



INDIA-US RELATIONSHIP IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD: EXAMINING MAJOR CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The relationship of India with the US had seen many ups and downs during the Cold War period. It has been observed that the two countries have not shared cordial relationship during the entire period of the Cold War. However, there was no direct hostility or rivalry between the two countries. There were different factors, which had frozen the relationship such as the US unconditional military support to Pakistan, the US-Soviet Union rivalry and most importantly divergent ideologies, which had affected the relationship. However, end of the Cold War in 1990s has changed overall structure of international politics. So, the relationship of India with the US has witnessed a major transformation. The relationship has strengthened in various areas. However, there are still many issues and challenges in the relationship. In this regard, the study examines major issues and challenges in the relationship since 1990s. It has also analysed the impact of these issues and challenges in the relationship.

KEYWORDS: Cold War, Cordial Relationship, Military Support, Divergent Ideologies, International Politics, Major Transformation, Issues and Challenges.

INTRODUCTION:

The relationship of India with the US had not been very cordial during the Cold War period. Nevertheless, they had never clashed directly. Though, the impact of the US and the Soviet Union rivalry had affected across the globe and similarly India could not remain away from it. Moreover, the US and India, in spite of common democratic setup, political pluralism and moreover, strong faith in liberal internationalism could not manage cordial relationship during the Cold War. Nonetheless, with the end of the Cold War in 1990s due to the demise of the Soviet Union, the relationship of India with the US has begun to change (Balachandran 2005). Thus, since 1990s, India has actively engaged with the US and other major powers across the globe. However, before that, India was fixated to the Soviet Union due to the Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union. Moreover, since 1990s, India has radically changed its foreign policy with major powers particularly with the US. Furthermore, India has also opened its economy in 1990s to overcome economic recession. So, after end of the Cold War, India and the US has developed a closer relationship in various areas. Additionally, both the countries have made many agreements, joint statements and more importantly the civil nuclear deal in 2008 that astonished many countries across the globe because India was not a signatory member of the NPT. So, after that, both the countries are trying to develop a strategic relationship. However, there are certain issues and challenges in the relationship (Andersen 2010).

Furthermore, when the US former President, Bill Clinton visited India in 2000, the aspirations from both the sides increased. Moreover,



after that, the US and Indian officials have strengthened the relationship in diverse areas. The relationship has enhanced in different areas such as economic, political and security aspects, however, it has not been increased to such an extent as the US and Indian officials, strategists and analysts have expected earlier (Cohen 2005).

Consequently, there are lot of issues and challenges in the relationship. Firstly, military relationship of India with the US has remained uneven with considerable variation. Secondly, India's concerns vis-à-vis its security in the region has not been addressed by the US considerably. Thirdly, the relationship between the two countries in energy sector has not enhanced majorly. Moreover, India has also perceived its relationship with the US on an equal basis without compromising its strategic autonomy. Besides, India aspires that, the US will satisfy its security concerns, for that, it would have to transfer advanced technology that would assist India to uplift its indigenous defence technology. In addition, India also wants to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in order to make its dynamic and active presence at the global level. Moreover, India also have a strong desire that the US would help it to achieve membership of the NSG and other major significant regimes across the globe (Tellis 2006).

The Major Challenges in the relationship

The relationship of India with the US has increased since end of the Cold War, however, there are certain issues and challenges, which are becoming obstacles in the strategic partnership. Since, 1990s, the cooperation between the two countries have strengthened in different sectors but not to such an extent, which allies are sharing. So, there are many issues and challenges those need to be addressed in order to strengthen the relationship.

Security Concerns

The security aspect remains one of the most significant area in the Indo-US relationship since 1990s. Besides, India's relationship with the US in defence sector has increased significantly since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1990s. However, during the Cold War, India had maintained strong relationship with the Soviet Union. Because, India was uneasy with the US over its close military relationship with Pakistan. However, with end of the Cold War, India has gradually maintained its defence relationship with the US that helped to build a trust in the relationship. Moreover, with the passage of time, Pakistan factor has seemed to be decline due to improvement in the Indo-US strategic cooperation. Additionally, after the 9/11¹ incident, both India and the US have strengthened their security relationship strongly as both the countries are facing substantial threats from terrorism. Besides, India is facing this menace from longer time as compared to the US due to its instability and vulnerability of countries in South Asia (Cohen 2009). Furthermore, the counter-terrorism remains a vital bond between the US and India, particularly, since President Clinton visited New Delhi in 2000.

Moreover, China as an aggressive country in the region had created a lot of security threat for India, which is strategic challenge for New Delhi. Moreover, the border incursions from Chinese forces had violated norms, rules and regulations and moreover, showing belligerence time and again. These incidents are viewing Chinese deliberate muscular diplomacy in South Asia in order to increase its influence and power in the region. In this regard, the US has shown its concern vis-à-vis Chinese aggressive diplomacy, particularly keeping its consideration towards its close allies, such as Japan and South Korea in the region. It would also harm the US interests in the region. Moreover, cooperation between India and the US would help to counter Chinese threats and secure the interests of both the countries. Another concern to India is continuing threat from extremist Islamic Jihadists, which are emanating from Pakistan. Especially, after withdrawal of the US

¹The 9/11 was a series of coordinated terrorist attacks on the US. Most of scholars have claimed that the attacks had executed by Al-Qaeda. In these attacks, at least two thousand people had killed and more than five thousand had been injured (Sharma 2012).

troops from Afghanistan since 2014. In order to tackle these challenges, India has to enlarge its relationship with the US. Moreover, the convergence of security interests in South Asia would benefit both the countries (Biswal 2016).

Moreover, the US aspired to take this partnership to the highest level. The *global war on terror* have integrated India and the US together because of common enemy. Moreover, the geo-political paradigm of South Asia in terms of Indian defence forces has made collaboration with the US. Moreover, India's partnership with the US would help to tackle security challenges, especially New Delhi's border conflicts with China and Pakistan. For that, India needs strong security partnership with the US to secure its borders and interests in the region. So, the strategic relationship with the US would benefit India for longer duration (Blake 2014).

Concerns of Clean Energy Security

The US would also support Indian ambition about solar power energy by installing 175 GW of renewable energy power plants that also includes 100 GW from solar energy power plants. Moreover, the US has also been acknowledging International Solar Alliance (ISA). It would play a critical role in deployment of solar power. The US intends to pursue membership in the ISA. The US and India are working together to launch third initiative of the ISA that will focus on the off-grid solar energy that would make access at the founding conference of the ISA in 2016. Moreover, the US has remained committed with other countries in mobilizing almost \$100 billion every year in order to address the genuine needs of developing countries in the process of mitigation and adaptation activities. In addition, the US is also committed to help in India's technical capacity. So, the US private sector is going to launch new efforts in order to invest more in Indian renewable energy sector that would serve as a model for the other ISA countries (Sirohi 2016).

Moreover, the US and India have announced \$20 billion US-India clean energy finance (USICEF). The project is expected to mobilize almost \$400 million, which would greatly assist to provide renewable and clean electricity to one million households by 2020. Moreover, it is a commitment to establish the India-US clean energy hub. It would also focus the US efforts to build partnership with major Indian financial institutions that will increase the renewable energy investment in India. Moreover, the US-India CSFP, which has large support from both the countries would provide much needed liquidity to smaller-scale renewable energy investments. This programme would help rural and far flung areas, which are not connected with main grid. In addition, the US and India are committed to major goals of mission innovation, which both the countries have launched during the COP-21 to double their respective research and development activities vis-a-vis clean energy programmes. Moreover, both the countries are also committed to research on grid storage and smart grids (Tellis 2010).

Climate Change

The US and India are sharing common concerns about climate change. Both the countries are trying to produce maximum clean energy. Moreover, both the countries are committed to work together and promote climate awareness to address threats that posed by climate change. Besides, leaders from both the countries are also ready to pursue a strategy to achieve low greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the US and India are working to adopt the HFC amendment in 2016 by increasing financial support from donor countries by providing funds to help developing countries to lower their carbon emissions. Furthermore, both the countries are working to address major concerns about increasing gas emission from international aviation. In addition, the two countries would work to pursue the G20 strong outcomes in order to promote heavy-duty vehicle efficiency in accordance with respective national capabilities and priorities. Moreover, signing of the MOU to enhance cooperation on clean energy, climate change and in the field of gas hydrates. Moreover, to strengthen cooperation on wildlife conservation as a strategy to increase development imperatives. So, signing of the MOU would help to strengthen cooperation in the areas of wildlife combating and their conservation (Scott 2012).

Divergent Opinions on Climate Change

In 2017, the US new President, Donald Trump had withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, which will make difficult for the global community to attain major global aims regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emission targets. However, its impact on efforts of India and other major countries would be minimal. Because they have already committed to reduce their emission level in spite of the US withdrawal. Moreover, the Paris agreement tries to restrict average global temperature within two degree Celsius from pre-industrial times. Its main goal is to prevent catastrophic and irreparable damage to climate change. In this regard, the US has pledged that, it would reduce its emission level by 26-28 percent compared to 2005 level by 2025. So, the US have to reduce almost 2 billion tonnes carbon dioxide, which is equal to its emission level of 2005. However, Trump had walk away from the Paris Agreement, nevertheless, it has not abandoned the reduction of emission targets. However, he has stopped to implement actions in the US that could reduce emission level. Contrary to it, he has committed to reopen coal mines that would severely affect emission reduction targets. However, the US and India has also joint programmes for clean energy and climate change, however, that will be executed bilaterally and has nothing to do with the Paris Agreement. Moreover, India has also committed that it would continue to work for reduction of emissions and are committed to the Paris Agreement. In this regard, Indian Science and Technology minister, Harshvardhan has pledged that, India will remain committed towards Paris Agreement and would address major challenges of climate change. He also argued that, India would work with other countries in this regard. So, the US decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement will not impact Indian commitment regarding climate change (Sinha 2017).

Transfer of Advanced Nuclear Technology

During process of the Indo-US civil nuclear deal from 2005-2008, the US and Indian officials negotiated on different aspects. One important aspect was India's demand to accept as a legitimate nuclear power. Because there was two different approaches from the NPT vis-a-vis nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states. In this regard, Ashley Tellis claimed that Indian officials demanded same normative and legal acknowledgement as has been given to the accepted nuclear weapon states. It included those countries, which have tested their nuclear weapons before 01 January 1967. Moreover, India officially had conducted nuclear tests in the 1998 and had been included in non-nuclear powers. So, Indian officials has tried to become a legal and legitimate nuclear power. Because India had very neat and clean nuclear technology track record. Even India has better track record than China, which had proliferated nuclear technology to Pakistan and North Korea. Moreover, China had also supported Pakistani nuclear programme and had provided crucial technology and fissile material to it especially during its initial phase of nuclear programme. So, India wanted the deal, which is equal to legal nuclear powers. In this regard, India had accepted the IAEA safeguards upon its nuclear reactors, which shows its strong commitment regarding objectives of the NPT (Tellis 2006).

Moreover, Ashley Tellis argued that India has been desired to consider the nuclear cooperation with the US. He further argued that Indian objective was to change the status quo vis-à-vis nuclear technology. In this context, C. Mohan argued that the US was ready to make a nuclear cooperation with India. In this regard, visit of Condoleezza Rice in 2005 has made clear that Bush administration wanted to have a civil nuclear cooperation with India. So, after 2005, India was intended that by making the deal with the US, it would receive advanced technology, which would help it to produce peaceful energy (Chaudhuri 2014).

Indian Aspiration to Become a Permanent Member of the UNSC

The aspiration of India to become a permanent member of the UNSC has a long history. It has been started in 1955, when the Soviet Union Premier, Nikolai Bulganin offered India to apply for a permanent seat in the UNSC. However, in this context, historian and political analyst, A.G. Noorani argued in his second series of the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* that Nehru was right to reject the Soviet Union offer as a permanent seat in the UNSC. He further argued that it was just to test India's understanding regarding

international relations. Moreover, he also claimed that it could have increased rivalry between India and China at that point of time. As it has been claimed that Nehru rejected the Soviet Union offer for applying as a sixth permanent member of the UNSC. However, Nehru rejected it and insisted that priority should be given to China in spite of India. He later on argued that offer was unlikely to materialise because it could have caused major problems for India's overall foreign policy and could have complicated the relationship with China and other major powers across the globe (Harder 2016).

However, since 1990s, India has changed its traditional foreign policy and engaged major powers in the world very actively. So, India's aspiration to become a permanent member in the UNSC has also grown. Moreover, India is having almost 17% of world's population. It is also one of the growing economy in the world. Moreover, it is also one of the responsible member of the world community. Taking into consideration of these factors, India wants to have a permanent membership in the UNSC. Moreover, on that basis, it wants to reform the UNSC. In addition, India also wants to make its dynamic and active presence at the global level. So, in this regard, the US had supported India's demand at various international forums, however, it did not satisfy Indian aspirations. Contrary to it, India claimed that, the US had not supported fully its demand as a permanent member in the UNSC. So, India claimed that the US has not been serious about the reformation in the UNSC (Cohen 2015).

Moreover, global organizations have to assess India's growing role in the world. Taking India's peace credentials into the consideration, the US former President, Obama has pledged to support India's bid for the permanent seat in the UNSC. He further argued that supporting India's bid in the UNSC would be in the long term interests of the US, as there is no clash of interests between India and the US. Similarly, in this regard, Tellis argued that by supporting India's permanent bid in the UNSC entails no cost to the US. He further believed that presence of India in the UNSC as a permanent member would be beneficial to the US as there is no inherent conflict between the US and India (Tellis 2015).

Nuclear Issue

The disputed nuclear test of India in 1974 has created suspicion and resentment in the India-US relationship. After that, the US had stopped nuclear fissile material to the Tarapur nuclear reactor. Moreover, the US not only stopped fuel supplies to the Tarapur reactors but had also denied India to reprocess fuel. That had posed severe safety challenges to Indian nuclear reactors as the US administrations from time to time has refused to take amassing nuclear waste (Burns 2007).

Nevertheless, since 1998 nuclear tests, the US had imposed certain sanctions on India. However, these sanctions did not impact too much and removed later on. However, India has not been accepted as a legitimate nuclear power. Because countries, who have done their nuclear tests after 1968 had been considered as a grave violator to international rules and regulations. However, during the Bush administration the US had shown eagerness to work with India on the nuclear issue. However, Indian officials were clear that they would not compromise on their side. In this context, the US official, Daniel Markey claimed that the US would not convince India on this issue (Bhatia 2012).

However, India also wants to address its nuclear issues with the US. So, the US officials also believe that India has not compromised its position vis-à-vis nuclear issue. So, Indian chief negotiator, Sham Saran had cleared that, India has two objectives, which it wants to address. Firstly, India wants to end its nuclear apartheid. Secondly, it also wants to end restrictions imposed by the NSG regime. Moreover, in this regard, the US officials argued that Bush administration was intent to change India's nuclear status. So, it was not remained only to exploration but had reached to action. So, Bush administration has used that opportunity to improve relationship with India. Moreover, in this regard, Tellis and Blackwill had suggested the Bush administration in 2002 to start negotiating with India on civil nuclear cooperation. So, both the countries have started negotiations from 2005 and successfully concluded the civil nuclear deal in 2008. Thus, the Bush administration had changed overall structure of the relationship and has made a lot of changes in domestic laws in order to accommodate the civil nuclear deal with India (Chaudhuri 2014).

However, Indian scientific community has lot of reservation on civil nuclear deal. The chairman of Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), Anil Kakodkar had been invited to join the process of the deal. Moreover, the former national security advisor, M.K. Narayanan had also serious apprehensions vis-a-vis the deal. Moreover, Saran and Grover during their meetings with Burns and Rice argued that the US would work to have a full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India. Further, they also claimed that the US would work with allies and friends to adjust global regimes. However, after completion of the India-US civil nuclear deal in 2008, it has not been fully implemented. The benefits, which both the countries has aspired has not been achieved yet. Moreover, technical difficulties in the deal has also complicated the process. In addition, compensation issue has also become major hurdle in implementing the deal. In addition, the Indian liability law 2012 has also become major hurdle in implementation of the deal (Goswami 2016).

Digital Aspirations of India

Since 1990s, India has opened its economy and integrated with the world market. The process of globalization has made the world as a global village. So, the digitalization has helped a lot in the process of liberalization. Thus, India is also trying to achieve maximum digitalization. So, in this regard, India has increased connectivity of people that has resulted a significant improvement in the growth and development of a country. Moreover, in 2016 Independence Day speech Prime Minister, Narendar Modi clarified that India needs to digitize, which would help in innovation and improve the life standard of people. In order to achieve this goal, he argued that government would take all necessary steps to ensure all people have access to essential services and information. It is critical and inspiring area to new constituents and other international partners. Because innovation is a critical factor for growth of any nation in the 21 century. In that context, Prime Minister, Modi further argued that the potential of modern technology would help Indian people to connect more easily and unite strongly. It would also help to improve standards of education and would help to embrace diverse benefits in medicines. It would also help to increase the countries electronic capabilities that would help those people who are living in rural areas. Moreover, in this regard, the US former President, Obama praised Indian efforts and wanted to have collaboration with India in this regard. In addition, the US former Assistant Secretary of state for South and Central Asia, Nisha Biswal claimed that India would likely to make every step that will promote business environment between the two countries. He also asserted that India would like to focus the US companies to create infrastructure platform that would help India to grow technologically. Moreover, their capabilities in different fields have been identified by the government of India (Moore 2014).

Membership of the NSG and other Regimes

India has been at receiving end of the technology denial regime since its first peaceful nuclear test in 1974. Since then, the US and Western allies have denied India from the benefits of technology and other assistance. The members who have made these regimes are technologically very advanced. These regimes are working outside the UN and international law. So, there is no such law, which are binding on them. Since 2010, India is trying to gain the membership in these regimes. Moreover, the four significant regimes are: the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG); Australia Group (AG); Wassenaar Arrangement (WA); and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The main aim of India to participate in these regimes is to gain full membership.

Furthermore, after India and the US concluded the civil nuclear deal in 2008, the Obama administration has endorsed India's membership for the four multilateral export regimes. Since, then, India has been trying to win the support of member countries in these regimes. In this regard, India has successfully become the member of three regimes except the NSG. The regime is most significant vis-à-vis exporting fissile material and receiving advanced technology to member countries. Moreover, Indian officials have argued that Indian membership in the NSG would help to prevent nuclear proliferation. Because, after becoming member of the regime, India have to follow the rules, guidelines, terms and condition of the regime. So, in this regard, the NSG regime can play a vital role in promoting the major objectives of the NPT

and other regimes, which are working for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, its application for the NSG membership is still pending because of Chinese reservations. So, in this regard, India needs strong support of the US to gain membership in the NSG (Pant and Joshi 2016).

Nuclear Deal and Compensation Issue

The India-US civil nuclear deal, which had been started in 2005 and successfully concluded in 2008. In this deal, the US has been agreed to support India through nuclear energy cooperation. Though, in the past, the US had denied technology on India on basis that would help in developing nuclear weapons. However, for the deal, the US had changed its domestic laws and a waiver from the NSG (Pant 2002). On the other side, India had agreed to separate its civilian and nuclear technology. Furthermore, India had also bring facilities, which are under the international safeguards and introduced nuclear liability legislation that are consistent with 1997 Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CND). However, there was lot of debates and discussions whether the International Atomic Energy (IAE) or the US track equipment would be sold to India. However, experts are arguing that it was only bargaining chip. Moreover, Indian liability law does not obey the CSC that India had signed but not ratified so far. Moreover, the 2010 Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA) has lot of significance that would help victims of nuclear accident to get an immediate compensation. Through this act, there should be no delay in proving whether the operator was responsible or not (Swami 2015).

CONCLUSION

The India-US relationship has transformed over the last more than two decades. The US former President, Barack Obama has called the relationship with India as a defining partnership in the 21st century. It will be significant for the US strategic interest in Asia-Pacific and across the world. In this regard, since, 2000, all the three US Presidents, Clinton, Bush and Obama had visited India. That shows increasing significance of the bilateral relationship. The relationship has based on common values, such as democratic government, diversity and more important the rule of law. Moreover, both the countries have shared common interests in promoting stability, security and economic prosperity through connectivity, trade and investment. Moreover, India and the US have a common goal to enhance free flow of global trade through all routes including the sea lanes. So, in this regard, both the countries want to secure the sea lanes.

Moreover, India is a country that has most favourable attitude towards the US. The people to people contacts are rising. Moreover, cultural and academic contacts have also strengthened. In addition, Indian American three million diaspora are playing significant role in strengthening the relationship. Thus India are becoming the trustful partner of the US. Moreover, the US can rely on India's military and diplomatic support in case of any conflict escalates in the Asia Pacific. Moreover, the US can also give example of Indian Muslims, who have challenged the barbaric ideology of the ISIS that has spread terror in the world. In addition, the US can also offer the support of India to tackle climatic challenges. It would also enhance support of India in strengthening international order that sustains peace, prosperity and security across the globe. However, there are still several issues and challenges that needs to be resolved such as, diverse approach regarding climate change, transfer of advanced technology to India, the US assistance in make in India initiative etc.

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