
Mujahid Hussain*
Tauqeer Hussain Sargana**

Contours of Indo-US Strategic Relations and Dilemma of Chinese Containment

ABSTRACT

The end of Cold War has given impetus to a transformed international order vested with economic orientation. Though, the US emerged as the sole super power so does nations like China, India, South Africa, Japan, and Brazil announced their bid to form multi-polar order. This bipartisanship of the evolving order orchestrated new power corridors that created both intellectual and physical domains for progressive and ambitious nations to fill the gap. Concepts like end of history, clash of civilization, and Jihad vs. McWorld took the most of political posturing. On the one side intellectuals were trying to frame a world suitable to the already envisioned 'new world order' analogy and on the other hand few states were charging the global environment on economic fronts. This gave rise to an amalgamation of politics with economics and paved the way for a greater and stable political system. It also marked beginning of positively transformed relations between India and the United States when the former entered into liberal international order propagated by the then US President George W. Bush. Today, the kind of relations both nations cherish has been established on the so-called plea that 'the two largest democracies (D2) have potential to develop the most crucial strategic alliance in the coming decades that would inevitably help them to shape the existing world order towards a more balanced and politically viable for the two strategic allies'. This research calls the Indo-US plea a 'D2 Strategy'. The study concludes that the nature of bilateral relations between India and United States are multifaceted, whereas the containment of China is the bed-rock element behind their strategic partnership. The study has applied inductive method

* PhD Scholar, Department of Politics and International Relations at International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations at International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan.

with that of 'Analytical Eclecticism' approach to evaluate the so-called strategic relations of the two biggest democracies.

Keywords: India, United States, Strategic Stability, Regional Politics, China, Post Cold War, Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal, 9/11, Military Modernization.

Introduction

It was the post-Cold War period when Indian leadership sought help from the US led international financial order to affix its economic vulnerabilities (Patnaik, 1993). Indian political leadership not only brought necessary changes in its economic policy but also accepted the recommendations of International Monetary Fund (IMF) to install one of his recommendee's as Indian finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh (Ahluwalia, 1998). Later-on in the post 9/11 world order, the same finance minister became two times Prime Minister of India, who allowed the two nations to take the relations to its zenith (Baru, 2015). Today the convergence of interests between the two nations has successfully led them to shed the bitterness and suspicion of the past. Both the democratic nations strongly seek a stable partnership to amalgamate orientation of future strategic relations while maintaining regional and international interests aligned. In the year 2005, the leaders of the two countries came up with an ambitious objective to transform their bilateral relations into a global partnership (Gupta, 2005). This required a systematic effort to fix foreign policy differences, which historically acted as obstacles in their relations.

The contemporary outlook and pace of ongoing bilateral agreements between the two nations are evident signs and indications to uproot the potential of Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. These developments have inevitably turned their relations into one of the most viable alliances with a significant impact on the development of the international relations in the 21st century. Not to denounce the regional vulnerabilities, it is necessary to point out that Indian bid to indulge into strategic partnership with United States has lots to do with political and security construct of Asia. China therefore is the primary victim of evolving Indo-US strategic nexus on continental as well as at international fronts. One of the most visible and common variable of strength that brings proximity of strategic relations between New Delhi and Washington is the emergence of a 'D2 strategy' which revolves around the concept of democracy. In fact the so-called plea of 'D2 Strategy' revolves around the plea that 'the two largest democracies (D2) have potential to develop the most crucial strategic alliance in the coming decades that would inevitably help them to shape the existing world order towards a more balanced and politically viable for the two strategic allies'. Therefore, this research paper has analyzed the Indo-US

strategic relations with special emphasis on developing 'D2 strategy' which altogether had helped both the nations to establish strong defense, economics and political ties making the strategic environment affective and helpful for bilateral alliance at regional and international forums. This addresses the fundamental question 'is containment of China the bed-rock element behind Indo-US strategic partnership?'

Conceptual Framework

The main purpose of the study is to investigate and explore the prospects of an enduring Indo-U.S. strategic partnership based on the idea of 'Chinese containment'. Various international relation theories bear relevance to explain the dynamics of the relationship, however in order to completely understand the prospects no single theory or lens is sufficient to explain the complete relationship. Hence, keeping in mind the lack of sufficiency and inbuilt limitation of any one theory to capture the complexities associated with the international relations, a prevalent concept in social sciences known as 'analytical eclecticism' is used. This idea allows the researchers to present their work in holistic manner, by going beyond the inflexible boundaries of various theories and paradigms and hence as result a more realistic assessment of real world problems can be made.

What is Analytical Eclecticism? To understand the concepts, it is important to clarify that analytical eclecticism is not a separate model of research, instead it is more appropriately seen to be an intellectual stance that a researcher can take, when engaged in research that is difficult to fit in a specific paradigm or theoretical tradition (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010). The following are three basic assumptions of analytical eclecticism:

- 1) It is based on pragmatist philosophy and is often associated with establishing middle range theoretical arguments that address actual issues of policy making and practice.
- 2) Its unit of analysis is not narrowly defined, instead it envelopes problems that are wide and large in scope and gives a sense of direction and clarity to the complexities in the real social world.
- 3) It generates substantive arguments that help to link mechanisms that are usually separately analyzed in different research paradigms.

Why Analytical Eclecticism? A researcher who follow one line of paradigm for making causations often tend to ignore a lot of other factors that have a tendency to explain a particular situation. Hence in international relations we often see that intuitive reasoning of a politician that is based on observation of a lot of factors often takes precedence. Using Analytical

Eclecticism doesn't mean undermining the utility of paradigm-based research, however often there is risk of high degree of error.

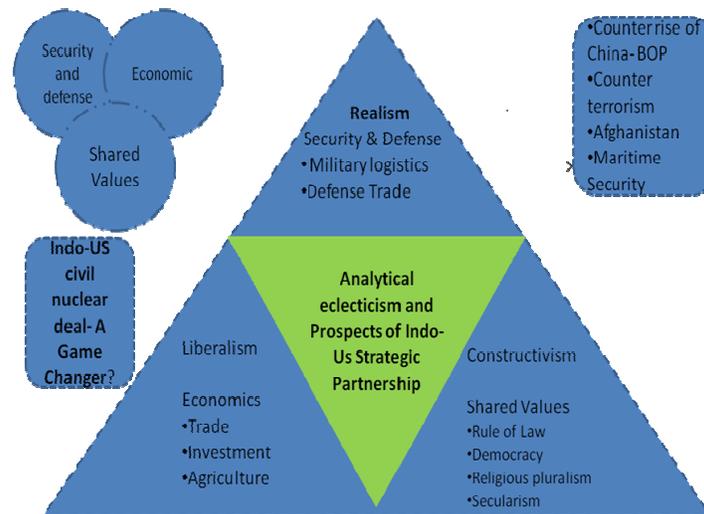
In case of Indo-U.S strategic relations, we see that they are made up of complicated and convoluted variables and interests. At one end their relationship is bound by strategic and defense objectives, on the other end there is an important chunk of economics that engages both nations to stay intact for the prospects of enduring partnership. Furthermore, the shared values provide a sustainable base to this strategic relationship. Hence it would be utterly unfair to disregard any one of the variables. Consequently, with the help of using the idea of analytical eclecticism a theoretical triangulation on three different vectors has been applied:

- i. **Realism** emphasis on the security and defense cooperation
- ii. **Liberalism** in terms of complex interdependence explain the aspect of economics in Indo-U.S strategic relations, and finally
- iii. **Constructivism** highlights the shared values, and common goals such as rule of law, strengthening democracy etc.

Together these three vectors would direct the primary question of the research that is to understand the contours of Indo-US strategic alliance and its camouflaged anti-China syndrome.

Figure 1-Conceptual Framework

Application of three Vectors: Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism



Source: Researcher's own illustration

Analytical Eclecticism approach has not been formally applied on the Indo-US strategic relations rather an outward inductive methodology has been deemed necessary to explain the nature of bilateral relations between the two democratic nations. This means that after explaining the pretext of bilateral relations an analysis is drawn to conclude the findings based on Analytical Eclecticism approach. Therefore, the upcoming paragraphs of this study would first highlight the contours of Indo-US strategic relations and its implications on strategic stability and afterwards induce findings of the study based on Analytical Eclecticism consisting realism, liberalism, and constructivism approaches.

Contours of Indo-US Strategic Relations: From Divergence to Convergence

In very simple and layman language national interest is the effort which is seen by a specific state or actor to be a worth attaining and a desirable goal (Trubowitz, 1998). These specific goals are made with clear context that they would generate a positive impact. Realization and attainment of these goals would serve multipurpose goals such as achievement of political,

economic, security and moral well-being of the state. Also, this renders true for any external relations that an actor might embark upon (Mohan, 2017).

Being the primary purpose, the context of national interest paves the way towards procedures and guidelines necessary to uphold the foundation and guiding point for any policy making. It is important that the statesmen think in terms of attaining these interests, although methods can differ but a country in making alliance or partnership will never go beyond a certain point, especially the defining national interest of its country, which always remains paramount. In relationship, negotiations or discussions national interest would guide the policy makers as to how much attention they would give on a certain matter. It is often the national interest that would define the nature and the depth of relationship between actors in the international realm.

For the sake of this research, it is important to define the type of national interests: National interests could be fixed or changing. According to the famous political scientist, Hans Morgenthau national interests are the most enduring feature of the international system (Morgenthau, 1948). According to him, despite changing regimes in a country what keeps the state running towards viable future is the 'national interest'. National interests are the constants of a State; hence in that case they remain "unaffected by the circumstances of time and place" (Burchill, 2005). On the contrary, other theorists have argued that interests are diverse and pluralistic in nature, and these subjective preferences as a result change. This could be because of changes in domestic political process or because of the shift in international environment.

India's Strategic National Interests

India doesn't have a formal grand strategy through which its precise interests can be calculated. For the most part the term grand strategy and national interest is often used for almost anything. Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when pledged to send a spacecraft to MARS he dubbed that action as a grand strategy in the national interest of the country (Stone, 2012). Furthermore, efforts to secure permanent membership in the UNSC that gives India quite an influential status in the international politics is also tagged as a grand strategic objective (Burra, S., & Jamil, H. 2018).). Similarly, entering into nuclear deal with United States was again considered central to India's national interest (Yeon-jung, 2017). To understand national interests coining Indian future strategic thought and the changes in its overall national security strategy, it is crucial to evaluate choices of foreign policy that New Delhi had made over the period of time.

The primary objective that roots Indian foreign policy lies in the vision that the leaders of nation established as foundational principles. Few

of the principles that Indian foreign policy had been maintaining over the years of its political relations with major powers are grounded on “a belief in friendly relations with all countries of the world, conflict resolution by peaceful means, independence of deliberation, actions reflecting the principles of non-alignment and equity in the accomplishment of international endeavors” (Ganguly and Pardesi, 2009). The study or the history of US-India relations indicate that the Indian foreign policy which has a direct impact on its relations with US has undergone five major transitions:

- i. **The first transition** in Indian foreign policy is “from the national consensus on building a socialist society in putting up a modern capitalist one” (Kohli, 2006). The socialist ideas with its roots in the freedom movement have dominated and influenced India in setting up its political discourse. The importance of these ideas was not mere rhetoric even in 1976 a constitution was passed to make the nation into a socialist republic (Kohli, 2010). However, the year 1991 not only transformed the international relations but had a considerable impact on India as well. With the collapse of Soviet Union, the pivot around India's Socialism resolve was now a rare reality. It was this time when the leadership began to open the economy and started to adhere to the principles of globalization. This change in the national economy strategy was beginning of a new era, with better opportunities that put the state on the roads to new friendships (Kohli, 2010).
- ii. **The second transition**, which is more implicit in nature, involves a shift in priorities involving a change of emphasis from politics to economics in the formulation of foreign policy. India had realized its slow economic growth as compared to other Asian countries particularly China (Staley, 2006). To match up this pace, Indian diplomacy began to enter the unexplored territories and spaces. Also, now the focus was on foreign direct investment instead of seeking foreign aid which has been part of successful Indian diplomacy in the past. This refocus has also transformed its relations with China and the Asian neighborhood as whole.
- iii. **A third important transition** in the Indian foreign policy is about changing its aspirations from becoming the leader of the ‘third world’ to channeling its energies on the quest for becoming a great power (Alden & Vieira, 2005). Before the breakdown of Soviet Union and its independence history, India viewed the world politics with the lens of anti-imperialism, which is again a manifestation in its commitment to non-alignment movement. However, the year 1990 was an eye opener for India. By that time, they realized that there is no third world trade union, which Indian supposedly was leading.

After the 1970s most of the developing countries were opening too much more pragmatic economic reforms (Prashad, 2008). So, India followed the trend too.

- iv. **The fourth transition** in their policy was letting go off the 'anti-Western' sentiments and as the largest democracy or the world they began to cash inevitably valued to find a place in the western agenda for international order. End of the Cold War and the rise of China on the other hand meant that they had to break this image and move beyond the anti-western approaches leading the Indian international relations (Altenburg, Schmitz & Stamm, 2008).
- v. **Finally**, Indian political approach tilted from '**idealism**' to '**realism**', a transition that essentially opened the doors for new era of international relations. Although, Nehru as the leader demonstrated realism at many fronts particularly their policy in the immediate neighborhood, yet their foreign policy was known to be idealist in nature. Indian leaders now began to seek practical means to maintain their standing in the world politics, which was more pragmatic in nature (Huchet, 2008).

These transitions in the Indian foreign policy had a direct impact on its relations with United States. Improving relations with United States became the principle national strategic objective for India and its culmination reached to highest point when in 2005 both countries signed an agreement of 'Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal' (Gopalakrishnan, 2005).

Indian ambitions to uphold unique but powerful status in the international politics is not an impossible objective to be achieved. Though, the track towards achieving the destiny seems quite a difficult journey. The objectives that link Indian future with its global aspirations are usually highlighted under four broader themes mentioned below (Sagar, 2009):

- a) **Security:** Impeccable homeland security
- b) **Economic Vitality:** Economic prosperity and wellbeing of the people
- c) **Diplomacy and International Politics:** Establishment of a desirable international system
- d) **Ideology as an Instrument of Strength:** An international political atmosphere that is conducive to pursue national interests and promoting its values.

An effort has been done to explain the above four traditional variables that had mostly occupied the Indian strategic thinking before ending up in an exceptional friendship with United States.

Security

According to the Indian Ministry of Defense, "India is surrounded by neighbors who are either antagonistic or unbalanced and thus are very much capable exporting their problems to India. Hence, territorial integrity and internal security have come forward as the most pressing national interest for India" (Mohan, 2017). China and Pakistan being the two powerful nuclear neighbors to India share territorial proximity and create defense vulnerabilities to its integrity. Furthermore, with Bangladesh India also face a problem of border management and issues of smuggling. It is very important for India to either join an alliance or to develop self-sufficiency in its areas of defense and military. In this regard, India has focused on acquiring long range missiles, sufficient arsenal and also a credible nuclear deterrence. The military modernization is thus the conclusive objective of India that further destabilizes the region and creates security anxiety in China and Pakistan.

In the background of India's security perceptions and with a focus on its values of promoting democracy, it has come up with the following national security objectives which can be later viewed to make comparison with United States interest in the region:

- i. Securing the countries border as per the law and constitution.
- ii. Ensuring the well-being of the citizens against any sort of atrocities including terrorism, conflict, etc.
- iii. Safeguarding the nation from any sort of extremism and religious radicalism off shooting from the surrounding states.
- iv. Protecting the national sovereignty against the use of WMDs.
- v. Working on Indian defense preparedness through the department of research and development.
- vi. Seeking improvements in pacts bringing strength to Indian security and strategic partnership with major powers of the world.

Economic Vitality

The pace of Indian economy is considered bit slow as compared to other Asian states. Hence, maintaining and securing a favorable economic environment keeping in view the realities of its growing population is a vital interest of India. India is striving hard to achieve the status of developed nation by 2025 (Wolf Jr, et.al, 2011). To achieve the said tasks, the country is consistently investing on three areas related to service sector, industry, and agriculture. In this regard large population and economic development makes securing the energy needs even more important that it secured through the civil nuclear cooperation with United States.

Diplomacy and International Politics

Diplomacy and international politics are very much connected to project and achieve national interests. Through successful diplomatic posturing, India has been able to achieve both security and economic objectives. Furthermore, Indian interests are also folded in the ambition to become great power and having a permanent place in the UNSC (Carranza, 2017). At one end India is upholding its virtues or independent decision making mainly regarding its decisions and positions on the non-proliferation treaty but also wants to use forums like WTO to voice its economic and trading concerns (Raghavan, 2018). Furthermore, India wants to mobilize the international relations in its favor and pursuing its goal to maintain the Indian Ocean as peaceful zone, so that it fully uses the potential of its exclusive economic zone to achieve its economic interests (Khorana & Choukroune, 2016).

Ideology as an Instrument of Strength

India strives to sell its ideology to uphold an image of moderate nation that revolve around principles of “ensuring friendly relations with all countries of the world, conflict resolution by upholding principles of peace, freedom of thought and actions as culminated in the non-alignment principles and equality in the conduct of international relations” (McDonald, 2018). Also, promoting values of peace and democracy encompass an important agenda in the Indian interests, apart from that India tends to uphold secular values as India is a home for people from all walks of religion and cultures (Sen and Wagner, 2009). To overshadow the so-called Hindutva ideology India has been quite successful to cherish ‘D2’ doctrine being the largest democracy in the world.

US Global National Interest

If India needs assurance on its security, US need trusted partner to promote and secure its interest outside United States, especially in the region of Asia Pacific and countering the rise of China. According to Thomas Donnelly and Melissa Wisner, “only India stands as a natural great power partner to the US in building the next American century” (Donnelly & Wisner, 2005). Furthermore, US need new and flourishing markets to pursue its economic interests as well. The formulation of national interest is the subject of considerable importance in United States. Some of the important US national interests that the Commission on the National Interest explained are, “(i) to prevent, deter and reduce any threat sprouting from any sort of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons on the country or its military serving elsewhere or abroad; (ii) to make sure the survival of US allies in shaping a safe world order in which they can thrive without any hindrance or fear; (iii) to stop materialization of hostile major powers or rogue states

intruding the US borders or its allies; (iv) to ensure the viability and stability of major global systems (trade, financial markets, supplies or energy, and the environment); and (v) to formulate prolific relations, aligned with American national interests, with states that could become strategic adversaries, China and Russia" (Allison & Blackwill, 2000).

These interests remained the foundation of US national interests especially in the aftermath of Soviet disintegration. However, for this study, the goals outlined in the national security strategy of 2000 and 2006 charted out during two terms of Bush administration and national security strategy of 2010 charted out during the Obama administration are taken as an instrument of evaluation. The Trump administration has yet to come forward to provide detailed vision on the nature of bilateral relations with India and for that very absence his term is excluded from the analysis. Though, few important developments are used in the conclusive part of the study. Therefore, this section is reflective of both Bush and Obama terms to unfold United States national security strategies to compare and formulate inferences.

Lord Palmerstone has rightly pointed out that, "Nations have no permanent friends or allies, they only have permanent interests. We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and these interests it is our duty to follow" (Maoz, et. al., 2007), yet Condoleezza Rice in her article Rethinking National Interest disagrees and emphasizes that "country with shared values and similar institutions are permanent friends to United States" hinting towards India (Rice, 2008). Furthermore, she also highlights that true allies of US are those who are also democratic and hence she refers to China and Saudi Arabia as authoritarian regimes and dubbed the relations with them as temporary.

As known that Rice has been an imperative part in the Bush Administration and thus based on her views we highlight that US national interest involved countering the rise of China while promoting relations with India. 2002 NSS contains all the elements that drive the external relations of America. In general, the national security strategy put forward four areas to pursue US interests on foreign fronts, "(i) security of the United States, its citizens and US allies and partners, (ii) affluence through maintaining a strong economic base, (iii) upholding the universal moral values at home and round the world, and (iv) building of an international order containing the US ideals" (Bush, 2002).

Parallel to that the US interests painted in the 2006 Bush national security strategy put forward the following goals (Bush, 2006):

- i. United States aspires to champion human rights advocacy
- ii. Encourages fortification of international coalitions to denounce global terrorism for the prevention of attacks against US and its allies

- iii. Committed to work for the neutralization of regional conflicts
- iv. Prevent the usage and spread of WMDs
- v. Efforts to promote global economic prosperity through free market liberal order
- vi. Commitment to spread the values of democracy through providing infrastructural support
- vii. Efforts to mature cooperation between global powers
- viii. Transforming American institutions to enhance national security management in the new world order
- ix. Connect to materialize the benefits and opportunities coining as a result of globalization

Furthermore, the "Department of Defense Authorization Act for FY 2012" emphasized on deepening strategic relations with New Delhi beneficial for America to pursue its national interest in the 21st century. The significance of India in America's strategic interests is clearly expressed in the following statement.

"The relationship between the United States and India-what President Obama has called one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century- is the priority for the US Government and for the US Department of Defense. The United States and India are natural partners, ordained to be closer because of shared interests and values and our mutual desire for a stable and secure world. A strong bilateral partnership is in US interests and benefits both countries. We expect India's importance to US interests to grow in the long run as India, a major regional and emerging global power, increasingly assumes roles corresponding with its position as a stake holder and a leader in the international system" (House of Representatives, 2011).

Basis of Relationship: Commonality of National Interest

Based on the identification of national interests of both India and United States, we can now identify the commonality of national interests among these countries. Below are mentioned some of the very important facets that converge both states national interests:

1. First, both the countries share a common take on countering terrorism and are willing to seek and collaborate on this front.
2. Secondly, they also have the same take on the prevention and stopping of WMDs to other countries and as well as non-state actors.
3. Third is the promotion of democratic values along with isolation of dictatorial regimes to spread their policies elsewhere.
4. Fourth is the protection of international sea routes, so that free flow of goods can be ensured by upholding the principles of free trade.

5. Both India and United States are common on its goal of courting the rise of China or by virtue to stall peaceful growth of China.
6. Lastly, they share the common goal of desiring peaceful developments in Afghanistan for ensuring stability in the region.

Based on the above investigation and analytical study of respective objectives of two nations, this study evaluates commonality of national interests between United States and India. Both these countries share similar view points on the areas of “regional security, economic development and concerns over Chinese military rise” (Brzezinski, 2012). Also, both desire a stable South Asia that involves secure control of nuclear and missile proliferation. Yet it is important to highlight that both nations separately set a different course of action to achieve desired goals and might have altogether a different take on the same issues. For example, for US “the ultimate value of an Indo-US relationship is that it helps to guard the American primacy; hence, the entire crux of the partnership is to aid and facilitate the balance of power in Asia, enrichment of American competitiveness by creating deep rooted linkages with the Indian economy” but for India the partnership with US is mainly “to seek the expansion of its national power” (Geraghty, 2012).

How Realism serves the Indo-US strategic partnership?

The neo-realist theory suggests that the strategic interactions between nations are explained by the nature of international system (Burley, 2017). The international system points to the overall security threats faced regionally and globally. The application of the neo-realist theory highlights China factor being one of the most important variable that brings both India and United States closer to form strategic partnership. In fact, neo-realism propagates absence of central authority in the international system due to which states must amaze power to balance the imbalance. Not in all situations states can manage the imbalance. Therefore, they must get into alliances.

The power posture of United States is unique but when it comes to engage China, it fails to manage balance with Beijing’s growing regional and global influence. For that very reason, it requires a factor that could contain China at the very verge of its surroundings. India hence, becomes an ideal factor in United States foreign policy to contain China. Moreover, India itself has failed to contain China and based on its experiences the country needs an alliance. Due to all these factors, both India and United

States are maintaining the same objectives around China which indulge them into natural strategic alliance.

China is seen to be a threat not only to United States because of its sheer size and growing economics but also poses a regional threat to India. China and India both previously share a history of border dispute, which was created into a War of 1962. As mentioned earlier, the realist paradigm proposes containment of China an utmost objective to maintain its position as a 'Hegemon' and for this purpose India is the only country in Asia that can at least be in line with competition with China. Apart from China, other security concerns for the US in the region includes: war on terror and to successfully handle the Afghanistan problem without creating it into a security quandary.

All these systematic variables influence India and United States to cooperate and eventually pave way for a strategic partnership. Hence, as per neo-realist analysis, security and defense cooperation between India and United States is tremendously increasing day by day. A realist analysis of Indo-U.S. civil nuclear deal also point towards United States willingness to make larger than expected favors, so that the tilt of India shifts in Washington's favor. Moreover, Strobe Talbott in his criticism of Indo-U.S nuclear deal points out that there is hidden Chinese subtext in the agreement (Talbott, 2010). Also, some of the Indian leftist authors point out to the deal as anti-China alliance with India (Pant, 2007).

Is liberalism the bed-rock element in the Indo-US strategic partnership?

Liberalism highlights the 'complex interdependence' existence between New Delhi and Washington's political systems and tends to see the strategic relations in terms of economic exchanges at various levels of emerging partnership (Mohan, 2010). The idea here is that there are multiple other channels through which a state can transcend cooperation beyond merely seeking to increase military power. Liberalism can help to establish that the Indo-U.S relations are not only determined by a security threat from China but there is an economic factor as well. In this regard it is worth taking into consideration that Indo-China relations are better than ever before and a positive rise in bilateral trade between the both neighboring nations is also getting impetus. This in fact allowed the two competitive nations in 2006 to observe India-China friendship year (Wang, 2008). In 2010, their volume of bilateral trade exceeded fifty billion U.S dollar and made China its largest trading partner (Barboza, 2010). Currently, the volume of bilateral trade is even greater than before which stabilizes and creates an ideal environment due to Indian full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Liberalism provides a valid dictum and solidified reasoning in increasing prospects of bilateral relations. The United States and Indian recent collaboration have finalized agreements on trade, agriculture, civil nuclear deal, etc. America being the biggest economy and its advancement in areas of technology and provision of capital to India to New Delhi makes Washington an ideal bidder in the growing India economy. On the other hand, India offers large markets for U.S. to invest and enhance production. The economic interaction between India and United States suggest a much deeper and a sustainable partnership, which would not be a victim to any changes in international system or state level disruptions.

Has constructivism manipulated the orchestration of Indo-US strategic partnership?

Constructivism is a positivist theory that emphasize on subjective and shared ideas, and identities held by actors. These shared ideas and norms are powerful enough to shape perceptions which in turn guide behavior. According to constructivist, anarchy is also subjective in nature, and can be seen according to how it is taken or defined (Wendt, 1992). Applying constructivism to the case of Indo-US strategic relations, we see commonality of shared values that the partnership between India being the world's largest democracy and America the world's oldest democracy is often dubbed as natural allies. In fact, this validates the very 'D2 Strategy' of both India and United states that the two largest democracies (D2) have potential to develop the most crucial strategic alliance in the coming decades which would inevitably help them to shape the existing world order towards a more balanced and politically viable for the two strategic allies.

Apart from this mutual sharing of values such as rule of law, religious pluralism and secularist ideology are other determinants of this relationship. In case of United States, we see that it is strongly backing and endorsing the vision of great India. India's rise is not seen as a threat to United States, again because of shared ideologies. It is this difference of perception that has enabled Indo-US civil deal to flourish. However, it is important to consider that these common principles alone cannot solely determine the prospect of Indo-US strategic relations; however they serve as a background to a bright future of cooperation.

Conclusion

The Indo-US relations without any doubt have been transformed into strategic partnership. The landscape of the regional security is somehow more critical keeping in view the presence of high stakes of China. The Indo-US alliance is vulnerable to that of Chinese growing influence in the region. Geography in fact plays the decisive role in the matrix of strategic landscape. Indian bid to rely on Washington will have to go through the mill of strategic calculations back in United States, while Chinese bid to curtail the Indo-US strategic nexus does not require a continent to travel. Hence, the variable of geography is the key hindrance in the execution of containment of China. No country in the world can excuse the bitter truth of geography not even the strategic nexus of India and USA. Even a slight possibility to checkmate the variability of geography could cause such a grave damage to Indian ambitions that no nation would ever think to indulge into gambling of strategic alliance with states situated elsewhere.

Though, the mode of direct confrontation is out of question but the strategic nexus between India and USA has a great potential to stimulate controlled chaos in the region which China could not afford at any cost. Indian ambitions in the region and military modernization along with its overdue presence in South China Sea could cause a permanent turmoil in the surroundings of China particularly for its CPEC and OBOR projects. Moreover, the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) between Afghanistan and USA is a key indication that the future of the region is still not out of context for Washington (Panda, 2014). The discourse of strategic gambling will define the future politics of this region. Pakistan in this equation becomes the key player to maintain balance in favor of China. If United States becomes successful to secure the neutrality of Pakistan that could cause great damage to Chinese economic, political and military interests in the region. It is important to mention that the study postures Pakistan's active engagement with China due to common national interests. So the possible of becoming neutral is out of context. Due to Pakistan's active engagement with China, the most foreseeable political landscape of the Indo-US strategic relations suggests a rapprochement between the two blocks (Indo-US vs. Sino-Pak) rather an execution of confrontation.

References

- Altenburg, T., Schmitz, H., & Stamm, A. (2008). Breakthrough? China's and India's transition from production to innovation. *World development*, 36(2), 325-344
- Alden, C., & Vieira, M. A. (2005). The new diplomacy of the South: South Africa, Brazil, India and trilateralism. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(7), 1077-1095.
- Allison, G. T., & Blackwill, R. (2000). America's national interests. *United States: The Commission on America's National Interests*.
- Ahluwalia, M. S. (1998). Infrastructure development in India's reforms. *India's Economic Reforms and Development: Essays for Manmohan Singh*.
- Baru, S. (2015). *The accidental prime minister: the making and unmaking of Manmohan Singh*. Penguin UK.
- Barboza, D. (2010). China passes Japan as second-largest economy. *The New York Times*, 15.
- Brzezinski, Z. (2012). Balancing the East, upgrading the west: US grand strategy in an age of upheaval. *Foreign Affairs*, 97-104.
- Burley, A. M. S. (2017). International law and international relations theory: a dual agenda. In *The Nature of International Law* (pp. 11-46). Routledge.
- Bush, G. W. (2002). *The national security strategy of the United States of America*. Executive Office of the President Washington Dc.
- Bush, G. W. (2006). *The national security strategy 2006*. Executive Office of the President Washington Dc.
- Burchill, S. (2005). *The national interest in international relations theory*. Springer.
- Burra, S., & Jamil, H. (2018). A Critic and an Apologist: India's Quest for UN Security Council Permanent Membership. In *Locating India in the Contemporary International Legal Order* (pp. 31-50). Springer, New Delhi.

- Carranza, M. E. (2017). Rising Regional Powers and International Relations Theories: Comparing Brazil and India's Foreign Security Policies and Their Search for Great-Power Status. *Foreign Policy Analysis, 13*(2), 255-277.
- Congress, U. S. (2011). National defense authorization act for fiscal year 2012.
- Donnelly, T., & Wisner, M. (2005). A Global Partnership between the US and India. *AEI National Security Outlook*.
- Ganguly, S., & Pardesi, M. S. (2009). Explaining sixty years of India's foreign policy. *India Review, 8*(1), 4-19.
- Geraghty, C. (2012). *India in the Indian Ocean region: Re-calibrating US expectations*. American Security Project.
- Gopalakrishnan, A. (2005). Indo-US Nuclear Cooperation: A Non-starter?. *Economic and Political Weekly, 29*35-2940.
- Gupta, A. (2005). *The US-India relationship: strategic partnership or complementary interests?*. DIANE Publishing.
- Huchet, J. F. (2008). Between Geostrategic Rivalry and Economic Competition. Emergence of a Pragmatic India-China Relationship. *China Perspectives, 2008*(2008/3), 50-67.
- Khorana, S., & Choukroune, L. (2016). India and the Indian Ocean region. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region, 12*(2), 122-125.
- Kohli, A. (2006). Politics of economic growth in India, 1980-2005: Part I: The 1980s. *Economic and Political Weekly, 12*51-1259.
- Kohli, A. (2010). Democracy and development in India: From socialism to pro-business. *OUP Catalogue*.
- McDonald, M. (2018). Constructivisms. In *Security Studies* (pp. 48-59). Routledge.
- Mohan, C. R. (2017). The Indian Express.
- Mohan, C. R. (2010). Rising India: partner in shaping the global commons? *The Washington Quarterly, 33*(3), 133-148.

- Maoz, Z., Terris, L. G., Kuperman, R. D., & Talmud, I. (2007). What is the enemy of my enemy? Causes and consequences of imbalanced international relations, 1816–2001. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(1), 100-115.
- Morgenthau, H. (1948). Politics Amongst Nations. *The Struggle for Peace and Power*.
- Panda, A. (2014). August 2014: The New Deadline for the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement. *The Diplomat*, 14.
- Pant, H. V. (2007). India in the Asia–Pacific: Rising ambitions with an eye on China. *Asia-Pacific Review*, 14(1), 54-71.
- Patnaik, J. K. (1993). The International Economic Regime and Liberalized Economy: The Case of India and IMF Conditionality. *India Quarterly*, 49(1-2), 97-116.
- Prashad, V. (2008). *The darker nations: a people's history of the Third World*. The New Press.
- Raghavan, C. (2018). WTO ministerial talks collapse in disarray. *Guardian (Sydney)*, (1810), 12.
- Rice, C. (2008). Rethinking the national interest: American realism for a new world. *Foreign Affairs*, 2-26.
- Sagar, R. (2009). State of mind: what kind of power will India become?. *International Affairs*, 85(4), 801-816.
- Sen, R., & Wagner, W. (2009). Cultural mechanics of fundamentalism: Religion as ideology, divided identities and violence in post-Gandhi India. *Culture & Psychology*, 15(3), 299-326.
- Sil, R., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2010). *Beyond paradigms: Analytic eclecticism in the study of world politics*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Staley, S. R. (2006). The rise and fall of Indian socialism why India embraced economic reform. *REASON-SANTA BARBARA THEN LOS ANGELES-*, 38(2), 44.
- Stone, R. (2012). India rising.

- Talbott, S. (2010). *Engaging India: Diplomacy, democracy, and the bomb*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Trubowitz, P. (1998). *Defining the national interest: conflict and change in American foreign policy*. University of Chicago Press.
- Wang, Y. (2008). Public diplomacy and the rise of Chinese soft power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 257-273.
- Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics. *International organization*, 46(2), 391-425.
- Wolf Jr, C., Dalal, S., DaVanzo, J., Larson, E. V., Akhmedjonov, A., Dogo, H., ... & Montoya, S. (2011). *China and India, 2025: a comparative assessment*. RAND NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INST SANTA MONICA CA.
- Yeon-jung, J. (2017). A path to NSG: India's rise in the global nuclear order. *Rising Powers Quarterly*, 1(3), 19-37.