining professional military bureaucracy and capabilities (Fjader, 2014, p. 117). As a result, the state's ability to secure its national security objectives relies largely on the state's military capability as well as its capability to form and maintain an efficient foreign policy capable of countering challenges from other states. The modern approach to national security is more comprehensive than the traditional approach, as the scholars propounding it argue that the state should also take efforts to deal with the challenges threatening its existence and survival. Hence, in the present day, issues such as ethnic conflicts, human security, environmental security, and health security are also discussed and debated within the scope of national security (Jindal, 2002, p. 110).

A reliable national security strategy of a state should be able to address six major questions. First, security for who? To Buzan Barry, addressing this question is as important as creating the necessary conditions for securing the goals of national security. He argues that just identifying the state or the individual is not sufficient, as there are many states and individuals whose security is interdependent (Buzan, 1991, p. 26). Second, security for which values? The values that national security policies aim to protect can be physical safety, economic welfare, autonomy, and territorial integrity. While, traditionally the national security policy of states focused more on securing the values of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and

independence, the modern approach has been evolved to include other values of human security, environmental security, food security, etc. within the purview of national security policy. Third, how much security? This question is answered properly by Wolfers by arguing that a nation can either have or aspire to have security in greater or lesser measures. Fourth, security by what means? It is possible for a nation to employ multiple means to attain its national security goals. It can have a strong military to defend the country's territories and adopt viable national policies to ensure human security. Fifth, security at what cost? David Baldwin argues that costs do matter as an important dimension of national security policy because the pursuit of security involves costs as it results in ignoring other goals that could have been achieved using the resources allocated for security (Baldwin, 1997, p. 16). Finally, security in what time period? To address this question, there are two strategies a state can adopt: either adopt a short-run policy of using military might and coercive diplomacy to achieve its objectives or to adopt a long-term strategy of making friendship with other states (Dahl & Linblom, 1953, p. 526).

Strategic partnerships, compared to the two ideas discussed above, are relatively new phenomenon in international politics. Even full-fledged theories explaining the concept are yet to emerge to enable in-depth analysis and examination of strategic partnerships existing at different levels in the international system. The term "strategic" denotes the special importance of the bilateral relationship as well as the joint efforts taken to secure the sovereignty and security of both nations engaged in the relationship. As a result, the concept of strategic partnership implies a special relationship that concern with matters of higher importance that strengthens a coalition or alliance between the states engaged in it (Michalski & Zongqi, 2017, p. 18). In the changed global scenario, global powers to small states adopt the policy of engaging in strategic partnerships, as it provides a viable option for the states to achieve their national security objectives without losing the freedom to act independently. As a new phenomenon in international

politics, in the 1990s, three important strategic partnerships were forged. The first one, formed in 1992, was between the US and Turkey. In 1993, the US again continued this policy by establishing a strategic partnership with Russia. Two of the small powers at that time, Brazil and China, also followed the path by engaging in a strategic partnership between them. Since then, China has forged around 70 strategic partnerships with major and minor powers and various international organizations. India also started moving in this direction by adding 20 strategic partnerships, including with the USA and EU (Envall & Hall, 2016, p 18).

It can also be argued that strategic partnerships have been created to provide an additional mechanism to the existing multilateral structures to manage international issues and prevent conflicts that arise from various standpoints (Michalski & Zhongqi, 2017, p. 23). As such, the strategic partnerships, in the opinion of Sautnet, must conform to three characteristics: the partners should adhere to a minimum of common benchmarks, the relations between the partners should be based on equality principle and there should also be a dynamic process capable of ensuring a common future (Sautenet, 2007, p. 705). Strategic partnerships are indispensable for strategic interaction in the present century, as they make interactions and engagement between the friendly and enemy states possible. Such partnerships should possess the following principles. First, they must be comprehensive. Second, reciprocity should be the guiding principle of the actions of states engaged in a strategic partnership. Third, both partners should recognize mutual values and objectives and act accordingly. Fourth, a strategic partnership is forged for fulfilling long-term objectives. Finally, the partners should look beyond the bilateral issues to the most serious regional and global issues (Renard, 2013, p. 312).

1.8. Review of Literature

A comprehensive overview of Indo-US strategic partnership, including defence cooperation and counter-terrorism cooperation, is provided by an edited volume edited by Sumit Ganguly, titled US-Indian Strategic Cooperation into the

21st century: More than Words. This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the Indo-US strategic partnership, tracing its origins and charting its development over time. It also assesses the broader geopolitical context, highlighting both the opportunities and the inherent limitations that shape the relationship today. Two factors, according to the authors, are responsible for the emergence of a strategic partnership between India and the US: shared respect for democracy and common concerns regarding the rise of China as a great power in the present century. The major obstacle in the strategic partnership is the US' relations with Pakistan. Another academic effort to provide a detailed overview of India-US strategic relations is made by Shireen M. Mazari, in his article, The Indo-US strategic partnership. In this article, he examines the major developments in India-US strategic relations in the post-Cold War period and analyses the major factors that compelled the US to forge strategic cooperation with India. Besides, Mazari discusses the implications of this partnership for both China and Pakistan and argues that Pakistan tested its first cruise missile, Babur, as a response to missile defence cooperation between India and the US. He concludes this article by critically evaluating the implications of the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement, which, in his opinion, undermines the NPT by contravening the commitment by nuclear-weapon states not to transfer nuclear technology and materials to states not a signatory to NPT. Saroj Bishoyi also provides an overview of the strategic relations between India and the US from 1995 to 2006, in his thesis titled US-India security relations, 1995-2006. In this thesis, he explains the context, components as well as major obstacles of Indo-US strategic relations. The three major aspects of Indo-US strategic partnership are explained in detail, namely cooperation in the transfer of dual-use technology, civilian nuclear cooperation, and counter-terrorism cooperation. This thesis also highlights that the September 11 attack and war on terrorism has transformed US-India relations, because it led to bolstering of political dialogue between India and the US.

K. P. Vijayalakshmi, in her article, *India-US Strategic Partnership: Shifting American Perspectives on Engaging India*, traces the evolution of Indo-US strategic partnership from 1991 to the Obama years. Its scope and nature are analysed in detail. It also discusses the major factors that influenced America's policy towards India in the post-cold war period. Throughout this article, the author argues that the strategic partnership between India and the US is a consequence of deliberate negotiations, measured intentions, and layered thinking by both countries. Because, the partnership continued to evolve in a positive direction despite hurdles due to the increased, regular, and layered bilateral engagement constructed on an institutional architecture. The author further adds limitations to this partnership, which is that cooperation is slow and plagued by delays as trends in defence cooperation reveals. Swapna Banerjee Guha also provides an analysis of Indo-US strategic partnership in the post-cold war period, in her article titled *Post September 11 Indo-US Strategic Ties: Locating Power and Hegemony*. This article mainly discusses the treaties and agreements signed by the two countries in the post-cold war period. She argues that the Indo-US strategic partnership is of crucial geopolitical importance as it creates a second line of defence, for both, against China. Furthermore, she addresses the question of why the USA decided to engage more closely with India in the post-cold war world scenario, which, to her, is part of the US policy to strengthen its foothold in Asia. She concludes this article by contending that it is the people in these two countries who will decide the nature of this newly emerging strategic partnership in the coming days. Lalit Mansingh addresses the question of why India is important for the US foreign policy in the post-cold war world scenario, in his article titled *Indo-US Strategic Partnership: Are We There Yet?* He argues that India's geographical position bordering China and Pakistan and astride one of the busiest and most critical maritime shipping routes on earth, its democratic political values seem to make an increased security cooperation a natural step for both countries. He also examines, in detail, the major limitation to Indo-US strategic partnership, which is the make in India policy

of the Indian government. This policy is a major obstacle because it is at odds with the Trump administration's focus on boosting domestic manufacturing.

An analysis of the Indo-US strategic partnership as it evolved since the end of the cold war is provided in a thesis written by Kamal Chandra Tiwari, titled *India-United States Strategic Relationship: A Paradigm Shift Since 1998 A Case Study*. It is argued in this thesis that the Indian-American community has played and continued to play an important role in enhancing strategic cooperation with the US. He also argues that the successful transformation of the India-United States strategic relationship will have a decisive and positive influence on the future international structure, as India's growing naval competence at sea could be a special asset for the United States. Both states have a common interest in keeping the oil and gas flowing from the gulf to point east. Sumit Kumar, in his thesis titled *US-India Strategic Partnership: Foundation, Dimensions and Limitations* analyses the conditions under which Indo-US strategic partnership evolved. In this thesis, he discusses three aspects of Indo-US strategic partnership, namely defence cooperation and high technology trade. He argues that the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union made India suspicious of Soviet Union's motives, thereby paved the way for closed Indo-US relations. It is also argued in this thesis that after the end of the cold war, and withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan resulted in further deepening ties between India and the US, as Pakistan became less important in the strategic calculations of the US. Another academic effort to provide a comprehensive overview of Indo-US strategic partnership is made by Sardool Singh, in his thesis *Indo-US Strategic Partnership in the Post-Cold War Period*. In this thesis, he analyses Indo-US strategic partnership in the post-Cold War period by providing an overview of it during the presidency of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. Also includes the problems and prospects of the partnership and a detailed analysis of the Civil Nuclear Deal. He argues that immediately after the cold war, factors including economic reforms in India, loss of the relevance of NAM, etc. created a favourable environment for the positive

growth of Indo-US strategic relations. Besides, Sardool Singh examines the major obstacles to Indo-US strategic partnership, which are the issues like defence trade hurdles, US-Pak bilateral ties, US-Sino relations, Kashmir issue, nuclear non-proliferation, and India's relations with Iran.

A critical analysis of strategic partnership between India and the US is the theme of the article, *India and the United States: Forging A Security Partnership?* jointly written by Sumit Ganguly and Andrew Scobell. In this article, the authors argue that historical, institutional, and structural factors undermine the forging of a strategic partnership by India and the USA. The major limitation of this partnership is the US' close relations with Pakistan, according to the authors. Since 9/11, the United States has been cooperating with Pakistan as part of its strategy to counter many of the security challenges it currently faces. This article also examines the context in which Indo-US strategic partnership has been evolved since the end of the cold war, which is characterized by the convergence of national interests of both countries regarding the need to balance China and fight terrorism as well as the adoption of liberal economic policies by India. Srinivasa M. Ramani, in his article, *Indian Foreign Policy, and the Indo-US Strategic Partnership*, makes a detailed analysis of the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement and a critical examination of the strategic partnership with the US. He argues that India's strategic alignment with the US is contradictory to the goals of India's foreign policy in the post-cold war world, namely securing regional harmony, multipolarity, and robust economic relations with other developing countries. He further adds that an independent foreign policy governed by affirmations toward multipolarity is best suited for the Indian nation. Any switch from this in favour of a strategic alliance with a unipolar hegemon will be at the expense of stability in India's environments. Yassir Nazir and Samir Ahmad Bhat also provide an analysis of Indo-US strategic partnership in the post 9/11 period, in the article titled *Post 9/11 Indo-US Strategic Partnership: An Analysis*. In this article, the authors examine the context, scope, and importance of the Indo-US strategic relationship. They argue that the US has changed its policy

towards South Asia in the post 9/11 period to meet new challenges of security, trade and to pursue its core and national interests. As part of this new policy, they argue, the US is re-examining its political, economic, military, and strategic relations with India.

An overview of Indo-US strategic partnership since the end of the cold war is provided by Mahrukh Khan, in his article Growing India-US Strategic Cooperation: An Analysis. In this article, he makes an in-depth analysis of the major components of Indo-US strategic partnership: defence cooperation, cybersecurity, technology cooperation, counter-terrorism cooperation, and maritime security cooperation. He argues the convergence of interests between both countries has contributed significantly to the success in promoting constant stability in the relationship and the rise in a strategic partnership regardless of the party in power in either of the states. Mahrukh Khan also contends that India's pivotal interest in developing its strategic relations with the US is to ultimately see itself elevated to great power status. Muhammad Hussain Samir, in his thesis, titled India and United States of America: Strategic Relationship in the Post-Cold War World, also provides an analysis of the nature and scope of Indo-US strategic partnership. The major focus of this thesis is the influence of China and Pakistan in shaping strategic relations between India and the US. This thesis also makes a detailed analysis of the Civil Nuclear Agreement. According to the author, there are three areas where the interests of both India and the US converge – combating terrorism, securing sea lanes of communication, and promoting democracy. The author also argues that the support and assistance of India are indispensable in the US' efforts to balance the growing Chinese power in the 21st century. Another thesis, titled Indo-US Strategic Relations and India's Security in the 21st Century, written by Lucky, also provides a detailed analysis of Indo-US strategic relations. In this thesis, he analyses the China and Pakistan factor in shaping Indo-US relations. He argues that the Indo-US nuclear deal had an explicit strategic dimension. The US sees India as a viable alternative to China. Therefore, the nuclear deal was supposed to provide the

edifice of a robust security relationship between the two states centred on balancing China's power. This thesis also discusses the counter-terrorism cooperation between both countries and the improvements in Indo-US relations during the visit of officials and leaders from India to the USA and vice versa.

Cherian Samuel offers a comprehensive analysis of the various provisions of the Indo-US Defence Framework Agreement of June 2003, in his article Indo-US Defence Cooperation and Emerging Strategic Relationships. The various aspects of this agreement discussed in this article are joint military exercises, collaboration in multinational operations, and strengthening capabilities of militaries of both countries to promote security and defeat terrorism. Cherian Samuel also provides a criticism of Indo-US defence cooperation, which is the failure of both countries to form deep strategic cooperation because both countries are trying to achieve different strategic goals from such cooperation. Sharma examines the major developments in the Indo-US defence cooperation, starting from the 1980s to the signing of the Civil Nuclear Deal, in his article Indo-US Strategic Convergence: An Overview of Defence and Military Cooperation. The major developments discussed in this article are Agreed Minutes on Indo-US Defence Cooperation, Defence Policy Group, Jaswant-Talbott Talks, military exercises, Next Steps in Strategic Partnerships, and New Framework for India-US Defence Relationship. He also provides an analysis of the impacts of India's stance on NPT and CTBT on the Indo-US strategic relation. According to this author, India's nuclear test is the most important obstacle in the Indo-US defence cooperation. Richard Weitz, in his article titled Promoting US-Indian Defence Cooperation: Opportunities and Obstacles, provides a comprehensive overview of the various aspects of Indo-US strategic partnership and the obstacles in it. This article especially focuses on the defence sales between both the countries and the major challenges to it. He argues that India's defence, industrial, and procurement practices still create problems for foreign partners. He further adds additional challenges to greater US-India arms sales cooperation, which are India's continuing commitment to buy weapons from

diverse foreign suppliers to avoid depending on any one of them, and the established presence of strong foreign competitors such as Russia and Israel that pledge to offer greater technology transfer.

A historical analysis of India-US strategic relations and the context which influenced it during both the cold war and post-cold war period is provided by Subhash Agarwal, in his article titled India and the United States: A New Partnership? In this article, he argues that the timing of Indian economic reforms happened to coincide with the US attempts to shape new alliances, find new markets, and define new global paradigms in a world of classic cold war imperatives. The author also makes a detailed discussion of the three major factors that caused the bolstering of Indo-US relations in the post-cold war world scenario. These are Indian economic reforms, India began to get more closer to the US, and the nuclear tests conducted by India in May 1998. Rita Manchanda provides a sharp criticism of Indo-US strategic cooperation, in her article titled Shedding Illusions about Indo-US Defence Cooperation. She argues that even after India cancelled the deal with Russia to supply cryogenic engines and technology to India, the US continued to impose sanctions on India, which reveals that the Indo-US strategic cooperation is not real. She also contends that technology transfer is used by the US to gain control of Indian decision-making, the cost of which would be much higher than one can assume. Shreya Upadhyay also provides an overview of the major components of Indo-US strategic partnership and analyses, in detail, the major challenges of it, in her article titled India-US Defence Partnership: Challenges and Prospects. She also gives some recommendations to improve the relations in general and security cooperation in particular. The major challenges discussed in this article are, first, India does not possess the military might to counterbalance China. Second, India's relations with Iran, Venezuela, and the US' relations with Pakistan act as obstacles in the path to a full-fledged Indo-US strategic cooperation. Third, trade issues are also impediments in furthering the security cooperation between both countries. Recommendations given by the author in this article

include attention needs to be paid to more defence exchanges, military exercises, training, planning, and military education, and defence relations between the two countries can reach new heights once the buyer-seller relationship is replaced with coproduction.

Written in the context of the birth of quad – a grouping by India, Japan, Australia, and the US to balance China, the article titled *Balancing Act: The China-India-US Triangle* by Mohan Malik provides an analysis of the India-US-China triangle that has been gained more relevance in the recent past with the emergence of China as a great power. The main focus of this article is the nature of the relationship between China and major Asian powers. He argues that a strong and prosperous India would checkmate China and prolong US primacy underpinned by shared values and interests. In contrast, a weaker, subdued, and isolated India would hasten the arrival of a Sino centric regional order. Mohan Malik concludes this article by contending that all Asian countries want to benefit from economic ties with China, but none want to live under the shadow of the dragon. Harsh V. Pant and Yogesh Joshi in their book *the US Pivot and Indian Foreign Policy: Asia's Evolving Balance of Power* also deals with the implications of the changed balance of power situation for Indian foreign policy. The primary focus of this book is the analysis of how the changed US policy of pivot to Asia impacts Indian foreign policy and India's relations with the US in the new balance of power situation in Asia. In this book, the authors also provide an excellent overview of the challenges emanating from the rise of China to India's national security. Through using solid facts and pieces of evidence, they succeed in establishing the fact that China is the number one challenge to India's national security. They argue that it's one of the most important objectives of Indian foreign policy to balance the rise of China. To achieve this purpose, American support has been helpful for India and it is also necessary for maintaining India's rise in the global system. Therefore, the US policy of pivot to Asia represents a significant strategic opportunity for India. Another work that directly discusses the implications of China's rise to India and the US is an

edited volume edited by Alyssa Ayres and C. Raja Mohan, titled *Power Realignments in Asia: China, India, and the United States*. This book comprises a collection of 14 articles addressing the various aspects of the changed balance of power situation in Asia and how it impacts India's relations with the US. The authors in this volume argue that China's rise affects not only the security and economy of India and the United States but also the Indo-US strategic partnership. Begins with an overview of China's economic potential, this volume moves to discuss the impacts on the security and policies of both the US and India.

1.9. Chapterisation

The first chapter is the "Introduction" chapter, which sets the stage for the rest of the thesis by providing a clear direction and establishing a framework for the research. It comprises of a brief introduction to research problem, statement of objectives, and hypotheses and a short description of the significance of the study. In addition, this chapter offers a brief overview of the methodology, thesis structure, as well as review of relevant literature on the topic.

The second chapter of this thesis, titled as "India-USA Relations: A Brief History", traces the historical evolution of India-US bilateral relations since India's independence. For this purpose, it's divided into several sections with each section dealing with the relationship's nature during the period of an American president, from Harry S Truman to Donald Trump. The focus here is to describe the major challenges encountered and highlight the achievements in the relations during this period. In this way, this chapter offers a broader understanding of the India-US relations since 1947 without which an analysis of Indo-US strategic partnership would have become incomplete.

Third chapter is titled as "The Context of Indo-US Strategic Partnership", as this chapter makes an in-depth analysis of the major factors that motivated both the countries to establish a strong strategic partnership between them. In international relations, alliances and partnerships are generally formed as a result of and response to the prevailing domestic and international situations. The Indo-

US strategic partnership, as this chapter shows, is not an exception to this. In the post-Cold War world scenario, the emergence of multiple factors including rise of China, growing menace of terrorism, liberalization of Indian economy and signing of Civil Nuclear Deal made it necessary for both India and the US to establish a strategic partnership between them. All these factors are discussed in a detailed manner in this chapter, on the basis of how each factor has led to the birth and strengthening of the strategic partnership. Hence, this chapter makes this study more comprehensive, thorough and insightful, as it provides a holistic view.

The fourth chapter provides a detailed analysis of the major aspects and developments of India-US defence cooperation and therefore titled as “Defence Cooperation as the Key Pillar of Indo-US Strategic Partnership”. Defence cooperation can be considered as a key pillar the strategic partnership because it’s an area with the potential to contribute more to increase the national power of both countries than other areas and it’s the most developed area of cooperation in the strategic partnership. Hence, in this chapter, a detailed description and analysis of the defence cooperation, covering defence trade, joint military exercises, and defence agreements, are provided. As part of description, this chapter traces the evolution of defence trade since end of the Cold War, explains the focus areas of major joint military exercises and discusses the key provisions of defence agreements. Analysis in this chapter is done through exploring the importance and achievements of these three focus areas as well as delineating the major challenges that each area of the cooperation is confronting.

The fifth chapter, titled “Counter Terrorism and Cyber Security Cooperation in Indo-US Strategic Partnership: Joint Efforts to Counter Modern Threats”, gives a detailed account of the major aspects of the counter terrorism and cyber security cooperation in Indo-US strategic partnership. These areas of cooperation have great potential to help both countries to counter terrorist and cyber security threats, given the international character of these threats which demands joint cooperation between countries. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first

part deals with a discussion on the dialogues, intelligence sharing, and training that both countries engage in as part of their counter terrorism cooperation. Here, an attempt is also made to examine the implications of these joint anti-terror activities for India. In the second part, the cyber security cooperation is portrayed as an emerging and important area of cooperation in Indo-US strategic partnership by analysing the cyber security forum and two cyber security agreements. Although in its nascent stage, this area of cooperation offers huge possibilities, as India can benefit from the technological superiority of US and US can make use of India's surplus skilled human resources to protect the cyber space.

An assessment of how this partnership is helping India to effectively balance China and a discussion of major challenges this partnership currently confronting are done in the sixth chapter, titled as "Opportunities and Challenges of Indo-US Strategic Partnership: An Appraisal". There are multiple ways in which the partnership with the US is contributing towards India's strategy of balancing China: through helping India to develop maritime capabilities, through offering diplomatic support to India, through the signing of foundational agreements and through supplying advanced weapons. An in-depth analysis of how each of these is facilitating India to deal with the China challenge is provided in the chapter's first part. For instance, one of the examinations done is to understand the importance of some of the advanced weapons acquired from US, such as Chinook helicopters and M777, in India's military modernization efforts, which is considered as an important step towards balancing China. In the second part of this chapter, an analysis of major challenges which needs to be overcome in order to let the partnership offer maximum benefits to both countries, based on how these challenges repeatedly stood as stumbling blocks in the relations in the post-Cold War period.

The 7th chapter is the "Conclusion" chapter, as it summarizes the key insights derived from the research. It provides a cohesive overview of partnership's dynamics, challenges and its role in India's strategic calculus, especially in balancing

China's rise. The 8th chapter of the thesis contains recommendations. It offers actionable suggestions to address challenges, strengthen cooperation and optimize the partnership for mutual benefit. This chapter builds on the findings and analysis, providing insights for policy makers, strategic planners and stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of the bilateral relationship.

CHAPTER 2

INDIA – US RELATIONS SINCE 1947: A BRIEF HISTORY

2.1. Introduction

India's relations with the United States since India's independence have been characterized by many ups and downs. The policies followed by New Delhi, during the cold war period, were not in accordance with the interests of the US. Determined efforts from both parties to improve security relations only started with the end of Cold War. Therefore, any discussion of Indo-US strategic partnership is incomplete without making a brief overview of Indo-US relations, from India's independence to the present. This chapter takes a look at this historical course, by discussing it during the presidency of each American presidents.

Before India's independence, the relations between India and the US were extremely limited, as Britain did not maintain any official and political contact between India and the USA. Economic relations were also not developed very well – the Indo-US trade from 1901 to 1939 constituted 7% of India's imports from and 10% of its exports to, the USA. The US business investment in India before independence was also nominal. The American government's role in the events leading to India's independence was also not significant due to the fact that most of the information about the developments in India came from British sources, leading to biases in US' approach towards Indian freedom struggle. Not just the US government, but the American people were also ignorant about what was going on India. Chiefly because the American public opinion on India was shaped by the writings of scholars like Katherine Mayo, who depicted a picture of India which was a land of sannyasis, naked ascetics, snake charmers, magicians, and poor people, in their writings. The first official contact with the US created in 1946, when Nehru, as the head of the interim government, appointed Asaf Ali as India's first ambassador

to the United States. In July 1947, the US appointed Henry Grady as first US ambassador to India.

2.2. Harry S. Truman

In the period immediately after India's independence, there were favourable developments in the relations between India and the US. President Truman, on 14 August 1947, sent a telegram of good wishes to Lord Mountbatten, in which he expressed: "we welcome India's new and enhanced status in the world community of sovereign independence nation, assure the new dominion of our continued friendship and good will and reaffirm our confidence that India, dedicated to the cause of peace and to the advancement of all people, will take its place at the forefront of the nations of the world in the struggle to fashion a world society founded in mutual trust and respect" (The Committee and the Department of States, 1950, p. 48). The Indian leaders acknowledged with gratitude the role played by the US in exercising pressure on the British government to speed up the process of granting independence to India. The democratic ideals of the US also positively influenced Indian leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, as he made efforts to develop close relations with the US.¹ New Delhi and Washington also shared common political values and strategic interests in the post-World War II global scenario.

However, despite these convergences, both countries could not develop the relationship into a strong and stable one. A number of factors can be attributed for this. The contradictory world views held by the leadership of both countries led to such a scenario. US foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II viewed the world as black and white, communist or anti-Communist and considered India's policy of non-alignment as immoral. Contrary to this, India believed in the policy of non-alignment as a policy for retaining her independence of judgement and action.

¹ Nehru's efforts to develop relations with the USA were focused on fostering economic cooperation and aligning India with global peace initiatives during the Cold War. He sought a partnership that balanced India's non-alignment stance with the strategic benefits of engaging with the United States on issues such as economic aid and development.

Her main concern was the promotion of a free and peaceful world in which all the nations have equal rights.

During the period of Truman presidency, India's relations with the US did not improve as expected because of the support given by the US to Pakistan in Security Council on the question of Kashmir, India's support to China, India's anti-American stance on Korean issue and India's opposition to American peace treaty with Japan. Before the accession of Kashmir into the Indian union, Pakistan invaded and captured a large part of it. Nehru brought the matter to the United Nations security council on January 1, 1948. At the United Nations, Britain and the United States did not condemn Pakistan's aggression on India, instead they managed to convert it into an Indo-Pakistan question. The US insisted on that India must settle the issue by conducting a plebiscite in Kashmir, which seriously irritated New Delhi (Tiwari, 1977, p. 52). Besides taking this anti-India stance, the US also took initiative to move a resolution in the United Nations, setting up a UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). Nehru reacted strongly to the alliance of the US and Britain by calling their common stands completely wrong and unacceptable. He warned that the stance would have far reaching consequences in our relations. The US did not stop there but continued to support Pakistan in the Kashmir conflict and moved resolutions in the US security council in favour of Pakistan from 1948 to 1953, causing significant strains on Indo-US relations.

The second obstacle in the path of forging Indo-US relations during the Truman period was the support given by India to China. The United States considered the victory of communism in China as a threat to world peace and a challenge to its policy of containment of communism. She did not want China to emerge as a global player. India, on the other hand, gave diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China on 30 December, 1949, adopted a stance against the American move to brand China as an aggressor in Korean War and repeatedly stood for the restoration of Formosa and Offshore Islands to the Communist regime. She also supported the demand for Chinese membership in the UN security

council. All these policies and actions from the part of India posed direct challenge to the national interests of the US.

In 1950, Indo-US relations met further strain because of the Korean crisis, despite the fact that India was not directly involved in the issue. Nehru feared that the involvement of America in the crisis would lead to making the war a global war, due to the fact that China would oppose the US intention of using Korean war against communism, which is what actually happened when China joined the war in November 1950 (Rao & Kondpi, 1951). The conflict clearly brought to light the different perspectives of the two nations on international issues. The US included the aggression by North Korea as part of an international conspiracy to challenge the stability of South Korea. India, on the other hand, viewed it as a possible conflict that could lead to a global war. As a result, she abstained from a US sponsored resolution calling for the military involvement of UN in Korean War and also voted against UN forces crossing the 38th parallel into North Korea and against labelling China as an aggressor in the war. Nehru also opposed American sponsored peace treaty with Japan on the ground that it should have included Soviet Union and Communist China (Rajagopalan, 2000, p. 2000). India did not take part in the San Francisco Conference that ratified the Peace Treaty in 1952. This stance adopted by India resulted in making the relations more problematic.

However, there were also some positive developments in the relations during the presidency of Harry S. Truman that laid the foundations of future relations between India and the US. In 1950, both countries signed a number of agreements on education, trade, and commerce. Among these agreements, the notable ones were the Fulbright Act and agreement of technical cooperation. The US also assisted India by providing \$190 million wheat loan in 1951. This loan helped India to cope with the acute food shortage during the 1950s (I.S., 1996, p. 26). India received more arms than Pakistan during the period of Truman administration, including substantial number of tanks and military aircrafts. These arms sales helped India in its efforts for modernizing its forces.

2.3. Dwight D. Eisenhower

During the two terms of Dwight D. Eisenhower, bilateral relations between India and the US witnessed dramatic shifts. In the first term, the forging of security relations between Pakistan and the US resulted in making the relationship into very low point ever since India's independence. However, the second term experienced the relationship becoming little warmer. In 1954, the US signed a US-Pakistan Mutual Aid and Security Agreement with Pakistan. By this accord, the USA agreed to supply sophisticated equipment including F-104 Star Fighter, F 86 Sabre Jet, B 57 Canberra Aircraft and the M47/48 Patton Tanks to Pakistan. India reacted strongly towards this new development. Nehru declared that "a military pact between Pakistan and the US changes the whole balance in this part of the world and affects India more especially. The US must realize that the reaction in India will be that this arming of Pakistan is likely against India, whether the US wants that or not" (Nehru, 1986, p. 454).

India and the US became further estranged when Pakistan joined SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organization) in 1954 and CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) in 1955. India's opposition to this new US-Pakistan alliance emanated from two reasons: it posed a burden on relatively weak Indian economy as India had to make a better equipped army and it could bring cold war into the region. The United States ignored India's demands to end arms supplies to Pakistan and insisted that arms supply to Pakistan were inevitable to protect US interests in the Middle East and South East Asia. President Eisenhower ended up making an unsuccessful attempt of offering arms to India – in a letter to Pandit Nehru on 26 February 1954, Eisenhower assured Nehru that any request for military assistance would receive his "most sympathetic consideration" (Biju, 2000, p. 280). But Nehru declined the offer.

However, the period of Eisenhower administration was not without any improvements in the relations, as evident in the Public Law 480 grants given by the USA to India. Public Law 480 authorized the sale of agricultural surpluses to other

countries on concessional rates. India became the major recipient of aid under this act (Shrivastava, 1969, p. 154). In Eisenhower's second term, the US assistance to India had grown substantially from \$400 million in 1957 to \$822 million in 1960. Eisenhower also became the first US president to visit India.² He visited India in December 1959 for four days. He addressed Indian parliament and exchanged views with many Indian leaders. Notable step taken by Eisenhower as part of the visit was that he instructed the US ambassador to Pakistan to raise the no war idea with Pakistan suggested by Nehru.

2.4. John F. Kennedy

In January 1961, John F. Kennedy took charge as the American president with a change in policies towards developing countries in general and India, in particular. The foreign policy of Kennedy administration differed significantly from that of Eisenhower administration as he recognized that developing countries were more affected by the internal challenges than external threats. Therefore, Kennedy's policy emphasized on aiding countries like India. He firmly believed that a strong India would be vitally important for a free and stable Asia. Kennedy also recognized the importance of non-alignment as the third force in the emergence of a pluralistic international system (Mohite, 1995, p. 33). However, when India used force to expel Portuguese from Goa in December 1961, the relations between both the countries suffered a setback. The USA repeatedly urged India not to use force to liberate Goa from the hands of Portuguese, but India did not act according to the US pressure. As a result, the USA went to the extent of sponsoring a resolution against India, which was vetoed by the Soviet Union. Thus, the issue of Goa led to conflicts in the relations in the first year of Kennedy administration.

Relations started to improve with the India-China war of 1962. During the war, India did not receive aid from the Soviet Union. As a result, Nehru turned to

² President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited India in 1959, marking a significant moment in U.S.-India relations as both countries sought to strengthen ties during the Cold War. The visit highlighted India's importance in U.S. foreign policy, as Eisenhower aimed to encourage economic cooperation and promote mutual understanding amidst the global ideological struggle.

the USA for assistance. The USA promptly responded to India's request by obtaining an assurance from Pakistan that it would not invade Kashmir so that India could redeploy its northern troops towards the Chinese front (Barnds, 1944, p. 378). By 20 November 1962, the situation had become worse for India and Nehru made an urgent and open appeal for military action against China by the US. US responded by dispatching American carrier the Enterprise towards the Bay of Bengal. Possibly influenced by this, China declared a unilateral ceasefire the next day (Hess, 1987, p. 268). Hence, the US military support during the war created favourable conditions for improved Indo-US relations.

In 1962, the American aid to India amounted to \$40 billion spent on the construction of power plants, a huge dam (Nagarjuna Sagar), fertilizer plant, diesel locomotive factory at Banaras, etc (Galbraith, 1969, pp. 373-374). Kennedy's period also witnessed the first joint exercise by Indian Air Force and American Air Force, named Operation Shiksha.³ In short, it can be concluded that during the period of Kennedy, the bilateral relations between India and the US marked significant improvements barring the failure of Kennedy to convince the US congress to grant a loan for the construction of Bokaro steel plant in India.

2.5. Lyndon B. Johnson

Following the assassination of John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963, vice president Lyndon B. Johnson became the president of the United States. President Johnson did not follow Kennedy's policy of favouring India, instead, he adopted the policy of treating India and Pakistan equally. However, in 1964 he extended a large sum of \$62.3 million as loan to the Government of India and signed a treaty for establishment of India's largest fertilizer plant in Vishakhapatnam.

Three major issues happened during the presidency of Johnson confirmed to the fact that he was not interested to specially treat India, thereby caused further damage to India-US relations. The first issue was the use of American

³ The Shiksha exercise focused on strengthening strategic ties between the two countries while also fostering mutual understanding in areas like logistics, air support, and ground operations.

supplied weapons by Pakistan in the 1965 war with India. Pakistan freely used advanced weapons including the Patton Tanks, F86 Sabre Jets and F-104 Supersonic Fighter Aircrafts, in complete violation of Eisenhower's assurance to India in 1954 that the military equipment supplied to Pakistan would not be used against India (Mohite, 1995, pp. 32-33). The failure of US to maintain this promise greatly irritated Shastri Government. Indian foreign minister Swaran Singh lodged an official protest with the US ambassador to India, Chester Bowles. The response of the US to the war by ceasing economic and military assistance to both India and Pakistan also caused anger in New Delhi, as Pakistan was the clear aggressor in the war.

The second issue was the Indian criticism of US intervention in Vietnam. In July 1966, Mrs. Gandhi signed a joint communique with the soviet president Kosygin condemning the US intervention in Vietnam. Johnson responded by cancelling the PL-480 food shipments to India. This decision, coming at the time of a severe Indian draught, resulted in worsening the relations between the two countries further (Malone, 2011, p. 159). Indira Gandhi's decision not to sign NPT of 1968 also caused strain on Indo-US relations during the last years of Johnson's presidency. Indira Gandhi and her cabinet decided not to sign NPT as it was discriminatory and did not provide adequate guarantees to non-nuclear states. Indira Gandhi called the treaty an 'unequal arrangement' between nuclear haves and have nots. This anti NPT position of India angered Johnson and as a result bilateral relations became strained by 1968.

2.6. Richard M. Nixon

Richard M. Nixon, a firm believer in use of force for achieving foreign policy goals, replaced Lyndon B. Johnson in the White House in January 1969. With the objective of developing good relations with both Pakistan and India, Nixon visited both countries in August 1969. Pakistan welcomed him warmly while India did not extend a warm welcome. Pakistan utilized it as an opportunity to seek more aid and arms from the US. As a result, the US moved closer to Pakistan, thereby

increasing its distance with India. In October 1970, president Nixon provided a 'one time exception' to Pakistan by reviving arms sales that was suspended after the 1965 India-Pakistan war. As part of this, the Nixon government approved a sale of 300 armoured personnel carriers and some aircrafts worth about \$50 million. Among Indian policy makers, this decision was widely criticized.

During the 1971 Bangladesh war, the US support to Pakistan became clearer, as it increased military and economic aid to Pakistan, suspended \$87 million worth of economic aid to India, and sent a naval fleet into the Bay of Bengal to force India to stop the war (Kissinger, 2011, p. 901). However, Indira Gandhi did not oblige to the US demands and turned to the Soviet Union for assistance by signing the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship in 1971. This treaty helped India to counterbalance against the alliance of Pakistan, China and the US, formed during the period of the war. As a consequence of the open support given by the US to Pakistan during the war, the image of the US in the Indian minds suffered irreparable damage (Palmer, 1984, p. 53). On the whole, the Bangladesh crisis exposed a direct conflict between the strategic interests of India and the US. India's regional interests conflicted with the global interests of the US. India-US relations reached lowest point during the war. It can be regarded as the worst ever phase in the relationship of the two countries (Palmer, 1984, p. 58).

In order to normalize the relations, in 1972, Nixon offered to reinstate the economic aid he had withdrawn the previous year, but India did not consent. Instead, the Indian government restricted field research conducted by American social scientists in India (Mansingh, 1999, p. 119). From the period 1972 to 1973, the relations between both countries improved to some extent with the food assistance to India under PL-480 totalling \$76 million (Moynihan, 1974, p. 8). In the 'state of the world' message, issued to the congress on May 3, 1973, president Nixon also described India thrice in the statement as a major power. He acknowledged for the first time that since 1971 crisis, India had emerged as a global power. This new changed attitude of America towards India was welcomed

very well by New Delhi. However, this warmth in the relations was short lived. In the year of 1974, two developments caused serious damage to it. The first was the nuclear test conducted by India in 1974 at Pokhran. India made it clear to the world that the nuclear test was a peaceful one, but the US was not convinced. The event was a big blow to American influence in South Asia as well as the emerging non-proliferation regime (Tellis, 2006, p. 115). The US responded in vigorous terms to this new development by cancelling a \$75 million development loan to India and ending the supply of fuel for the Tarapur atomic reactor plant. This event, needless to say, caused serious damages to the improving relations between the two countries. Another development that caused strains on the Indo-US relations was the expansion of US naval base in Diego Garcia. This negatively impacted Indian interest to keep the Indian Ocean free from Cold War.

2.7. Gerald Ford

On 10th August 1974, Gerald Ford became the US president, following the resignation of Richard Nixon. The experience of Ford in dealing with South Asia was very limited, forcing him to depend on secretary of state Kissinger for formulating policies. After the Bangladesh war of 1971, India emerged as the sole super power of the region. This situation led Ford to consider India in the foreign policy calculation of the USA. As a result, Dr Henry Kissinger visited India in late October 1974. This visit was a major step in improving Indo-US relations, as it helped to clear some of the deadlocks in the relations emanated from the Bangladesh war of 1971. Through open and frank discussions, a better understanding of the new realities in the Indian subcontinent and also of India's position with regard to its nuclear test of May 18 was reached. Kissinger could also lay the foundations of Indo-US cooperation by setting up a joint Indo-US commission for economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation (Joshi, 1975, p. 94). Aid consortium's aid to India also increased substantially from \$948 million in 1972-73 to \$1860 million in 1974-75, marking another improvement in the Indo-US relations.

However, a few developments in the mid of 1970s again caused strains on the Indo-US relations. First, in June Indira Gandhi imposed emergency in India to counter the ongoing domestic turmoil. The US president responded to this by putting a hold on American economic aid to India and critically commented at an informal press conference that “it was very sad development and I hope that in time there could be a restoration of democratic processes as we know them in the US” (New York Times, 1975). This response created a negative impression among Indian leaders about the credibility of the US support. Second, in the same year, the US government decided to lift a ten-year-old embargo against the sale of lethal arms to South Asia, causing further setbacks to the already troubled relationship. This evoked strong reaction from India and it cancelled the scheduled visit of its external affairs minister to the United States. Finally, the emergence of a strategic relation between the Shah of Iran and the US also hindered Indian national interests. Particularly, the US decision to give Iran access to vast amount of American military equipment to support its region angered India very much. India disliked this American move due to the fact that a strong Iran could be a potential rival to its interests in West Asia and there were concerns that Iran might make military equipment available to Pakistan in the event of another Indo-Pak war (Mohit, 1999, p. 127).

2.8. Jimmy Carter

When Jimmy Carter won US presidential elections in 1976 November, it created apprehension in Pakistan and expectation in India. Because, the foreign policy agenda of Carter administration attached a high priority for India, compared to previous presidents. This policy was part of US policy of paying more attention to North-South issues. It intended to forge US’ relations with nations likely to become major powers by the end of 20th century. India was considered as one of the middle powers along with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil and Venezuela. Personally also, Carter had an interest for third world countries in general and India, in particular.

With an intention to improve relations with India, President Carter visited India in January 1978. It was in all respects a highly successful visit. At the culmination of their meetings, the president and the prime minister signed the Delhi Declaration. Both leaders expressed their deep resentment for war and agreed that both India and the US “will do their utmost to resolve disputes with others amicably”. It’s also committed both nations to the reduction and gradual elimination of nuclear weapons and also affirmed “an unwavering faith in the democratic form of government” (Gould & Ganguly, 1992, p. 123). In August 1978, the Carter government took another important decision to resume direct development assistance to India, seven years after it was cut off in 1971. For the year of 1978 itself, the US approved a total of \$60 million of direct development assistance to India. The Carter administration also presented to the Congress a request to authorize \$92 million of aid for the year 1979. The Congress approved this without much hesitation. These two developments improved Indo-US relations in the initial years of Carter administration. However, these initial improvements in the relations did not continue primarily due to the geo political conditions created by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The US supplied arms to Pakistan to fight what Americans called Soviet expansionism. India believed that the arms supplied by the US to Pakistan to fight in Afghanistan was diverted against India in Jammu and Kashmir. This scenario created resentment in India against American policy. The ambiguity maintained by India on Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also attracted severe American criticism.

2.9. Ronald Reagan

On 20 January 1981, Ronald Reagan became the US president with a change in policy towards South Asia. The new president viewed the world strictly in a bipolar sense. To him, the world was divided between allies and adversaries. In the list of adversaries, he included Soviet Union and other communist nations. The nations siding with Soviet Union were also discredited by him.

The policy priority of Reagan from the beginning itself was not to improve US' relations with India but to strengthen Pakistan militarily to fight against Soviets in Afghanistan, which consequently harmed Indian security interests. Throughout the period of Reagan administration, military aid provided by the US to Pakistan and Soviet Union to India were major irritants in Indo-US relations. In September 1981, the US announced \$3.2 billion economic and military assistance to Pakistan. The package proposed the sale of forty long range F16 fighter bombers to Pakistan, the most modern and sensitive radar as well as other military equipment including missiles, tanks, helicopters, howitzers and armed personnel carriers. The intention of the US was to give Pakistan the ability to deal with a "range of limited cross border threats from Soviets or Soviet backed Afghan forces" (Congressional Quarterly, 1981, p. 1787). To this new development, Indians reacted sourly, with the ministry of external affairs making it clear that the sale of F-16s have the potential to lead to an arms race, threaten Indian security and weaken the serious effort underway to improve Indo-Pak relations. But, the US did not consider Indian concerns and the United States ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick expressed the view that the arming of Pakistan "was neither an actual or intended threat to India" (Honsa, 1982, p. 3). Indian complaint was that it had nothing in its arsenal at that particular time to match the F-16s committed to Pakistan. Such advanced aircraft in the hands of its traditional adversary were seen as posing serious threat to Indian security. It's clear from the fact that the F-16's long distance capacity enable it to be within range of every major industrial city, military installation and nuclear facility in India. Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi insisted that Pakistani rulers were procuring weapons with the purpose of directing them against India as had been in the past. This was evident from the communique issued on the occasion of arms and air program from Islamabad, as it did not make any reference to Soviet threat.

Though the US arms supplies to Pakistan resulted in deteriorating Indo-US relations, the visit of Indira Gandhi to the US in 1982 and some of the important

agreement signed in the next two years helped to improve the relations. In fact, it was during the period of Reagan that India and the US decided to strengthen cooperation in multiple areas from space to agricultural research. Between 1980-82, the largest number of joint ventures approved by India was with the American firms mainly in chemical and petroleum fields. During the same period, American investment in India increased from \$350 million to \$500 million.

As part of a well-planned Indian policy of forging Indo-US relations, since the early eighties, prime minister Indira Gandhi visited the US in July 1982. She characterized her Washington visit as “an adventure in search of understanding and friendship” (Kamath, 1997, p. 60). Indira Gandhi tried to convince American public and Reagan that India did not side with any nation, but stood independent and neutral. During the visit, she could discuss many bilateral, regional, and global issues with Ronald Reagan. They included super power relations in view of the Afghan crisis, the Iran-Iraq War and ways of a peaceful solution, US role in solving the Lebanese problem etc. They also explored ways in which India and the US could bolster cooperation in the fields of science, technological transfer, agriculture, trade and educational exchange. As a result, the STI (Science and Technology Initiative) was signed in 1982 for a period of three years. It proved successful in areas of health, agriculture, biomass, monsoon and solid-state science and engineering. The visit of Mrs. Gandhi was also significant with regard to economic considerations. The United States was informed about the efforts being made by India to promote economic development. Possibly convinced by this, the Reagan administration agreed to provide Rs. 78.2 crores as development assistance for three projects on August 21 (Gupta, 1985, p. 255). To conclude, on the whole the visit created a friendly atmosphere necessary for the development of relations between the two countries and softened the extremely rough edges of the relationship.

In 1982, Mrs. Gandhi could also settle the issue of American nuclear fuel supplies to Tarapur nuclear power plant. When the US Congress made it a

precondition for the purchasers of nuclear fuel to open up all nuclear establishments for international inspection, nuclear fuel supplies to India were stopped by the US in the early 1980s, thereby causing serious damages to India-US relations. The government of India denounced it as an unfair and coercive act that threatened India's economic health and denigrated India's long-standing opposition to nuclear weapons (Power, 1979, p. 577). However, as a culmination of discussions in New Delhi and Washington, an agreement between Reagan and Mrs. Gandhi on the supply of nuclear fuel to Tarapur was reached. It was decided to keep the 1963 agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation between India and the United States intact.⁴ But, the supplier of nuclear fuel would henceforth be France rather than the US. This solution enabled both the United States and India to get rid of this long-standing issue in the bilateral relations between both the countries. Another improvement in the relations occurred with the signing of an agreement for an agricultural research project between India and the US in June 1983. In 1984 also, a memorandum of understanding was signed by which the US agreed to transfer technologies to India, including dual use technologies, and eased American restrictions on trade. As part of this, the US granted India a license to buy the line General Electric F-404 jet engines for its light combat aircraft, which was significant given the earlier US denial of it to China (Gaan, 1992, p. 8).

In large sections of American society, the young Rajiv Gandhi's government was considered as a welcome change. The Reagan administration looked upon him as accommodative and cooperative for enhancing mutual cooperation and resolving differences in the relations between the two countries (Jain, 1988, p. 8). In June 12 1985, Rajiv Gandhi visited the United States. This visit was regarded as a great success as it resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding regarding technology transfer and the inauguration of an eighteen month long cultural festival of India in the US. The festival was the largest festival of any country organized in America. Its objectives were to generate great interest in

⁴ This agreement allowed for the exchange of nuclear technology, research, and materials for energy generation.

Indian arts, literature, and movies as well as to promote tourism, investment and trade. It proved as an effective way of reaching to the United States public and shaping its opinion of India. During the visit, Rajiv Gandhi and Reagan discussed in detail wide range of issues concerning security, peace, economic development, space, science and technology and elimination of nuclear weapons. Both agreed to continue consultation, cooperation, and collaboration on international terrorism. Besides these, he initiated two new projects. The first project was a program to develop and produce improved and new vaccines against major communicable diseases. The second project was a joint collaboration agreement on research and technology development programs in agriculture and forestry, health and nutrition, family welfare and biomedical research, and industrial research and development.

In 1986, American investment in India crossed Rs 400 million, a tenfold increase since 1980. In 1980, the total US investment in India was around Rs 40 million (Dean, 1987, p. 35). However, two developments occurred in the mid of 1980 caused irritation and tension in Indo-US relations. First, India criticized US military action against Libya and even expressed solidarity with Libyan leaders. Washington responded by saying that the US cooperation in helping India to counter terrorism would be conditional. Second issue aroused when a US congressional group organized a briefing on Sikh in India. The Lok Sabha unanimously condemned this as an attempt at direct interference in the internal affairs of the country. Senior leadership of various Indian parties condemned this event.

In the last two years of Reagan administration, Indo-US relations improved much because of multiple factors. To begin with, in January 1987, both countries agreed to establish the US – India Fund (USIF) with the intention of ensuring ten-year funding for some of the Indo-US cooperative projects in the spheres of education, culture, science, agriculture research and technology and small-scale industrial research and development. The primary functions of it were to finance technical assistance, training, and research cooperation, including the creation of

linkages of networks among government, university and private sector institutions (Dean, 1987, p. 35). The decision of Reagan administration in March 1987 to sell India XMP-14 computer was another positive development. On the trade front, the bilateral trade registered a growth by 6% in 1987, reaching the record level of 4.225 billion dollars. India's exports to the US had increased 12% in 1987 over 1986. In 1987, trade surplus was in India's favour, approximately 1.3 billion dollars (Jain, 1988, p. 22). In April 1988, the US also agreed to assist India technologically by agreeing to sell India ring laser gyroscope for the use of its newly designed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) (Gaan & Das, 2002, p. 183). Another milestone in technological cooperation between India and the US achieved with the Rajiv – Reagan agreement for the renewal of the science and technology initiative for an additional period of three years from 1988. As evident from the annual report 1986-87 of the department of science and technology the chief contribution of STI was that it had helped to evolve a mechanism by which scientists of both the countries could formulate programs and work through bilateral visits (Jain, 1988, p. 25). Besides these developments, an important improvement in the bilateral relations was manifested from the efforts taken by Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on October 1988 to jointly initiate a \$ 21.66 million seven year project for the development of the system for preserving and utilizing plant genetic resources in India.

2.10. George H. W. Bush

During the term of George H. W. Bush as American president, drastic changes occurred in the world politics. The disintegration of Soviet Union, the fall of Berlin Wall, the end of communism in Eastern Europe, and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan resulted in the end of Cold War confrontation between the two superpowers. In this changed international context, India-US relations also marked significant improvements, as these changes forced India to end its reliance on the Soviet Union for strategic support and get more closer to the

USA. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan also reduced the significance of Pakistan in American strategy.

The first Indian effort to draw closer to Washington was made during the Gulf crisis in August 1990. In this Gulf War India decided to provide important services to the US. By neglecting the fact that Iraq was India's leading trade partner in the Gulf, India extended refuelling facilities to the US aircraft transiting from the Far East to the Gulf through India. This support given by New Delhi created a positive impression in the US policy making circles and motivated the USA to strengthen military relations with India. To this help, the USA reciprocated in October 1990 by suspending military and economic support to Pakistan because of the concerns over Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

Economic relations between India and the US improved significantly during the period of president Bush. Just one year before India's economic reforms itself notable multinational corporations like PepsiCo entered into Indian market. In the mid-1990s, the United States emerged as India's main trading partner and an important source of technology and investment. The economic reforms in 1991 by P. V. Narasimha Rao government further enhanced US' interest in Indian market and thereby brought India and the USA closer than ever. This is evident from the fact that in 1991, the US became the largest single country export market for India, accounting for 18.9% of India's total exports. In this period, US was also the largest single country supplier for India, providing 8.9% of its import. The economic reforms also resulted in a huge increase in the US investment in India, which rose from a meagre \$20 million in 1990 to more than \$1.1 billion in 1993 (Tang & Villafuerte, 1995, p. 12-13).

It was also during the tenure of George Bush that strategic relations between India and the United States began. The first major step in the direction of improving Indo-US defence cooperation was taken by US in the form of the Kickleigher proposals of April 1991. It intended to bolster Indo-US defence cooperation through annual visits by chief of staff, setting up of steering

committees, conducting strategic seminars, training Indian officers in the USA, joint exercises and staff talks (Dutt, 2003, p. 34). Accordingly, high ranking US military officers including commander in chief of the US Pacific Command and Commanding General of the US Army in Pacific visited India in 1991 and 1992 respectively. Not only this, an executive steering group for army, navy and air force of both the countries was formed in 1992 and joint naval exercises of Malabar Series was started in the same year (Kumar, 1997, p. 783).

However, the period of George Bush administration was not without any issues in Indo-US relations. The Super 301 trade dispute of 1989 was one of the most important obstacles in the path to improving Indo-US economic relations. Paragraph 301 of the “Omnibus Trade Competitiveness Act (OTCA)” of 1988 required the US president to take retaliatory action against countries that harmed US commercial interests (Department of State, 1989, p. 436). Accordingly, India along with Japan and Brazil, was identified as causing serious damages to US commercial interests, as evident from the fact that India enjoyed a trade surplus of \$690 million with the USA in 1989 alone. This particular action from the part of the US resulted in strong reaction in New Delhi. India refused to talk with the US about the disputed policies resulting in the US decision not to remove India from the list. Responding to this new development, commerce minister of India, Arun Nehru, told parliament that India was not going to be intimidated by anybody on the issue of economic independence (Kux, 1998, p. 436). The second issue was the Indo-Russian joint collaboration on the Indian Agni Missile program to develop ballistic and rocket technologies in 1992. This joint collaboration made America suspicious towards India’s commitment to arms control. In response to this, the US suspended military and technology transfer programs to both India and Russia entirely and imposed a temporary ban of two year on sensitive technology exports to both countries. The issue of alleged human rights violations by India in Kashmir, Punjab and North East also casted a shadow on Indo-US relations in the early 1990s. The US congress severely criticized India’s actions (Kux, 1998, pp. 292-293).

2.11. Bill Clinton

When Bill Clinton became the president in 1993 it was expected that the Indo-US relations would see positive improvements as a democratic regime in US is always regarded kinder and friendlier towards India than the republican governments. But this hope proved wrong in the first year of Clinton administration itself as Indo-US relations reached a new low. Increased misunderstanding, suspicion and tension prevailed between the two largest democracies of the world mainly because of two major issues – India’s stance on NPT and India’s human rights record in Kashmir and Punjab (Mishra, 1996, p. 56). The US administration under Clinton attached much priority to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia because it considered this region as the most likely theatre for a nuclear conflict in the near future. Therefore, Clinton pressurized India and Pakistan to give up their nuclear weapon ambitions, end their nuclear weapon programme and sign NPT. But India has repeatedly made it clear that it would not sign the NPT because of the discriminatory nature of it as it allowed nuclear nations to retain their nuclear arsenal while the non-nuclear nations will be prevented from having theirs. This issue has acquired new momentum during the initial years of Clinton administration.

Similarly, India’s human rights record in Kashmir and Punjab and the consequent reactions from the part of Clinton and US officials also made the relationship complicated in 1993. President Clinton while addressing the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, 1993 added Kashmir into one of the crisis spots of the world by saying that “Bloody, ethnic, religious and civil wars rage from Angola to Caucasus to Kashmir” (US Department of State, 1993). This particular statement of Clinton was strongly resented by India. Followed by this, a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives intended to put a ban on development assistance to India if it does not permit Amnesty International to investigate cases of alleged human rights violation there. Rao Government outrightly rejected such intrusive diplomacy bitterly and accused Clinton

administration with following a “sanctimonious diplomacy” (Gupta, 1994). During the Narasimha Rao period India-US relations also soured because of the question of the rights of Sikhs. This issue emerged by the end of 1993 with the letter of Clinton to a pro-Khalistan organization in which he called for a solution in Punjab “that safeguards Sikh rights”. Until then, the US had opposed the idea of so-called Khalistan and considered Punjab as an integral part of India. Therefore, the response of Indians to this new US stand was highly critical. The Minister of External Affairs made it clear in a strong statement that “a solution has indeed been attained in Punjab by democratic means where the rights of all Indians, including Sikhs are protected under the law, regardless of religion”. The Punjab Chief Minister described the US stand as “misguided” and “politically motivated”.

In 1994, Indo-American relations entered a new phase with P. V. Narasimha Rao’s visit to the United States. This visit helped to ease the already troubled relationship. While at Washington, he made it clear that Kashmir is no longer negotiable because India is a country with diversity in culture and ethnicity, like the United States. As a result, the open criticism of US on India’s human rights record in Kashmir was withdrawn, President Clinton welcomed the setting up of a National Human Rights Commission, and Indian insistence that a solution is possible only bilaterally and within the framework of the Shimla Agreement was fully accepted. The visit also resulted in the setting up of a durable framework comprising of Eminent Persons Group and Indo-US business partnership initiative aimed at building a new partnership. In the same year, nearly half of all investment approvals by the Government of India were from the US companies (US Department of Commerce, 1992, pp. 63-64). However, multiple challenges remained in bilateral economic relations, including disagreement over the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The US charged India with weak IPR regime and forced the latter to enact laws to protect Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). To address these issues, the Indian parliament passed certain laws in May 24 1994 to make IPR regime strong in India. As a result, US removed India from the

“priority foreign country list”⁵ and added to the “priority watch list”⁶ in June 1994 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 1996).

Indo-US defence cooperation also improved during the Bill Clinton presidency, as evident in the two major developments in 1995 – the signing of the Agreed Minute on Defence Relations in January and joint military exercises in May – June. The defence calculations of the United States of America changed in the period after Soviet Union’s disintegration. As a result, United States Defence Secretary William Perry visited India in 1995. During this visit, Perry made an effort to establish a basis for defence cooperation by meeting three tier contact groups of military, civilian official and defence research establishments (Burns, 1995). On January 12, 1995, Perry and Indian Minister of State for Defence M. Mallikarjun signed an “Agreed Minute on Defence Relations (AMDR)” (Burns, 1995). The agreement was historic in that India and the United States did not have such a security relationship for almost 50 years. It sought to establish periodic consultations and closer ties between civilian defence officials and uniformed services (Thakur, 1996). A Joint Technical Group was also formed as part of AMDR to oversee cooperation in defence research and production. Another development of closer defence relations between India and USA occurred in May-June 1995, when Indian and US military units conducted joint exercises on land and at sea. Joint exercises on land were high altitude exercises by US special forces and Indian para commandos in the Nahan Hills about 150 miles north of Delhi and naval exercises called Malabar II were conducted off India’s western coast in the Arabian Sea in which five US and six Indian ships and maritime aircraft participated (Thakur, 1996).

⁵ The U.S. Priority Country List is a designation used by the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to identify countries that engage in particularly severe violations of intellectual property (IP) rights. Countries on this list face heightened pressure and may be subject to U.S. trade sanctions or diplomatic actions to address the violations and encourage compliance with international IP standards.

⁶ The U.S. Priority Watch List is a designation given to countries that the U.S. Department of Commerce identifies as engaging in significant trade barriers, including intellectual property theft, piracy, and other violations. Countries on the list are subject to increased scrutiny and may face trade sanctions or restrictions aimed at encouraging reform.

However, in the same year, the Brown amendment intended to transfer \$368 million worth of US arms to Pakistan put strain on Indo-US relations. By successfully passing this amendment in both houses of the US Congress, Clinton administration could release arms package to Pakistan comprising of P-36-11 Orion reconnaissance aircraft, Harpoon anti-ship missiles, sidewinder air to air missiles, Tow 2A missiles, Kobra helicopters as well as engines, spares and 07 support systems for F16 aircrafts (Dasgupta, 1995). The passage of Brown Amendment was done at a time of changing American policy towards South Asia. The general perception among Indian policy makers was that the importance of the Pakistan factor in India-US relations would be minimal. But the Brown amendment proved that the influence of Pakistan factor is very much alive in America's relations with India in the post-cold war period as well (Chari, 1999, pp. 5-6). Therefore, the Indian political leadership reacted sharply. PM Narasimha Rao made it clear to the Clinton administration that the transfer of arms to Pakistan would lead to an arms race in the region. The Indian Home Minister S. B. Chavan even went to the extent of considering it as part of an evil design of the US on the subcontinent. He also accused the US of attempting to gain a foothold in Kashmir (Kux, 1998, p. 256). India's Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee charged the US with forcing India to divert its limited resources to the military sector. The US responded to soothe Indian feelings by making it clear that the arms supplied to Pakistan were not against India but to counter Islamic fundamentalism.

The CTBT of 1996 also stood as an obstacle in the path of improving Indo-US relations. It was one of the foreign policy objectives of Clinton administration to have the CTBT accepted by all nations. But India had openly opposed the treaty on the ground that it was discriminatory. On August 20, 1996, India formally vetoed the draft text of the CTBT in Geneva. Rejecting the agreement, Indian representative said, "Let me make one thing extremely clear. India will not sign this treaty unless its concerns are not taken on board" (Singh, 2002). There were three major reasons because of which India rejected the agreement. Firstly, accepting it

would have a negative impact on India's security interests. Secondly, India's request for including a commitment on the part of nuclear weapon powers to ensure complete nuclear disarmament was not added in to the CTBT. Thirdly, India considered it not as a comprehensive treaty but only a nuclear test explosion ban treaty as it allowed nuclear weapon states to conduct certain type of nuclear weapon related tests. From this particular episode, the opposite views of India and US on nuclear non-proliferation issues had become clearer. India opposed multilateral treaties like the NPT and CTBT because these treaties hampered the interests of the nuclear 'have nots' including India. The US, contrary to this, regarded the universal adoption of these treaties as only means to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the US did not accept India's stance on CTBT. In fact, the US government linked India's opposition to CTBT with the latter's desire to acquire nuclear weapons (Crossette, 1996). Responding to India's objection to CTBT, on 10 August 1996, US official Warren Christopher said that "the US is determined not to allow a single nation to prevent from reaching a test ban treaty and terms India's demand for setting up a time table for the elimination of nuclear arsenals not possible".

The second term of Clinton Administration was one of the most important periods in Indo-US relations as it was during this period that significant improvements and challenging issues in the bilateral relations between both countries occurred. Unlike the first administration, the second administration was keen on upgrading the relationship into a partnership. This new change in US policy was evident in the increase in the trade between both countries, the Jaswant Talbott talks, the stance taken by US in favour of India during the Kargil War and the visit of Clinton to India in 2000. But it was also during this period that India conducted nuclear tests and the US responded with economic sanctions, the difference over the issue of weapons proliferation especially missiles persisted and the US continuously rejected India's demand to declare Pakistan as a state sponsoring terrorism. In August 1997, India signed an extradition treaty with the

US. This treaty allowed India to seek extradition of terrorists who assassinated General Vaidya, imprisoned in US prisons. In the same year, Prime Minister I K Gujral visited US on September and Madeleine Albright became the first US Secretary of State in 14 years to visit India. During I K Gujral's meeting with President Clinton on 22 September 1997 at New York, the President provided a guarantee to the Prime Minister that the US would not intervene in any way with the issues of contention between India and Pakistan (Arora & Bisht, 1997).

The bilateral trade between India and the US had grown impressively in the second term of Clinton Administration. The Clinton Administration began to consider India as an important economic partner. President Clinton himself expressed that the economic reform of India is the real engine of growth in the bilateral relationship. Leading scholars like Stephen Cohen opined that "with the transformation of Indian economic policy since 1991, Corporate America has begun to take India seriously" (Cohen, 2001, p. 288). In 1997, both countries had a bilateral trade turnover worth \$10 billion. In 1998, it increased to more than \$11 billion out of which India's export accounted for \$8 billion. There was 8.67% increase in the total trade between India and the US in 1999 with both countries transacting goods worth \$12.79 billion. India's trade surplus with the US stood at \$5.38 billion in 1999. In 2000, the total trade volume between India and the US was \$14.35 billion and India's exported \$10.69 billion worth of goods to the US, giving India a trade surplus of \$7.03 billion, its highest with any country. During this period, India could gain high trade surplus with the US primarily because of the increase in the export of software products as evident in the fact that in 1999, the US accounted for 61% of India's total software export.

The Clinton's second term also witnessed nuclear tests by India in 1998. Threatened by a nuclear power next door, the Indian government finally conducted three nuclear explosions on 11 May 1998 followed by another two explosions on 13 May 1998. The three simultaneous detonations on 11 May 1998 comprised of a 15 kilotons fission device (atom bomb), a 45 kilotons thermonuclear device

(hydrogen bomb) and 0.2 kilotons (sub kilotons device). The two devices detonated on 13 May included 2 sub kilotons devices of 0.5 kilotons and 0.3 kilotons (Swaminathan, 2003). After these tests, India declared itself to be a nuclear weapon state and announced its objective to achieve 'minimum credible deterrence' (Tellis, 2001, p. 2). The reaction of Clinton administration to these tests was extremely vehement, because he considered it as directly challenging the US efforts to deter nuclear proliferation. He said that he was "deeply disturbed by the nuclear tests" and added that "this action by India not only threatens the stability of the region but also directly challenges the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (Sarfraz, 2019). Americans also felt that they have been deceived by India, as Indians kept their plan to conduct nuclear weapons secret at a time when bilateral relationship between the two countries was improving and becoming closer. Secretary of state Madeleine Albright accused India with deceiving the US while discussing the issue in the US Congress. President Clinton signed an order on May 13 1998, based on the provisions of the Glenn's Nuclear Proliferation Act of 1994, which enables the US president to adopt measures against countries that test nuclear weapons. This order acted as a policy solution to deal with the nuclear tests, as it imposed financial and arms control sanctions including the termination of \$21 million in economic development assistance, the postponement of \$1.7 billion which was lent by international financial institutions, the cancelation of loans and credits by US banks and the annulments of arms sales. However, the reaction of the US to five nuclear explosions by Pakistan on 28th May 1998 was soft and muted. This approach of US to an issue of global importance had created suspicion in New Delhi of the intentions of the US.

The nuclear tests conducted by India in May 1998 also had some positive impact on Indo-US relations as it provided an opportunity to address nuclear differences in a serious and systematic manner. The most important factor that directed US policy towards South Asia was the non-proliferation approach in the

post-Cold War world order. As a result, over the two years after the Pokhran II nuclear explosion, there emerged a notable series of high-level discussions between Jaswant Singh and the US deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott. The talks covered issues related to security, disarmament and non-proliferation. It was the first ever dialogue of the US with any country on security matters. It helped to understand each other's security environment realistically and led to create more understanding on security concerns amongst the policy makers of both countries (Kumar, 2000 p. 43). In particular, the dialogue led to an understanding among the US leaders that India's security concerns in the nuclear field should be accepted and India was an actor with the potential to influence the shaping of peaceful and stable world order. It also resulted in the broadening of Indo-US cooperation on fighting terrorism, science and technology and economic matters.

Another incident that had a positive impact on Indo-US relations was the intervention done by President Clinton in 1999 to force Pakistan to withdraw the forces it had sent across the Line of Control in Kashmir near the town of Kargil. Indian leaders had assumed that US would support Pakistan during the Kargil war and was therefore liked President's action much. They not only pleased with Washington's willingness to oppose Pakistani aggression but also began to consider it as part of a shift in American policy towards the region.

The real turning point in Indo-US relations came in 2000 with the visit of Clinton to India from March 20 to 24. This visit made positive impacts on wider areas of economic, strategic and technological aspects of the bilateral relationship between India and the US as it resulted in a number of bilateral agreements being signed and setting up of forums and joint groups. The fact that this visit was the first by the US president in the past 22 years also reinforced its importance. During the visit, Clinton gave a speech at the Indian Parliament and signed the "Vision for the 21st Century" document. The vision statement expressed the intention of both countries to intensify the dialogue between the two states at various levels, enhancing economic cooperation, promoting cooperation in the field of science

and technology and combating terrorism (US Department of State, 2000). Among these, the most important achievement of vision statement was the establishment of institutional arrangement for government-to-government dialogue in economic issues. Thus, Bill Clinton's successful five-day visit to India and Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit in the same year to the United States laid strong foundation for transforming Indo-US relations to that of a partnership in the 21st century (Ghosh, 2002, p. 61).

2.12. George W. Bush

When George W. Bush took office in January 2001, he soon expressed his interest in continuing the rapprochement with India already started during the time of Clinton. Even prior to assuming office, major policy advisor of Bush administration Condoleezza Rice made it clear that India would figure prominently in the Bush administration's global strategic calculus in her foreign affairs article in which she opined that "there is a tendency conceptually (in United States) to connect India with Pakistan and to think only of Kashmir or the nuclear competition between the two states" (Koshy, 2008). For the first time she recognized that India has the potential to become a great power. Thus, she made it clear that the US foreign policy would do well to take that into account (Koshy, 2008). President Bush acknowledged the role of India in achieving some of the important goals of his presidency such as advancing democracy, containing China and countering terrorism. Within the war on terrorism discourse, India was identified as a stable democracy and a global power with which America should intensify its relationship. With regarding to the objective of containing China, the Bush administration saw India as a potential counterweight to China. Therefore, president Bush refused to look at India through the prism of non-proliferation and viewed India as a natural and strategic ally. He stated that the US would not force India to sign the CTBT.

During the first term of Bush administration, both countries took serious efforts to improve the relationship and tried to avoid major elements in the policy of both countries that directly hinders the national interests of each other. In May

2001, India openly supported President Bush's controversial national missile defence initiative and following the September 11 terrorist attack in New York and Washington, India extended unconditional and ambivalent support to the United States and even went to the extent of offering military bases for US forces preparing to strike targets in Afghanistan (Hathaway, 2003, p. 7). Positive changes were visible also in the policies and attitudes of the United States towards India, thereby ensuring favourable conditions for the growth of Indo-US relations. On September 22 2001, President Bush waived technology sanctions imposed on India following the nuclear tests in 1998.⁷ The US also adopted a policy of pressurizing Pakistan to end cross border terrorism against India, when in March 2002, President Bush asked Pakistan to stop cross border terrorism against India. Similarly, America's reaction to the testing of intermediate ballistic missile by New Delhi was soft and muted (Gaan & Das, 2002, p. 195). In short, in the span of just four years, senior officials of Bush administration went from describing India as having the potential to be a great power to considering it as a major power along with Russia and China (Powell, 2004).

In the same period, India could also gain benefits from the trade with the US. India-US two-way trade had increased significantly from US \$10 in 1990s to US \$17 billion in 2003 with India enjoying the favourable balance. In 2002, India's export to the United States grew 21.4 per cent. In 2003, however the growth per centage of exports to the US came down to 11 per cent. Of the items exported to the US, majority of the items were in the IT sector, as in 2002, 61% of the total IT exports worth RS 234.280 million were to the US market, making US India's biggest IT market. Despite this improvement in trade, the US annual investment to India which was \$737 million in 1998 dropped to \$414 million in 2003.

Another notable feature of improvement in Indo-US relations during the first term of Bush is the efforts taken by both countries to transform their

⁷ These technology sanctions restricted the transfer of sensitive technologies, particularly in areas like missile development, nuclear technology, and advanced electronics, aiming to curb India's nuclear and military capabilities.

relationship into a strategic partnership such as the counter terrorism cooperation, joint military exercises, establishment of joint forums and groups and the signing of important strategic agreements. In December 2001, the first step towards intensifying military to military cooperation was taken when the Indo-US Defence Policy Group resumed its meetings for the first time since 1998. In these meetings they decided to conduct more joint military exercises including Malabar exercises and promote military education (Hagerty, 2006, pp. 21-23). Followed by this, the High Technology Cooperation Group dialogue began in November 2002 to deal with high technology trade issues and to facilitate the transfer of sophisticated civilian and military technology. In the same year, the USA also initiated a regional security dialogue with India that sought to expand cooperation to include dialogue on ending civil war in Sri Lanka, promoting political stability in Bangladesh and reconstructing Afghanistan. It was also during the same period that both countries conducted military exercises such as the Balance Iroquois exercise of 2002 involving the para commandos of India and supporting units from the US Pacific Command and the Malabar Joint Naval Exercise of 2003, jointly held by naval forces of both countries. In addition to deepening the military to military contacts, the Bush administration has signalled the willingness to sell India various forms of weapon technology including the aircraft engines and artillery locating radar previously denied to India and has established regular diplomatic consultations on matters of common interest such as terrorism, peacekeeping operations, protection of sea lanes and piracy.

The real turning point in India-US relations came in January 2004 with the signing of Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP), which was announced by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President George W. Bush. Considered as a major development in the US strategic orientation towards India, the NSSP provided base for promoting bilateral activities and commerce in space, civil nuclear energy and dual use technology. Later missile defence was added as a

fourth component to the NSSP (Sikri, 2009, p. 175). The importance of this initiative is that it led to the modification of the United States' export licensing policies.

In president Bush's second term, the Indo-US relationship proceeded at a furious pace. The first major turning point in the relationship occurred with the visit of Condoleezza Rice to New Delhi in March 2005. During this visit, she expressed the American desire to help India achieve major power status (Venkateshwaran, 2006, p. 6). This was followed by the signing of a ten-year defence agreement named "New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship" on June 27 2005. This agreement sought to promote bilateral defence trade including technology transfer, as well as joint research, development and production programs. Another major step in the process of improving Indo-US relationship was the visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the US in July 2005. President Bush declared his ambition to achieve full civil nuclear cooperation with India during this visit. In order to achieve this objective, the Bush administration agreed to "seek agreement from Congress to adjust US laws and policies" and "to work with friends and allies to adjust international regime to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India, including but not limited to expeditious consideration of fuel supplies for safeguarded nuclear reactors at Tarapur" (Ministry of External Affairs, 2006). India, as part of fulfilling its responsibility as a nuclear power, promised "to assume the same responsibilities and practices and acquire the same benefits and advantages of other leading countries with advanced nuclear technology" (White House, 2005).

In the same year, a 12 day joint exercise of Indo-US navies, titled SALVEX was held from 13 September to 23 September. As part of this joint exercise, there were also training sessions and professional discussions between the two navies (Venkateshwaran, 2006, p. 4). In addition to this, India and the US signed an umbrella agreement on cooperation in the field of science and technology in October 2005. This agreement, signed by Union Science and Technology Minister

Kabil Sibal and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, was a result of 15 years of intense negotiation by India and the US (Industry Week, 2005)

On 2nd March 2006, the historic nuclear agreement was signed by India and the US, thereby bringing a new dimension to the India US relations. Under the deal the Bush administration agreed to start the necessary steps to allow US and international sales of material and technology to India's civilian nuclear energy industry, including "dual use" items with either civilian or military applications. The necessary steps comprised amending US law and international agreements that prohibited such sales as India had not signed the NPT and had openly violated its goals. The agreement also implied that the United States would appeal to its allies to remove restrictions imposed by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) on India. In return for these concessions, India promised: to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs and place all its civilian nuclear energy facilities under the supervision of IAEA, to maintain a self imposed moratorium on further nuclear weapon testing, and to agree not to sell or transfer to other countries equipment or technology that might be used for nuclear weapons. However, both countries had to work really hard to get the approval of the agreement and its related safeguards clauses at the IAEA or by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Both these steps were preceded by a serious debate in the Indian lower house of parliament in July 2008, with the government narrowly winning the no confidence vote brought against the agreement. Then, the IAEA approved the safeguards agreement on 1st August 2008 and the NSG approved an India specific waiver from its terms on 6 September 2008. Finally, the US senate approved the deal by a vote of 86 to 13 (Malone, 2011, p. 170). The Indo-US nuclear pact has significantly rewritten the rules of the global nuclear regime by underlining India's credentials as a responsible nuclear state that should be integrated into the global nuclear order (Pant, 2016, p. 23). The deal also had some political advantage as it provided an opportunity to India after 50 years to speak in front of the world organizations like WTO, UNO and global monetary lending institutions.

Counter terrorism cooperation and economic relations are two other areas improved during the second term of Bush administration. In the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Mumbai on 26 November 2008, US intelligence agencies have set up offices in India to enable better intelligence collection and sharing between the nations. The first overseas visit of CIA director Leon Panetta was also to India, which is seen as a major step in increasing India-US counter terrorism cooperation. As part of improved economic relationship between the two countries, both the investment and trade increased substantially in 2008. US share in FDI has moved from US \$11.3 million in 1991 to US \$1791.13 million in 2008. India's total trade with the US in the same year was US\$ 43.4 billion.

2.13. Barack Obama

When Barack Obama became the US president on 20 January 2009, Indians viewed it with suspicion. Their main concern was whether President Obama would continue Bush's policy towards India or not. In India also, a new government under the leadership of Manmohan Singh came to power in the same period. Obama certainly did not disappoint Manmohan Singh as he sent Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to India on a five day visit from July 17th -22nd 2009. During her visit, she revived the Strategic Dialogue for strengthening India-US strategic partnership. The Strategic Dialogue was a joint effort to intensify and maintain their cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism, disarmament, trade and investment, science and technology, environmental sustainability, energy security, education, agriculture and healthcare (The Hindu, 2009). This was followed by the 'Singh-Obama Summit' in Washington. President Obama's invitation to Manmohan Singh as the first state guest of his administration was widely viewed as an important milestone in Indo-US relations, since it was the highest honour given to a foreign dignitary by an American President who takes charge after winning presidential elections. During the meeting, both the leaders agreed to broaden educational exchanges by announcing the Obama-Singh Initiative (Mahapatra, 2009, pp. 440-441).

President Obama's visit to India from November 6-9 2009 added further momentum to Indo-US bilateral cooperation and resulted in establishing a solid and long-term framework for their strategic partnership. During the visit, President Obama lifted the restrictions on the Indian organizations including the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Bharat Dynamics, thereby removing the main obstacles in the way of strengthening strategic cooperation between the two countries. In addition, on November 8, during an address to the members of both the Houses of the Parliament, President Obama made it clear that the relationship between United States and India would be the defining partnership of the 21st century. He asserted that India has already been emerged as powerful country in Asia. Importantly, for the first time he declared American support for India's permanent membership in the expanded United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (The Hindu, 2010).

Economic relations and counter terrorism cooperation between the two countries also improved substantially during the first term of Obama administration. In the year of 2011, India emerged as the 13th largest goods trading partner of the US with US\$ 57.8 billion in total goods trade. This total volume in goods trade further increased to US\$ 62.8 billion in 2012, registering a growth of about 9 per cent. Out of this, Indian exports accounted for US\$ 40.5 billion, providing a trade surplus of around US\$ 18 billion to India. As part of strengthening counter terrorism cooperation, both the governments signed Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative (CTCI) on July 23, 2010 (Borah, 2012, p. 120). This initiative provided a platform to both the countries to jointly work across a wide range of areas such as transport security, money laundering, fake currency, terrorist financing, maritime port, cyber security and mega city policing (The Hindu, 2010). The US also ensured India that the United States will continue to insist on

Pak leadership to bring Mumbai attackers to justice and granted Indian investigators access to David Headly.⁸

However, because of multiple reasons, the prior optimism about US-India relations was gradually replaced by scepticism in the first term of Obama administration itself. Firstly, the Indian government did not consider American companies for \$11 billion contract for 126 new Medium Multirole Medium Combat Aircraft (MMRCA). Instead, New Delhi considered European companies. US government officials openly expressed their disappointment for not selecting US based Boeing and Lockheed Martin for consideration. Secondly, among Indian officials, a new concern emerged that the Obama administration was overly focused on US' relations with China in such a manner that minimizes India's influence and visibility. Thirdly, many in India viewed Obama's efforts to strengthen US' ties with Pakistan as harmful to Indian security. Finally, the new US emphasis on non-proliferation and arms control was also considered by Indian leaders as a factor that would lead to pressure on India to join such multilateral initiatives as the CTBT and FMCT.

This scepticism in Indo-US relations got diminished during the second term of Obama administration as it saw the visits of Modi to USA in 2014 and 2015 and the visit of Obama to India in 2015, the signing of defence agreements and the expansion of economic relations. The bilateral cooperation between India and US has intensified, resulted into the broadening of cooperation in areas including trade and investment, clean energy, cyber security, agriculture and health, education and cyber security. During the same period US also emerged as the largest arms supplier to India by overtaking Russia. This new momentum in Indo-US relations was primarily caused by the advent of Modi regime in India, which according to commentators led to a 'qualitative change in the relationship' and a 'fundamental

⁸ David Headley is a Pakistani-American terrorist who played a key role in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which targeted various locations across the Indian city, including hotels, a train station, and a Jewish centre.

transformation' in India's policy towards the US. Since assuming office, Modi has succeeded in creating a strong connection with the American leadership.

Modi's visit to the United States in September 2014 added a new dynamism to Indo-US relations. His approach was different from the past, as he interacted with constituencies beyond the government level, including Indian Americans and the US corporate sector. In an unprecedented manner, he reached out to the 2.8 million strong Indian American community by giving a rockstar address to an audience of more 18000 people at Madison Square Garden in New York and making an appearance at the Global Citizens Festival in Central Park (BBC, 2014). The visit also resulted in other important outcomes such as the renewal of the New Framework in the India-US Defence Relationship 2005, which is set to expire in 2015. Obama declared his administration's support for India's planned National Defence University (NDU). Both the leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation on maritime security and naval technology cooperation. Obama assured Modi that India now meets requirements to join Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) (The Tribune, 2014). During the visit important economic decisions were also made as both the leaders pledged to deepen economic cooperation by setting a target of US\$ 500 billion to be achieved in Indo-US trade and decided to set up a joint program to boost business investment (Mishra, 2014, p. 2).

Modi's visit to the US and interest he took to reach to American Indian communities and the corporate sector did lead to one of the most celebrated visits by any American president to India. In a significant gesture indicating US recognition of India as an emerging power, president Obama visited New Delhi as the chief guest of Republic Day parade on January 26. During the visit, Obama settled the controversial nuclear liability issue between the two countries that helped to resolving the logjam over civilian nuclear cooperation (Ramachandran, 2015). The two countries also decided to start co-development and, joint production of military equipment as per the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI). Under this initiative, four pilot projects have already been

selected: Raven Mini UAVs, mobile hybrid power source, chemical/bio protection gear, and roll on roll off intelligence and surveillance modules for C-130J aircraft. Lastly, the visit also resulted in the signing of some of the key agreements by two countries including an agreement on setting up a joint clean energy research and development centre, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP), Global Disease Protection Centre (GDPC) and energy cooperation and a pact on technical cooperation for the study of monsoon (Pant, 2016, p. 56).

In addition to these two high level visits, the second term of Obama administration also witnessed Indo-US relations developing into a “global strategic partnership”, based on shared belief in democratic values and enlarging convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. This new milestone in defence cooperation was achieved as a result of intense interaction between the officials of two countries, the passing of acts including the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) and the upgradation of India as a Major Defence Partner by the US in 2016. In 2015, Carter and Parrikar met four times and laid the foundation of a new and elevated phase of strategic defence cooperation. This was followed by the Strategic and Commerce Dialogue at the level of the External Affairs Ministry and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, which was held on 22 September 2015, in Washington D. C. The National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) was passed in December 2016 by the US House of Representatives by 375-34 votes. This act was intended to promote defence trade, co-production and co-development of military equipment between the two (The Indian Express, 2016). There were also provisions to expand military to military engagement and the resolution of impediments to bilateral security cooperation. Finally, in December 2016, Washington declared India as a Major Defence Partner. According to the joint statement, it “institutionalize the progress made to facilitate defence trade and technology sharing with India to a level at par with that of the United

States' closest partner and ensure enduring cooperation into the future" (Kaura, 2017).

2.14. Donald Trump

When Donald Trump became the US president in January 2017, every major Obama policy was either reversed or put on hold. This caused considerable anxiety among Indian policy makers in the first few months of Trump presidency about a possible break from the momentum achieved by the Obama in Indo-US relations. However, this did not happen and on the contrary, Trump administration's maiden National Security Strategy (NSS) considered India "a leading global power" (The White House, 2017). As evident from the signing of various important defence agreements, the Trump era ensured the continuity of the momentum of past decades on issues of defence interoperability and security cooperation. Trump also continued the US policy of considering India as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific.

During the Trump administration, economic relations between India and the US marked by issues as well as improvements. The trade disputes emerged because Trump administration considered bilateral trade deficit with India seriously and criticized India for a range of "unfair" trading practices including imposing high tariffs on the products from the United States (. To counter this, the Trump administration imposed tariffs on steel imports from India and stopped preferential access for Indian products. In retaliation to this, India imposed tariffs on 28 products imported from the United States in June 2019. Also, a trade deal to address issues reportedly neared conclusion in 2020, but did not come into effect. Despite these issues, the trade between India and US improved in 2019 (Congressional Research Service, 2020, p. 14-15). The total goods and services trade between India and US in 2019 were \$146.1 billion, out of which India imported \$58.6 billion worth of goods and services and exported \$87.4 billion worth of goods and services. In the same year, foreign direct investment to India from the US also grew 8.1% from 2018 into \$45.9 billion. The major areas of US

investment in India were professional, scientific and technical services, manufacturing and wholesale trade.

Two important breakthroughs in the form of two defence agreements were also occurred during the period of Trump presidency. The first one was the Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA), signed on June 2019. This agreement had much strategic value for India as it allows India access to advanced communications technology used in US defence equipment and permits real time information sharing between the two countries' militaries. This deal was a result of negotiations spanning a decade. The second deal was the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo Spatial Cooperation (BECA), signed in October 2020 during a 2+2 meeting in New Delhi. It will provide Indian military access to data that are regarded essential for the firing of missiles, armed drones and other targets with precision. In short Indo-US strategic partnership entered a new phase of cooperation during the Trump period.

Trump's visit to India in February 2020 was another positive development in Indo-US relations during the Trump administration. The trip itself was a notable one given the fact that Trump – a leader totally averse to long distance travel actually made this trip. More importantly, he addressed a large audience in a large cricket stadium in the state of Gujarat. In the speech, he highlighted India's political and cultural traditions, thereby generating loud and long applause from the thousands in attendance. The visit also resulted in important achievements in strategic and energy cooperation between the two countries. As part of enhancing strategic cooperation between the two countries, India placed an order for helicopters worth \$3 billion and both the leaders decided to upgrade defence cooperation to the level of interoperability of armed forces by operationalizing the important bilateral agreements. Trump also emphasized the need to strengthen "Quad" consisting of the US, India, Japan and Australia to ensure security in the Indo-Pacific region. Two energy agreements were signed during the visit that marked significant improvements in Indo-US energy cooperation. The first one

consisted of Exxon-Mobil helping India to bolster its natural gas distribution network. The other was a deal by which the US International Development Finance Cooperation (DFC) agreed to assist India to establish a \$600 million financing facility for renewable energy products.

However, certain policies and actions from the part of both India and the US caused tension in the bilateral relationship during the Trump administration. First of all, many statements made by Trump on India including his description of India as a “tariff king”, his complaint that India has “done absolutely nothing” to mitigate climate change, and his gripe that India did not offer required assistance in Afghanistan, created unfavourable conditions for the relations to grow. India’s relations with Russia and Iraq also caused trouble in the Indo-US relations. In a strong violation of US’ interests, India purchased missile defence system from Russia and continued to buy oil from Iran, two of the actions that could trigger US sanctions. Besides, India gave nod to China’s Huawei to participate in 5G network trials in a move that directly hinders US interests.

2.15. Conclusion

During the Cold War period, the global and regional factors played an important role in shaping and determining Indo-US relations. Despite sharing a common democratic tradition, both India and the US could not develop a strong relationship, because of India’s close relationship with the Soviet Union, US tilt towards Pakistan, and India’s first nuclear test in 1974. The relationship was neither close nor bitter for a long period of time. In short, it was a distant relationship, with both the countries not seriously interested in closer ties and Cold War equations appeared to be the main reason behind this. Because of this, Washington and New Delhi were often regarded as “estranged democracies”. The one exception to this was the cooperation in the economic sphere in the form of economic assistance from the US to India.

With the lifting of Cold War geopolitical constraints and the simultaneous opening of India’s economy in the early 1990s, the New Delhi has emerged as an

important player in global politics. The dominance India enjoys in the geography of strategically vital South Asia, its vibrant economy, pluralist society, cultural influence and the growing military power have increased the importance of India in the post-Cold War foreign policy of US. As a result, both the countries took efforts to improve the bilateral relationship, especially in the strategic and economic areas of cooperation. For instance, the bilateral trade in merchandise goods increased from \$5.6 billion in 1990 to \$66.9 billion in 2014. The signing of Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Deal in 2008 was another major breakthrough of the new and improved relations between India and the US. In fact, Stephen P. Cohen argues that the most important factor that is helping the emerging India-US relations is that it's not only based on relations between two governments or administrations but based on societies and economies.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT OF INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

3.1. Introduction

The strategic partnership between India and the USA is a post-Cold War development. The end of the Cold War along with the disintegration of Soviet Union led to changes in the foreign policies of both India and the US. Indian foreign policy, in the 1990s, began to shift away from strict non-alignment policy and adopted a pro-western policy, primarily facilitated by the need for finding necessary resources for economic and military development, as cooperation with Russia was no longer perceived as a viable alternative to Indo-Soviet security cooperation. The USA, on the other hand, confronted with new challenges different from the communist threat, such as emergence of non-traditional security threats including terrorism and climate change. Forging partnerships with emerging countries were accepted as a one of the important strategies of Washington's solutions to effectively counter these threats. As a result, India, as an emerging country, gained importance in the foreign and security policies of the USA, especially since the second tenure of Clinton administration.

These important changes resulted in a new bold era in Indo-US relations, as different from the relations during the Cold War period. Cold War international context was less favorable for initiating and forging strategic relations between the two countries, despite sharing many common features like democracy and pluralism. Of course, there were efforts from both the countries to build such a partnership, but India's inclination towards USSR and US' support to Pakistan stood as important obstacles that made them failures. However, various factors that emerged since the end of Cold War forced both India and the US to establish strategic cooperation between them. In short, the India-US strategic partnership is a result of the changes in various factors that has been predominant in international and domestic levels ever since the end of Cold War.

Therefore, any analysis of Indo-US strategic partnership would be incomplete without making an effort to understand these factors. This chapter examines the major factors that caused changes in the foreign policies of India and the USA towards achieving mutual strategic cooperation between them since the end of Cold War. To accomplish this, it is divided into five sections, with each section explaining the major aspects of a factor. The first section argues that the rise of China as a great power challenges the national interests of both the countries. The second section identifies and explains another international factor – terrorism – as threat to the national security of India and the USA. In the third section, an effort is made to analyze the implications of Indo-US civil nuclear deal for the improvement in the overall relations between India and the USA. The liberalization of Indian economy and its positive impacts on Indo-US relations is examined in the fourth section. Finally, in the last section, the importance attached to India in the post-Cold War foreign and security policy of US is added as an important factor that helped both the countries to expand the scope of their bilateral relationship.

3.2. Rise of China

The contemporary international order is shaped by the rise of China as a great power. Chinese leaders could achieve this status for their country because of the systematic and consistent adoption of economic reforms in the past few decades. These reforms not only allowed China to become the second largest economy, after US but also emerge as a military super power. Although Chinese leaders openly claim that their country's rise to great power status will be a peaceful one, a rapid and large-scale change in the balance of power in China's favor in Asia is a cause of concern for major countries with influence in the region, including India and the USA. Given these conditions, it is in the interest of both India and USA to balance China's rise, as evident in the recent efforts taken by both the countries to bolster security cooperation between them. As far as India is concerned, a lot of continuing issues ranging from unresolved boundary issues to

China-Pakistan axis poses direct threats to its security. However, India was initially not willing to balance China and cooperate with the US, but when Modi government came to power in India, New Delhi's reluctance gave way to active cooperation with the US.

3.2.1 India's Concerns

Ever since the beginning of 21st century, double digit economic growth rates have enabled China to become an economic and military super power. At the present, the GDP of China is around six times bigger than that of India and one estimate suggests that "Chinese GDP expands producing economic growth on the scale of a 'new India' every two years" (Twinning, 2014, p. 172). As the economic power helped China to build its military power, it has widened the strategic gap between India and China, in latter's favor (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2015, pp. 211-212). This emergence of China as a great power has caused an unprecedented geopolitical reality for India: first time since its independence, India confronts a great power at its immediate neighborhood (Tellis, 2015, p.23). The advantage enjoyed by India during the Cold War period – the absence of a great power at its immediate frontier – now seems to be lost with the strengthening of Chinese economic and military systems. Broadly speaking, the major challenges faced by India by the rise of China are six. A brief overview of these challenges is provided below.

First, the Sino-Indian boundary dispute poses serious challenges to India's national security, as it is the only conflict that's still continuing in the post Second World War Asia. The enormous size of land – 47000 sq. mile of Himalayan territory – that is still in dispute between the two countries also makes the problem one of the most important foreign policy challenges for India. In 1962, both the countries fought a war in which India was outrightly defeated. 60 years have passed since the War but both India and China have not been able to find a solution to the problem. As far as India is concerned, the rise of Chinese military prowess around the disputed territory has led to the loss of its hope to settle the dispute in the way in

which India wanted (The Economist, 2012). The root cause of the dispute is the Chinese reluctance to accept the McMahon Line as the boundary line between India and China, resulting in the failure of both countries to draw even a mutually defined Line of Control (LoC) separating India and China (Garver, 2010, p. 241).

China's territorial claim on India's Arunachal Pradesh forms a major part of this territorial dispute, which China considers as Southern Tibet. It can be considered as one of China's strategies to limit India's power and influence as an emerging country (Goswami, 2011, p. 781). Therefore, China adopted an aggressive posture on India's Arunachal Pradesh in the last two decades, as evident in many of its actions such as denying visa to IAS officer from Arunachal Pradesh in 2007 by saying that the officer is a citizen of China (The Financial Express, 2007), opposing the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal in 2009 (Mukherjee, 2009) and renaming of six places in Arunachal Pradesh in 2017 (Business Standard, 2017). China also includes the claim on Arunachal Pradesh within its domestic political narrative of 'lost territories'.¹ This narrative's aim is to help Chinese leaders to regain territories that in their opinion belonged to China historically. Disturbingly for India, in this manner, Beijing equates its claim on Arunachal with that of Taiwan.

Presently, the development activities taken by both India and China around the border is a major cause of standoffs between the two countries, as India views Chinese infrastructure development as a threat to its security and China does not allow upgradation of infrastructure on the Indian side. Two of the recent standoffs are worth mentioning here because of the intensity of the conflicts and the long time taken for resolving them. The first standoff occurred in July 2017, when India tried to block Chinese efforts to construct a road in Doklam (Hindustan Times, 2017). Chinese activities in this area was viewed by India as part of its attempts to take control of Silliguri Corridor which connects Northeast from the rest of India. The second standoff, started in 2020, led to direct clashes between Indian and

¹ China's "lost territories" refer to regions that were once under Chinese control but were ceded to other countries through treaties or conflicts, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet, Aksai Chin, and disputed areas in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

Chinese troops resulting in casualties in both sides. This standoff was caused by the Chinese objection to road construction by India in the Galwan river valley.

Second, China-Pakistan strategic partnership limits India's ambitions to emerge as global power. This partnership is based on the mutual consensus by both the countries to balance against India's rising power in South Asian subcontinent. To Pakistan, a solid partnership with China helps it to build its military power in order to fill the huge military gap with India. China, on the other hand, considers Pakistan as important partner in its efforts to counter Indian might in the subcontinent. The China-Pakistan partnership also threatens India's security by creating a potential two front theater during the time of war with either China or Pakistan (Garver, 2000, p. 188). As a country that is struggling to become a global power, India finds the consistent and strong diplomatic, economic, and military support extended by China to Pakistan as challenging towards realizing its ambitious foreign policy goals.

The defence cooperation is the major component of this partnership between China and Pakistan. In the last two decades, China could become the largest arms supplier to Pakistan. It has provided technology assistance to Pakistan and assisted Pakistan to establish large weapons production factories. Pakistan's military modernization is also supported by Chinese help, as China not only cooperated with Pakistan in producing advanced armaments such as fighter jets and guided missile frigates but also providing M II missiles to Pakistan (James Martin Center for Non Proliferation Studies, 2009). In another unprecedented development, China and Pakistan conducted a joint naval exercise off Shanghai, in November 2003. The importance of this exercise lies in the fact that China had not conducted joint exercise with any other country before. In 2012, China signed an agreement with Pakistan to sell eight S2 type conventional submarines and allowed Pakistan to use Beidou – 2 satellite system of navigation. This development created alarms in New Delhi as it helped Pakistan to bolster its naval deterrence against India (Ansari, 2015).

The economic cooperation between China and Pakistan is expanding, because of the large-scale Chinese investments in Pakistan's infrastructural projects. In particular, Chinese investment in deep water in Gwadar, construction of which is completed in 2021, has much strategic implications to other countries, as its location is at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. For India, it weakens its strategic position in the Arabian Sea, as it has been noted by some that Gwadar port helps China to monitor Indian movements in the Arabian Sea and the US-Indian maritime cooperation in and around Indian Ocean (Haider, 2005). Another fact that worries India because of the increasing Sino-Pak economic cooperation is that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Both the countries ignored India's reservations about it and moved forward with the project, which involves construction of transport corridor connecting western China and Pakistan. It is planned as a project that will help China to access Arabian Sea, thereby enabling China to directly transport oil supplies from the Middle East. To Pakistan, the completion of this project will accelerate its economic development by bringing revenues for acting as a channel for connecting Central Asia with Beijing.

In addition, China has been trying to alter the nuclear balance in the subcontinent in Pakistan's favor (The Times of India, 2000). The role of China has been so crucial in the development of Pakistan's nuclear program. It helped Pakistan at a time when Pakistan found it difficult to gather nuclear technology and materials from other countries due to the rigid export control mechanisms in those countries. Even though China is a member of Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), China has provided nuclear materials and expertise to Pakistan and extended help in setting up nuclear facilities in Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme can rightly be considered as an extension of the Chinese one (Chang, 2010). China has adopted a stance of outrightly rejecting any claim of Chinese assistance to Pakistan. However, the key person of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, A Q Khan, acknowledged the generous support provided by China to the development of his

country's nuclear weapons programme by gifting 50kg of weapons grade enriched uranium, design of nuclear weapons and large amount of uranium hexafluoride (Smith & Warrick, 2009).

Third, the rapid expansion and modernization of Chinese military and infrastructure over the last few decades have enhanced the national power of China considerably, thereby causing serious mismatches in the military capabilities of China vis a vis India. This modernization encompassed both hardware and software of the PLA as accompanied by double digit growth in the budget allocation for defense. As a result, China has emerged as an important power to deal with in the Asia-Pacific region for India. It is widely accepted that from 1999 onwards the PLA has been making efforts to transform from a large infantry based armed force to that of a force capable of projecting power abroad. As part of this strategy, on January 10 2007, China successfully carried out an anti-satellite missile test.² On the same day in 2010, China also conducted an interceptor missile test. Chinese efforts to upgrade the PLAN and the PLAAF can also be considered as part of this strategy. The PLAAF's primary function in the past was to act as a support force. But from the 1990s onwards, China has begun to develop it as an assault force by adding advanced helicopters, and enhancing its air strike capabilities. Similarly, the Chinese navy's primary role as a coastal force in the past was changed into a navy with the potential to project power into Indian Ocean and help China to emerge as a maritime power. As a result of consistent reforms in the past two decades, the Chinese navy achieved the status of third largest navy in the world, after US and Russia, and enjoys dominance over Indian navy. It now includes a large scale platform and weapon procurement programme, comprising of programs for ASBMs, anti-ship and land attack cruise missiles, mines, submarines, aircraft carriers, frigates, patrol crafts, etc. (Rourke, 2015).

² In 2007, China conducted an anti-satellite missile test, destroying its defunct Fengyun-1C weather satellite in low Earth orbit, creating significant space debris. The test raised international concerns about the militarization of space and the long-term risks posed by the debris to other satellites.

Another fact that makes Chinese military capabilities a challenge for India is the development of border infrastructure along the Indo-China border by China, as suggested by the Indian government's own China study group that China can now move more than 10000 troops to Indian border within a short period of 20 to 25 days. In the past it took China three to six months for doing the same (Unnithan, 2011). The construction of 30000 kms of strategic roads in the Chinese side of the border enabled China to do this. The region is also witnessing the development of fully operational air fields by China. As a result, the force projection capabilities of China have enlarged considerably in the last two decades. Many in India view these developments in the context of shift in China's military doctrines, particularly the doctrine of "Local Wars Under Informationalised conditions," a euphemism for small scale wars (Kondapalli, 2012, p. 98).

Fourth, China tends to oppose the notion of the Indian Ocean being seen as an area of India's complete control and influence. Even though it shares equal interests with India as far as ensuring the security of the region is concerned, Beijing has taken serious efforts in the past two decades to strengthen its influence in the Indian Ocean region (Krupakar, 2017, p. 39). Indian strategic analysts view the efforts taken by China to establish naval and commercial facilities in Bangladesh, building of strategically important port at Gwadar, Pakistan, construction of naval bases in Burma, and development of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka as part of grand Chinese strategy of strategic encirclement of India. The important problem is whether these states allow China to use these facilities against India during the time of an Indo-China war. In the event of China-India war, the neutrality of these states cannot always be ensured. In particular, the chances are higher that Pakistan use such an opportunity to secure its objectives disturbs India's security calculations to a large extent.

Besides, in the recent past, China has already given enough indications of its desire to expand its influence into the Indian Ocean: in September 2014, Beijing sent a song class submarine to Colombo, and in June 2015, a yong class submarine

visited Karachi (Arasakumar, 2006, pp. 61-62), and in 2017 Beijing secured its first ever naval base in the Indian Ocean region by establishing a permanent military base in Djibouti (Chaudhuri, 2012). This growing influence of China was evident even in the rescue missions for the Malaysian jetliner MH 370 in April 2014, as China deployed eight important naval warships in this operation. China was not able to do so a decade back made this presence alarming for India (Krishnan, 2014).

Fifth, the failure of India to play the leadership role in South Asia has been utilized by China by making consistent efforts over the last few years to project itself as an alternative to India. China, at the present, is more deeply engaged in South Asia than it has been in the past. Importantly, China could gain strategic advantage over India by creating dependence on China for defence supplies among South Asian states, as evident in the supply of T-59/T-69/T-85 tanks, anti-aircraft gun system and other defence related equipment by China to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In the past only Pakistan among India's neighbors used its relations with China to secure its strategic interests against India. China Pakistan intense cooperation in the nuclear sphere can be considered as the highest point of this partnership. But, currently the strategy of using China to challenge the regional dominance of India has been actively pursued by Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh to varying degrees. As a result, China found an opportunity to limit India within the straight jacket of a mere "South Asian Power" by offering all kinds of economic and military support to these three states, thereby preventing India from asserting its regional supremacy.

Finally, China also adopted a policy of not accepting India's rise as a major power in international system and is extremely reluctant to accommodate India in international organizations and regimes as an equal country. China does not allow the inclusion of India in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Except China, all other veto powers in the UNSC have supported India's candidature for permanent membership of the UNSC. China, however, has consistently sought to weaken this consensus by adding unacceptable conditions for UNSC's expansion

(Malik, 2012, pp. 289-90). Beijing also made efforts to prevent the emergence of India as a nuclear power by refusing to discuss nuclear matters with India because of the possibility of such an action leading to the recognition of India as a nuclear power. It has been insisting over the past two decades that India must give up its nuclear program and sign Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state, in accordance with the UN resolution 1172 (Pant, 2018). In addition to this, China also tried to scuttle the Indo-US nuclear deal at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2008. It was only under strong American pressure that Beijing finally agreed to the deal at the NSG. However, China has been constantly trying to thwart India's efforts to be a member of the grouping that regulates the global trade of nuclear technology and material (Joshi, 2013).

It is evident from the above discussion that the rise of China as a great power has resulted in a variety of challenges for Indian foreign policy and national security. In such a context, structural realist theory of balancing, which stipulates that states in an anarchic international system engage in an act of balancing in order to protect its national interests against a rising power (Donnelly, 2005, p. 38), can be applied to understand India's actions to balance against the expanding Chinese military and economic capacity. According to this theory, states have no choice but to balance against a dominant power through both internally, by bolstering the systems ensuring national security, and externally, through building partnerships and alliances. India has already taken efforts to strengthen its military infrastructure and systems through allocating more financial capital into it and the attempts by it to build solid strategic partnerships with major powers, such as USA and Japan can rightly be considered as part of its strategy of externally balancing against China (Mohan, 2013).

3.2.2 US' Concerns

In the post-Cold War world, the rise of China as a great power has led to making it the default adversary of the US. Presently, it is the power against which Washington measures itself militarily and economically. US leaders over the past

two decades expected that economic reforms in China would make it a democratic country. However, it is widely accepted among the American public and elites, at the present, that China's economic reforms have not only failed to bring democracy into China but have also given China the required military might to challenge the geopolitical primacy of the US (The White House, 2018). It is evident from the ongoing expansion of Chinese economy and military that it could become the most powerful adversary Washington ever dealt with. It is estimated that the GDP and defense budget of China could surpass those of the US in the next 20 years (Dobbins, 2012, p. 10). Therefore, China could, if it decides, achieve the status of a more powerful opponent of the US than either the Soviet Union or Germany.

Some scholars view this current strategic competition between US and China in the framework of power transition theory. This theory holds that rising powers are more likely to come into conflict with other powers when they make efforts to gather raw materials and establish military bases (Schweller, 1999). Hence, power transition causes a substantial risk to the international system's stability, as even the local or regional conflicts will be seen as part of a global rivalry for dominance. The conflict can also result from a belief in US that rising China will definitely challenge the existing international order and dominance of US in it, forcing the former to take countermeasures in the form of building alliances and partnerships with likeminded countries.

Two regional issues with a potential to cause direct military confrontation between USA and China are Chinese growing assertive behavior in South China Sea and its claim over Taiwan. In the case of Taiwan, China fears that America will use its power to challenge Chinese claim over Taiwan. This issue is the most troublesome issue in China-US relations as China will strongly oppose any US effort to weaken Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan at any cost (Roy, 2003, p. 71-72). In fact, the modernization of PLA itself is clearly aimed at dealing with a possible clash with the US over Taiwan. The potential of this conflict to cause a direct military conflict between both the countries was underscored by the crises of 1995 and

1996, when China tried to intimidate Taipei by firing short range ballistic missiles into the waters near Taiwan. It led to a crisis when Washington deployed two carrier battle groups, which was considered as extremely aggressive by Beijing at that time. The growing assertive behavior of China in the South China Sea during the past two decades has provided enough indications of the growing military prowess of China and its ambition to act as the major force in defining the Asia-Pacific maritime order. It also demonstrated that China is adopting a policy of excluding other countries, as it established military outposts on artificial islands, engaged in a standoff with US navy in March 2009 and dispatched patrol ships to the Senkaku's island in September 2001 as a response to Japanese government's purchase of three islands from the private owner (Harlan & Yang, 2011).

China also opposes the current international order shaped by the US and its liberal allies. In the place of current international order dominated by the US, China clearly wants to establish a multipolar order in which China will be one of the major powers. As a first step towards achieving this objective, Beijing hope to replace the dominant position of the US in the Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, it totally stands against the US military bases and military alliances in the region. This new approach was clearly visible in the address of Xi Jinping at the fourth summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). During the address, he stressed that security problems in Asia should be solved eventually by Asians themselves through systematic cooperation, thereby outrightly rejected the US intervention in the region (Jinping, 2014). This new orientation is backed by the expansion of Chinese military capabilities in the region. A US department of defense report in August 2015 highlighted that PLA Navy (PLAN) boasts the largest number of vessels in Asia, excluding the US Navy. It currently possesses more than 300 surface ships, submarines and patrol craft (US Department of Defense, 2015, p. 10). Beijing also deployed conventional ballistic missiles targeted against US power projection systems in the Asia-Pacific region and made large scale investments to upgrade its air defense system against US air strikes (Friedberg, 2014, p. 16-17).

3.3. Terrorism

Terrorism has posed serious challenges to the national security of both India and USA over the past two decades. Hence, it acted as an important factor that necessitated deep counter terrorism cooperation between these two countries. The nature of new terrorist activities was different from the past, as it acquired an international character of spreading in many countries. As a result, the fact that no state was in a position to effectively counter this new threat without cooperating with other states forced both US and India to strengthen counter terrorism efforts such as intelligence sharing, technology cooperation and legal assistance. Both India and USA face the threat of terrorism from diverse sources. Of these sources, naxalism is the most important terrorist threat in India and the US is struggling to cope with security issue of right-wing extremism, as the following section highlights.

3.3.1 Terrorist Threat in India

Over the past two decades, terrorism has emerged as one of the most important threats to India's national security. Every year terrorist attacks take away the lives of hundreds of Indian people, including both civilians and military personnel. For instance, in 2016 alone, 364 people died because of terrorist attacks. These attacks cause deep security and political concern in India not only because of the casualties that result from such attacks, but also because they led to serious tensions between India and Pakistan (Rajakumar, 2017, p. 48). Currently, India faces terrorist threats from both indigenous and transnational terrorist groups. These threats come from inside as well as outside of the country, making it what is often referred to in the western countries as 'hybrid' threats (Frank G Hoffman, 2009). The three types of groups constituting this threat are Maoists, insurgent groups in North East and extremist religious groups.

The Maoist insurgency of the Communist Party of India – Maoist (CPI-M) remains to be the most severe domestic security threat to India's national security. As in 2009, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called it as "biggest security

threat to India” (Kausay, Munir, Mehta, Bukhari, & Spittel, 2011, p. 19). Facts regarding Maoist violence in India underscores this: from 1999 to 2018, 13834 persons have been lost their lives in Maoist violence in India (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018), and in 2009, the movement, at its worst, affected 223 of the 640 districts in India (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2009). In the last two decades, they have made successful attacks against security forces, public facilities and civilians. For doing this, they used tactics such as shootings, ambush, vandalism, and attacks using IEDs. At the present, the left-wing extremism is weakening with the geographical area under Maoist influence dropped from 96 districts in 2010 to 41 in 2021 (Press Information Bureau, 2021). However, the rebels still retain the capacity to carry out major attacks as evident in the attack on para military personnel in Bastar in March 2021 and in April same year, they killed 22 police personnel in an ambush in Sukma district.

Insurgency in North Eastern states of India is the second most important internal security threat faced by India since its independence. It caused a large number of casualties in India: from 1992 to 2019 21635 people died in the various attacks and violence by the multiple insurgent groups in India’s North East. Since India’s independence, 22 major outfits and 116 insurgent groups have come into existence in the region (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2014). These insurgency groups can be further classified into three categories – the originals, the outgrowths and vacuum fillers (Routray, 2022, p. 305). The prominent outfits in the originals category are United Liberation Front of Asom (ASOM) and the NNC in Nagaland. These outfits stood for the complete independence from India or a separate state from an existing state because of the marginalization of indigenous population (Routray, 2022, p. 366). The outgrowths, on the other hand, are groups formed by sections within an original group because of the latter’s decision to agree to peace negotiations with the government. The NSCN can be considered as an important outfit of this category, as it came into existence when some NNC cadres refused to support the outfit’s signing of Shillong accord with the government in 1975 (South

Asia Terrorism Portal, 1975). The vacuum fillers are different from the above two categories in that their activities mostly focus on pecuniary benefits and they may or may not share linkages with existing groups. The Garo National Liberation Army is a major outfit that belongs to this category.

The Islamic terrorism is the major threat faced by India as part of religious extremism. This threat primarily comes from outside of the country – Pakistan and Bangladesh, and multiple terrorist organizations constitute to this threat in multiple ways. Prominent terrorist groups among them are Al Qaeda, Indian Mujahideen, Jaish E Muhammad, Lashkar E Toiba, and D Company. In the first ten years of 21st century, Al Qaeda emerged as the most important Jihadist terrorist group in India. During this period, it had successfully carried out attacks including the Indian parliament attack in 2001, and train blasts in Mumbai in 2006 (Rajakumar, 2016, p. 10). Indian Mujahideen is another important terrorist group in terms of attacks. It is responsible for German Bakery attack in Pune in 2010, that killed 17 people and attack in Mumbai on 13 July 2011 (Tankel, 2014). Jaish E Muhammad recently got high attention in Indian media following the suicide attack on the CRPF convoy on 14 February 2019 in Pulwama district of Kashmir, killing 40 people (Yasir & Habib, 2019). Lashkar E Taiba, another Pakistan based terror group, launched the Mumbai attacks in November 2008. It was one of the most lethal terrorist attacks on Indian soil, as 10 Lashkar terrorists attacked two hotels, a railway station, a Jewish community center and a café. While these terrorist organizations main attacks occurred in the post 2000s, the crime syndicate D Company carried out its attack in Mumbai in March 1993. It was an attack comprising of car, scooter and suitcase bomb blasts, resulting in the death of 257 people, making it the deadliest terrorist attack in Indian history.

3.3.2 Terrorist Threat in the USA

The main terrorist threat faced by USA stems from lone offenders, and small cells of individuals. The two categories of extremists constituting this threat are Domestic Violent Extremists (DVEs) and Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs)

who are inspired by the foreign terrorist groups (US Department of Homeland Security, 2020, p. 17). Till the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the United States had largely been free from the threats posed by foreign terrorist groups.³ In the period from 1950s to 1990s, most of the groups that posed challenges to US security were indigenous groups run by the US citizens. These groups' activities were aimed to keep casualty rate low and publicity high. However, this trend changed with the Federal Office bombing in April 1995, that killed 168 people (Robertson, 2007, p. 86). Since then, various forms of terrorism – religious terrorism, eco-terrorism, right wing extremism, left wing extremism has caused serious security challenges to US and resulted in large scale casualties.

The religious terrorists killed a greater number of people in USA – 3086 people – in the last two decades. This large number of casualties is primarily the result of attacks on September 11 2001, as it caused 2977 deaths (Jones, 2020, p. 5). This surprise attacks on World Trade Center and the Pentagon was the result of Osama bin Laden's efforts to attack US over a period of three years. Osama Bin Laden founded Al Qaeda as a terrorist organization aimed at establishment of a global Islamic state. Towards achieving this end, he declared war against the main enemy – the USA. Even before the attack, Al Qaeda had already made three attacks against the US. The first two attacks were against US embassies in Dares-Salam and Nairobi in 1998. Two years later, Al Qaeda attacked USS Cole in Aden, Yemen, killing 17 people. Presently, religious terrorism that comes from home grown Salafi jihadists inspired by the ideologies of Al Qaeda and Islamic State as some of the recent terrorist attacks in there shows. On 12 June 2016, Omar Mateen, an American born Muslim citizen killed 49 people in an attack at the Pulse night club in Orlando (Jacobs, 2017). Barak Obama later confirmed that he was deeply inspired by the ideas of various religious extremist groups. Similarly, on 31 October 2017

³ Before the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, the United States had been relatively insulated from large-scale attacks by foreign terrorist groups. While there had been incidents involving terrorism, such as the hijacking of planes in the 1970s and attacks on U.S. embassies, the bombing marked a significant turning point, signalling the growing threat of international terrorism on U.S. soil.

Saifullo Saipov drove a rented pickup truck into runners and cyclists, in Manhattan, killing 8 people. FBI later described the attack as a terrorist attack by a religious extremist (Jacobs, 2017).

The eco terrorist groups emerged as a threat to US in the late 1990s. Their main demands were to preserve forests, end scientific testing on animals and ban wearing of fur. The two prominent groups belong to this category are Animal Liberation Front (ALF), and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). In the period from 1990 to 2005, these two groups carried out 1200 criminal attacks that resulted in more than \$110 million in damage. While the ALF attacks were directed primarily against medical testing laboratories and meat packing companies, the ELF attacked logging companies and car dealerships (FBI, 1999). Therefore, the FBI considers both ELF and ALF as terrorist groups with a goal of bringing social and political change through using force and violence (Jarbee, 2002).

The right-wing terrorism is the most severe terrorist problem in the US, as they have been responsible for majority of attacks and plots - 57% - since 1994. The groups belonging to this category can be classified into three: white supremacists, anti-government terrorists and anti-women extremists. The dominant characteristic of this threat is that the threat primarily come from individuals. For instance, anti-government activist Louis Beam advocated an organizational structure that he called “leaderless resistance”, as a means to attack the US Government (Jones, 2020, p. 6). White supremacists’ activities are aimed at protecting the privileged status of white people and preserve their social control over other races. They strongly oppose any govt policies that is intended to ensure racial or ethnic integration, provide more access to economic and political resources for other races, and enhance cultural diversity (Cooter, 2006). In August 2019, in a major incident, a white supremacist killed 22 people in a Walmart in an effort to stop “Hispanic invasion” of the USA. The second groups of people belong to right wing extremism are anti-government extremists that includes militias and the sovereign citizen movement. They consider US govt as corrupt as well as a

threat to their freedom and rights. In order to challenge the US government's primacy, they try to attack public places and institutions. For example, in August 2017, a 23-year-old man named Jeremy Varnell attempted to detonate a bomb outside of an Oklahoma bank in the name of starting the next revolution (Jones, 2020, p. 8). The third category of groups belong to right wing extremism are anti-women activists called celibates or incels. They engage in acts of violence against the women in the belief that women are responsible for hierarchy in American society. The violent acts of these groups include killing of nine women at a community college in Oregon in 2015 by Harper Mercer, and in 2018 November, 40-year-old Scott Beierle murdered two women in a yoga studio in Tallahassee (Jones, 2020, p. 9).

In addition to right wing extremism, left wing terrorism also poses threats to the US. It includes the use of violence by sub national or non-state groups that oppose capitalist and imperialist ideologies, support communist or socialist ideologies or work towards establishing anarchist systems. In the past, these groups carried out attacks against government and capitalist targets. The antifa network is an example of left-wing extremism in USA. It is a decentralized network of left extremists that strongly oppose what they consider as fascist or racist tendencies in the mainstream politics or social life in the US. They have been very much active in protests and rallies in the last 10 years. These rallies often turned violent, as in June 2016, an antifa protestor confronted a far-right rally in Sacramento, CA, resulting in the stabbing of five people during the clash.

3.4. Civil Nuclear Deal

The Civil Nuclear Deal between India and US has helped to remove the most important irritant in the relations between both the countries, thereby improved the relationship in all aspects. Therefore, it can be considered as one of the most important factors that enabled enhanced strategic partnership between India and USA. It was the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998 and the consequent effects of such an action that necessitated the signing of a comprehensive deal. In

the aftermath of India's nuclear tests in 1998, the US was left with two options. The first option was to impose sanctions on India to force it to end its nuclear weapons program. The second option was to accommodate India into the existing nuclear regime by providing concessions (Varadarajan, 2005). Although Washington adopted the first option initially, later it resorted to the second option by offering the civilian nuclear deal. It can be considered as rational choice made by the US in the belief that no sanctions would have been able to force India to give up its nuclear weapons program.

The process that resulted in the Civil Nuclear Deal started with the joint statement on July 18 2005, signed by former Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh and former President of USA George Bush. This joint statement not only granted formal recognition by USA of India as a state with advanced nuclear technology, but also resulted in the commitment to establish full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India. In March 2006, both the leaders signed Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement as a first step to implement the joint statement. This was followed by the Hyde Act of 2006, passed by the US Congress in the same year. The Hyde Act modified the requirements of US Atomic Energy Act to facilitate nuclear cooperation with India. It was followed by the formal passing of US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement by US House of Representatives on 28 August 2008. As a final step to enable international civil nuclear trade with India, an India specific safeguards agreement was passed in IAEA and the NSG eased its guidelines on 6 September 2008.

As per the terms of the nuclear deal, the suppliers of nuclear materials to India were allowed to sell reactors and related components, software and fuel to India. It included a commitment from the part of US to ensure fuel supply for India to help New Delhi to establish a strategic fuel reserve in case fuel supplies from other countries are ever stopped (Bose, 2007, p. 23). New Delhi also secured a US approval to permit India to reprocess fuel supplied from the US, since plutonium can be used to produce nuclear weapons, the US policy is not to allow other

countries to do the same. With this achievement, India became the third exception to it after Japan and EU (Bose, 2007, p. 23). In return for these assurances from the part of the US, India agreed to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities, place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, continue its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, refrain from transferring enrichment and reprocessing to states that do not possess them and work with the US to conclude a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT) (Hosur, 2010, p. 438).

The positive implications of the nuclear deal for India and Indo-US relations are so deep and wide. It liberated India from the four decades of denial in accessing nuclear technologies and fuel, as former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in the Lok Sabha that “the nuclear agreement will end India’s nuclear isolation and apartheid” (The Hindu, 2008). He further made it clear that the agreements concluded with the US would help India to enter into nuclear trade with all the countries for civilian use without compromising on the development of nation’s strategic nuclear weapons program. Without such an agreement, India would never be able to fully integrate into the international system, strategically, economically and politically. The nuclear deal also helped to strengthen the strategic relations between India and US. Primarily because it led to more confidence in New Delhi in the reliability of US as a partner and supplier of sensitive technologies to India.

3.5. Liberalization of Indian Economy

The economic reforms undertaken by Narasimha Rao government in early 1990s can be considered as another most important factor that facilitated enhanced cooperation between USA and India in all aspects, especially the strategic and economic aspects. Because of the opening up of Indian economy for global trade, the US policy makers began to attach more importance to India. This new economic policy was the result of a foreign exchange crisis experienced by India in the 1990, caused primarily by the Gulf War. It involved a drop in earnings and remittances from the Gulf and rise in fuel prices, which forced then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and then Finance Minister Manmohan Singh to take a

strong decision to lift industrial and trade controls and allow foreign investment into the country. They also introduced drastic changes into the banking sector and areas of Rupee convertibility vis a vis foreign currencies (Timberg, 1998, p.125). As a result, trade with foreign countries and the flow of FDIs to India improved substantially, thereby making India one of the top emerging markets in the world.

Since India's economic reforms, US exports to India increased from around \$2 billion in 1991 to \$3.3 billion in 1995 and imports from India to US rose from \$3.1 billion to \$5.7 billion in the same period (Timberg, 1998, p.125). The US direct investment to India also rose from \$372 million in 1990 to \$818 million in 1994. This positive impact on Indo-US economic relations has helped both the countries to enhance the economic and political relations, as India has assumed a new priority for the US policy. It also opened new opportunities for the US companies to interact with Indian counterparts and will certainly create new jobs in both US and India. In other words, it can be argued that the economic reforms of India have led to the strengthening of bilateral economic relations between India and US and the old US policy of neglecting India changed into one of giving importance to India based on its track record as a stable democracy and its new role as an emerging economy.

3.6. Shifting Post-Cold War US Policy Towards India

The post-Cold War US foreign policy attached much significance for building closer strategic and economic partnership with India. The disintegration of Soviet Union and the consequent decline of Pakistan as a partner of US led to this policy shift. For the first time since India's independence, America recognized the role of India for achieving its own national interests: promotion of democracy and free market economy. From George Bush Sr to Donald Trump, this pragmatic US policy shift is clearly visible. During the tenure of George Bush Sr, the foundations for building strategic cooperation between India and the US were laid in the form of Kickleigher proposals, brought forth by former US Pacific Commander Clade Kickleigher in April 1991. The Kickleigher proposals aimed to promote Indo-US

defence cooperation through joint seminars, training and setting up of steering committees, thereby making such a cooperation different from the nature of defence ties India established with the former Soviet Union. As a result of this proposals joint steering committees of Army, Navy and Air Force were established and visit of military officers to each other's military installations and facilities increased.

The efforts taken to enhance Indo-US strategic cooperation during the period of George Bush Sr was further continued during the two terms of Bill Clinton to the extent of transforming the relationship into that of a partnership, although the US sanctions on India in the wake of its nuclear tests in 1998 temporarily halted its progress. Some of the significant developments that happened in Indo-US relations during the Clinton presidency not only signaled a new policy orientation towards India by Washington but also laid the strong foundations upon which the next President George Bush Jr built a solid partnership. As on January 12 1995, both the countries concluded an Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations, which highlighted a new strategic understanding and set out a three-year program of military exchanges. It also started discussion towards exploring opportunities for promoting trade of defence equipment. The second turning point occurred during the time of Kargil War of 1999, when Clinton forced Pakistan to withdraw its forces across the LoC in Kashmir near Kargil (Riedel, 2010, p. 138). Such an intervention from the part of US was unexpected and therefore very much impressed Indian leaders. This was followed by the Clinton's visit to India in March 2000. A number of agreements were signed and both Clinton and Vajpayee issued a joint "vision statement", thereby allowing New Delhi and Washington to start a new strategic partnership.

When George W. Bush became US president in January 2001, doubts emerged among Indian policy makers about the continuity of Clinton's pro India policy by the new republican administration. However, Bush president recognized India's role for achieving the most important objectives of his presidency, namely

the war on terrorism and promotion of democracy, and balancing China's rising power. He transformed India-US relations through concluding a civil nuclear deal and thereby removed the most important obstacle in Indo-US relations. The US' war on terrorism also helped to bolster Indo-US ties, as the political dialogue between India and US have been increased and improved cooperation on issues involving Afghanistan and Pakistan. A number of official visits by military and political leaders of the two countries took place. Moreover, on September 22 2001 the USA removed many of the technology sanctions imposed on India because of India's nuclear tests in 1998 (Guihog, 2005, p. 280). The results of these policies were that USA for the first time viewed India as an emerging power that needs to be integrated into the existing international system by openly assuring that it would help India emerge as a major power in the present century.

During the two tenure of Obama administration, Washington's policy towards India was marked by a number of achievements and developments. First, during his visit to India in Nov 2010, Obama declared US' support for India's bid for permanent membership on the UN Security Council (Wax & Lakshmi, 2010). Second, Obama promised to support India's efforts to be a member of non-proliferation regimes such as the NSQ, MTCR and Australia Group. Third, he initiated a high level strategic dialogue cochaired by Indian foreign minister and US foreign secretary. This strategic dialogue included mutual dialogues on important matters such as trade, defence cooperation, and education. Fourth, the US' 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) attached much importance for India in US' efforts to achieve its strategic objectives (US Department of Defense, 2014). In this report, India was considered as an important partner of the US and therefore mentioned along with traditional allies of the US such as Japan and Australia. Finally, India has been regarded as a "linchpin" of US' pivot to Asia policy⁴ aimed at countering China's growing power in the region. The one underlying factor that

⁴ The pivot to Asia policy emphasized strengthening U.S. economic, diplomatic, and military engagement in Asia, recognizing the region's growing geopolitical importance, especially in light of China's rising influence and regional security challenges.

caused the US to include India in its strategic policies during this period is the realization from the part of US policy makers that many of the global challenges faced by the US are India's regional challenges too, thereby making India ideal partner for exerting influence and providing resources to counter these challenges (Council on Foreign Relations, 2011, p. 3).

The Trump administration continued the pro India policy of the Obama period, primarily through two new foreign policy strategies, unveiled in 2017. Those were 'South Asia Strategy' and 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy'. The South Asia strategy framed a new approach towards resolving the Afghanistan crisis in which the role of India and Pakistan were emphasized. It expanded India's role as an economic and development partner of Afghanistan (Ayres, 2019). In the free and open Indo-Pacific strategy, India was viewed as one of the four critical anchors for ensuring order and stability in the region, by expanding the geographic scope of the region to include India (Ayres, 2019). It was also during the Trump presidency that US took a position supportive of India during the Pulwama, Balakot and Ladakh incidents. The Trump administration supported India's right to self defense during the Pulwama terrorist attack, compelled Pakistan to release Indian Air Force pilot who accidentally entered into Pakistan after an air skirmish with Pakistan Air Force, and responded positively when India requested military assistance in the wake of Ladakh standoff with China. These three actions from the part of US has profoundly helped to create confidence in India on the reliability of US as a strategic partner (Mohan, 2021).

3.7. Conclusion

From India's independence to the end of Cold War, both India and US failed to develop a strong strategic cooperation between them, despite sharing common features such as democracy and respect for human rights. However, this trend has changed with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. With the end of Soviet Union as an important partner, India confronted with the reality of protecting its national security by cooperating with other powers,

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especially with the US. The interests of both US and India converged on fighting the challenges posed by the rise of China as a great power and growing menace of terrorism, thereby making Indo-US strategic partnership a necessary component in the strategy to deal with these challenges. Other factors including the liberalization of Indian economy in the 1990s, the changed foreign policy orientation of Washington towards India, and Indo-US nuclear deal of 2008 also provided the necessary context for the development of strategic partnership between India and US.

CHAPTER 4

DEFENCE COOPERATION AS THE KEY PILLAR OF THE INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

4.1. Introduction

In the last two decades, as a result of signing of numerous agreements, promotion of bilateral joint military exercises and growing defense trade, the cooperation in the defense sector has become the most important component of the Indo-US strategic partnership. It has also been one of the notable developments in the post-cold war period that manifest the rapidly improving bilateral relationship between the two countries. US' willingness to deepen defense cooperation with India has been the result of its strategy to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region, as remarked by the US Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta during his visit to India in June 2012 that "we will expand our military partnership and our own presence in the arc expanding from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia. Defense cooperation with India is a linchpin in this strategy" (Garmone, 2012). As an emerging power, India strives to achieve the qualitative and technological capabilities of its military by forging a strong defense cooperation with the US.

During the Cold War period, Both India and US could not develop a solid defense partnership because of the fact that the perceptions of both the countries were diverging on various global issues. The cooperation was limited to the provision of military supplies by the US to India during the 1962 Indo-China War, the signing of a MoU on defense technology cooperation in 1985 and the supply of General Electric F-404 – GE engines to India's light combat aircraft project in 1984. However, since the mid 1990s, US – India relations have acquired a new momentum with the Kickleighter Proposals of 1991 and the Agreed Minute of Defense Cooperation in January 1995. These two initiatives promoted bilateral naval exercises and established executive steering groups for all the three branches of the military. But, the bilateral defense cooperation plunged low when India tested its second nuclear device in 1998, and the sanctions on India that led to the

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stoppage of all the bilateral military to military activities and the arms sales to India from US. Fortunately for India, the sanctions did not last long, as the US decided to reconsider its sanctions after an intensive dialogue between US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and India's external affairs minister Jaswant Singh. They met 14 times from 1998 June to 2000 September to discuss nonproliferation and to set a broad vision for building Indo-US relationship.

A major turning point for the development of Indo-US defense cooperation occurred with the 9/11 attack that led to the reorientation of Washington's strategic priorities. In December 2001, senior defense officials from both sides met in New Delhi to revive the cooperation by building on the threads from 1998. This was followed by the setting up of High Technology Cooperation Group in 2002 that dealt with giving approval to 90% of dual use application by India to US. Two more bilateral initiatives in the form of Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) of January 2004, and New Framework for Indo-US Defense Relations of 2005 provided a strong impetus for the expansion of Indo-US defense ties. Since the signing of these two agreements, the bilateral defense ties have grown to include combined exercises with all the three branches of Indian military, signing of key agreements such as Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreements (LEMOA) and Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA), that are aimed to enhance interoperability between the armed forces of both countries, large scale increase in the arms sales from US to India and the efforts taken to co-produce and co-develop military systems.

The Obama administration further strengthened India-US defense cooperation by transforming it from a buyer-seller relationship to that of becoming the most important component of bilateral strategic partnership. In fact, in 2016, Obama administration passed National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2017, which recognized India as America's "major defense partner" and aimed to help the Washington bureaucracy expedite defense licenses concerning India. Because of this new designation, India could also get into America's approved category of Arms Control List, thereby removing the main hindrance in India's efforts to acquire US defense technology. The Trump administration continued the progress achieved

by Obama in Indo-US defense ties by giving License Exception Strategic Trade Authorization – 1 (STA – 1) status to India, another status granted only to its NATO allies, intended to enhancing supply chain efficiency of defense products and developing interoperability between the systems of the two countries.

In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the various facets of this rapidly maturing defense partnership is given, with a focus on examining each component's importance and its challenges. For this purpose, it is divided into three parts. First part deals with the evolution of defense trade from the US to India, particularly since the turn of the new century, by discussing the major developments and its implications for India. In the second part, a detailed analysis of the bilateral joint military exercises as the most important element of the military-to-military interaction between India and US is provided along with importance and limitations. An overview of the major bilateral defense agreements is the content of the third part. It also delineates the significance of these agreements for promoting the defense cooperation between both the countries.

4.2. Defense Trade

The end of the Cold War and dissolution of the USSR resulted in a difficult situation for India with regard to procuring the necessary military hardware for its military forces, forcing it to consider other alternative sources of weapons. The United States became one of the sources of arms by the turn of new century. Over the last two decades, the military sales from US to India has increased from virtually nothing to more than \$22 billion, mainly including aircrafts, missiles, and helicopters (Unnithan, 2021). Meanwhile, United States and India have achieved great success in understanding each other's acquisition processes: Washington has eased its strict regulations regarding exporting of arms for India and New Delhi has showed its willingness to accept end user monitoring mandated by US for the sale of military hardware to India.

The first supply of military hardware India received after its independence was from the United States. The US gave 200 Sherman Tanks to India worth \$19 million. However, it rejected another Indian request for 200 fighter aircraft worth \$150 million, on the ground that the request was not justifiable as India was

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already a recipient of huge development aid from the US (Kumar, 1997, p. 751). The second important arms supply from the US to India occurred in 1953, when the former supplied 54 C IPQ Fairchild Military Transport Aircraft to the latter, despite a strong resentment from the part of Pakistan. Moreover, during short period after India – China war in 1962, the US responded positively to Indian request for military aid by supplying ammunition, small arms, and communications systems. After this, no major military supplies take place from US to India until mid-1980s (Singh, 1995, p. 29).

In the 1980s, a shift in US policy towards India was clearly visible. As a result of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the US showed its willingness to sell advanced weapon system to India also. In 1980, an Indian team visited the United States as part of New Delhi's efforts to procure Tow Anti-Tank missiles and long-range Howitzers. Although it failed to materialize due to Washington's decision not to supply night sights for the Tow, India could get GE F – 404 engines for its light combat aircraft in 1986 (Manchanda, 1993). In 1997, the US once again responded positively by supplying Precision Guided Munitions to India's Air Force.

Thereafter, the first ten years of twenty first century had seen an exponential growth in the military sales from the US to India. In the period from 2001 to 2005, the US sold \$400 million worth weapons to India. This amount was small when compared to the arms sales from 2005 to 2010 amounting to more than \$3 billion (Business Standard, 2015). The first important military purchase from the US during this period was the order for twelve Raytheon AN ITPQ – 37 fire finding long range weapons locating radars, which was delivered in 2003 July. It was vital for India because of its ability to track artillery mortars and then identify their firing position (Luthra, 2007). The radar filled a void in India's preparedness by helping it to equalize its capabilities vis a vis Pakistan, who already had the same weapons from the US. Around the same time, the US and India could also finalize the deal for the sale of Phalcon early warning system. Known for its capability to detect long range aerial threats, the Phalcon system went a long way in helping Indian Air Force to strengthen its capability to detect and counter aerial threats.

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In the 2005 to 2009 period, India purchased four major arms from the US, thereby provided a strong foundation to the defense trade relationship between both the countries. Of these four, the first sale occurred in 2005, when India purchased Patriot anti-missile system. Thanks to this purchase, India could equip its anti-missile capabilities with one of the world's most advanced anti-missile systems in terms of its effectiveness against weapons of mass destruction. The second major procurement from the US was the amphibious transport dock vessel USS Trenton in 2006. It later inducted to Indian Navy renaming as INS Jalashwa. The remaining two purchases during the period included the sale of Sikorsky 3HUH Sea King helicopter in 2006 and C 130 J Hercules military transport aircraft in 2008.

This initial progress achieved in Indo-US defense trade during the Bush period was further expanded during the tenure of Obama administration. In fact, the military exports from US to India during Obama presidency progressed at a pace and scale higher than any other previous presidency, as the bilateral defense trade expanded to \$5.74 billion in 2013, and to over \$14 billion by the last year of Obama presidency. As a result, India emerged as the second largest buyer of US arms and the US surpassed Russia as the largest supplier of arms to India during the period from 2011 – 2014 (Sengupta, 2015). Two developments facilitated this large scale growth in Indo-US defense trade: in late 2000s, India agreed to sign end user agreement with the US and in 2014 the Government of India allowed 49% FDI in India's defense sector.¹ While the signing of End User Agreement removed the most significant barrier to the bilateral defense trade, the Government's decision to raise FDI limit enhanced the interest and confidence of US military firms to engage in arms trade with India (Miglani, 2014).

The first major weapon deal during the period of Obama was the order for 8 Boeing P8I Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, for the Indian Navy. The purchase, with a cost of \$2.2 billion, was considered as a milestone in Indo-US

¹ In 2014, the Government of India allowed up to 49% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector under the automatic route, with any investment beyond this threshold requiring government approval. This policy aimed to enhance technological capabilities, reduce reliance on imports, and attract foreign investment into India's defence industry.

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defense trade relationship, due to the fact that it was the biggest purchase by India from the US till then. With this sale, many of the Indian concerns regarding the reliability of US as a defense partner had been diminished because of the additional assurances that came with, especially the maintenance and training support (Gady, 2016). It was also regarded as a force multiplier for the Indian Navy as these aircraft can efficiently track ships and destroy submarines (Financial Express, 2020). This deal was followed by the purchase of 24 Harpoon Block II missiles in 2010. Intended to use in India's Jaguar aircraft, the purchase of these missiles, with a capacity to effectively strike land based targets and ships from ships, submarines and aircrafts, is a turning point in India's efforts to bolster its maritime military prowess (Gooptu, 2010).

In 2011, in another military deal by India from the US, New Delhi has signed a contract to procure 10 C17 Globemaster III. The aircraft is known for its capability to carry troops, tanks, and other supplies into airfields which are in harsh and difficult terrains, thereby significantly enhancing India's ability to effectively participate in external operations, especially UN's peacekeeping missions. It also helped to foster US military's interaction with the Indian military. After Narendra Modi came to power in India as the 14th Prime Minister, New Delhi signed yet another deal worth \$3 billion for the purchase of 15 Boeing Chinook CH – 14 cargo helicopters and 22 Boeing AH – 64 Apache attack helicopters (Chaudhury, 2015). The induction of these two choppers into Indian Air Force is expected to enhance its rescue capabilities in the event of disasters and aerial warfare capabilities, given the Apache's excellent track record as an integral part of various well known military campaigns and Chinook's capacity to lift heavy weights (Livemint, 2019).

The trade component in Indo-US defense cooperation remained solid during the 4 year period of Trump presidency too, especially with the signing of \$ 2.06 billion deal for the purchase of 24 MH 60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters in 2020 for the Indian Navy. This helicopter can be used in multiple scenarios, including anti-submarine warfare and rescue missions. It will help Indian Navy to actively counter the Pakistani and Chinese submarine presence in the Indian Ocean,

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particularly because of its unique capability to attack and destroy submarines that are present even in several hundred meters below sea level (ABP Live, 2020). The Government of India could also finalize two more important weapon deals during the period of Trump presidency. The first one was the \$1. 021 billion deal for MK 45 naval guns and the second deal included the order for six more Apache 64 E helicopters worth \$930 million.

Table 4.1
Major Military Sales from US to India since 2001

Sl. No.	Equipment/Weapon	Number ordered	Price	To be/already inducted in	Finalized in
1	Boeing P-8I maritime aircraft	8	\$2.01 bn	Indian Navy	2008
2	Super Hercules C-130J military transport planes	6	\$1 bn	Indian Airforce	2008
3	C-17 Globemaster III aircraft	10	\$4.12 bn	Indian Air Force	2011
4	Super Hercules C-130J military transport planes	6	\$1 bn	Indian Air Force	2013
5	AH-64 Apache attack helicopter	22	\$1.4 bn	Indian Air Force	2015
6	Boeing P 8I maritime aircraft	4	\$1 bn	Indian Navy	2015
7	Chinook CH-47 heavy lift helicopters	15	\$1 bn	Indian Air Force	2015
9	M777 Howitzer guns	145	\$732 mn	Indian Army	2016
10	AGM – 84L Harpoon Block II missiles	21	\$200 mn	Indian Air Force	2016
11	Super Hercules C-130J military transport planes	1	\$134 mn	Indian Air Force	2016
12	MH-60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters	24	\$2.1 bn	Indian Navy	2020
13	AH 64E Apache helicopters	6	\$930 mn	Indian Navy	2020

Source: Compiled by the researcher from different sources

Finally, Indo-US defense trade during the initial two years of Biden presidency has also been marked by some significant developments. The deal to purchase 31 MQ – 9 high-tech unmanned aerial vehicles is particularly an

important achievement in that it can contribute to strengthen the intelligence surveillance reconnaissance capabilities of all the three divisions of Indian armed forces. Armed with weapons, this UAV will also be useful in striking targets in mountains and maritime areas especially in the time of long and enduring missions (Dutta, 2023). Consequently, after employing these drones, India will be in a better position to monitor Chinese activities in Indian Ocean, thereby securing the interests of US and expanding New Delhi's maritime power.

However, Indo-US defense trade relationship, as evolved in the last two decades, is not without some persistent challenges. First of all, many Indian strategists argue that India is reluctant to consider US as a supplier for its strategically vital weapons because of the longstanding fears about the reliability of US as a munition's supplier. The Indian decision not to select US' F – 16 and F – 18 aircrafts in its 2011 deal was partially caused by this skepticism (The Sunday Times, 2011). This problem is a result of various incidents in the past: in 1990 US suspended deliveries of fighter jets to Pakistan, in 1970s US stopped the supply of nuclear fuels to India's Tarapur nuclear power plant, and the imposition of sanctions on India in 1998 (The Sunday Times, 2011). The absence of defense industrial cooperation is also an impediment in promoting the arms trade. India has already signed agreements for license production with many of its arms suppliers such as France, UK and Russia, that enable Indian companies to produce weapons by cooperating with companies in these countries. The United States, on the contrary, refused to cooperate with India by not accepting Indian demands to the transfer of technology. It insists that these demands are not within the limits, detrimental to the interests of foreign companies due to the absence of measures to protect intellectual property, and wrongly perceived owing to the limited abilities of Indian defense industry (Gupta, 2014).

4.3. Joint Military Exercises

As part of its efforts to engage with the armed forces of other countries, India had started a number of military exercises with the United States since the

beginning of the 21st century. Although that of a symbolic nature in the beginning, these joint exercises emerged as significant pillars of military to military cooperation between the two countries, by acquiring a routine character and involving all three branches of the two countries' armed forces. The primary objective of these exercises has been to promote 'interoperability' between the two forces, which will help both militaries to conduct joint operations in the future and develop the professional fighting capacity of the personnel. Indian and the US militaries did conduct joint military exercises in the 1950s and 1960s.² However, for a long period since then, no such joint military exercises took place owing to the differences in the foreign policies of two countries in the Cold War period, till the commencement of exercise Malabar 1992.

4.3.1 Navy Led Exercises

Navy to navy cooperation between India and the US, as reflected primarily in the joint exercises appears to have gained the status as the most important facet of the Indo-US military to military cooperation. The converging interests of both the countries with regard to safeguarding maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region have contributed greatly to this enhanced level of naval cooperation. Besides, it is relatively easy to maintain collaboration between navies than other services, and the Indian and US navies were the first of the three services to start joint exercises. Of all the navy to navy exercises between India and the US, the Exercise Malabar is the most high profile and sophisticated naval exercise because it includes most of the elements of naval warfare and involves the participation of advanced military platforms such as submarines and naval aircrafts carriers. The first Malabar exercise was conducted in 1992, as part of implementing the proposals put forwarded by the then US Army Pacific Commander Lieutenant General Claude Kicklighter to strengthen India-US military cooperation. The

² In the 1950s and 1960s, India and the U.S. conducted joint military exercises such as Exercise Cimarron (1959) and Exercise Dagger Thrust (1963), which focused on enhancing cooperation in logistics and field operations. These exercises were part of their broader defense engagement under the U.S.-led Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), though India's non-alignment policy limited deeper military collaboration.

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second and third Malabar exercises were held in 1995 and 1996, respectively. But, the imposition of sanctions on India in 1998, following India's nuclear tests, led to the suspension of these exercises (Kronstadt & Pinto, 2012).

The Malabar Exercise was recommenced in 2002 and since then held for 26 times till 2022. The scope and complexity of these exercises have substantially increased ever since they were began. While the focus areas of 2002 exercise were confined to basic forms of exercises such as communication drills and maneuvers, the 2003 exercise saw the scope expanded to other areas including anti-submarine warfare and live firing of weapons. During Malabar 03, the two navies could also start low intensity operation with the exercising of vessel interdiction by naval commandos, which is known as visit, board, search and seizure (UBSS) operations. By 2005, Malabar had acquired the character of an advanced exercise, as a result of the involvement of aircraft carriers and the 2006 exercise was marked by the participation of an expeditionary strike group led by an amphibious assault ship, called USS Boxer (Embassy of India, 2006). In 2007, the Malabar became a more sophisticated, and multilateral exercise involving the participation of Australia, India, US and Japan. All the Malabar exercise conducted from 2008 to 2021 primarily included maritime interdiction operations, anti-submarine warfare, air defense and gunnery training. The 2011 exercise also included disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. In 2013, for the first time, a US destroyer with missile guided technology participated with the Indian Navy. The 2015 exercise was particularly important in that Japan became a permanent member, thereby made the annual bilateral exercise a trilateral one.

The Malabar Exercise's 26th edition was held off the coast of Japan in November 2022. Marked by the participation of all the four quad countries' navies, the exercise aimed to promote interoperability and cooperation among them to deal with growing maritime security challenges (Indian Express, 2022). During the sea phase of Exercise Malabar 2022, lasting for five days, the navies engaged in anti-submarine and anti-air warfare exercises, live gunnery firings and a procedure

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validating the bilateral agreements supporting logistics between the four participating countries (Indian Express, 2022). When it comes to participation, Indian Navy sent multirole frigate INS Shivalik and anti-submarine ship INS Kamorta; the US Navy was represented by an aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan and two guided missile cruisers USS Milius and USS Chancellorville; Japan participated with a helicopter carrier Hyuga, a tanker and two destroyers Takanami and Shiranui; and Australia used its tanker Stalwart and Arunta Frigate (Rajagopalan, 2022).

In the final analysis, the Malabar exercises have contributed greatly to bolstering of India-US political and military ties as well as played a vital role in achieving interoperability and maritime domain awareness between the two navies. It also led to the enhancement of maritime cooperation among the Quad countries, thereby ensuring the maritime security of wider Indo-Pacific region. However, India's decision not to link its combat electronic systems with that of US and Japan during the exercises limits the effectiveness of exercise Malabar, as these systems are important in achieving a shared operating picture among the participating navies (Mason, 2021, p. 28-29). Both the US and Japan are able to share a common operating picture during the exercises because their combat electronic systems are linked together, putting India in a disadvantageous position of not being able to participate in the exercises in a full-fledged manner (Mason, 2021, p. 28-29).

The Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) is another naval exercise where Indian Navy engages with the US Navy. It is the largest naval exercise in the world involving the participation of multiple naval powers such as Japan, France, Korea, and Australia. In 2012, India's presence in RIMPAC started with the sending of naval commander (US Navy, 2012). Indian Navy sent, for the first time, INS Sahyadri to participate in RIMPAC in 2014, thereby ensuring the full participation of India in RIMPAC (The Times of India, 2016). The last time Indian Navy participated in RIMPAC was in 2022, when it sent INS Satpura and P8I Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Anti –

Submarine Warfare (LRMR ASW) aircraft to the exercise. During this exercise, Indian Navy could engage in advanced multinational operations such as anti-submarine and anti-air warfare exercises. INS Satpura's and P8I's participation in the exercise also confirmed the capability of Indian Navy when it comes to operating in distant parts of the world, as the Hawaii, the location of RIMPAC, is 9000 nautical miles away from Indian Coast (Force, 2022).

4.3.2 Army Led Exercises

Army is the next important military branch with regard to the potential for intensifying the military to military cooperation in the future between the two countries. Army to army joint military exercise have expanded greatly in scope and magnitude ever since they commenced in the mid 1990s. Exercise Vajra Prahar and Yudh Abhyas are the two prominent exercises among them. While Vajra Prahar is held between the special forces of the army, the Yudh Abhyas is a regular army level exercise. The first Vajra Prahar Exercise was conducted in Agra in May 2002, thereby ended a long period of 39 years that marked the absence of any joint exercise between the special forces of two countries. Coordinated by the US Special Operations Command (SOCOM) with the Indian special forces, the exercises were carried out with an objective to promote weapon familiarization and focused on airborne operations. Since then, Vajra Prahar Exercises are conducted annually in India and US alternatively, with a focus on developing the counterterrorism and counter insurgency capabilities.

The latest edition of Vajra Prahar was conducted in August 2022 at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh. The joint training that lasted for 21 days offered an opportunity for the special forces of both countries to engage jointly in Air Borne operations and counter terrorism operations in an effective manner (Press Information Bureau, 2022). The exercise was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, training comprised of combat conditioning and special missions at tactical level. A 48 hour validation of training already acquired by the two forces during the first phase was included in the second phase. The US' contingent participated in the

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exercise were from 1st Special Forces Group and Special Tactics Squadron (STS) and India was represented by special forces of Special Forces Training School (SFTS) (The Print, 2022).

Compared to Vajra Prahar, Yudh Abhyas is a more advanced and brigade level exercise involving the conventional forces of both countries. This exercise was first started in 2004 at a platoon level and since then held annually. During this period, the size of participating troops in this exercise have increased from platoon to brigade level and the scope of the exercise included drills specifically designed to enable the forces to develop counter terrorism, counter insurgency and peace enforcement capabilities. In particular, Yudh Abhyas exercises allow the forces to rehearse multiple scenarios with an objective to familiarize with each other's organizational framework and war procedures which would greatly facilitate the interoperability between the armies of both countries, thereby helping them to cope with challenges that may arise in the future (Business Standard, 2017). The exercise also offers an effective platform wherein which experiences of both countries' forces with regarding to planning and execution of operations are shared (Business Standard, 2017).

The latest iteration of Yudh Abhyas was completed in Auli, in Uttarakhand, from November 17 to December 2 2022. This edition included the participation of the 2nd brigade of the US Army's 11th Airborne Division and soldiers from the Assam Regiment of Indian Army. The primary focus areas of the exercise were peace keeping and peace enforcement. Towards the goal of acquiring skills in these two areas, both the troops set objectives and worked together for achieving them (ANI, 2022). In addition, the troops devoted their time and efforts for training to strengthen Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations. As part of this, they practiced the actions to be taken to deal with any natural calamities in the future. Yet another important feature of the exercise was that it involved the practicing of a range of combat skills such as combat engineering and the use of Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) in warfare (ANI, 2022)

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In the final analysis, it appears that joint army to army exercises between India and US is beneficial for securing the multiple interests of both countries' armed forces. As far as the US Army is concerned, these exercises provide an opportunity to it to emerge as an effective counterinsurgency force and to bring efficiency and effectiveness into its disaster relief efforts. Therefore, the US Army do not send same forces to participate in these exercises. Instead, they rotate the units that participate in both Yudh Abhyas and Vajra Prahar to promote interoperability and cultural exchanges between the two armed forces (Macleod, 2013). For India, these army led exercises are valuable as they help it to obtain US made technologically advanced equipment. This is possible because when these two forces exercise together for long period of time, the rationale for US allowing India to acquire the equipment would always remain high (US Embassy, 2004, p.48). Nevertheless, it can't be asserted that the army led exercises between India and US is highly effective in ensuring interoperability between the two armed forces, particularly because of the very small size – around 350 of troops participate in it. Both Indian Army and US Army includes more than 2 million soldiers. Thus, an annual training involving just 350 soldiers from each army is not suffice to prepare them to jointly fight in the wake of any future conflicts.

4.3.3 Air Force Led Exercises

Joint exercises involving the air forces of both countries do not occur frequently due to the difficulties Indian Air Force faces with regarding to distance and fuel costs, limiting the number of its international engagements to very less (Khera, 2017, pp. 27-28). Cope India is the major air force exercise that started in 2002. The main scope of the exercise, as evolved over the last two decades, included training for air mobility, expert to expert discussions, and combat training drills. In 2004, the exercises were conducted with an objective to train in less advanced aspects of air fighting such as maneuvering proficiency and air lift interoperability. Later, in 2005 and 2006, exercises were began to be conducted in

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an AWACS (Air Borne Early Warning Control System)³ environment and marked by the participation of the two air force's top fighters (F 16 CJ and SU 30 MKI). The last time Cope India exercise was held before 2018 was in 2009, when both countries conducted joint drills to enable them to conduct air lift operations to support humanitarian or air lift operations. In 2023 April, the last edition of Cope India was held at Kalaikunda in West Bengal. It was marked by the participation of 24 combat aircrafts, and eight transport aircrafts. Of these, IAF employed Rafale, Sukhoi – 30 MKI, Jaguar, and Tejas aircrafts as well as C130J and C17 transport planes. The important aims of Cope India 2023 were to familiarize with each other's various technical application of air power and strengthen the ability to do joint operations with cohesion.

For the US, air force led exercises with India provides an opportunity for its air force to test against the European made and Russian fighters of India, including Rafale and Mig 29s. Indian Air Force, on the other hand, can strengthen its capability to deal with regional security challenges and conduct non combatant evacuation missions, by conducting these exercises with the US. However, some important challenges remain. The air force led exercises are not well developed when compared to the same between other two military branches of India and US because of the inability of Indian government to approve these exercises owing to their high costs. The fact that IAF relies heavily on Russian military equipment also makes deep cooperation with the US difficult, as India fears that showcasing these Russian supplied fighters to the US might discourage Russian suppliers from providing India these equipment also makes deep cooperation with the US difficult, as India fears that showcasing these Russian supplied fighters to the US might discourage Russian suppliers from providing India these equipment in the future (Weitz, 2017, p. 86).

³ AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) is a radar system mounted on aircraft for surveillance, tracking, and air defence coordination. It provides long-range detection of threats, enhancing situational awareness and command capabilities in military operations.

4.3.4 Tiger Triumph

India and US also engaged in joint exercises involving the participation of all three services, called Exercise Tiger Triumph. For the first time, it was held in Visakhapatnam and Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh, in November 2019. Tiger Triumph exercise aimed to accomplish the objective of preparing the armed forces of both countries jointly work for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations (Rajagopalan, 2018). The most recent iteration of Tiger Triumph was in 2022, when Indian and US military representatives carried out disaster relief services to a notional third country affected by a super cyclone (ANI, 2022). During the exercise, multiple scenarios were simulated with an objective to acquire deep knowledge about advanced operations. As a result, the exercise increased mutual understanding and the ability of both countries armed forces to jointly operate towards ensuring assistance and carry out relief operations in times of natural disasters.

4.4. Defense Agreements

The signing of multiple defense agreements by India and US has played a crucial role in cementing a strong defense cooperation between them. The first agreement was the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 1984 to facilitate transfer of technology. As per the provisions of this agreement, the US began to allow India access to dual use technology (Mahapatra, p. 180). As a result, India could acquire sensitive technologies such as super computers, General Electric (GE) engines for its light combat aircrafts and LM 2500 gas turbine engines for equipping Indian naval vessel, from the US. Since the signing of this agreement, Washington and New Delhi signed several other agreements that directly contributed to defining the scope of their defense relationship. In 1995, both the countries signed an agreement called Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations that led to the incorporating joint exercises to defense relations. After 10 years both the countries signed another agreement that intended to transform the defense cooperation into a higher level. In 2012, Defense Trade and Technology Initiative

was signed to add defense industrial cooperation⁴ element into an already expanding defense cooperation. Recently, both the countries finalized four vital foundational agreements to promote interoperability between their military forces.

4.4.1 Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations

On January 12, 1995, a new milestone in Indo-US defense relations occurred with the signing of Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations between the United States and India. This agreement led to the establishment of Joint Defense Policy Group (DPG), Joint Technical Group (JTG), and Joint Steering Committee (JSC), each dealing with a specific aspect of the relationship (Kumar, 1997, p. 760) The primary scope of DPG included dealing with the issues in defense relations, particularly the joint concerns of post-Cold War security situation and joint response to it in the form of security planning. JTG focused on conducting bilateral discussions with regarding to expanding the scope of cooperation in activities of defense research and production. Finally, JSC was constituted with an objective to expand the scope and frequency of service to service cooperation, which included efforts to increase the scale and sophistication of bilateral military training and joint exercises between the two countries (Saksena & Grillot, 1999, pp. 154-155). The Agreed Minutes had its own limitations. The US defense secretary stressed that Washington can't establish defense ties with India to the extent of compromising its defense ties with Pakistan and signing of the agreement did not promote arms transfer or joint technology development. Nevertheless, the agreement can be considered as a success in promoting confidence building between the two countries by the way of increased joint exercises, high level visits and seminar as part of the two countries' efforts to strengthen service to service cooperation.

⁴ Defence industrial collaboration refers to partnerships between countries or companies to jointly develop, produce, and share military technologies, equipment, and expertise. The goal is to enhance defence capabilities, improve innovation, and reduce reliance on external suppliers by leveraging shared resources and knowledge.

4.4.2. The Defense Framework Agreement

The Defense Framework Agreement signed between India and US on June 28, 2005 marked the beginning of a new era in the defense relations between India and US. It formalized and gave a direction to the burgeoning defense cooperation between the two countries. In fact, the agreement went a long way in removing the mutual suspicion that has characterized Indo-US relations during Cold War period and added a new bold agenda for military cooperation that aimed to countering security issues of mutual concern such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and religious extremism (Department of Defense & Ministry of Defense, 2005) For doing so, it sought to promote defense trade between the two countries, increase technology transfers from US to India and bolster cooperation in the area of missile defense. In addition, the framework agreement directed the military establishments of both countries to increase joint exercises and intelligence sharing in order to achieve interoperability between them.

In June 2015, the Defense Framework Agreement was renewed for another ten years during the visit of US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter to India. This renewal not only reinforced the aspect of regularity in the bilateral defense cooperation but also resulted in institutionalizing the bilateral partnership and providing a solid roadmap for future course of action. In addition to directing both countries to strengthen almost all the spheres of defense cooperation, the renewed agreement focused enhancing joint development of military systems between the two countries such as mobile electric hybrid power sources and next generation protective ensembles. It also led to the formation of working groups to strengthen cooperation on technology of jet engine designs of aircraft carriers. In this way, the agreement allows Indian defense industry to effectively deal with the challenges posed by the globalization of the defense industries of major powers. Moreover, in the opinion of Indian strategists, the nuclear deal and the expanding joint military exercises with the US are a culmination of the ten-year defense framework signed in 2005 and renewed in 2015.

4.4.3. Defense Trade and Technology Initiative

The Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) was signed in 2012 as a result of Obama administration's efforts to strengthen defense technology cooperation with India by accepting India's lack of willingness to enter into a formal alliance with the US (The Economic Times, 2016). This agreement was intended to transform the buyer seller relationship to that of co-development and coproduction of military systems required for modernizing Indian military forces (The Economic Times, 2016). The initiative is deemed equally beneficial for both the countries. It's expected to enable India to expand its defense technology base, thereby adding more strength to the Make in India campaign in defense sector of present Indian Government. For the US, it would reduce India's dependence on the Russian arms market and makes India more dependent on US for arms.

Broadly speaking, the DTTI has four main objectives. Firstly, to remove bureaucratic impediments in the defense relationship between the two countries and subject it to strategic decisions taken by the top level leadership. Secondly, to bolster the defense industrial base of India by adopting a collaborative approach rather than traditional buyer seller relationship. Thirdly, to identify new areas with potential for technological cooperation for co-production and co-development. Finally, to enhance India-US business ties (The International Cooperation Directorate, 2018). Towards realizing these objectives and implementing the initiative, both the countries have already working on six pathfinder projects under the DTTI. These projects are: protective ensemble against chemical and biological weapons; mobile electric hybrid power units; next generation unmanned Raven aircrafts; intelligence and surveillance kits for C – 130 aircraft; digital helmet displays and tactical biological detection system (The International Cooperation Directorate, 2018).

4.4.4 Foundational Agreements

As part of enhancing defense cooperation between them, India and USA have also signed foundational agreements such as the General Security of Military

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Information Agreement (GSOMIA), Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Exchange Agreement (LEMOA), Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). The first agreement among these four was GSOMIA, as it was signed in as early as January 2002. It ensured that both the countries would safeguard all the classified information or technology shared as part of transfer of technology and sale of weapons between them. As a result of signing GSOMIA, India could gain access to many of the US military establishments as well as dual use technologies. It also facilitated an increase in the sale of US arms to India (Tomar, 2002).

The second foundational agreement called LEMOA, was signed in August 2016. The signing of LEMOA was a breakthrough moment in Indo-US defense relations as it permits both countries' militaries to exchange logistics support, supplies and services such as food, communication, spare parts, fuel and medical services. Prior to signing this agreement, India's logistics support for US operations had happened only once in 1991, when US military planes were provided with fuel in Mumbai during Operation Desert Storm. However, signing of the agreement have helped armed forces of both countries to increase coordination and enable interoperability in the bilateral exercises. It also led to enhancing regional cooperation by allowing both countries to use each other's ports, naval and air bases for repairing and resupply.

In 2018, both the countries signed CISMMOA which would enable their military forces to communicate securely and effectively with each other during dedicated data links based on a CETRIXS type communication system(Peri, 2018).⁵ Without CISMOA, the US was unable to supply certain sophisticated technologies to India. The agreement not only facilitate interoperability between the armed and naval forces of both countries, but also help India to closely watch Chinese moves

⁵ CETRIXS (Communications Electronic Tactical Radio Integrated Exchange System) is a type of communication system used by military forces for secure and reliable tactical communication. It is designed to integrate various communication channels, enabling real-time, encrypted voice, data, and video transmission over both short and long distances.

in the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean. The last foundational agreement known as BECA was signed in 2020. BECA will provide India access to US geospatial databanks which can be helpful for increasing the accuracy of targeting with cruise and ballistic missiles. The signing of BECA also resulted in fulfilling the primary prerequisite for purchasing the Predator B drones from the US.

4.5. Conclusion

Defense and military cooperation emerged as the key pillar of India-US strategic partnership in the post – Cold War period. Defense trade, joint military exercises and certain defense agreements can be considered as the key components of this expanding partnership. Although started during the period of UPA Government, it is the NDA Government that took serious efforts to boost the defense cooperation between the two countries. India has purchased some of the highly advanced arms from the US such as P8I surveillance aircrafts, C 17 Globemaster aircrafts and MH 60 Seahawk helicopters, thereby increasing the defense trade volume from near zero in 2008 to over \$20 billion in 2020. Joint military exercises between the two countries have also intensified during the same period. Presently, India conducts more military exercise with US than with any other country. It involves the participation of all the three branches of the armed forces of both countries. Exercise Malabar, Exercise Yudh Abhyas, and Exercise Cope India are the three prominent joint military exercises. Finally, India and US could sign some defense agreements that elevated the defense cooperation into a higher level. For instance, the four foundational agreements signed by them are likely to increase the interoperability between the two countries' armed forces.

CHAPTER 5

COUNTER TERRORISM AND CYBER SECURITY COOPERATION IN INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: JOINT EFFORTS TO COUNTER MODERN THREATS

5.1. Introduction

The fact that India and US have been the victims of major non-traditional threats of terrorism and cyber attacks led to a realization from the part of both countries that they can benefit by jointly fighting these two challenges, therefore they laid the foundations of expanded counter terrorism and cyber security cooperation since the early 2000s. There were some instances of counter terrorism cooperation prior to the September 11 attacks, but that event elevated the counter terrorism as an important component of India-US strategic partnership. Since then, counter terrorism cooperation has improved significantly to include areas such as improved coordination, intelligence sharing and technology sharing, and joint efforts to deal with improvised explosive devices. This changed orientation in the counterterrorism cooperation has also been evident from the multiple public statements issued by the senior leaders of both countries. For example, on September 22, 2015, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and US Secretary of State John Kerry issued a declaration on combating terrorism, which emphasized on mutual concerns about terrorist networks in South Asia and defined the long-term counterterrorism goals of both countries (US Department of State, 2015).

Similarly, the common goals and values contained in the broader Indo-US strategic partnership motivated both the countries to establish a cyberspace domain which is open, secure and global. Towards achieving this end, they already devised a number of mechanisms, including dialogues and agreements, that laid a solid framework for the two countries to continue their cyber security cooperation

in an effective manner. Although these efforts are at its nascent stage, cyberspace would certainly better served once substantial progress is achieved.

5.2. Counter Terrorism Cooperation

Counter terrorism cooperation between India and the US has emerged as another important component of the evolving strategic partnership between them in recent years, thereby widening the scope of the partnership which has already been marked by an active and expanding military to military relations. Indo-US cooperation in countering terrorism has preceded the Al Qaeda attack in September 2001 and has seen some significant achievements spanning decades during the Cold War period, but it was only recently that such an engagement became more substantive and routinised to the extent of Obama administration describing it as a key pillar of the bilateral relationship. This growth of partnership in countering terrorism is facilitated largely by a shift in US' policy towards Pakistan that agrees with India's insistence that Islamabad is the main sponsor of terrorism in the region and terrorist groups in Pakistan is responsible for most of the terrorist attacks in India (Kronstadt & Pinto, 2012, p. 14).

The counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries began during the time of Reagan administration, when Indian intelligence personnel were trained in the US to deal with hostage situations and aviation security. During the 1980s, Washington also took measures to assist India to counter the Sikh insurgency in Northern India. This limited support provided by the US to India was further expanded during the 1990s, which marked the occurrences of three specific instances of counterterrorism cooperation. First, the kidnapping of two American tourists in Kashmir in 1995 enabled close cooperation between US and Indian counterterrorism officials. Second, in 1996, US adopted a law to ban the fundraising activities of groups designated as terrorist groups, including the two prominent Sikh organizations active in US, thereby weakened their ability to conduct anti-India activities (Nayak, 2011, p. 56). Finally, India and US signed the first counterterrorism treaty between them in the form of US-India extradition

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treaty, which allowed US to extradite Sikh militants wanted in India. However, this initial progress achieved in the counterterrorism cooperation stalled with the 1998 sanctions on India, as it resulted in ending all the contacts and cooperation between the two countries' respective counterterrorism establishments and stopping the sale of counterterrorism equipment to India (Nayak, 2011, p. 57).

In early 2000, the bilateral counterterrorism cooperation was put back on track with the inauguration of the joint counterterrorism working group, which indicated a strong desire from the part of both countries to strengthen the profile of counterterrorism cooperation at the international level. This was followed by the 9/11 attacks that forced the two states to consider counterterrorism cooperation as one of the most important elements of their bilateral relationship. Importantly, India was quick to offer vital support to the US in its efforts to weaken terrorist infrastructure in Afghanistan, including an offer to use many of India's military bases (Tellis, 2005). This changed orientation of both countries towards jointly fighting terrorism was also evident in a joint statement by President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee in 2001 November that terrorism poses serious threats to the national security of both countries and must be defeated by joint action (Office of the Press Secretary, 2001).

Another turning point in the evolution of Indo-US counterterrorism cooperation came after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008, as this attack helped to overcome some of the impediments to enhanced cooperation in the form of improved intelligence sharing and law enforcement cooperation (Curtis, 2011). The US also agreed to pressure Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism (Sharma, 2012, p. 320). Furthermore, during the inaugural meeting of 2009 India-US Strategic Dialogue, President Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh set a target of destroying all the safe havens of terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Department of State, 2011). At the present, counterterrorism cooperation has improved substantially from mere dialogues to improved intelligence sharing, training and exercises.

5.2.1. Dialogues

Dialogues between India and US have contributed significantly for institutionalizing counterterrorism cooperation and increasing mutual understanding. The first attempt to promote dialogues between the two countries in an institutionalized manner was started in 2000 with the launching of the Joint Counterterrorism Working Group (JCWG). Formation of the Working Group helped the broader relationship by starting the recovery from the US sanctions imposed on India in 1998 and elevated counterterrorism cooperation's importance in the relationship. Since 2000, the JCWG met 19 times, thereby emerged as a key dialogue venue for counterterrorism cooperation. Throughout these years, the working group has gained the status as the most useful and facilitating mechanism for exchange of information, sharing of intelligence, training programs involving counterterrorism and for enhancing institutional links between crime prevention agencies in the two countries.

The last meeting of the JCWG was held on 12th December 2022 in New Delhi. After expressing strong disapproval of the use of terrorist proxies, cross border terrorism and other forms of terrorism, both sides called for bringing those who were behind the 2008 Mumbai and 2016 Pathankot attacks to justice. The meeting provided an opportunity for both parties to exchange views on the new threats caused by the UN designated terrorist organizations and emphasize the need to jointly act against the terrorist networks of ISIS, Al Qaida, Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish e Mohammed (JeM) and Al Badr (US Embassy, 2022). Participants also discussed in detail the major counterterrorism challenges faced by both countries, such as dealing with terrorist financing, preventing the use of internet for terrorist purposes, and new and highly sophisticated technologies for terrorist purposes (US Embassy, 2022).

The second major dialogue involving counterterrorism cooperation between India and US was the Homeland Security Dialogue (HSD), which was first held between the Department of Homeland Security and Ministry of Home Affairs.

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In addition to acting as the first comprehensive bilateral dialogue on homeland security between the two countries, the dialogue held at a senior level with the participation of Secretary Napolitano and Minister Chidambaram. Since then, the Homeland Security Dialogue, held in multiple times, contributed greatly to form lines of communication between the key bureaucratic counterterrorism experts and remove the barriers to cooperation. As a result, both India and US could successfully address various aspects of counterterrorism cooperation, such as law enforcement and critical infrastructure protection. Moreover, the Dialogue established some working groups that are still functioning and delivering good results, with a focus on areas including ensuring critical infrastructure protection, countering illicit finance and securing global supply chain (US Embassy, 2014).

The two countries also launched a Designations Dialogue in 2017 that aimed at enhancing cooperation with regard to sanctions against terrorist organizations and individuals, thereby moved closer to alleviating Indian concerns with regard to US reluctance to designate terrorist groups that directly posed threat to India (Ministry of External Affairs, 2017). This dialogue was particularly important not only because designations was one of the major methods adopted by the US to pressure Pakistan to stop supporting terrorists against India, it also indicated a change in US policy on Pakistan that are more favorable to Indian interests. The designations dialogue led to two important results: first, the United States designated Hizbul Mujahideen as an international terrorist organization in 2017, resulting in a change in US attitude towards Indian security concerns, as the group has not posed any threat to US and is not linked to the broader jihadist networks in Afghanistan that challenged US interests (US Embassy, 2017). Second, Washington assisted India to change some of its laws on designations, which is hailed as a great achievement by the US officials (Ministry of External Affairs, 2017).

These dialogues may seem like mere bureaucratic exercises, but they significantly strengthen counter terrorism cooperation between the two countries. Because, they help both countries to learn the best possible ways to engage with

one another, bolstering what Ayres calls “habits of cooperation”, especially establishing engagement between Department of Homeland Security in US and India’s Ministry of Home Affairs, which are unaccustomed to dealing with one another (Ayres, 2017, p. 233). Nevertheless, there were also instances of dialogues causing frustration to participants, as one official of Bush Administration called dialogues as “a dialogue of the deaf (Rajeshwari, 2000, p. 1105). This difficulty was particularly evident in lack of consensus in many meetings, where India insisting on resolving Pakistani threat, while the US emphasized on the indigenous threats within India (Rajeshwari, 2000, p. 1105). The dialogues were also sometimes marred by the reluctance of the US to bring important intelligence or information to the table, causing embarrassment for their Indian counterparts.

5.2.2 Intelligence Sharing

Intelligence sharing remained a weak link in the counterterrorism cooperation during much of the Cold War period. This was particularly because the intelligence agencies considered one another as counterintelligence threats. The US intelligence officials often complained that Indian officials treated them counter intelligence threats, thereby preventing both countries' intelligence agencies to work together and share intelligence (Kronstadt & Pinto, 2012, p. 15). The US also had another important concern with regard to intelligence sharing: the Indian services compromised intelligence shared by the US agencies through leaks. This was evident from the fact that highly sensitive US intelligence that is shared with Indian agencies regularly appeared in the Indian press (Bacon, 2019, p. 250). The damage to US interests from these leaks was particularly severe when such intelligence dealt with Pakistan. As a result, the US intelligence services have showed lack of willingness to share intelligence and became more cautious with sharing (Bacon, 2019, p. 250).

Intelligence sharing has gradually improved since the 9/11 attacks. In October 2001, an unnamed Indian official claimed that India’s external intelligence service, known as the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), had shared very critical

information with US officials, which included the cell phone number of terrorist Omar Sheikh (Kak, 2001). In another instance of intelligence sharing, the United States assisted India by providing intelligence on expansion of Maoist activities in India and on attempts by Maoist groups around the world to establish a grand alliance (Reddy, 2004). According to reports by Indian police sources, the US decision to put some of these Maoist groups in the terrorist exclusion list would help Indian authorities to prevent them from getting external support. The 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack by Pakistan based terrorists also led to improved intelligence sharing between the two countries, as India sought and received US intelligence and the FBI offered assistance to India in investigation process (Agrawal, 2011, p. 64).

However, intelligence sharing is still limited to those terrorist threats that directly impacts the national security of both countries. Scholars opine that the intelligence sharing could be made more dynamic from the present level so as to increase its utility. For instance, India did not share intelligence it had about the Islamic State attack in Sri Lanka, in 2019,¹with the US, leading to disappointment among the US officials (Bacon, 2019, pp. 188-189). From their viewpoint, India must share information on such regional terrorist threats in order to strengthen the current counterterrorism cooperation. Indian officials, on the other hand, believed that it's not part of intelligence sharing cooperation and complained that the US demands more intelligence than it is possible for them to share (Bacon, 2019, pp. 188-189).

5.2.3. Agreements

Both the countries also signed two agreements to enable greater counterterrorism cooperation between them. In October 2001, US-India Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty was signed in order to provide legal privileges to help in

¹ On April 21, 2019, ISIS claimed responsibility for a series of bombings in Sri Lanka that targeted churches and hotels, killing over 250 people. The attacks were carried out by the local extremist group National Thowheed Jama'ath (NTJ), with alleged ISIS connections.

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terrorism related investigations (Embassy of India, 2001). This treaty established a formal and regularized channel for ensuring that both the countries can seek and receive law enforcement assistance from each other. The scope of it covers a wide array of matters that includes direct access to statements, documents, testimony, items of evidence and records, identifying persons, locating items, transferring persons under custody for testimony, and help in proceedings related to seizure and forfeiture of assets (Congress.gov, 2002, p.3).

The second agreement, called Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative (CCI), was signed in 2010 to strengthen government to government cooperation. The decision to sign this agreement emanated from 2008 Mumbai attacks and led to a strong commitment from the part of New Delhi and Washington to bolster their capabilities to effectively counter the terrorism threat. Specifically, the CCI resulted in enhancing the element of technical cooperation in the broader counterterrorism partnership. It focused on increasing exchanges regarding to modernization of techniques, enhancing cooperation between forensic science laboratories, establishing procedures to provide assistance regarding mutual legal assistance, and strengthening capacity to deal with money laundering, counterfeit currency and terrorist financing (Indian Embassy, 2012).

5.2.4. Training and Exercises

Although counterterrorism is generally not included in the defense relations, some defense exercises and training has also been dealt with it. The first such exercise took place in India's Northeast in March 2004 in which US Army troops engaged in jungle counter insurgency exercises with Indian troops. Followed by this, in July, a senior US Army delegation visited the 15 Corps Battle School (CBS) in Jammu Kashmir for learning its anti-militancy and unconventional operations training techniques for the purpose of equipping the US troops heading to Iraq (Kashyap, 2004). In 2015, US special forces conducted Tarkash joint counterterrorism training exercise with India's leading counterterrorism force known as National Security Guards (NSG). The annual Yudh Abhyas exercise of

2016 also included counter insurgency and counterterrorism scenarios and thereby made another important progress in the direction of raising the possibility of joint operations in the future (Gady, 2016).

In terms of joint training, the Anti Terrorism Assistance Program (ATAP) of the US Department of State has played a key role. This program has been active in India since 1998 and began to deliver good results since 2001. Under ATAP, joint training of officials in the security and law enforcement departments has been conducted alternatively in India and US. The assistance provided covers a wide range of areas in the counterterrorism preparedness, such as training in explosives, investigation and countermeasures, counterterrorism legislation, courses to counter the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and counterterror police training (US Department of State, 2016). Importantly, the Government of India has modified and adopted many of these courses as part of its domestic training programs concerning law enforcement.

This area of counterterrorism cooperation possesses huge potential for bolstering and expanding the cooperation in the near future. The first reason for it is that such training and exercises are generally classified, removing any public scrutiny and, therefore, avoiding resulting political blowback for India. In fact, because of the political priority given to counterterrorism and existence of popular support to countering terrorism in both countries, there would be very limited political objection to any cross training intended to improve the skills of all involved in this domain. In addition, these armed forces are engaged in consistent training almost all the time when they are not deployed, hence the opportunities for future cooperation are plenty.

5.3. Cyber Security Cooperation

The present nature of cyberspace that extends beyond national boundaries necessitates India to establish and maintain cyber security cooperation with other countries in order to ensure the security of its cyber space. Doing so will not only

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help India to influence their policies but also play a key role in determining the proceedings of international efforts in formulating legal frameworks, treaties and agreements relating to cyber security.² India could also benefit from such an outreach during the aftermath of a major attack or security breach affecting its cyber infrastructure, as it can easily get information shared by its partner or international institutions, in addition to the attack attribution frameworks they offer.

In this effort, the United States emerged as one of the most important partners for India. India decided to start cyber security cooperation with the US primarily because of the technological superiority maintained by the US over both hardware that facilitates the functioning of interconnected systems and software that runs it. The US also achieved substantial progress in ensuring the security of these systems. The heavy public and private investments made by the US in research and development allowed it to reach such a position. Given this, India, as an emerging power with a lot of activities being carried in the cyber domain, have much to gain. For instance, partnership with the US on cyber security will help India to strengthen its cyber security by enabling access to up to date and cutting-edge technological developments in the area.

Cyber security cooperation also has the potential to be one of the important components of Indo-US strategic partnership due to a number of factors. Both countries suffer from a significant number of cyber threats each year from the state as well as non-state actors. The illicit cyber activities cause a loss of around \$400 billion a year for the US and around \$4 billion for India (Economic Times, 2013). Because of this, there prevails a strong political support to foster cooperation to grapple with these threats in both countries. Another factor that

² International efforts to create legal frameworks for cybersecurity include the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001), which provides a legal basis for international cooperation in fighting cybercrime, and the UN GGE on Cybersecurity, which aims to develop norms for state behaviour in cyberspace. Another significant initiative is the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace (2018), which encourages global collaboration to ensure a secure digital environment.

can promote cooperation is the structural complementarities that exists in the service sector, which makes an extensive use of cyber networks, between the two countries (Samuel, 2011, p. 770). The adherence to democracy and common political values by both US and India also facilitate cyber security cooperation, as it significantly reduces friction on ideological grounds.

While India is rich in the availability of technically skilled manpower, the US has the necessary infrastructure and financial resources. Both these two advantages can be utilized to launch joint cyber defense collaborative program. Understandably, this may result in a situation where in both countries worry about sharing highly sensitive tactics, information and procedures. However, both countries have already been engaged in conducting a good number of grounds, naval and air exercises around the world while still keeping their national secrets secure. Hence, it can be assumed that the same strategy can be successfully adopted in the cyber space cooperation as well. This part on Indo-US cyber security cooperation included an analysis on the cyber security forum and two important cyber security agreements.

5.3.1. Cyber Security Forum

Although major developments in India-US cyber security cooperation in the form of discussions in high level summits and subsequent joint statements happened in the recent past, cooperation had been started as early as 2001 when the India-US Cyber Security Forum was established as a first initiative that formalized the cooperation between the two countries. The forum was established as a follow up to initial discussions conducted by the leaders of both the countries and emerged as an offshoot of then existing dialogues on counterterrorism (Embassy of India, 2002). The primary task assigned to the forum was to ensure the protection of “the critical infrastructure of the knowledge based economy” of the two countries. For this purpose, it involved the participation of stakeholders from Government as well as private sectors in order to discuss and cooperate on key issues in the cyber domain.

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The objectives that both the countries wanted to achieve from the working of the forum were not the same. The US intended to secure the interests of US companies outsourcing to India. Towards this end, the discussions in the forum were directed towards addressing national security issues emanating from the functioning of critical information systems involved in outsourced business processing (US State Department, 2006). India, on the other hand, gave importance to capacity building and research and development. As a result, the forum also focused on building up capacity in areas such as data protection. Because of these divergent objectives, the forum failed to achieve substantial outcomes. In addition, the US was less willing to cooperate with India on defense and high technology matters as it required the setting up of a strategic partnership, which was yet to be materialized at that time.

However, the forum was successful as a platform to bring multiple stakeholders in both government and private sector together. For India, the deliberations in the forum helped it to establish some good mechanisms to ensure cyber security, such as the establishment of Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in 2004 and a National Skills Registry (NSR) in 2005. The CERT-In has been helping India ever since its formation, to develop its capacity in internet traffic analysis, detection of malicious software and cyber forensics (Institute for Defense Studies & Analysis, 2012, p. 50). The National Skills Registry was set up with an objective to authenticate working professionals in the IT industry by using independent verification and biometric identification (Press Information Bureau, 2006). For the United States, it led to increased information security consciousness in Indian IT companies, which was important given the fact that lack of US understanding about Indian IT industry was the primary obstacle to forging a cyber security partnership with India.

Although the forum was able to achieve some initial success, its operation was stopped following the arrest of three Indian officials on the suspicion of leaking sensitive intelligence information, concerning vital aspects of India's national

security to the US government (Raman, 2006). As far as India was concerned, the issue was a major security breach, as one of the arrested individuals was working in the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and another individual was the director of computers in the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). The incident can be considered as an indication of open reality that highly sensitive information was involved in cyber security deliberations. Therefore, any cyber security forum that is set up between the two countries must have enough safeguards incorporated to it in order to prevent the repeat of using such forums for the purpose of poaching intelligence.

5.3.2. Agreements

India and the US signed mainly two agreements as part of forging their cyber security cooperation. In 2011, the first agreement, called India-US Cyber Security Agreement, was signed to enable their computer emergency response team to coordinate activities on cyber security and cyber policy, in addition to building their capacity to respond to cyber-attacks. For the first time, this agreement formalized the relationship between the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and India's Department of Information Technology (DIT) (Department of Homeland Security, 2011). The signing of this agreement also resulted in developing a new generation security collaboration between the two countries, because it expanded the scope for security reliance and sharing of critical cyber information, as well as collaboration on important cyber related domain issues.

In 2016, both the countries reached another milestone in cyber security cooperation by announcing a shared acceptance of a framework for cyber space cooperation. The framework comprises 13 common principles and 21 areas of cooperation to achieve these mutually accepted principles. Specifically, the agreement aims to establish a model of internal governance that involves the participation of multiple stakeholders (US Embassy, 2016). While the 2011 US-India Cyber Security Agreement lacks uniqueness, as India has signed similar agreements

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with more than 40 countries and the provisions of it contains not much details, the Framework of 2016 is more unique and detailed. This is particularly true because the framework is one of just ten such agreements India has signed with other countries and it appears to contain more detailed provisions as well as focused approach towards addressing cyber security threats of mutual concern, when compared to some other similar agreements, especially what can be understood from agreements with China and Russia (Elmokadem, 2016).

In particular, the framework agreement primarily aims to strengthen Indo-US cooperation in the following areas: sharing information on a real time basis about threats to cyber security and setting up important mechanisms to facilitate such information sharing; establishing joint mechanisms for practical cooperation to eliminate cyber threats to the security of information and communication technology infrastructure; maintaining the existing cooperation between law enforcement agencies to fight cybercrime; conducting skill development and capacity building programs jointly in the realm of cyber security, digital forensics and legal frameworks and ensuring the application of international law to the conduct of states in the cyber spaces (US Embassy, 2016).

The framework also demands a strong commitment from the part of India and the US to promote that nation states adhere to voluntary norms, such as avoid making intentional damage to critical infrastructure as a means to prevent the delivery of critical services to citizens; refrain from conducting or deliberately supporting cyber enabled IP theft to allow companies to achieve competitive advantages; and cooperate to mitigate telecommunications security issues, including accrediting appropriate entities (US Embassy, 2016).

It is evident from the above that the framework agreement seeks to achieve commitments from the part of both the countries in order to address some of the important cyber threats and threat actors in the Indo-Pacific region. In particular, it aims to address the following threats: the threat created by large scale Chinese theft of IP in order to use it for economic gain; the threat posed by the efforts by

key nation states including China, Russia, North Korea and Iran to acquire access to critical infrastructure entities, evidently for the purpose of launching destructive attacks during the time of a crisis; and the alarmingly expanding and persisting threat of cybercrime in the economic sphere.

However, although the framework sets specific goals for both the countries to achieve in their cyber space cooperation, it does not provide enough strategies and means for joint work to achieve these goals. The means provided by the framework are limited to routinising the ongoing dialogues and many other working groups, promoting Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) to CERT cooperation, and encouraging the use of US-India Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. Hence, it can be argued that the framework, although covers almost all the key areas in cyber security cooperation, is silent on how some of the key issues raised by the framework itself are to be resolved in an effective manner.

5.4. Conclusion

Ever since the end of Cold War, India-US have been facing serious non-traditional threats of cyber attacks and terrorism to their national security, forcing them to cooperate in order to make use of each other's expertise and experiences in fighting these two challenges. Although started during the Cold War period, the counterterrorism cooperation became an important element of the strategic partnership since the establishment of India-US Counter Terrorism Working Group in 2001. Both the countries also cooperated in the counterterrorism area through agreements, sharing intelligence, and training and exercises. As a result, currently there exists a solid counter terrorism partnership between the two countries. Cyber security cooperation has also emerged as an important area of the partnership with a lot of possibilities for future cooperation. Initial attempt to establish cooperation in this new area includes the formation of cyber security forum in 2000, which resulted in the creation of CERT in India. In 2016, both the countries signed a comprehensive framework agreement for cyber security cooperation and revived the spirit of cooperation which was lost following the end of cyber security forum in 2006.

CHAPTER 6

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: AN APPRAISAL

6.1. The Strategic Partnership's Role in India's Efforts to Balance China

In the opinion of Jervis, when a state adopts various measures in order to increase its security, it results in decreasing the security of other states (Jervis, 1978, p.200). Such a situation leads to a security dilemma in the international system, thereby forcing the affected states make efforts to enhance their capabilities through the strategy of counter balancing (Jervis, 1978, p.200). India, as a country that is currently facing the challenges posed by a strong and powerful China through aggressiveness along the disputed border and its growing influence in the Indian Ocean, has realized that there has been an intent of containment than competition from the part of China. As a result, in order to deal with this security dilemma, New Delhi has adopted a counter balancing strategy that involves bolstering its economy and military and constructing partnerships with major powers. The first strategy is called internal balancing and the second strategy can be considered as external balancing. Ever since the beginning of present century, India's policy makers have been attaching much importance to the role of US for the success of both these strategies.

One can discern from the history of Indian foreign policy and Sino – Indian relations that India will never concede to live under Chinese hegemony in a unipolar Asia, under the Government of any Indian political party. In the words of former Indian National Security Advisor that the key to a stable China-India relationship is an Indian policy to maintain an equilibrium (or prevent the emergence of an important imbalance), thereby providing an acknowledgement of the balance of power logic by a serving public official (Business Standard, 2013). Also, during the January 2015 summit between Modi and Obama in New Delhi, Modi officially expressed his intention that India won't be a satellite of China, but

rather be a peer competitor to it. Because of this shift in India's policy, Mr. Obama and his team discovered to their surprise that Modi's views on China's rise and its impact on strategic situation in Asia-Pacific was closely aligned with their own (Baker & Harris, 2015). At the same summit, in a joint strategic vision document, Modi and Obama pledged a shared interest in protecting freedom of navigation and overflight across the region, mainly in the South China Sea (Obama & Modi, 2015).

Historically, India has made efforts to balance China alone, and when required, with the help of Soviet Union during the Cold War.¹ India has no history of participating in the kind of alliances created by the US in the Asia – Pacific. Nevertheless, strengthening India-US strategic partnership challenges that history and allows India to balance more effectively against growing Chinese prowess. In fact, almost all the states in the Asia-Pacific is making efforts to counter the uncertainty and security threat created by China's rapid rise. What makes India's case special is the way in which it's doing so, because of the absence of formal alliance, history of associating with Non-Alignment, its developmental backwardness compared to other states and the hard reality of sharing 2500-mile border with China.

Officials in the Clinton, Bush, Obama and Trump administration have recognized India's importance in ensuring future Asian balance of power, emanating from a realization that bolstering the US-India part of US-China-India triangle would help to establish balance in favor of democracies. Hence, India can gain much in deepening its partnership with the US in terms of enhancing its capabilities vis a vis China. It can be considered as a unique benefit that by itself should be enough to justify the basis of the partnership, as neither any other country nor a combination of countries can provide India this benefit. The United

¹ During the Cold War, India received significant military and strategic assistance from the Soviet Union, particularly after the 1962 Sino-Indian War, which highlighted India's vulnerability to China. The Soviet Union provided India with advanced weaponry, military training, and diplomatic support, especially during conflicts such as the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan, strengthening India's defence capabilities and regional position.

Opportunities and Challenges of Indo-US Strategic Partnership: an Appraisal

States is the most desirable partner for India because of four main factors: its capability, its self-interest, its willingness to partner with India and its external balancing strategy.

The United States is the most attractive partner for India in its efforts to balance China, simply because of Washington's potential as the only one powerful nation than China. Despite the impressive growth achieved by China over the last four decades, it is unlikely to replace the United States' position as the most powerful nation in the foreseeable future owing to the huge gap existing between the two countries, especially when it comes to the military power and technological prowess. Although there are much discussions going around the world about Washington's expected decline, many strategists argue that the US will continue to strengthen its superior position vis a vis China and maintain its dominance for the foreseeable future. The fact that United States has had most successful recoveries among the developed countries from the 2008 financial crisis is a clear indication of this excellent resilient capacity of the US (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016, p. 12).

The most important element that is contributing to this enormous US national power is the US military power. The United States continue to maintain command of the commons through achieving a strategic military dominance in all four domains of air, land, sea and space (Posen, 2003, p. 46). In the naval domain, for instance, the US presently operates eleven aircraft carriers, while China's first aircraft carrier became operational only by late 2016 and is much smaller than the US 54, 53, 56 aircraft carriers (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2020). Efforts taken by China to develop anti-access/are denial military capabilities to deny US freedom of movement in these domains may not still be enough to significantly tilt this balance in China's favor (Biddle & Oelrich, 2016, p. 12). In addition to military capabilities, another advantage the US enjoys is a large network of alliances and partnerships around the world, based primarily on US' position as the world's largest economy.

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The United States also share India's interest in securing that China does not establish its hegemony over the Asia Pacific. While India's interest in balancing China stems from its desire to prevent China's dominance in Asia so that it can preserve its strategic autonomy, the United States sees China's potential domination of the Asia Pacific as a new challenge to its global dominance, despite the fact that China is not yet a direct military threat to the US (Tellis, 2017). This US interest has been evident from the various official documents and statements of US administration from George Bush to Donald Trump. For example, the US Indo-Pacific Strategy during Trump presidency emphasized much on the increasing geostrategic importance of the region for US interests and Washington's worries over China's growing threat to US interests in the region (Department of State, 2019, p. 11). The fact that US and India share common interest to balance China was the basis of both the US – India joint statements issued at the conclusion of Modi Obama Summit in 2015 and the end of the Trump Modi Summit in 2017.

Moreover, the United States has adopted a strategy of aligning with others to balance China. Indeed, the United States possesses enough power to resort to an internal balancing strategy alone to counter China successfully, but it has also recognized the importance of an external balancing strategy by constructing or strengthening alliances and partnerships with China's neighbors who are even more threatened by China's power and behavior. This is an attractive strategy for the US because it allows it to share its burden with other countries also. If the United States were to decide to give up this strategy and rely solely on internal balancing strategy, India can no longer accrue the benefits of building a strategic partnership with Washington. However, to India's benefit, this has not emerged as a concern yet, as the United States has so far appears committed to an external balancing strategy. For instance, the recent Indo-Pacific strategy of Biden administration, announced in 2022, gives much importance to building alliances and partnerships to balance China, in which India's role has been recognized as a rising regional power and net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region (Saha &

Mishra, 2022). It also emphasized the need to support India as a partner in order to achieve US' objectives in its strategy for Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the most important advantage of establishing and maintaining a partnership with US is that such a partnership can allow India to balance China, because of Washington's capabilities, self-interest, and willingness to partner with India through its external balancing strategy.

The magnitude of India's China threat depends primarily on the timeframe involved. By taking enough time and assistance to build up its military capabilities, India can certainly emerge as a country capable of deterring Chinese expansionism and checking Beijing's intention to cause trouble or conflict in Asia. Towards achieving this end, the assistance and support of the US already proved to be vital and will continue to remain so in the foreseeable future, as evident in the great interest showed by the US in engaging with India. Until now, India has received many benefits of the strategic partnership with the US in balancing China, in both continental and maritime domains. Notably, India could acquire, over the last two decades, sophisticated weapons systems, modern defense technologies, and operational capabilities from the US, thereby starting the process of bridging the huge gap existing between India and China in terms of military power. India also envisions an important role for US in helping it to achieve its ambition of developing indigenous defense capabilities.

6.1.1. Through Building Maritime Capabilities

In the maritime domain, the strategic partnership with the US has been instrumental in India's efforts to balance China, by helping it to develop capabilities in order to effectively counter growing Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region, ever since 2009. In particular, New Delhi is deeply concerned with the rapidly increasing presence of Chinese submarines in the region, with one of these submarines even docking in Sri Lanka's Colombo port in 2014 (Mello, 2023). India can't match this Chinese advancement without collaborating with the US. Hence, both countries have been engaging in various activities to build high end

capabilities that could be vital in Indian endeavors to deter Chinese coercion against India in the region.

US and Indian militaries, especially the navies, have been giving much significance to building these high end capabilities such as anti-submarine warfare through conducting exercises. Importantly, high end, Malabar series exercises are primarily conducted with an objective to further enhance India's own efforts to strengthen its maritime domain awareness capabilities² along important sea lines of communication in the Western and Eastern Indian Ocean, as complex maritime operations in the surface, sub surface firings, advanced maritime interdiction operations are conducted during this exercise (India Today, 2019). Thus, the exercise is widely viewed among the strategists as an effective way of keeping a constant pressure on China in the Indian Ocean, in particular and Asia Pacific, in general. The United States also sought to strengthen Indian naval capabilities by supplying it with sophisticated maritime reconnaissance aircrafts, such as the P8I Poseidon aircraft.

6.1.2. Through Soft Balancing

In addition, the US helps India in soft balancing China through offering tangible diplomatic support to India against China. China's rapidly expanding and aggressive inroads into the Indian Ocean by the ways of building military bases, port leasing and predatory economics has resulted in causing a pressing strategic challenge, because these advances will lead to an Indo-Pacific that is less open, less prosperous, and less secure for the US and India. In order to counter it, the US has recognized India's primacy as the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region and offered support to the growing role of India in Pacific Ocean. As a result, Washington making use of its diplomatic capabilities to counter China in the region

² Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) refers to the understanding and monitoring of activities in the maritime environment to ensure the security, safety, and sustainability of seas and oceans. It involves the use of various technologies such as satellites, radar systems, and maritime surveillance to detect, track, and respond to threats, including piracy, smuggling, illegal fishing, and naval operations, while safeguarding maritime trade and resources.

has boosted the confidence of India that it will reduce the influence of Beijing in the Indian Ocean Region, thereby aiding India to soft balance China.

Over the last two decades, the United States has offered substantial diplomatic support to India's soft balancing strategy against China in multiple ways. First, both the countries have acknowledged the increasing threat caused by Beijing's assertiveness in the area. They have committed towards establishing their role as leading powers in the Indian Ocean and ensuring the continuity of peaceful and rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific, especially freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region (Talwar, 2014). This shared interest to ensure maritime security against China's growing influence was the major theme of the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean, announced during the visit of Obama to India in 2015. It can be considered as a turning point in India-US strategic partnership, as it was the first joint statement ever issued by both the countries that openly outlined the intention of them to work in collaboration to achieve their shared interests in the region, including promoting regional connectivity, economic integration, freedom of navigation and adherence to maritime international law in the Indo-Pacific (Modi & Obama, 2015). The obvious target was China, as it is the only country that threatens these interests in the region.

Second, the US considers India as the Western strategic pivot of the Indo-Pacific indispensable to prevent the emergence of a Sino-centric Asia and reclaim the strategic space that is being lost to China in the South China Sea.³ It is for this reason that many of the strategic documents and statements of the US attaches much importance to the role of New Delhi as a net security provider in the region. For instance, the Quadrennial Defense Review Report, in as early as 2010, expressed that as India's military capabilities expand, it would play a vital role in

³ The U.S. has focused on reclaiming strategic space in the South China Sea, where China's expanding military presence and territorial claims have raised concerns about freedom of navigation and regional security. Through increased military presence, joint exercises with regional allies, and diplomatic pressure, the U.S. seeks to counter China's growing influence and maintain its role as a key security partner in the Indo-Pacific region.

Asia as a net provider of security in the Indo-Pacific Region (US Department of Defence, 2010, p. 60). Similarly, in 2016, US secretary of defense Ashton Carter acknowledged the role of India as an important stakeholder in the proposed “principled security network” in East Asia (US Department of Defence, 2016, p. 60). The 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy of the US also considered India as a “regional guardian” whose capabilities must be developed and whose interests aligns closely with US’ Indo-Pacific objectives (US Department of Defence, 2019, pp. 33-34). In this way, Washington has been offering much needed diplomatic support to India, thereby helping it to remain confident in the face of growing Chinese power and influence in the region.

Third, both the countries have been engaging in Maritime Security Dialogues since 2016, the last round of which took place in 2022. Its primary objective is to improve cooperation at the operational levels of the US and Indian naval forces. In the first round of the dialogue, both the countries agreed to finalize a white shipping technical arrangement to enhance data sharing on commercial shipping traffic and navy to navy discussions to ensure submarine safety and bolster anti-submarine warfare capabilities (Peri, 2016). In the last round of the dialogue, held in 2022, the two sides affirmed their shared intention to strengthen maritime security internationally and enhance cooperation towards a free, open and inclusive maritime order that would ensure security and inclusive growth (Ministry of External Affairs, 2022). These kinds of dialogues can also be considered as contributing to India’s soft balancing against China, as it provides opportunities to India to discuss with the US the challenges China poses to maritime security in the region.

6.1.3. Through Foundational Agreements

The three foundational agreements signed with the US in the last one decade also help India in balancing China, as them potentially marks an enhancement in India’s operational capacities in the Indo-Pacific region. The three foundational agreements are: Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement

(LEMOA), Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA), and Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA). These foundational agreements establish the necessary ecosystem for realizing the objectives of the security partnership and thereby strengthen both countries' regional influence in the Indo-Pacific region. This is particularly because these deals help them to achieve real maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean and the larger Indo-Pacific. In short, these agreements lay the foundation for India to emerge as a net security provider in the region, as envisioned by the US.

The first foundational agreement LEMOA was signed in 2016 and considered as an important part of the then US president Obama's strategy to contain China. This agreement directly helps India to balance China, as it provides opportunities to increase presence in areas where China's influence is growing in the Indo-Pacific. This benefit is possible because LEMOA allows India's armed forces to utilize US bases all over the world for accessing US defense supplies, including fuel and spare parts and services such as maintenance and repair facilities (Iqbal, 2016). In particular, the pact bolsters Indian Navy's ability to conduct operations in the Indo-Pacific region, thereby providing an excellent opportunity for it to emerge as a pan regional security provider. By establishing close coordination with the US in the region, India could play a vital role in ensuring a fair, balanced, and open maritime security architecture.

In addition, LEMOA facilitates the active presence of US Navy and Air Force in the Indo-Pacific region, as the US can now utilize Indian air and sea ports for logistical assistance. Instead of having to build military bases from the scratch, as in the case of Iraq or Afghanistan, the US can now enjoy the benefit of using well built Indian facilities through this pact (Tiefer, 2016). In particular, LEMOA will help the US to counter the growing military might of China in South China Sea, which is evident through the construction of air bases. This is so due to the fact that operational logistics is the life blood of today's maritime missions. Any ocean-going

navy that can access logistical pit shops along the way can secure a wider operational footprint in the distant littorals (Singh, 2016). In this way, by ensuring strong US presence in the region, India can effectively check any Chinese activism that might jeopardize Asian security in the future. The flexibility of calling upon the US for any assistance in the event of a crisis has also improved substantially with the signing of LEMOA.

In September 2018, both the countries signed the second foundational agreement called CISMOA, which allowed India to buy advanced American weaponry and enabled the transfer of sophisticated communications platforms to India (Habib, 2018). With the conclusion of this agreement, both countries have replaced the open radio channels, used for communication, with high tech communication systems. This agreement has contributed a lot to bridge the huge gap existing between the capabilities of India and China, with regarding to access to high end communication equipment (Habib, 2018). It also helps New Delhi to effectively conduct surveillance of Chinese moves in Indian Ocean and Himalayas (Mishra, 2019, p.117). As a result, India has now become the central pillar of America's Indo-Pacific strategy, which aims to curb the growing influence of China in the region by building the capabilities of regional partners.

The last foundational agreement, called BECA, was signed in October 2020. It is the most important agreement signed between the two countries till now and the US has signed this type of agreement only with its closest allies. The pact allows India access to a wide array of sensitive geospatial and aeronautical data, that is considered vital for military action. Specifically, this agreement provides India access to the US National Geospatial Intelligence Agency's (NGIA) "geospatial information bank",⁴ which is highly valuable for it (Sharma, 2016). The BECA agreement also enables India engage in subject matter exchanges and get training

⁴ The U.S. National Geospatial Intelligence Agency's (NGA) "geospatial information bank" stores a vast array of geospatial data, including maps, satellite imagery, and location-based intelligence. This information supports national security, military operations, and intelligence analysis, assisting decision-makers in both defence and crisis management.

at the US National Geospatial Intelligence College (Indian Express, 2016). When evaluating from an operational and strategic standpoint, the BECA agreement puts India closer to the US than other non-treaty allies. For instance, before the BECA was signed, the US had to make use of a strenuous and careful process to share information from satellites. Now, the US can share such information in real time.

This agreement has immense potential to enhance India's defense capabilities, thereby helping it to balance China. Primarily, three such benefits can be identified. First, the BECA agreement enables India to procure advanced navigational aids and avionics on US supplied aircraft. Until now, the absence of such an agreement hindered India from making use of the advanced navigational and flight management systems for the effective operation of aircrafts purchased from the US, such as C 17, C130J, and P8 I aircrafts (Shukla, 2010). Second, it could allow for enhancing cooperation in anti-submarine warfare. This capability is vital to India because of the continuing presence of Chinese submarines in the Indian Ocean. To date, cooperation in this area was limited because a great part of anti-submarine tactics and operations involve classified information, which can only be shared with an agreement on communication security and data sharing (White, 2021). Finally, the BECA allows India to use US geospatial maps to achieve pinpoint military accuracy of automated hardware and weapons including cruise and ballistic missiles, thereby helping India to secure a strategic advantage against China in the event of a conflict.

6.1.4. Through Military Modernization

Another way in which the strategic partnership with the US is strengthening India's efforts to balance China's rise is through the supply of advanced weapons, which significantly contributes to India's military modernization. For decades, the United States has been able to maintain its position as the world's leader in sophisticated technology research and development, especially when it comes to advanced weapons technology. India can certainly make use of the US advantage. However, the United States was not willing to provide India advanced weapons and

technology, forcing India to rely on Russia. This is not the case now, thanks to the emergence of a close strategic partnership between both countries, the US now is committed to bolster India's military capabilities. For example, in November 2017, during a meeting between Trump and Modi, on the sidelines of ASEAN meeting, both the leaders affirmed their commitment to enhance defense cooperation by stating that the two countries should have world's greatest militaries (Panda, 2017).

In pursuit of this objective, India and the US have so far made great progress in terms of educating one another on their respective processes. For instance, the US has eased export control for India and India has shown willingness to adopt new end user monitoring procedures. Although the two countries continue to face some bureaucratic challenges to foreign military sales, they managed to adapt and innovate as a way to promote and deepen technology collaboration (Abercombie, 2018). As a result, the India – US defense trade volume increased from a mere \$200 million in 2000 to over \$20 billion in 2020. An analysis of how some of the important weapons purchased from the US, such as C130 J Hercules transport aircrafts, P8I Poseidon surveillance aircrafts, M777 ultra-light weight howitzers, Chinook helicopters, C17 Globemaster transport aircrafts, MH 60 R helicopters, and Apache AH 64 E helicopters, can contribute to modernizing Indian military reveals that the India-US strategic partnership has been instrumental in India's military modernization efforts in the last one decade.

Lockheed Martin's C130J Hercules transport aircraft is the most sophisticated airlifter in the world. The C130J is known for providing an operator greater capability with maximum operational efficiency, because it is based on highly modern aerospace technology and its proven, rugged airframe design (Deccan Herald, 2010). It is also equipped with a state of the art communication/navigation suite. It makes full use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and other most reliable aides that can be helpful in navigation and route planning. As a result, the cockpit crew can focus more on the mission at hand

instead of managing aircraft systems (Balla, 2012). The C130J can perform other roles in addition to just being a cargo transport aircraft. The war time utility, for instance, includes special operations, air maintenance roles and casualty evacuation among other roles.

The Indian Air Force currently operates 13 C130J aircrafts. The C130J is perfectly suited for the mission environment of India, as it involves conducting operations in austere, high elevation airstrips under hot conditions. The US had operated C130J aircraft for several years in the mountainous areas of Afghanistan in conditions akin to India and performed incredibly well (Balla, 2012). As a tactical airlift aircraft with “kill with stealth” as their motto, the aircraft will be extremely useful for quickly deploying ‘special forces’ in all weather conditions, that includes airdrops and landings on unprepared or partially prepared surface even under poor lighting conditions (Panda, 2014). Given these important advantages of this aircraft for enhancing the operational capability of Indian Air Force, the C130 J will surely give a strategic advantage to India in a future conflict with China, as a good part of India’s border with China is mountainous regions without adequate infrastructure to operate. In fact, India flew its C130 J aircraft during the April 2013 Daulat Beg Oldie incident, to send a signal to China.

The P8I is mostly considered as the world’s most deadly long-range maritime reconnaissance anti-submarine warfare aircraft. Boeing made P8I by adding many sensors and weaponry to the Boeing 737-800 airliner (Shukla, 2022). The anti-submarine warfare capability of this aircraft is facilitated by some of the most modern US technology comprising a Telephonics APS 143 Ocean Eye aft radar system and an advanced magnetic anomaly detector (Gady, 2020). The aircraft is also fitted with Harpoon Block II missiles and MK 54 Lightweight Torpedoes. It uses these two weapons to destroy submarines once detected. Additionally, it can transfer the data on submarines to friendly warships or submarines, so that they can carry out the mission.

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Currently, Indian Navy operates 12 Boeing made P8I aircrafts, which has been bought with the cost of \$3 billion. These aircrafts have flown 35000 flight hours ever since in 2013, when the first P8I was inducted into Indian Navy, thereby enhancing a close observation and firm control over the Northern Indian Ocean (Shukla, 2022). During this period, the aircraft has emerged as a strategically important asset to India, because it has drastically enhanced Indian Navy's ability to detect and eliminate submarines from hostile countries, as retired captain Dalip Sharma said: P8I has been a game changer that has shrunk battlespace whilst increasing transparency and maintaining near continuous surveillance far from the Indian shores. In short, it is a true force multiplier across multiple domains and geographical boundaries (Gupta, 2020).

Therefore, the P8 I aircraft help India to achieve an edge in aerial balance and sub surface surveillance capabilities vis a vis China. During any future conflict with China, the P8Is will surely allow the Indian Navy to effectively track ships and submarines of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), when they attempt to move from the South China Sea into the Indian Ocean. This would be achieved through patrolling and mounting surveillance over five crucial Southeast Asian Straits – Malacca, Lombok, Sunda, Ombai, and Wetar. In addition, the P8Is proved to be an important asset for conducting surveillance over the movements of People's Liberation Army along the land borders, as India has extensively used them during the 73 day long Doklam Standoff and two year standoff on the Ladakh Border. During the 73 day Doklam standoff, India deployed P8Is to conduct surveillance on the movement of the People's Liberation Army troops, as acknowledged by then Chief of Defense Staff General Bipin Rawat (Gupta, 2020). The P8Is was used during the two-year long Ladakh standoff with China to get information about Chinese positions and pick up PLA deployments in rear areas.

The BAE systems' M777 Ultra-Light Howitzer is the only battle proven 155 MM ultra-light weight howitzer in the world (Chandrakanth, 2016). The unique feature of the M777 is that it possesses the same firepower of the modern 155 MM

towed systems and at less than half the weight. This extremely less weight and smaller size help the Army to transport it easily by using a CH-47 Chinook helicopter or truck, thereby allowing them to quickly move it in and out of battlefield than other guns with heavy weight. As a result, those armies currently operating M777 howitzers can effectively gain tactical upper hand in the battle field, as the speed at which guns can be placed at strategic locations is crucial decisive factor during a war (Vikas, 2018). Given the success achieved by the US in using M777 howitzers in mountainous regions in Afghanistan, it appears that these guns are also highly effective to be used in the mountains, in particular (Vikas, 2018).

The Indian Army has procured 145 M777 Howitzers from the BAE systems. With this, the BAE systems played an important role in the modernization of Indian Army. Before the induction of these weapons to Indian Army, it was a challenging and time consuming task for the Army to transport artillery guns to the mountainous regions, as during the Kargil War, it took the Army a while for placing the Bofors AB's Haubits FH77U artillery guns in strategic locations. However, after the M777 Howitzers are incorporated to Indian Army, it is now possible for the Army to quickly deploy artilleries in India's mountainous border regions. This will particularly provide an edge to India over China in the event of a future conflict, as Indian Army can now overcome the challenge of not having proper infrastructure in the Eastern border with China for transporting artilleries by road, by transporting M777 Howitzers using helicopters.

These advantages of M777 Howitzers have already been visible, as in September 2022, during the Ladakh standoff between India and China, the Indian army deployed a good number of M777 ultra-light weight howitzers in mountainous regions in forward locations along LAC in Arunachal Pradesh (The Economic Times, 2022). In this way, the Army has effectively addressed the difficulty of transporting heavy artillery guns in the mountainous regions, thereby achieving a tactical advantage as the Army can now easily move those howitzers

from one place to another in accordance with the operational requirement, using Chinook helicopters (The Economic Times, 2022). This deployment can also be considered as part of Army's efforts to boost its operational capabilities in the Eastern sector bordering China.

The Chinook helicopters are one of the very few helicopters in the world that can lift very heavy weights. It has several means to load cargo including multiple doors and three ventral cargo hooks. India currently operates 15 Chinook helicopters that are stationed in Assam and Chandigarh. The IAF has deployed the Chinooks in India's Northern and Eastern regions, bordering with China, thereby allowing the helicopters to provide the crucial strategic heavy lift capability to the IAF. As a result, these helicopters enable the IAF to quickly access the hard to reach mountainous border areas (Panda, 2019). In fact, the IAF has noted in a statement that the addition of heavy lift Chinook helicopter is a significant achievement towards the modernization of IAF (Panda, 2019).

In operation since 1991, the C17's ability to deliver large combat cargo troops and equipment directly into small, challenging and austere airfields in remote locations makes it a vital transporter for military, humanitarian and peacekeeping missions (Philip, 2021). It's possible for C17 to take off from a 7,600 foot airfield and it boasts a high payload capacity of 77 tons. It can fly 2,400 nautical miles after fully refueled. Its ability to refuel while in flight and land on 3000 feet paved or unpaved airfield in all conditions further enhances its versatility. Hence, the C17 has been proven to be a force multiplier for multiple militaries

India procured 11 Boeing C17 aircrafts from the US. These aircrafts are primarily used in border areas and hinterland of India (Mohapatra, 2013). Ever since their first induction into IAF in 2013, the C17s have flown more than 31000 flying hours, thereby playing an important role in supporting a good number of Indian Air Force operations in challenging terrains, such as the Himalayas and deserts. In fact, in 2012, then Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal NAK Browne, recognized the role of C17s in modernizing IAF by saying that C17s would provide

IAF a major impetus towards transforming into a force with full spectrum strategic capability (Noronha, 2012). The major benefits of using this highly modern aircraft is already evident, as this aircraft plays a vital role in providing food, logistics, and medical supplies to the Leh Air Force station, fulfilling the requirements of soldiers stationed in the challenging conditions of the Siachen Glacier (Raksha Anirveda, 2023).

The utility of C17 aircrafts in helping IAF to build strategic airlift capability in the remote locations of the bordering regions with China has already been evident, as it played a vital role during the Ladakh standoff, thereby helping India to match the advancements made by China in border infrastructure on the Chinese side of the border. During the standoff, the C17 enabled IAF to quickly deploy troops, combat vehicles, tanks and air defense weapons to forward areas in Eastern Ladakh, giving a major boost to India's defense capabilities vis a vis China (Orbits Hub, 2013). This is particularly true because with the induction of C17s to IAF, India has acquired the capability to operate even in austere and difficult terrains.

The US defense giant Lockheed Martin's MH 60R is an all weather helicopter specifically designed to support various maritime operations with sophisticated avionics and sensors. The MH 60R is fitted with Advanced Cockpit Avionics Suite that allows the aircrew to engage in diverse missions, such as anti-submarine warfare (ASW), surveillance, naval gun fire assistance, logistics support and anti-surface warfare (Katoch, 2022). These capabilities are also facilitated by the MH 60R's ability to fire torpedoes, missiles and rockets. In addition, the presence of AAS – 44 forward looking infrared electro optical on the helicopter leads to proper surveillance of the battlefield during low light conditions (Katoch, 2022). The fact that the helicopter is launchable from a wider range of vessels including aircraft carriers, destroyers, cruise ships, amphibious ships, and frigates makes it a highly desirable choice for navies around the world.

India signed a contract for 24 MH 60 R in 2020 February, and 6 of them have already been delivered (Kronstadt, 2024). The induction of MH 60 R

helicopters into Indian Navy, hailed a pivotal moment in the process of India's defense modernization, would bolster India's blue water capabilities through helping the Navy to extend its operational reach and support various naval operations, such as anti-submarine warfare and surveillance, across spectrums, thereby enabling the Navy to address a significant capability gap in the area of anti-submarine warfare (Bowman, 2020). Over the past decade, China has succeeded in increasing the size and capability of its submarine fleet, many of which have been deployed to patrol in the Indian Ocean, causing a deep consternation in New Delhi. In this context, once all the 24 MH 60 R helicopters are inducted into Indian Navy, India will be in a position to effectively deal with this new threat in any future conflict with China.

The AH 64 E Apache is a highly advanced multi mission helicopter equipped with the latest technology, such as sophisticated navigation, sensor and weapon systems, securing a position as the world's best helicopter (Force India, 2019). The advanced sensors allow Apache helicopter to detect and engage its targets even when flying very low and at high speed to avoid being detected by hostile forces. It also has the capability to transmit and receive battlefield pictures to and from the weapons systems, using data networking (Som, 2019). The weaponry with which these helicopters are equipped includes air to ground hellfire missiles, air to air stinger missiles and 70 MM Hydra rockets. Apaches are fitted with a 30 MM chain gun comprising 1200 rounds, further adding an area weapon subsystem to the helicopter. As a result, these helicopters are ideal for providing support to ground troops by taking on enemy choppers and UAVs (Indian Defense News, 2015).

The Indian Air Force currently operates 22 Apache helicopters, purchased from Boeing. The two pilot Apache helicopter is considered as a game changer for the IAF, with regard to providing the vital close air support to Indian Army in India's challenging border regions (Bowman, 2020). Indeed, India had attack helicopters in the past, but what makes this aircraft special is that it guarantees lethal firepower with devastating accuracy (Sura, 2019). The induction of Apache helicopters will

also help the IAF to secure more strike options along disputed boundaries, thereby enhancing its capability in the mountainous terrain. The IAF's intention to use them along the disputed border with China is already evident, as it has heavily deployed Apache helicopters during the two-year Ladakh standoff with China (Philip, 2020).

6.2. Challenges

The strategic partnership with the US has achieved significant progress over the years and is currently plays a vital role in India's strategy of balancing China's rise. However, despite this advancement, multiple challenges prevail that prevent the full blossoming of this partnership. This part deals with an analysis of five major challenges to Indo-US strategic partnership, which are India's defense ties with Russia, India's policy of strategic autonomy, gap between Indian potential and performance, failure to achieve interoperability and Pakistan factor. In this part, an in depth analysis of how these challenges caused strains in the relations in the last two decades is done. This analysis shows that the extent to which this partnership can contribute towards helping both countries to achieve their national security objectives depends on successfully overcoming these obstacles.

6.2.1. India's Defense Ties with Russia

India's close defense ties with Russia complicated multiple aspects of the India-US strategic cooperation ever since the Cold War period. During the period of Cold War, India purchased more weapons from the Soviet Union than from any other country (Mastny, 2010, p. 52). Russian – Indian defense cooperation continued to remain in a good state, as it helped both countries to secure their mutual security, economic and geopolitical interests. Presently, more than 70% of all the armaments and military equipment operated by Indian military is sourced from Russia or Soviet Union, making New Delhi heavily dependent on Russia. What made Russia an attractive choice for India is the fact that Russia has been willing to offer its most advanced military technology to India. In addition, India could achieve joint capability development by cooperating with Russia, as evident in the collaborative production of the advanced Brahmos missiles in India.

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New Delhi's advanced defense ties with Russia has been posing a challenge to India-US strategic partnership, because by deepening defense partnership with Russia, India is acting against the interests of the US: the US intends to wean India away from Russian military hardware. Consequently, over the last decade, on multiple occasions, the US officials and leaders explicitly expressed their concern with regarding to India-Russia defense cooperation. For instance, in 2020, Republican senator Marc Rubio, who was the then chairman of senate intelligence committee warned India to refrain from developing close cooperation with Russia (Kumar, 2020). In another instance, happened in 2022, then US defense secretary suggested that it's not a right strategy for India to continue to acquire weapons from Russia, as in his opinion, it does not allow India to safeguard its interests (Business Standard, 2022).

There are five major reasons because of which the US wants India to weaken its defense ties with Russia. Firstly, India's Russian origin weapon systems are not technologically compatible with the US weapons, making it highly difficult for the two countries to achieve interoperability (Mello, 2023). Second, US fears that the advanced Russian intelligence systems that can collect data, such as the S 400,⁵ could put the security of US systems under severe risk and acquire information on the sophisticated US military technology (Lalwani & Kalyankar, 2020). In the recent past, the US removed Turkey from the F35 coproduction program because of the latter's decision to buy S 400 missile system from Russia (Macias, 2019). Therefore, as the India-US defense cooperation expands to the levels of advanced weapons procurements and cooperation, India's possession of Russian origin technology systems is an obstacle that can potentially slow down or cease the progress achieved in the ties so far.

⁵ The S-400 missile defense system is an advanced Russian intelligence and defense platform capable of tracking airborne targets and providing real-time data for air defense operations. It combines radar, sensors, and missile capabilities, making it a powerful tool for surveillance and defense.

Third, due to the Russia-US competition for dominance across different parts of the world, US always make use of any opportunity to prevent Russia from growing and expanding. It believes that Indian procurement of Russian weapons promote and tacitly support the revisionist belligerence of Russia (Lalwani & Kalyankar, 2020). Therefore, owing to US' relations with Russia, the US wants India to outrightly sever all the defense ties with Russia. Fourth, India's and Russia's interest in building a multilateral world order over one led by the US can be considered as against the interests of the US. This interest to establish a multilateral world order has already been evident in the participation of India and Russia in BRICS and SCO.

Finally, since the beginning of Ukraine War in February 2022, a new dimension has added to this challenge. India adopted a neutral stance on this issue and abstained from joining the West, led by US, in opposing Russia's military action and imposing economic sanctions. This has led to some negative statements from US leaders and officials, questioning India's commitment to the partnership with the US (Kapur, 2023). Given India's principle of strategic autonomy and its need for advanced weapons like S 400, India is unlikely to ever fully end its defense relationship with Russia. So far, New Delhi appears to be adopting a policy of cautiously balancing Russian and American baskets. Hence, the Russian factor will likely remain a major obstacle that can hinder the future growth of India-US strategic partnership.

6.2.2. India's Policy of Strategic Autonomy

India's adherence to the policy of strategic autonomy in managing its foreign relations can be considered as another important challenge towards deepening Indo-US strategic partnership, as India is unlikely to cooperate as closely with the US as Washington's other allies do. Strategic autonomy implies that a country can secure its national interests and conduct its preferred foreign policy without being hindered in any way by other countries. Strategic autonomy ensures that the state in question has enough power so as to allow it to successfully

overcome pressures from other countries to change or influence its policies. Since the end of Cold War, Indian policy of Non-Alignment has been gradually replaced by the policy of strategic autonomy. Pursuing this policy enabled New Delhi to engage in strategic hedging while cooperating with all the big powers as a way of maintaining the balance of power in its favor. This strategic shift in India's foreign policy is evident in the statements of multiple Indian leaders and officials. For instance, then foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale, at the 2019 Raisina Dialogue, said that India today is an aligned country based on issues. He further added that this alignment is not ideological, thereby giving India the ability to be flexible and maintain its autonomy (Business Standard, 2019).

However, there is disagreement about which countries and activities are helping India to achieve strategic autonomy and which are posing serious challenges to it. Some analysts and officials, like S Kalyanaraman and M K Narayanan, warns that bolstering defense cooperation with the US will lead to opening channels for the US to exert pressure on India on important national security issues, such as nuclear weapons and Kashmir (Smith, 2020). Other scholars, on the other hand, argue that alignment with the US actually helps India to protect its strategic autonomy, as it helps India to strengthen its decision making power vis a vis China. In their opinion, China is the major country restricting India's strategic autonomy because it is fear of Chinese retribution that prevented New Delhi from adopting independent policy on multiple matters, such as establishing greater ties with Taiwan, conducting military exercises with close partners and allowing Tibetan exiles freedom of speech. As a solution to this, these scholars contend that alignment with the US will enhance India's strategic autonomy, as it can put India in a better position vis a vis China.

Despite this dominant and emerging discourse on the role of US in helping India to protect its strategic autonomy, India so far appears to be following a policy of adopting a cautious approach while engaging with the US, as a way to protect its strategic autonomy. Therefore, India's desire to play an independent role in global

affairs places limits on India-US strategic partnership and will continue to do so in the near future, as this interest to protect its autonomy has been deeply rooted in the Indian bureaucratic and political system for decades. This is particularly because India is a country with the ambition to become a leading power in Asia and therefore will never be interested to be part of an alliance or become a junior partner to a super power.

In addition, Indian policy makers and officials attach the status of a unique actor among the allies and adversaries of the US. They believe that India is a country that does not pose any strategic challenge to the US, but at the same time does not easily act according to America's desires and strives to achieve its own interests (Raghavan, 2011). In this way, Indians are confident that even if Pakistan – US alliance comes to an end, New Delhi won't replace Pakistan as Washington's willing and subordinate ally (Sarkar, 2015). This Indian obsession with strategic autonomy leads US to a paradox, which is that US can benefit from partnership with India to advance its interests when India is weak, but a weak India cannot contribute substantially to support US in its endeavors. It's because of this reason that US strive to help India become a global power. However, India is highly likely to claim more autonomy when it became a more powerful country, thereby making it difficult for the US to set the agenda.

The impacts of Indian adherence to the policy of strategic autonomy were already visible in the defense relations between them, as it significantly delayed the signing of foundational agreements for more than a decade. Although all the three agreements – CISMOA, BECA, and LEMOA – were finally signed by 2020, the delay shows Indian reluctance to be part of a US led military system. The absence of these three agreements, during the period of deliberations, prevented the functioning of US defense platforms sold to India in a full-fledged manner, led to the failure to achieve interoperability, and data sharing between their militaries (Rosen, 2017, pp. 3-4). From the perspective of US, these agreements are routine agreements that Washington has signed with a number of countries, but they have

been viewed with caution by Indian leaders. They expressed a concern that these agreements negatively impact India's long held policy of strategic autonomy, because it can lead to the establishment of US bases or ports in Indian territories, improperly bind New Delhi to US systems and force India to support US in future military conflicts (Rosen, 2017, pp. 3-4).

6.2.3. Gap between Indian Potential and Performance

There also remains concerns about the gap between Indian potential and performance, especially in the defense sector. The underlying rationale for the US to support India to become a country with substantial military power is to highlight that democracy and development are not mutually exclusive. However, because of India's failure to come up to the expectations of US, this rationale and India's importance in it is gradually losing its ground. This Indian weakness principally stems from the lack of political will to take strong measures to reform its defense forces, and restructure its outmoded force posture as well as industrial enterprise (White, 2021, p. 5). Other factors, such as India's relatively weak national currency and high inflation prevailing in the defense sector also led to this weakness as these two factors continuously cause gaps between the armed forces' requirements and budget (Darling, 2015).

In fact, some of the US officials and analysts even went to the extent of saying that Washington has been overinvesting in a partner that is yet to demonstrate sufficient intention to provide significant benefits for the US (Kronstadt & Pinto, 2013, p. 48). Their concerns are justifiable, given the fact that India's economic constraints does not always allow it to purchase costly US defense equipment. This issue is further exacerbated by some regulatory hindrances on the Indian side, as evident in its slow acquisition time line, caused by a mismatch between procurement plans and budgetary allocations (Kronstadt & Pinto, 2013, p. 48)

6.2.4. Failure to Achieve Interoperability

It's one of the objectives of India-US strategic partnership to achieve interoperability between their armed forces. The defense documents of 2005 and 2015 attached much significance to this. However, although India conducts more exercises with the US than any other strategic partner, the armed forces of both countries are still far away from having the capability to operate together. The primary reason for the failure to achieve interoperability is that the frequency in which India exercises with the US is insufficient to achieve interoperability (Abercombie, 2018). This can be gauged from the fact that the US Navy conducted just one exercise with India in 2019, while on the other hand, it has conducted 28 exercises with Japan and 8 exercises with Singapore in the same year.

The primary reason for low frequency of exercises with the US is that in India, exercises are planned in order to help it to achieve political and foreign policy goals rather than making use of the operational benefits. Because of this, New Delhi has always tried to increase the number of partners with which it conducts exercises (12 partners since 2012), instead of expanding the frequency of exercises with important and capable partners like the US (Khera, 2017, p. 16). This can help India to acquire familiarity with multiple militaries, but it does not advance the objective of achieving interoperability.

6.2.5. Pakistan Factor

The US – Pakistan relationship, especially in the defense sector, has repeatedly posed challenges to the development of Indo-US strategic partnership. During the Cold War period, the US had aligned with Pakistan and always supported Pakistan in the event of any sort of conflict between India and Pakistan. After the 9/11 attack, because of the apparent geographical advantages, the US was compelled to cooperate with Islamabad for its war on terrorism. The US has provided significant amount of aid in the form of money and military equipment to Pakistan, thereby causing serious disappointment to India's policy makers. Since

the end of Cold War, it's possible to identify multiple instances where the Pakistan factor acted as an obstacle to the deepening of India-US strategic partnership.

First, during the time of India-US negotiations to finalize the defense agreement CISMOA, an important operational concern raised by India was that the agreement would enable US to monitor New Delhi's communications in operations involving any conflict with Pakistan. India also feared that the agreement might allow US to share sensitive communications with other countries, especially Pakistan (Dutta, 2018). Second, the Obama administration did not provide many of the arms requested by India, like ballistic missile defense systems and armed UAVs, given the US apprehension that providing these weapons to India would weaken the military balance in the region between India and Pakistan (Singh, 2018).

Third, in 2016, a defense deal between US and Pakistan caused serious negative impact on India-US strategic relations. India declined the US based defense manufacturer Lockheed Martin's offer to relocate its entire F 16 assembly system line to India, primarily because the offer came on the heels of its announcement that it was supplying eight F 16s to Pakistan (Fair, 2016). The reason because of which India decided not to accept the offer could be considered as an example for the most critical challenges for India-US defense relations. This instance showed that New Delhi always give priority to assessment of its own security threats than the compulsions that emerge from bilateral security relations. Hence, the strategic threats posed to India by Pakistan's F 16 fleet is a reality that forced India to turn down Lockheed Martin's offer.

Fourth, US-Pakistani ties have always posed serious challenges to India-US counter terrorism cooperation, which is an important component of the strategic partnership. Both the US and India are in favor of the emergence of a more politically stable and democratic Pakistan that is not a safe haven for the Islamic militant groups. However, despite this mutually agreed objective, strategies for countering threats generated by Pakistan and Pakistan based terrorist groups differs, causing an impediment to India-US security relations. For instance, Indian

officials have long been insisting that the security agencies of Pakistan, particularly ISI, are responsible for the region's problems involving Islamic terrorism (Kumar, 2015). This perspective of New Delhi is in conflict with the Washington's policy, which has considered Pakistan's security services as indispensable for its war against terrorism and cooperated with them in the last two decades (Curtis, 2011).

Finally, mutually dependent character of US-Pakistan partnership and its ability to provide advanced weapons for the Pakistani military, that can be used against India, has remained a serious issue for India in the past two decades. Since 1954, the US has been assisting Pakistan by providing weapons and economic aid to bolster latter's military capabilities. The US aimed to achieve the objective of containing USSR by militarily supporting Pakistan during the Cold War period. In the post-Cold War period, the focus has been shifted to countering terrorist threats to the US, leading to a substantial increase in the supply of weapons and aid to Pakistan.

Major Indian concern is that Pakistan has been allegedly using massive war aid received from the US meant for countering terrorism for other purposes. Indian leaders conveyed this apprehension with the US on multiple occasions, such as during the 2010 visit of then defense minister A K Antony to the US. He stated during the visit that India's practical experience showed that Pakistan was misusing the aid provided by the US by diverting a portion against India (The Indian Express, 2010). Because of this, India demands the US to closely monitor its military assistance to Pakistan in order to ensure that such an aid is not used to bolster Pakistan's conventional military and nuclear capabilities against India.

6.3. Conclusion

The United States plays a critical role in India's strategy to balance China's rise by fostering a multi-faceted partnership. Through initiatives aimed at strengthening India's maritime capabilities, such as joint naval exercises and sharing advanced surveillance technology, the U.S. supports India's presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Diplomatic backing from the U.S., including collaboration in

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forums like the Quad, helps India address regional security concerns and counter China's assertiveness. Additionally, the U.S. supplies India with cutting-edge weaponry and defence systems, enhancing its military readiness. Foundational agreements like CISMOA and BECA further deepen this cooperation by enabling secure communication and sharing of geospatial intelligence. Together, these efforts bolster India's ability to assert its strategic autonomy while countering China's growing influence.

The Indo-US strategic partnership in the 21st century, while advancing in areas such as defence, trade, and regional security, faces several challenges that hinder its full potential. These include the complexities of US-Pakistan defence cooperation, which complicates India's trust in the US, as well as India's continued defence ties with Russia, which the US seeks to reduce. India's policy of strategic autonomy also presents a challenge, as it occasionally diverges from US priorities on global issues. Moreover, there exists a gap between India's military potential and its actual performance, particularly in defence modernization, and achieving interoperability with US forces remains difficult due to low frequency of exercises being conducted.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

7.1. Conclusion

Throughout the Cold War period, both India and the US failed to achieve and maintain good bilateral relationship between them. US support and military assistance to Pakistan as part of its efforts contain Soviet Union primarily led to this situation, because by doing this, US was bolstering the capabilities of Pakistan, which caused serious strain on India's relatively weak economy at that time. India's response to many of the international developments involving US during the same period also caused significant negative impact on the relations. This was evident in the joint communique signed by Indira Gandhi with USSR in 1966 condemning US invasion in Vietnam, as the US responded by suspending PL 480 food supply to India. Again, in 1986, India strongly criticized US military action against Libya and extended solidarity with Libyan leaders. However, during the same period, India could get some significant aid and assistance from the US for its development activities. Some of the important aid and assistance received from the US included US agricultural surpluses, such as wheat, aid worth \$90 million for the construction of power plants and fertilization plants and funding of Indo-US cooperative projects in education, culture, science, and technology.

With the end of Cold War, there emerged multiple favorable conditions for the improvement of India-US relations, such as the liberalization of Indian economy, weakening of US reliance on Pakistan for countering communism, and the Gulf War in 1990. As a result, during the George H.W Bush presidency, strong foundations were laid for strengthening the relationship, especially in the security and economic spheres. During the Gulf War in 1990, India provided refueling facilities to the US aircrafts thereby led to creating a positive impression among US policy makers towards India. Kickleighter proposals of April 1991 also helped to

start strategic cooperation between the two countries, as it laid out an action plan for enhancing the defense cooperation between the two countries through training, joint exercises and seminars. In the economic sphere, during the mid-1990s, US became one of India's main trading partners and a vital source of technology and investment. This was evident from the fact that in 1991, the US achieved a new status as the largest single country market for export from and import to India, as the US was the destination for 18.9% of India's total exports and supplier of 8.9% of its imports. Nevertheless, there were two issues during this period that reduced the effectiveness of the progress achieved to some extent. The first one was that the US included India in a list of countries that caused damages to US commercial interests as per Super 301 Act. The second issue was US suspension of technological and military transfer to Russia and India in response to their joint collaboration on Agni missile program.

During the two terms of Bill Clinton as American president, Indo-US relations went through two important crises. The first one emanated from US' critical responses to India's human rights record in Kashmir and Punjab, which were expressed through Bill Clinton's United Nations address in which he, for the first time, included Kashmir to one of crisis spots in the world. This was followed by a bill intended to ban development assistance to India. This issue was resolved during the Narasimha Rao's 1994 visit to US, as US had withdrawn its criticism of India's human rights record in Kashmir and welcomed the setting up of National Human Rights Commission by India. India's nuclear tests in 1998 was another issue that stalled the progress achieved in multiple areas in the bilateral relations, because US imposed sanctions on India and thereby ended most of the assistance to and cooperation with India. Fortunately for India, this issue was resolved through the Jaswant Talbott talks, as it allowed both the countries to reach a realistic understanding of each other's security environment. The period after the beginning of the talks was marked by some other important positive development in the relations, as evident from the decision taken by Clinton to force Pakistan to

withdraw forces during Kargil War and Clinton's 2000 visit to India. The visit proved to be an important turning point in the relations, given some of the achievements during it, such as signing of the Vision for the 21st Century Document and setting up of institutional arrangement for government to government dialogue on economic issues.

India-US relations began to transform into a strategic partnership during the period of George W Bush as American president. He offered open support to help India to become a great power in the 21st century and made serious efforts to achieve this objective. Bush's administration, for the first time, considered India as an important partner for securing many of the national interests of the US, such as advancing democracy, fighting terrorism and countering China. In pursuant of this changed US policy, multiple achievements could be made in the relationship during the period of Bush presidency. First, Bush asked Pakistan to end cross border terrorism against India in 2002, thereby signaled a change in US approach towards India-Pakistan conflict. Second, his administration showed the willingness to sell India advanced weapons and technologies which were denied previously. Third, in a turning point in Indo-US strategic cooperation, Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) agreement was signed in 2004 that allowed cooperation in space, civil nuclear energy, dual use technology and missile defense. Fourth, both countries could set a broad agenda for their defense cooperation by signing the New Framework Agreement for the Indo-US Defense Relations in 2005. Finally, Bush administration succeed in removing one of the most important irritants in the bilateral relations in the form of difference over nuclear proliferation issue by signing the nuclear agreement in 2006. This agreement removed the ban on the sale of material and technology to India's nuclear energy industry.

Obama continued and further expanded the progress achieved in Indo-US relations during the period of George Bush. As a first step in this direction, Obama initiated strategic dialogue in 2009 as part of the joint effort to strengthen cooperation in areas such as counter terrorism cooperation, science and

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technology, education and trade. During his first visit to India, Obama lifted restrictions imposed on India's ISRO, DRDO, and Bharat Dynamics in addition to offering support to India's bid for permanent membership in United Nations security council. The trade component of the relationship also remained strong during the first term of Obama, as India-US bilateral trade reached \$62.8 billion in 2012. However, two issues caused some strain on the relations during this period. The first one was the US efforts to bolster ties with Pakistan, which India considered as a threat to its national security. The second issue emerged with the renewed US interest on non-proliferation, which led to Indian fears as might force New Delhi to sign CTBT and FMCT. Obama's, second term also witnessed some significant improvements in multiple spheres of Indo-US relations, especially the security relations. The US became the largest arms supplier to India overtaking Russia and a new initiative called Defense Trade and Technology Initiative was launched to promote coproduction of military systems. These two achievements were further accentuated by the designation of India as a major defense partner in 2016. This designation allowed US to upgrade the defense trade and technology sharing with India to a level similar to that of US' closest partners.

Indo-US strategic partnership entered a new phase during the four-year period of Donald Trump with the signing of CISMOA agreement in 2019 and BECA in 2020. The signing of CISMOA enabled real time information sharing between the militaries of two countries and the BECA agreement allowed India to access US geospatial data vital for military action. Trump also revived Quad as a dialogue mechanism to ensure security in the Indo-Pacific. Nevertheless, Trump's period was marked by some economic issues related to tariff as well, which led to weakening the bilateral relations to some extent. Trump called India a tariff king and accused India of imposing high tariffs on imports from the US. In order to deal with this, he imposed new tariffs on steel imports from India, forcing New Delhi to impose new tariffs on 28 products from US. Despite this episode, the bilateral trade remained strong and reached a new high of \$146 billion in 2019, out of which

India's exports to US accounted for \$87 billion and the total value of imports was \$58 billion.

The Indo-US strategic partnership is a post-Cold War development, as most of the factors that motivated both the countries to enhance strategic cooperation between them has been evolved since the end of Cold War. Since cooperation with Russia has not offered India the same benefits that India enjoyed during the cooperation with the USSR, New Delhi gradually adopted a pro Western policy for achieving its national security objectives. US also adopted a policy of building partnerships with emerging countries as a means to counter the new challenges of 21st century, thereby increasing India's importance in US policy. Multiple factors contributed towards creating a favorable environment for the partnership to emerge and thrive. Out of these, the rise of China as an economic and military super power in the last two decades is the most important factor, given the reality of China's increased ability to change contemporary international order and Asian balance of power in its favor. Hence, it became the common interest of both India and the US to counter growing threat posed by Chinese power to their influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

For the first time ever since its independence, India confronts a great power in its immediate neighborhood. China's GDP is six times bigger than that of India, resulting in a strategic gap in the defense capabilities of India vis a vis China, as this economic development allowed China to significantly expand and strengthen its military capabilities. There are multiple reasons that makes China a serious challenge for India to deal with. Firstly, Indo-China boundary dispute poses serious challenges to India's national security, because of the enormous land area of 47000 square miles of Himalayan territory that is still in dispute. The root cause of this dispute is China's claim over Arunachal Pradesh and its long-held policy of not accepting McMahon line as the border line separating the boundary between the two countries. Presently, the infrastructure development activities undertaken by the two countries is a cause of standoffs between the two countries, since India

considers infrastructure development on the Chinese side as a threat and China does not allow India to upgrade its border infrastructure. Secondly, China has significantly increased its influence in the Indian Ocean Region by building naval and commercial facilities in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, thereby leading to what's considered as a strategic encirclement of India. This puts India's national security at risk as the neutrality of these states cannot always be expected in the event of an Indo-China conflict.

Thirdly, the well-established strategic partnership between China and Pakistan makes it difficult for India to achieve many of its foreign policy and national security objectives, as it helps Pakistan to develop its defense capabilities to fill the huge strategic gap existing between India and Pakistan as well as allows China to challenge India's might in the subcontinent. This is evident from some of the facts such as China is the largest arms supplier and provider of technical assistance to Pakistan, the Gwadar port developed by China in Pakistan weakens India's strategic position in the Indian Ocean and China assisted Pakistan to develop nuclear weapons. Finally, modernization of Chinese military systems and infrastructure made China an important power to deal with in the Asia – Pacific for India. This has been facilitated by the double-digit growth in Chinese budget allocation for defense. The results of this modernization is evident from the transformation of PLA as a large infantry based force to that of a force with the capacity to project power abroad, change in PLAAF's role as a support force to that of an assault force and the PLAN's increasing capability to project power into the Indian Ocean Region.

For the US, the ascension of China to the status of a great power in Asia threatens its national interests in multiple ways. Presently, it is the power against which US measures militarily and economically. There are two issues with the potential to cause direct military conflict between the two countries: China's assertive behavior in the South China Sea and China's claim over Taiwan. In the first case, China has been following a policy of excluding other countries from exercising

influence and control over South China Sea, which directly hampers US interests in the region. Taiwan issue is the most troublesome issue in US-China relations, given that China would oppose any US effort to weaken Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan at any cost. China also intends to replace the current international order dominated by the US with a multipolar order in which China will be one of the important powers. As part of this policy, Chinese leaders strongly opposes all the US military bases and alliances in the region.

The second important factor that created a favorable context for the strengthening of the strategic partnership is the terrorism, as it posed serious threats to the national security of both India and US for the last two decades. Both the countries suffer from terrorist threats emanating from multiple sources. The primary sources of terrorism in India are naxalism, religious extremism, and North East insurgency and the US has been impacted by terrorist activities led by right wing extremists, eco terrorists, Islamic extremists and left wing extremists in the last two decades. The fact that presently terrorist organisations operate internationally across different countries forced New Delhi and Washington to enhance their counter terrorism cooperation by engaging in activities such as sharing of intelligence, transfer of technology and legal assistance. This international character of terrorism makes it impossible for any country to effectively counter it alone.

The Civil Nuclear Deal signed with the US in 2006 is the 3rd important factor that resulted in the strengthening of strategic partnership between India and US. This is because by signing the Nuclear Deal with India, the US removed the most important obstacle in the bilateral relations and ended four decades long denial of accessing nuclear technologies and fuel. Consequently, India can now engage in nuclear trade with all the countries for civilian purposes without ceasing its nuclear weapons program. Without such an agreement, India would never been able to be part of the present international system. Since the Nuclear Deal boosted India's confidence in the reliability of US as a provider of dual use technologies to India, it

also culminated in enhanced strategic cooperation between them. The economic reforms undertaken by the Narasimha Rao government in India in the 1990s can be considered as a fourth factor that encouraged both the countries to establish strategic partnership, as the US policy makers began to attach more importance to India following the liberalization of Indian economy and the resulting significant increase in bilateral trade and flow of investments to India.

The defense cooperation has become the key pillar of the Indo-US strategic partnership due to the substantial progress achieved by the two countries in this area, in the form of signing of multiple agreements, growing defense trade and military exercises. For the US, defense cooperation with India allows it to counter growing Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific. In this way, it helps India also to enhance its qualitative and technological military capabilities. The first two attempts in this direction were made in the form of Kickleigher proposals of 1991 and Agreed Minutes on Indo US Defense Relations in 1995, as they promoted bilateral exercises and established executive steering groups. After these agreements, the defense cooperation stalled in 1998 following India's nuclear tests and US sanctions. The sanctions were lifted and a new broad vision for the defense cooperation were set as a result of Jaswant-Talbott Talks that lasted for two years. Since then, an important change in US policy towards South Asia following the 9/11 attack transformed the defense partnership, as evident in the signing of Framework Agreement and foundational agreements. The Framework Agreement helped to build mutual confidence and created a new bold agenda for the military cooperation for countering security issues such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and revisionist tendencies. The foundational agreements – LEMOA, CISMOA and BECA – enabled the militaries of both countries to exchange logistics, communicate securely and access geospatial data banks.

Defense trade as part of India-US defense cooperation is an area that achieved substantial growth in the last two decades, as the US became one of the alternative arms suppliers of India after the disintegration of Soviet Union and

resulting loss of a major supplier to India. Since the beginning of the present century, the military sales from US to India increased from a meagre amount to more than \$22 billion, allowing both countries to understand each other's acquisition processes. As a result, India could equip its armed forces with some of the most advanced and unique weapons in the world such as helicopters, aircrafts, and howitzers. For instance, the purchase of Boeing P8I Poseidon surveillance aircraft from the US is a true force multiplier for the Indian Navy as it enhances its ability to track and destroy submarines. In spite of this progress, two challenges still remain in the defense trade relations. First is the longstanding reluctance of Indian policy makers to consider US as a supplier for many of its strategically most vital needs because of its fears about the reliability of US as a supplier. The absence of defense industrial cooperation is also a major issue, as India has usually been able to maintain such cooperation with many of its arms suppliers as part of its efforts to strengthen its domestic defense industrial base.

Joint military exercises are the second most important element of the defense cooperation, given the fact that these exercises have acquired a routine character and encompassed the participation of all three military branches. The ultimate objective of these exercises is to promote interoperability that would help both countries to conduct joint operations in the future and strengthen fighting capabilities. Out of the joint exercises by the three military branches, the navy led exercises have gained more prominence, owing to the converging interests to safeguard maritime security interests in the Indian Ocean Region. Malabar exercise, started in 1992, is the major and most high-profile Navy led exercise. Ever since Malabar exercise's commencement in 1992, its scope and complexity has expanded greatly to include a wide range of the elements of naval operations, such as anti-submarine warfare, maritime air defense, maritime interdiction operations, gunnery training and disaster relief operations. In this way, the Malabar exercise has contributed substantially to develop maritime domain awareness capabilities. Nevertheless, India has been unable to make full use of these exercises because of

its reluctance to link combat electronic systems of navy with that of other Quad countries, since such an action is vital for achieving a shared operating picture.

The army led exercises also expanded in scope and magnitude since mid-1990s, two important exercises of which are exercise Vajra Prahar and Yudh Abhyas exercises. The Vajra Prahar exercise has been held annually since 2002 and involves the participation of special forces of both countries. It aims to enhance the counter terrorism and counter insurgency capabilities of the special forces. Exercise Yudh Abhyas is a regular army level exercise that is being conducted since 2004 with an objective to acquire familiarity with each other's organizational framework and war procedure in order to achieve interoperability. For the US, these exercises with India help its army to become an effective counter insurgency force. It facilitates India to acquire US made technologically advanced weapons. However, the very small size of troops – 350 troops – participating in the exercise makes it difficult for both countries to achieve interoperability. The air force led exercises do not occur as frequent as exercises in other two branches, because the government of India is unable to approve request for more exercises as their costs are higher than what India can afford. The only air force led exercise that achieved some progress is the Cope India Exercise, which has been held a few times since 2002. This exercise involved training for air mobility, combat training and air lift training. It provides an opportunity for the US to test its aircrafts against European and Russian made jets and helps India to deal with regional security challenges.

Counter terrorism cooperation is the second major facet of Indo-US strategic partnership, given the high level of progress achieved in this area of cooperation. Although some instances of counter terrorism cooperation happened prior to the 9/11 incident, a transformation in this area began to evolve since the 9/11 attack. After the attack, India showed a change in its past policies by offering crucial support, in the form of military bases, in its military action against terrorist groups in Afghanistan. This offer was widely appreciated by the American officials and increased the confidence of US in India as a strategic partner in its fight against

terrorism. The cooperation began during this period was further bolstered after the Mumbai terror attacks, as it led to removing many obstacles to enhanced cooperation by improving intelligence sharing and law enforcement cooperation as a response to the attack. Currently, the counter terrorism cooperation has expanded from mere dialogues to training, exercises and intelligence sharing.

Both the countries have been engaged in three counter terrorism dialogues that have led to institutionalizing counter terrorism cooperation and achieving mutual understanding. The first of these three, called Joint Counter Terrorism Working Group, was started in as early as 2000 and met 19 times since then. As a result of working as an important dialogue venue for the counter terrorism cooperation between India and the US, the JCWG became the most valuable mechanism for exchange of information, training programs, and intelligence sharing. A dialogue exclusively for the homeland security was launched in 2010 as the second major counter terrorism dialogue between the two countries. This dialogue enabled key bureaucratic experts from both countries to establish lines of communication and remove many impediments to cooperation, allowing them to address law enforcement and critical infrastructure protection issues. In 2017, a Designation Dialogue was also started to improve cooperation on anti-terrorism sanctions, which successfully resolved Indian complaints with regard to US failure to designate terrorist organizations that posed threat to India. This was possible because designations were one of the major strategies adopted by the US to exert pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism.

Intelligence sharing as part of the counter terrorism cooperation has also been gradually improved since the 9/11 attack, as evident in three cases. First, in October 2001, in an unprecedented move, Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing shared crucial information with the US, which even included the phone number of a terrorist. Second, in the early 2000s, US shared with India the intelligence on the expansion of Maoism in India as well as the efforts taken by Maoists across the world to forge a formidable alliance. Finally, in the aftermath of

Mumbai attacks, India received vital US intelligence and FBI extended its help in the investigation process. However, intelligence sharing is still confined only to those terrorist threats with the potential to weaken the national security of both countries. Training and joint exercises are other two activities conducted under the framework of counter terrorism cooperation by India and the US. In terms of training, India has been an active recipient of assistance under the scheme of Anti Terrorism Assistance Program (ATAP) since 1998, as it received training covering a wide array of areas in counter terrorism preparedness, such as training related to explosives, counter terrorism police training, and counter terrorism legislation. Armed troops of both the countries could also incorporate the elements of counter terrorism into many of the joint exercises they have conducted. For instance, in 2004, a group of senior US Army officers visited the 15 Corps Battle School (CBS) in Jammu and Kashmir for acquiring knowledge about CBS' anti-militancy and unconventional operation training methods.

Indo-US cyber security cooperation can be considered as another emerging area of Indo-US strategic partnership. Currently, the nature of cyber space is that of extending beyond boundaries, which forced India to create and nurture cyber security cooperation with other countries. For India, the US became a prime partner in this effort, since Washington has been able to maintain technological superiority over both the hardware and software powering the cyber space and achieved much progress in ensuring the security of them. Hence, forging a solid cyber security partnership would help India to secure its cyber space by making use of the modern and advanced technological development in the area. In addition, the advantage enjoyed by India, in cyber domain, in the form of its large scale technically skilled manpower and the US's possession of necessary cyber infrastructure can be utilized to start joint cyber defense collaborative programs. The one problem this may create is a situation in which both countries worrying about engaging in cooperation involving highly sensitive information and tactics. Nevertheless, this may not be a problem because both the countries have already

involved in joint military exercises that included sharing of sensitive information without compromising on its security. The major achievements in the cyber security cooperation are the launching of cyber security forum and signing of two agreements.

In 2001, India-US Cyber Security Forum was formed with a primary objective of protecting “critical infrastructure of knowledge-based economy” of both countries. This forum formalized the cyber security partnership and succeeded in bringing key people in government and private sector together. The functioning of the forum helped India to create effective mechanisms for protecting the cyber space, such as Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) in 2004 and National Skills Registry (NSR) in 2005. US also benefited from it, as the forum increased US information security consciousness in Indian IT companies. Apart from these benefits, the forum failed to achieve many of its key objectives. The primary reason for this was that both the countries pursued two different objectives, thereby making it difficult to set a common agenda. For the US, the priority was to safeguard the interests of US companies outsourcing to India, resulting in directing the forum’s activities towards achieving the protection of critical information systems involved in outsourced business process. Different from this US interests, India gave importance to capacity building as well as research and development, forcing it to include capacity building in data protection as an important objective of the forum. Anyway, the forum’s operations come to an end when 3 Indian officials were arrested in India on the charge of leaking sensitive intelligence information.

The first cyber security agreement, called India-US Cyber Security Agreement, was signed in 2011. This agreement contributed greatly to create a new generation of cyber security collaboration between the two countries, as it allowed the CERT teams of both countries to effectively coordinate activities on cyber security and develop capacity to deal with cyber attacks. In 2016, both the countries signed a more detailed and unique agreement called Framework for

Cyber Space Cooperation, which aimed to create a model of internal governance involving the participation of stake holders from all sectors. Some of its provisions included sharing of information on a real time basis concerning threats to cyber security, establish joint mechanisms to counter threats to information technology infrastructure and ensuring adherence to international law by all states in their conduct in the cyber space. In essence, the agreement tries to enhance the capabilities of both India and the US to effectively deal with cyber threats and threat actors in the Indo-Pacific region, which includes issues such as large scale theft of IP by China for economic gains, and the attempts by the states including North Korea, Russia, China and Iran to acquire access to critical infrastructure entities.

One of the most important outcomes of India's strategic partnership with the US, as evolved in the last two decades, is that it has been helping India to bridge the strategic gap existing between the capabilities of India and China. Currently, there exists an understanding among New Delhi's policy makers that China is following a policy of containment rather than competition vis a vis India, as revealed by China's aggressiveness along the border and its growing influence in the Indian Ocean Region. This reality forced India to adopt a counter balancing strategy, containing building economy and military power of the country and developing partnerships with powerful countries. In this context, India is presented with a unique opportunity in the form of bolstering strategic partnership with the US, particularly because of US' position as the only state in the world more powerful than China, its interest to prevent China from establishing hegemony over the Asia Pacific and Washington's self-declared strategy of aligning with others to counter the threat posed by China.

There are multiple ways in which the strategic partnership with the US is contributing greatly towards Indian efforts to balance China. First, in the maritime domain, the strategic partnership has significantly helped India to develop high end naval capabilities to effectively counter Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean

Region. This is made possible through the annual joint naval exercise Malabar and Indian acquisition of advanced maritime reconnaissance aircraft known as P8I Poseidon aircraft. The annual Malabar exercises allows India to bolster its maritime domain awareness and anti-submarine warfare capabilities in Western and Eastern Indian Ocean, because advanced maritime operations in the surface, sub surface firings and complex maritime interdiction operations are conducted during this exercise.

Second, the US has been helping India to soft balance China by the way of providing tangible diplomatic support to India. This has contributed to reducing India's worries about the impact of growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean Region. There are three major ways in which the US plays a vital role in India's soft balancing strategy against China. The first is that both the countries have jointly recognized the growing threat by China's assertiveness in the area. Both of them want their countries to be leading powers in the Indian Ocean Region and maintain the existence of a peaceful and rule based order in Indo-Pacific by safeguarding freedom of navigation and over flight in the region. The second is the US consideration of New Delhi as a power without which it's impossible to prevent the emergence of an Asia Pacific region dominated by China. This changed US orientation is evident in multiple US strategic documents like the Indo-Pacific Strategy of 2019, which named India as a regional guardian whose national power must be increased and whose interests converges with the interests of the US in the Indo-Pacific. Maritime Security Dialogue, launched in 2016, can also be regarded as another way in which US is contributing towards the soft balancing strategy of India, as this dialogue facilitate both countries to improve cooperation towards securing a free, open and inclusive maritime order that would promote security and inclusive growth.

Third, the signing of three foundational agreements, called CISMOA, BECA and LEMOA, have strengthened Indian efforts to balance China, as these agreements create the required eco system for achieving the goals of the security

partnership through increasing both countries' regional influence in the Indo-Pacific. In particular, these agreements enable both countries to develop real maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific region, thereby laying the foundations for India to become a net security provider. The first of these three agreements, called LEMOA, signed in 2016, directly helps India to balance China, as it provides necessary means to increase India's presence in those areas where China's influence is expanding in the Indo-Pacific. This is possible because the agreement allows Indian armed forces to make use of US bases across the world for logistical support, including supply of fuel, food, and spare parts. India can now, thanks to the agreement, also check any Chinese activism that might weaken Asian security through ensuring the active presence of US forces in the region, since the US forces can also utilize Indian bases for logistical support.

CISMOA is the second foundational agreement India signed with US, as it was signed in 2018. This agreement paved the way for India to buy advanced American weaponry and allowed US to transfer sophisticated communications platforms to India. In this way, the CISMOA agreement helps India to bridge the big strategic gap existing between India and China in terms of access to highly advanced communication equipment. The last foundational agreement, called BECA, was signed in 2020. BECA agreement allows the US to provide India the opportunity to make use of a variety of sensitive geospatial and aeronautical data that is regarded as crucial for the success of military operations. This agreement also presents India with the means to enhance its military capabilities, as a way to balance China. This is evident from that BECA enables India to acquire valuable navigational aids and avionics for the US supplied aircrafts. BECA also allows both countries to deepen anti-submarine warfare cooperation, as it involves sharing of classified information.

Finally, the strategic cooperation with the US has been helping India to modernize its military by acquiring unique and advanced weapons from the US, which can be considered another way in which India is able to balance China. In

fact, the US has succeeded in achieving a status as the world's leader in advanced weapons technology research and development for decades. India can certainly benefit from this advantage, given that currently Washington is willing to supply its most advanced weapons to India due to the existence of a strategic partnership. Till now, both the countries have made great advancement in familiarizing with each other's respective processes, leading to a significant increase in the defense trade volume from \$200 million in 2000 to over \$20 billion in 2020. An analysis of seven important defense equipment purchased from the US, based on how they can enable India to bolster its military capabilities is worth doing here. M777 Ultra-Light howitzers is the one weapon. The ultra-weight of this artillery gun allows Indian Army to quickly and easily transport this gun using truck or helicopter to the mountainous regions, thereby helping the Army to overcome the difficulty it faced in transporting heavy weight artillery to the mountainous regions. Indeed, this benefit can guarantee an edge to India over China in future military conflicts.

The C130J Super Hercules military transport aircraft is another important defense equipment India procured from the US, known as one of the highly sophisticated airlifters in the world, the C130J aircraft is ideal for the swift deployment of special forces through air drops and landings on unprepared or partially prepared surface even under bad lighting conditions. This advantage of operating C130J aircraft will surely be beneficial for India in a future conflict with China, as a major part of border India shares with China lacks adequate infrastructure to operate. The P8I Poseidon surveillance aircraft is yet another defense equipment India procured from the US. Ever since its induction into IAF, it has completed 35000 flight hours, thereby ensuring a close monitoring and tight control over the Northern Indian Ocean. The utility of this aircraft lies in that it can allow IAF to effectively track ships and submarines of the PLAN when they transit from South China Sea to the Indian Ocean during the time of any future conflict with China. The procurement of Chinook helicopters from the US also give more strength to IAF's airlifting capabilities, as these are one of the very few helicopters

in the world that has the capability to lift heavy weights. India has deployed Chinook helicopters in India's Northern and Eastern border regions with China, leading to an enhancement in the strategic airlift capability of IAF.

The C17 Globemaster transporter aircraft is another significant defense acquisition by India from the US, given its extraordinary capability to deliver large combat cargo, and troops directly into challenging airfields in distant locations. IAF primarily uses these aircrafts in border areas and hinterland of India, where they proved to be an important asset, as C17 aircrafts helped IAF to build strategic airlift capability in the challenging terrains of border regions with China. MH 60 R Seahawk helicopter can also be considered as another valuable Indian defense acquisition from the US. The induction of Seahawk helicopters into Indian Navy is hailed as a pivotal moment in India's defense modernization, as this helicopter has the potential to strengthen the blue water capabilities of Indian Navy by the way of allowing the Navy to expand its operational reach and conduct various naval operations such as anti-submarine warfare, surveillance and anti-surface warfare. It's expected that once all the 24 Seahawk helicopters ordered by India are made part of the Navy, New Delhi will be in a better position to effectively cope with the increasing presence of Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean. The Apache AH 64 E is another attack helicopter, procured from the US, that is considered as a game changer for giving close air support to Indian Army operating in India's mountainous border regions. Indeed, India had attack helicopters in the past, but what makes Apache helicopters different is that it comes with lethal firepower with destructive accuracy.

But, both India and US also face some important challenges to their partnership, which needs to be overcome in order to let the strategic partnership to allow them to secure their rightful place in the evolving Asia Pacific order. Many of these challenges have, on multiple occasions, caused some strain on the bilateral relationship, hence they must be dealt with effectively for the smooth development and continuance of the strategic partnership. Broadly speaking, five

major challenges can be identified as limiting the effectiveness of the partnership. First is that India's performance in areas such as defense sector has not been according to its high potential, which is caused primarily by the absence of political will to adopt required policy measures to reform its defense forces. This Indian weakness has, to some extent, led to loss of US' hope to project India as a successful example of a democratic country with significant national power.

The second important challenge that both countries are confronting is the failure to achieve interoperability between the armed forces, despite it being an important objective of their strategic partnership. The primary reason for this is that the frequency with which India conducts exercises with the US is not adequate to facilitate the armed forces of both countries to operate together. The low level of frequency is caused by the fact that Indian policy makers gave priority to increasing the number of partners with which it exercises rather than increasing the frequency of exercises with more capable partners like the US. The emergence of strategic autonomy as a hallmark of Indian foreign policy since the end of Cold War is the third challenge to Indo-US strategic partnership, because India is unlikely to be a junior partner to the United States that act easily according to the wishes of Washington. It implies that India will never replace Pakistan as US' subordinate ally if the US – Pakistan alliance become weak. It's because of this Indian obsession with strategic autonomy that the signing of foundational agreements as part of the defense cooperation was delayed for more than a decade, as Indian leaders feared that signing of these agreements could allow US to establish bases or ports in Indian territories and compel India to take a pro US stance in future military conflicts.

New Delhi's well established defense ties with Russia, as evident in its heavy dependence on Russia for weapons, has been posing challenges to India-US strategic partnership. Because, by trying to forge defense ties with Russia, India is acting against the interests of US. Multiple reasons can be identified because of which India's active defense cooperation with Russia making it somewhat difficult

for India and US to strengthen their strategic cooperation. Some of the important ones among them are: firstly, India's Russian origin weapons are not technically compatible with the US weapons and therefore does not ensure a suitable condition to improve interoperability, secondly US fears that the ability of some of the Russian weapon systems to collect data jeopardize the security of US weapons and finally US believes that India's procurement of Russian weapons help Russia to become more stronger and pursue its revisionist policies. The last challenge to Indo-US strategic partnership worth analyzing is the Pakistan factor, as this factor, on multiple occasions, caused strain on the partnership. For instance, during the period of Obama administration, many of the advanced weapons requested by India was not provided because Washington's policy makers feared that providing advanced weapons to India would destroy the military balance existing between India and Pakistan. Again, in 2016, India did not allow Lockheed Martin to relocate its whole F16 assembly system line to India, apparently because of India's lack of interest to be part of a system that supplies F16s to Pakistan. Pakistan factor also prevented the strengthening of India-US counter terrorism cooperation to some extent, because Washington considered Pakistan's security agencies as important partners in its war against terrorism, which is totally against India stance that these intelligence agencies are the promoters of Islamic terrorism around the world.

7.2. Major Findings

1. The emergence of China as a great power in the last two decades greatly promoted the strengthening of strategic partnership between India and the US. For India, the strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan as well as the unacceptable military behavior of China around the border threatens its national security. The United States is seriously concerned with the Chinese ability to change the Asian balance of power in its favor. Hence, both India and the US wants to deter the Chinese attempts to dominate in the region.
2. In the last two decades, terrorist organizations' activities are not limited to a single country, as most of them operate internationally across multiple

countries. This fact makes it difficult for any government to work alone to effectively counter these threats. As a result, this reality forced India and US to strengthen their counter terrorism cooperation as part of their broader strategic partnership.

3. The signing of the Civil Nuclear Deal in 2008 has helped to remove the most important irritant in the relations between India and the US, thereby creating the necessary conditions for the development of a solid strategic partnership between them.
4. The post-Cold War foreign policy of the US attached higher importance to building a closer strategic partnership with India as a way to secure its national interests. This policy shift, as evident in the policies of all US administrations since George Washington, has been welcomed by India very well, leading to the bolstering of the partnership between these two countries.
5. India's decision not to link its combat electronic systems with that of US and Japan during the Malabar exercises limits the effectiveness of exercise Malabar, as these systems are required for achieving a shared operating picture among the operating navies.
6. The counter terrorism dialogues have greatly contributed to help both countries to learn the best possible ways to engage with one another, thereby allowing increased engagement between India's Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Homeland Security in the US.
7. The intelligence sharing cooperation between the intelligence agencies of both countries has been constrained by the failure of them to share intelligence on terrorist threats other than what directly impacts the national security of both countries. This was evident from the decision of Indian Government not to share the intelligence it had on the Islamic State in Sri Lanka in 2019, leading to frustration among the US officials.

8. Ever since the beginning of the present century, Indian policy makers have been attaching much importance to building a partnership with the US for the purpose of internally and externally balancing China.
9. The United States is the most attractive partner for India in its efforts to balance China because of Washington's potential as the only one powerful country than China, its self-interest to prevent Chinese dominance over the Asia Pacific, its willingness to partner with India and its external balancing strategy.
10. In the maritime domain, the strategic partnership with the US has contributed substantially to India's efforts to balance China, by helping it to develop anti-submarine warfare and maritime domain awareness capabilities. This is made possible primarily through the supply of advanced weapons such as P8Is to India and conducting annual Malabar exercises with India.
11. The US help India to soft balance China by offering tangible diplomatic support in multiple ways. Firstly, both the countries have acknowledged the increasing threat caused by China's assertiveness in the area through various joint statements such as the Joint Strategic Vision Document for the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Secondly, the US considers India as the Western strategic pivot of the Indo-Pacific indispensable to prevent the emergence of a Sino centric Asia-Pacific. This US approach, as evident in multiple official documents of Washington, helps India to remain more confident in the face of growing Chinese power and influence in the region.
12. The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement signed with the US in 2016 allows India to become a pan regional security provider by increasing presence in areas where China's influence is growing in the Indo-Pacific. This benefit is possible because the agreement enables India's armed forces to make use of US bases across the world for accessing US defence supplies including fuel and spare parts and services such as maintenance and repair facilities.

13. The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) signed with the US in 2020 helps India to effectively counter growing Chinese capabilities in the region. This advantage stems from the three benefits this agreement can offer. Firstly, the BECA agreement allows India to procure advanced navigational aid on US supplied aircrafts, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of using these aircrafts for conducting surveillance of Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean and Himalayan regions. Secondly, it helps India to develop anti-submarine warfare capabilities, as the US can now easily share classified information required for such operations. Finally, the agreement allows India to use US geospatial maps to achieve pinpoint military accuracy of automated weapons such as cruise and ballistic missiles.
14. Most of the defense equipment purchased from the US over the past two decades, such as P8I aircrafts, C130J aircrafts, M777 Howitzers, Chinook helicopters, has contributed greatly to bridge the huge gap existing between India and China in terms of defense capabilities.
15. India's well-established defense ties with Russia is a major challenge to Indo-US strategic partnership because by deepening ties with Russia, India is acting against the interests of US. Three major reasons can be identified for this. First, India's Russian made weapon systems are not technologically compatible with the US weapons, thereby making it hard for two countries to achieve interoperability. Second, US fears that the advanced Russian intelligence systems that can collect data, such as the S400, could put the security of US systems under severe risk and acquire information on the sophisticated US military technology. Finally, US believes that Indian procurement of Russian weapons promote and tacitly support the revisionist belligerence of Russia.
16. India's interest to play an independent role in global affairs places limits on India-US strategic partnership and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future, as this desire to protect its autonomy has been deeply rooted in the Indian bureaucratic and political systems ever since India's independence. This

is primarily because India is a country with the ambition to be a leading power in Asia, and therefore, will never be interested to be part of an alliance or to become a junior partner to a super power.

17. India's strong desire to protect its strategic autonomy leads the US to a paradox, which is that US can benefit from partnership with India to secure its interest when India is weak, but a weak India cannot significantly contribute to support US in its endeavors. It's because of this reason that US make efforts to help India become a global power. However, India is more likely to claim higher autonomy when it became a more powerful country, thereby making it hard for the US to set the agenda.
18. Although India conducts more exercises with US than any other country, the armed forces of both countries are still far away from being interoperable. This is caused by the fact that the frequency in which India exercises with US is not enough to achieve interoperability.
19. Pakistan factor is an important impediment to deepening India-US counter terrorism cooperation because the strategies of India and US for countering threats generated by Pakistan and Pakistan based terrorist groups differs. This is evident from the Indian insistence that Pakistan's security agencies are responsible for the region's problems involving Islamic terrorism. The United States, on the other hand, considers Pakistan's security services as indispensable for the war against terrorism.

CHAPTER 8

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Policy Recommendations

1. The study shows that Indian armed forces are currently facing the issue of lack of adequate infrastructure in the border areas for them to operate. Although many of the weapons purchased from the US, such as aircrafts that can operate even under adverse conditions, allows Indian military forces to operate in this difficult terrain to some extent, the Government of India should consider developing infrastructure in the border areas as a matter of utmost priority. Because, China has greatly upgraded infrastructure on the Chinese side with the potential to put India in a crisis in the event of a conflict.
2. In the context of China's growing influence in the South Asian subcontinent and the possibility of using such influence against India, India should make efforts to revive the SAARC. Doing this will help to improve overall diplomatic relations among the South Asian countries and help India to strengthen its rightful position in the region, thereby preventing any South Asian country from adopting an anti-India stance.
3. Although the defense trade volume between India and US increased substantially over the last two decades, the defense industrial cooperation component remains weak. This is despite the fact that India has much to gain by collaborating with the US in the areas of advanced weapons research and development, given the superiority enjoyed by Washington in those areas. Hence, India should make optimum utilization of the partnership with the US for jointly developing weapons as a way to upgrade its domestic defense industrial base, rather than just remaining a complete buyer of US weapons.

4. Except India all other countries participating in Malabar exercise linked their combat electronic systems together, allowing them to get a shared common operating picture among the participating navies. India should also link its combat electronic systems with other quad countries in order to participate more effectively in the exercise.
5. As evident from this study, the intelligence sharing as part of counter terrorism cooperation between the intelligence agencies of both countries is limited only to those threats that directly challenges the national security of both countries. Instead of this, the intelligence sharing should be expanded to cover terrorist threats to other countries also. In this way, both countries can be part of an international effort against terrorism, thereby contributing towards destroying the deep roots of terrorism spread across the world.
6. The cyber security cooperation between the two countries has become weak since the end of Cyber Security Forum's activities in 2006, despite the high level of cyber security threats both countries face. As a solution to this, Indian Government should take initiative to establish another cyber security forum, as bilateral discussions and exchange of information plays an important role in allowing both countries to jointly fight the cyber security threats.
7. Presently, it appears that the joint military exercises involving Indian armed forces are planned in order to achieve the political and foreign policy objectives of New Delhi, given that India has increased the number of partners with which it exercises rather than the frequency of conducting exercises with more capable partners like the US. This has led to failure to achieve interoperability as an important objective of Indo-US strategic partnership. Therefore, policy makers should try to increase the frequency of conducting exercises with the US, so that the operational benefits of joint military exercises can be increased and fully utilized.

8. It's found from this study that the United States has invested a lot of their diplomatic and political and economic capital to ensure the emergence of India as a major power in the region, because only a partner with sufficient national power can help Washington to secure its interests in the region. However, India so far has failed to come up to the expectations of the US, thereby casting some shadow on the future of this strategic partnership. Hence, the government of India should adopt proactive measures to reform the economy and strengthen defense sector and eliminate all those elements that can weaken the survivability of this country. If this is done, India – US strategic partnership would become one of the remarkable developments in 21st century.

8.2. Recommendations for Further Research

1. This study discusses the bilateral strategic cooperation and how it helps India to counter the challenges posed by the rise of China. The one another area for future research is to study both countries roles in regional multilateral frameworks like the Quad, and ASEAN, focusing on how their joint efforts in these institutions address the rise of China and promote a rule based international order in the Indo-Pacific.
2. The main areas of cooperation covered in this thesis are defense, cyber security, and counter terrorism. Presently, the Indo-US strategic partnership has been expanding to include other areas, such as energy security cooperation, technology cooperation and economic cooperation. All these areas demand a detailed research, which can be considered by future scholars.
3. It can also be explored how India and the US can leverage cultural diplomacy, public outreach, and educational exchanges to strengthen their partnership and counter China's influence in the global South and other developing regions.

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APPENDIX 1

FRAMEWORK FOR THE U.S. - INDIA DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP

1. **Defense and security cooperation** is a key component of the bilateral relationship between India and the United States and has evolved to become a vital pillar of engagement between the two countries. The United States and India have created a wide-ranging, strategic partnership that reflects their common principles, democratic traditions, long-term strategic convergence, and shared national interests. These interests include:
 - Maintaining peace and security;
 - Defeating terrorism and violent extremism;
 - Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and associated materials, data, and technologies;
 - Supporting a rule-based order, protecting the free flow of commerce.
2. In 1995, the Agreed Minute on Defense Relations between the United States and India was signed, beginning a new era in U.S.-India defense relations. In 2005, the two sides reflected the continued evolution of the relationship by signing the New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship, which charted an ambitious course for the future development of the India-U.S. partnership. In 2013, the Joint Principles for Defense Cooperation stated that India and the United States share common security interests and place each other at the same level as their closest partners—confirming that this would also apply with respect to defense technology transfers, licensing, trade, research, co-development, and co-production involving defense articles and services, including advanced and sophisticated technology.
3. The renewal of the 2005 Framework marks a new chapter in the relationship between two strategic partners. The renewal builds upon the shared understandings and successes of the past and charts a path forward for the next ten years. Through defense dialogue mechanisms, military-to-military interactions and exercises, and increased opportunities in defense technology collaboration, the United States and India have expanded the potential of the partnership and bilateral collaboration.

4. In pursuit of a shared vision for an expanded defense partnership, both sides determined that their defense establishments are to:
 - A. Conduct regular service-specific, joint, and combined exercises and exchanges;
 - B. Collaborate in multinational operations whenever it is in their common interest to do so;
5. Enhance cooperation in military training and education, including instructor and student exchanges and collaboration between national defense universities;
 - D. Strengthen the capabilities of their defense establishments to promote security and defeat terrorism;
 - E. Expand interaction with other nations in ways that promote regional and global peace and stability;
6.
 - F. Enhance capabilities to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
 - G. Increase exchanges of intelligence;
 - H. In the context of this strategic relationship, continue to strengthen two-way U.S.-India defense trade. The United States and India commit to work to conclude defense transactions, not as ends in and of themselves, but as means to strengthen both countries' security, to reinforce the strategic partnership, to achieve greater interaction and cooperation between their armed forces, and to build greater understanding between defense establishments;
 - I. Exchange experiences and practices in operating common defense platforms; and increase capacity to use such platforms optimally;
 - J. Explore collaboration relating to missile defense;
 - K. Strengthen the abilities of their militaries to respond quickly to disaster situations, including in combined operations;
 - L. Assist in building worldwide capacity to conduct successful peacekeeping operations, with a focus on enabling other countries to field trained, capable forces for these operations;
 - M. Conduct routine exchanges on defense strategy and defense transformation;
 - N. Continue strategic-level discussions by senior leadership from the U.S. Department of Defense and India's Ministry of Defense, in which the two sides exchange perspectives on international security issues of common interest, with the goal of increasing mutual understanding, promoting shared objectives, and developing common approaches; and
 - O. Enhance cooperation toward maritime security and increase each other's capability to secure the free movement of lawful commerce and freedom of navigation across sea lines of communication, in accordance with the principles of international law.

7. The Defense Policy Group (DPG) is to continue serving as the primary mechanism to guide the U.S.-India strategic defense partnership, recognizing the significant contributions the meetings have made to the overall defense relationship. The Defense Policy Group is to make appropriate adjustments to the structure and frequency of its meetings and of its subgroups, as determined jointly by the Defense Policy Group co-chairs, so that it remains an effective mechanism to advance U.S.-India defense cooperation.
8. The sub-groups of the DPG are to continue to meet regularly and to report to the DPG. These sub-groups and their objectives are as follows:
 - A. The Defense Procurement and Production Group (DPPG), co-chaired by the Director General (Acquisition) and the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), is to review government-to-government defense acquisitions (including hybrid programs) and other defense trade issues.
 - B. Senior Technology Security Group (STSG): The objective of the STSG is to develop an understanding of export licensing and technology security processes and practices and to establish a technology security dialogue for adequate protection for advanced defense technologies.
 - C. Joint Technical Group (JTG): The JTG provides a forum for discussion and coordination of defense research and production matters.
 - D. Military Cooperation Group (MCG): The MCG serves as the primary forum to guide cooperation between the armed forces of both sides.
 - E. Executive Steering Groups (ESGs): In conjunction with the MCG, the ESGs function as the primary mechanisms to develop military service-related cooperation.
9. Recognizing the transformative effect that the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) can have, the two sides have established a DTTI Group, which is to work towards resolving process issues impeding cooperation and the alignment of systems; increasing the flow of technology and investment; developing capabilities and partnership in co-development and co-production; and intensifying cooperation in research and development. The progress made by the DTTI Group is to be presented to the DPG.
10. The initiatives and activities described above are to proceed in reliance upon this Framework for guidance on the principles and objectives of the U.S.-India strategic relationship and are to strive to achieve those objectives.
11. This Framework is to be effective from the date of its signature and is to continue in effect for 10 years unless it is revised or terminated in writing.

Disagreement, if any, regarding Framework matters is to be resolved through mutual consultations.

12. This Framework is to guide the two sides in further developing bilateral defense ties.

Signed in New Delhi on 03 June, 2015 in two originals in English.

Secretary of Defense
(Ashton Carter)

For and on behalf of the Government of the United States of America

Minister of Defense
(Manohar Parrikar)

For and on behalf of the Government of the Republic of India

APPENDIX 2

U.S.-INDIA JOINT STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN REGION (2015)

As the leaders of the world's two largest democracies that bridge the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region and reflecting our agreement that a closer partnership between the United States and India is indispensable to promoting peace, prosperity and stability in those regions, we have agreed on a Joint Strategic Vision for the region.

India and the United States are important drivers of regional and global growth. From Africa to East Asia, we will build on our partnership to support sustainable, inclusive development, and increased regional connectivity by collaborating with other interested partners to address poverty and support broad-based prosperity.

To support regional economic integration, we will promote accelerated infrastructure connectivity and economic development in a manner that links South, Southeast and Central Asia, including by enhancing energy transmission and encouraging free trade and greater people-to-people linkages.

Regional prosperity depends on security. We affirm the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea.

We call on all parties to avoid the threat or use of force and pursue resolution of territorial and maritime disputes through all peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We will oppose terrorism, piracy, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction within or from the region.

We will also work together to promote the shared values that have made our countries great, recognizing that our interests in peace, prosperity and stability are well served by our common commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

We commit to strengthening the East Asia Summit on its tenth anniversary to promote regional dialogue on key political and security issues, and to work together to strengthen it.

In order to achieve this regional vision, we will develop a roadmap that leverages our respective efforts to increase ties among Asian powers, enabling both our nations to better respond to diplomatic, economic and security challenges in the region.

As part of these efforts, the United States welcomes India's interest in joining the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, as the Indian economy is a dynamic part of the Asian economy.

Over the next five years, we will strengthen our regional dialogues, invest in making trilateral consultations with third countries in the region more robust, deepen regional integration, strengthen regional forums, explore additional multilateral opportunities for engagement, and pursue areas where we can build capacity in the region that bolster long-term peace and prosperity for all.