

India-United States Strategic Relations: China as a Factor

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Abstract

The constructive relationship between India and the United States that witnessed significant upward trajectory by the dawn of the twenty-first century is being portrayed by many in India and abroad as moving in the direction of containing China. Their perception is based on the fact that India and the United States enjoy more convergences of interests than the divergences of interests. The paper argues that containment of China would result to serious strategic and economic implications for India. It should be in the interest of India and the United States that they encourage China rise in positive direction that doesn't pose any threat to both of them rather than in a negative one. This way they can receive maximum benefit out of the expanding relations, both economically and militarily. It further argues that the changing international security environment requires cooperation between these three countries rather than confronting each other.

Key Words: India, United States, China, containment, strategic cooperation

Introduction

The constructive relationship between India and the United States that started soon after the cold war end had gained significant upward trajectory by the dawn of the twenty-first century. Both countries enjoy more convergences of interests than the divergences of interests and the former has been the driving force behind this strategic relationship. The recent upsurge in the strategic partnership between the two countries have led many to perceive that the rationale being containing China that has the potential to threaten both India and the United States. However, Ashley J. Tellis in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 2006 has refuted the claim made by many Indian and American Officials that an India-U.S. expanding relation is aimed at containment of China. He is of the view that a policy of containing China is neither feasible nor necessary for the United States at this point of time. He further added that it remains unclear whether it would be in the interest of India to become a part of any containment policy vis-à-vis China.

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Here one may ask a question and that is whether India and the United States are really interested in the containment of China. If yes, then what would they gain out of it. Also both countries must recognize the implications of this step to regional and global peace and security. Therefore, before evolving any such containment strategy, India and United States must have to rethink its short-term and long-term implications of such strategy. If the U.S. is really interested in the containment of China then India must have to ensure that it does not become a victim of the U.S. policy of containment that has nothing to do with India's interests. As India's interests require cooperative relationship with China or any other countries (Tellis, 2006, April 26).

Mr. Ashley J. Tellis was quite right when he say during his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that, "a strengthened bilateral relationship does not imply that India will become a treaty bound ally of the United States at some time in the future. It also does not imply that India will become a meek, complaint and uncritical collaborator of the U.S. in all its global endeavors. Rather India's large size, its proud history, and its great ambitions, ensure that it will always pursue its own interests- just like any other great powers" (Muhammad, 2006, July). Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Robert Zoellick in his speech in China on 21st September 2005 has said that 'Washington recognizes the growth of China as a world power is non-stoppable and that China's cooperation is necessary for addressing regional and global concerns'. Deputy Secretary of State views reflects about what should be U.S. position toward China and the role China would play in future given the regional and global insecurity (Bhadrakumar, 2007).

This is further accentuated by what the former U.S. Secretary of State Ms. Condoleezza Rice in her speech in Tokyo in 2005 regarding the role of U.S.-India relationship vis-à-vis China had said that, "I really do believe that the USA-Japan relationship, the USA-South Korean relationship, the USA-India relationship, all are important in creating an environment in which China is more likely to play a positive role than a negative one." She further added that these alliances are not against China; they are alliances that are devoted to a stable security, political and economic and indeed, values-based relationships that put China in the contest of those relationships and on a different path to development than if China simply untethered, simply operating without that strategic context." Ms. Condoleezza Rice Statement seeks to clear the misperception underlying India-U.S. relationship vis-à-vis China.

It will always be in the interests of India to seek to have good relations with other countries. Really, this is important from the Indian point of view if it has to achieve major power status. From the Indian side, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee has said, "We are no longer bound by the cold war paradigm where good relations with one power automatically entailed negative consequences with its rivals." His comments reflects that India today stand poised at the threshold of having closer relations with all major powers that would strengthened India's interests. This is further accentuated by the fact that

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during the cold war U.S. and Soviet Union were rival super powers. Because of which India's tilt toward the latter did not allow India to have closer relations with U.S. Today, the situation is quite different that U.S. and China enjoy closer ties with each other. Therefore, there should not be any problem for India to engage with both countries that have significant positive consequences for India. India has a lot to gain out of it. India's strategic analysts C. Raja Mohan is of the view that India must offer reasonable assurance that its partnership with U.S. is not directed against China in order to ensure that it joins the Asian balance of power without causing unnecessary turbulence is pertinent (Raghavan, 2007, October-December).

Containment of China would result to serious strategic and economic implications to India. India must keep in mind the fact that today China and U.S. also shares a lot many common interests that may at some point of time in future forced both countries to work closer together. Therefore, India should prefer to work for its own interests, rather than coming under someone pressure (Sasikumar, 2007, Fall).

Why Containment of China is Less Likely to Happen

There are many reasons as to why containment of China is less likely to happen. Today India and United States have a much better interactions with China than ever before in the past. And where there is a convergence, there must also be a divergence. The same is the case with India and the United States stance towards the containment of China. Although India and the U.S. have the same concerns over the growing Chinese power and its expanding influence, but still they have the differences over other issues involving China that would seriously undermine India's strategic security. The growing relationship between India and the United States should not become the sole ground for the containment of China.

India expressed concern over the Chinese equipping Pakistan with nuclear and missile technology and other weapons needs. India perceives this as helping to maintain strategic balance between the two South Asian giants, thereby worsening the security situation in South Asia. However, the United States remain non-committed to the growing military ties between China and Pakistan that would seriously threaten India's security. The reason may be due to the fact that Pakistan has really benefited from the American arms and equipment supply in the past and also at present (Raghavan, 2007, October-December). And also that the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation, Mr. Robert Einhorn has made it very clear when he say that, "We are terribly concerned about the behavior of Iran. Pakistan of course is a friend of US and we wish to have good bilateral relations with Pakistan. We also recognize China as a good friend of Pakistan and we don't intend to interfere in anyway with their close relationship." And instead China and United States together has opposed India's nuclear programme (Menon, 2005). Therefore, it becomes very important for India that it looked at China factor from its own mirror rather than looking at from the mirror of

U.S. thereby avoiding getting involved in an unnecessary events that would only increase India's concerns over China.

It would be quite interesting to know why U.S. should be ready to take such a huge step when China today is the second largest holder of treasury bonds with nearly \$400 billion next only to Japan with some \$841 billion. Chinese exports to U.S. are five and half times more than what the former imports from U.S (Dutt, 2006). Also United States has in the past and present been investing heavily in Chinese economy. If today, China has become an economic powerhouse, then it was with the support of United States. How can a nation think of containing a country where more than one hundred U.S. owned multinationals companies are doing business? The American businesses would lobby hard against any of the American move to counter China because they understand the significant losses that would be incurred as a result of such move. The economic relations would be seriously affected if U.S. and India directed their relations against China (Mahapatra, 2005). The United States have a much better trade relations with China than ever before in the past. It is much ahead of what it enjoys with India. Given this fact, India and United States would want to have closer relations with china. If the United States were to contain China then it would not have helped the latter to become a partner in the thermonuclear energy research and in the building of more nuclear reactors in the country (Subrahmanyam 2005, July September).

Table 1: Areas of Convergence and Divergence between India and U.S., India and China and U.S. and China

Name of the Pairs	Areas of Convergences	Areas of Divergences
India and United States	Combating terrorism, promoting democracy, ensuring regional and global security, preventing nuclear proliferation.	India signing NPT, CTBT and Pak factor.
India and China	Combating terrorism, establishment of a multipolar world order, human rights.	Border dispute, Tibet issue, Sino-Pak collaboration, China's regional influence.
United States and China	Combating terrorism, preventing nuclear proliferation, ensuring regional and global security.	Taiwan issue, Chinese military modernisation.

Source: John W. Garver, "The China-India-U.S. Triangles: Strategic Relations in the Post Cold War Era", *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Analysis* (Washington), vol. 13(5), October 2002, pp. 5-56.

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From table 1 one can observe that Containment of China is less likely to happen given the kind of convergence that China enjoys with both India and United States. China enjoys some point of convergence with India that is against the wish of the United States such as the creation of the multipolar world and human rights. At the same time, United States also share areas of convergence that goes against India's interest like U.S. and China stance towards India's long time enemy Pakistan and South Asian stability (there is always a possibility of U.S. and China coming together to pressurizing India for resolving the Kashmir dispute) (Guihong, 2005, July-December). As Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Tang Jiaxuan has said, "the international community should encourage direct dialogue between India and Pakistan in a more balanced and fair manner, which is the most effective way to lead South Asia toward peace and stability." United States and China seeks to maintain a balance between India and Pakistan so that the Line of control is not changed unilaterally and also by violence (Guihong, 2003, January).

Whether Containment of China is in the Immediate Interests of United States

This section would like to highlight what the American officials had to say vis-à-vis containment of China. Many American officials are not in favor of containing China, instead they have suggested for more engagement with China, given the role that China would play in the twenty-first century. Also the international community demanded close cooperation between U.S. and China rather than confrontationist relations for the betterment of international peace and security. U.S. would need China's help in meeting the twenty-first century challenges. As Mr. William Overholt had commented that, "these two great civilizations must now engage each other-for better or for worse-to a degree that has never before occurred", since 'much of the future of humanity will hinge on whether both sides can approach this engagements with appropriate gravity and earnest efforts to understand one another's real motives'

Former U.S. Secretary of Defence, Mr. William Perry had concisely summed up China's growing presence as one where 'China is fast becoming the world's largest economic power and that combined with its UN permanent five states, its political clout, its nuclear weapons and a modernizing military, make China a player with which the U.S. must work together'. This is followed by the statement of former U.S. Assistant Secretary of defence, Mr. Nye's who had argued for 'deep engagement' with China where 'it is wrong to portray China as an enemy. Nor is there reason to believe that China must be an enemy in the future....enmity would become self-fulfilling prophecy'. This view was again supported by Chief, Secretary of Defence Mr. William Perry when he said that containment was the wrong option, alienating China and damaging America's own security interests. Instead, the U.S. should engage China, not contain it.....we believe that engagement is the best strategy to ensure that as China increases its power, it does so as a responsible member of the international community'.

Then comes the turn of former Secretary of State, Mr. Madeleine Albright who also spelt out the similar view when he say that how 'no nation will play larger role in shaping the course of twenty-first century Asia than China with its huge population and vast territory, China's emergence as a modern, growing economic and military power is a major historical event'. And as such a containment policy for China would be a mistake, would, in fact, guarantee an outcome contrary to American interests. A policy of containment would divide our Asian allies and encourage China to withdraw into narrow nationalism and militarism' (Scott, 2007). From all of this statement and views, it becomes very clear that containment of China cannot be in the immediate interests of United States owing to the need for China in meeting serious challenges in the twenty-first century.

Options Available for India and United States

As far as China is concerned, both India and the United States must be very careful before taking any such steps. Taking a confrontationist approach or the containment approach against China would be counter-productive for both India and the United States. It should be in the interest of both countries that they encourage China rise in positive direction that doesn't pose any threat to both of them rather than in a negative one. This way they can receive maximum benefit out of the expanding relations, economically and militarily (Sekhon, 2007).

Both India and the United States should find out way for cooperation in areas of common international concern where China has a significant role to play given its economic and military prowess. Ensuring international peace and security has been the common major objective of the three countries. Cooperation among the three countries is the key to achieving this very objective. It should be in the interests of India, the United States and China that they avoid getting involved in the strategy of containment of each other country that would have negative implications.

For India, Beijing negative response to the growing relationship with the U.S. should not back-out India from moving further ahead when it is in the national interest of India. At the same time, India should ensure that shadow of India-U.S. relations does not figure in India-China relations. This way India can enjoy closer relations with both United States and China. The level of cooperation may be different due to the level of understanding gained between these countries (Raghavan, 2007, October-December).

Chinese Stance on India-U.S. Relationship

The end of cold war brought a significant shift in the relationship among the states. They are no more bound by the cold war dimension where a close relationship with one superpower does not allow it to have closer relations with the other side. The United States is not the only country with whom India has expanded its relations. It has expanded relations with Russia,

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France, Australia, Japan, etc. India is a rising power in the world which is still in the process of development that needs the support of other countries and in particular to the United States owing to the pre-eminent power. India would never want the growing relations with the United States to come at the cost of its relations with any of the abovementioned countries including China. India would like to have balance relations with each of these countries. For instance, India enjoys a strategic partnership with Russia which has a clash of interest with the United States. However, in some cases, it may tilt in favor of one country depending upon the convergence of interests and a close understanding (Shambaugh, 2009).

China is closely watching the prospering India-U.S. relations with suspicion because it is against the interest of it. China doesn't want to see India become a major great power in the world and the relationship with United States is the key to India achieving this objective. It also believes that the relationship would alter the regional balance of power. Beijing apprehension is fuelled by the growing defence and security relations between India and the United States. Also the military-to-military ties since the last one decade has improved significantly. Both countries have conducted a series number of unprecedented and increasingly substantive combined exercises involving all the three branches of the armed forces. Beijing concerns over a regular India-U.S. joint naval Malabar exercise off the Indian coast is owing to China's growing dependence on oil imports transiting the Indian Ocean.

A Beijing concern over the expanding India-U.S. relations is well placed by Mr. Yang Yunzhong at the Jinan Military Academy when he critically said that, "The rapid developments between US-India relations will exert profound influence on the political and security environment of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. The U.S. now views India as a leading player in South Asian affairs and a rising world power, not just a source of regional problems. Both economically and militarily, India is gathering momentum and this provides the U.S. more diplomatic and strategic angles to play in the region. Among the benefits for the U.S. is the fostering of an anti-China stronghold, south-west of China." Mr. Yang views reflect the fact that China is seriously concerned that the growing relationship has the potential to restrict Beijing influence in Asia-Pacific region.

The landmark ten year defence framework agreement signed recently between India and United States outlining the future areas of cooperation is viewed with suspicion in China. The content of the agreement raised the eyebrow of the Chinese officials. The areas of cooperation includes expand the two-way defence trade, increasing the opportunities for technology transfer and co-production that remain non-starter for many years, expand collaboration in missile defence and last but not the least establishment of a bilateral Defence Procurement and Production Group.

Beijing came out very strongly against the pact and perceives that this step is aimed at U.S. armed forces conducting exercises and training in the Indian

Ocean. This will improve operational capabilities of U.S. forces in the region, widen its influence and obtain important strategic advantages (Chansoria, 2008, July). As another Chinese scholar Mr. Zhang Lijun thinks, 'most importantly, India is the best bet to restrict a future strong China, as per U.S. regional security strategy in Asia'. Also Mr. Zhang Guihong said, "U.S.-India strategic partnership in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, and U.S.-Japan military alliance in East Asia and West Pacific Ocean are the two major concerns for China in the new big power games in the Asia-Pacific region." Such a perceptions only reflects that China is serious worried about the growing India-U.S. relationship (Scott, 2007).

Many India and American Strategic analysts have refuted the claim made by Beijing as not reasonable. As former U.S. Under-Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Juster in his speech in Mumbai on 20 November 2003 has said that, "A strong and vibrant India will be the most effective in advancing our shared objective of promoting peace and stability in Asia, combating global terrorism and stemming the problem of Weapons of Mass Destruction." In addition to this, according to a report prepared by the U.S. based Council on Foreign Relations, "U.S.-India military-to-military cooperation is evolving along lines that the pentagon has established with many non-allied but 'friendly' countries and the policy challenges is to continue this enhanced cooperation and where possible, to enlarge its parameters'(Maharatra, 2005). Chinese claim of the growing India-U.S. relationship as moving in the direction of containment of the former is baseless because this is not the first time United States has come out in support of any country. If United States has expressed its intention to help India become a major power then it is in keeping with the changing world scenario and the role that India is most likely to play for the international peace and security. If U.S. is willing to help India to become a major power then it is not aimed at undermining Beijing role and instead the move would reduce the responsibility of both U.S. and China. What the Chinese should not forget is the fact that despite of having fought a war and a clash of interest, the United States has come out in support of it during the cold war period. United States has provided them with technology and capital support. The U.S. support has played an important part for the Chinese to become a world power. Today when the United States is ready to help India to become a world class power, Beijing is making false claim so that India does not get the benefit of the relationship. Such a Chinese selfish claim should not dissuade India from engaging closely with United States the sole super power in the world. India stands at the threshold of huge strategic gain from this relationship (Subrahmanyam, 2005).

It was during his visit to New Delhi in March 2008, U.S. Defence Secretary Mr. Gates made it very clear in the context of the growing military-to-military ties that, "I don't see our improving military relationship in this region in the context of any other country, including China. When you look at the kinds of activities that we are engaged in and the kind of exercises that we conduct...these expanding relationships don't necessarily have to be directed against anybody" (Inderfurth, 2008). Also that United States is not

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the only country with whom India engage in a joint military exercises. India also conducts regular naval exercises with IOR and Southeast Asian navies. What China should not forget is that it was in the year 2004, India held its second joint exercise with its People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). The exercise provided an opportunity for the two Asian giants not only to assess one another, but also to extend a hand of rapprochement in the face of existing circumstances that cause the Chinese to feel encircled by the United States (Ghosh, 2004, January 18-20).

Factors That May Take India Closer to United States

Containment of China is not in the immediate interests of neither India nor the United States, but there are certain factors that may propel India to move closer to engaging the United States in a way that has never experienced before. India and United States share deep and serious concern about the rising Chinese military power. For the United States, China remains the only regional power that has the potential to seriously challenge or deny the U.S. role in Eurasia. At the same time, strategically India is also seriously concerned about the Chinese illegal military arms and equipment rapprochement with Pakistan that has the potential to threaten India's security and also undermine India's ambitions to play a key role in Asian continent. According to a Ministry of Defence annual report 2008-09, "the possibility of enhancing connectivity with Pakistan through the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, illegally occupied by China and Pakistan, and with other countries, will also have direct military implications for India." The report further added that, "Beijing White Paper on National in 2008 stated objective of developing strategic missile and space-based assets, rapidly enhance its blue-water Navy and systematically upgrade infrastructure, reconnaissance and surveillance and operational capabilities in border areas 'will have an effect on the overall military environment' in the neighbourhood India" (Annual Report, 2008-09). The more the China have a closer relations with Pakistan, the rationale will be for India to enjoy closer relations with the United States.

These days, Beijing is increasingly making an effort to influence India's neighborhood for its long-term benefits. These include the development of the Gwadar Port off the Baluchistan coast, closer military ties with Myanmar and also its developmental projects in Bangladesh. These are viewed with suspicion in India (Ollapally, 2009). India is strategically concerned about the 'string of pearls' strategy employed by China to extending its areas of influence very close to India's border. These include Pakistan in the north-west, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar in the north-east, and Maldives and Srilanka in the South. India's inimical relations with both China and Pakistan have given way to the closer cooperation between the latter two countries. Also their common interests of not wanting to see India become a major power have played a significant part. Pakistan got maximum benefit out of this. India is seriously concerned about China providing arms and equipments needs to Pakistan that has nothing to do with its security

concerns. They have transferred to Pakistan weapons designs and nuclear fissile material.

China's policy of equipping Pakistan serves dual purposes- one is that it helps Pakistan to maintain balance with arch rival India, thereby challenging India's conventional military strength and secondly, it pressurises India from taking any such steps that is not in favor of China. This way arms supply relationship between China and Pakistan has serious negative implications to India. These developments have compelled many strategic analysts in India to view that Beijing has a continuous and an uninterrupted support to Pakistan as a policy of encirclement of India. Also it seeks to ensure that Beijing successfully proceeds with its efforts to achieve its objective and delay India's ability to challenge China. India's suspicions were further aggravated when China developed a naval base in Gwadar in Karachi. Given this posture, Chinese claim of India-U.S. defence cooperation directing towards them is not justified. The recent Chinese expansion should not become an offshoot to the growing India-U.S. defence and security ties that holds the key to international peace and security. But the Chinese move would only destabilise the Asian security rather than bringing stability to the region (Kak, 2006, Monsoon and Chansoria, 2008, July) and gain more and more weights in the international system.

China's anti-Indian stand is very well reflected in the recently concluded nuclear deal with Pakistan. Under the deal, China would be lending Pakistan with \$207 million to buy two more reactors- Chasma-3 and Chasma-4. This deal is directed toward the successful conclusion of India-U.S. civil nuclear deal to show that if United States can offer nuclear deal to India then why cannot we offer to our close ally, no matter whether it goes against the wish of the international community and in particular to India. When United States under the leadership of former President Mr. George W. Bush has out rightly rejected Pakistan demand for a nuclear deal, China has come out in support of its long time close allies Pakistan for establishing two more reactors at the Chasma atomic complex in Punjab. This step is aimed at maintaining a nuclear parity between India and Pakistan and also to ensure that India is engaged in a tussle with Pakistan that would restrict New Delhi from moving ahead and shift its focus from China (Nandan, 2010, July 16).

However, India is most unlikely to adopt a confrontationist stand against its Asian giants, China owing to the fact that it would keep the options alive of closely engaging with all the major powers of the world, which it perceives is the key to it becoming a major power in the world.

Long-Term Implications of the Containment Strategy

Any move directed at the containment of the China must first assess the short-term and the long-term implications to the international security. The triangular relationship between India, the United States and China is the key to international peace, security and stability. This is reflected in what former U.S. President George W. Bush had said after meeting Chinese counterpart

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Mr. Hu Jintao that “both the USA and China share extensive common strategic interests under the new international circumstances. A good U.S.-China relationship is of strategic importance to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large. Both the nations agree to address the bilateral relationship from a strategic and long-term perspective and to move forward for development of constructive and cooperative China-U.S. relationship in the 21st century.”

For the U.S., relationship with China is important given its economic and military capability, to meet the twenty-first century challenges. It includes fighting terrorism, ensuring international peace and security. The U.S. would need the support of China in meeting the challenges posed by the nuclear programmes of North Korea and Iran (Rajan, 2007). If the growing relationship is really aimed at hedging China then there is no doubt that it would have its implications on the international security. The responsibility of the security and safety of the international community is before them given their convergence of interest on various security challenges facing the world. If the responsible state are engaged in the containment of each other for the sake of their interests rather than cooperating each other in eradicating such problems then what to say about the international peace and security.

The containment strategy would give way to counter containment that would be highly disastrous and the objective of achieving the regional and global security would be under threat. As former U.S. Defence Secretary of Defence, Mr. William J. Perry and Assistant Secretary of Defence, Mr. Ashton B. Carter has said that, “Hedging is contagious....and hedging can beget more hedging in a dangerous spiral” (Shambaugh, 2009).

South Asian security and stability would be seriously undermined by adopting containment strategy. As such this step would only help to deepen the ongoing defence and strategic ties between Pakistan and China with whom India does not share very close relations. This is reflected from the fact that unlike United States, China has continued to engage in close relations with Pakistan even after the end of cold war. This would only mean that India is ready to face a two-pronged problem directing from both east and west location. And also the possibility of resolving the border problems would be under threat (Guihong, 2003, January).

Strategic Areas of Cooperation between India, United States and China

The international community would benefit from the strategic cooperation between India, China and the United States on wide range of regional and global issues. These include fighting terrorism, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, peace keeping operations, maritime security, security of the sea lanes of communication, climate change, etc. If there are areas of divergences among these countries, there are also areas of convergences that are most likely to bring these countries together. Really,

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the changing international security environment requires cooperation between these three countries rather than confronting each other. The relationship among these countries holds the key to international peace and security.

Former U.S. President Mr. George W. Bush has expressed optimism about the prospects for the major powers avoiding conflict. This was indicated very clearly in the Administration 2002 National Security Strategy report that, "today the international community has the best chance since the rise of the nation-state in the seventeenth century to build a world where great powers compete in peace instead of continually prepare for war. Today the world's great powers find us on the same side - united by common dangers of terrorist violence and chaos." This is followed by what former U.S. Ambassador Mr. Richard Haass, Director of Policy Planning in the State Department during the Bush tenure has said in 2002 that, 'war between the great powers is almost unthinkable'. Moreover, U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld has noted in June 2004 that 'future dangers will less likely be from battle between great powers, and more likely from enemies that work in small cells, that are fluid and strike without warning anywhere, anytime- enemies that have access to increasingly formidable technology and weapons'. These views reflect the need for constant cooperation among the major powers that holds the key to international peace and security. They should stop projecting each other as a threat and instead come together to finding ways on how to tackle the challenges facing them and the world.

If the United States today wants to have broader relations with both India and China that holds the key to international peace and security. Chinese leaders are also eager to work closely together with United States and India. According to the Chinese officials and policy advisers, the Chinese leadership has concluded that the only China, as a rising power, can avoid conflict with the dominant power, the U.S. is not only to eschew challenging the current hegemon but also to forge a close partnership with it. Also the Chinese leaders have assured the U.S. officials that it does not seek to reduce or eliminate the US presence, including military, in the Asia Pacific region and that China wants to cooperate with the U.S. on a wide range of issues of strategic importance to both countries (Garrett, 2006, August). Therefore, as the year rolls by there will be need for more and more cooperation among the major power countries on the global challenges facing the international community.

Concluding Remarks

India, United States and China have both common and divergent interests that would make it quite difficult for the first two countries to adopt containment strategy against the third one. There may be cases in future where India and China would come together against the United States particularly when it adopts a policy that is strictly unilateral or interventionist. And also there is a possibility of the United States and China coming

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together to pressurizing India on nuclear issue and on Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. This is further accentuated by the fact that there has been a significant thaw in the relationship between the three countries after the cold war end. This is not to say that there will not be any conflict between the three countries (Harding, 2004).

The growing relationship between India and the United States does not mean India would come under the U.S. pressure to agreeing to hedging China with whom India had a border problem that remain unresolved for the last more than four decades. Also India had a share of common interests with China on many aspects. India has in the past resisted the U.S. attempt to take the former in its side to pressuring China. For instance India express unwillingness to the United States proposal of setting up a Center for Asian Democracy and vote against Beijing or at least abstain on China's human rights record at the UN Commission on Human Rights (Mohan, 2007, Summer).

If on the one side India has resisted the U.S. pressure to come with it against China but on the other side there is always a possibility of U.S.-China cooperation in pressuring India vis-à-vis South Asian security and signing the NPT and CTBT. India has very good reason as to why it cannot move along with the United States to contain China. After the 1998 exposition of nuclear capability by India and Pakistan, United States and China under the leadership of President Bill Clinton and President Mr. Jiang Zemin respectively, together issued a joint statement stressing the need for both countries to jointly tackling the security situation in South Asia. U.S. President Bill Clinton urged Beijing to play a bigger role in ensuring the peace and security in the South Asian region (Matto, 1999).

Any negative approach on the part of India and United States vis-à-vis China would have regional and global implications. Therefore, it is important that India and United States pursue a moderate and subtle approach toward China that sends a positive message and also that it satisfy the interests of the two largest democracies, India and Unites States (Ang, 2004).

India and the United States instead of adopting a hedging strategy must find out ways of strategic cooperation with China. U.S. relations with India and China are much better than ever before in the past that today they have a broader interaction on regional and global issues. On the other hand India's relation with China is also on the upswing in recent years. Therefore a stable and prosperous relation between the U.S. and China should be in the interests of India. Otherwise, India would face a difficult situation of having to choose sides among the two countries in a conflict that would take India in an advantageous situation (Shambough, 2009). It is very much important for India that it keep the options alive for its closer engagement with other countries of the world that would serve its interests.

End Notes

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