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India-US-Pakistan Strategic Relations

Abstract

The attacks of 9/11 caused US to attack Afghanistan. Indian engagement in Afghan issue has serious consequences on the region particularly on Pakistan. The present Indo-US entente is considered as “irreversible” and is known as “Strategic Partnership”. Both states took number of steps leading them to further develop this partnership including economic, trade, space, nuclear technology, missile technology, and defense cooperation. The security environment of South Asia, on the other hand, has always been blemished with traditional rivalry between the major states of the region, Pakistan and India since their inception. The nature of mutual relations of both of these states determine the security environment of the region. The rise of one of them as a regional power creates apprehensions for the other and is also meant to be the destabilization of the region. In this scenario, India US cooperation particularly in high-tech defense equipment has been the cause of anxieties in Pakistan. This paper tries to review the Indo-US-Pakistan strategic ties and its implications on Pakistan.

Keywords: India, Pakistan, USA, strategic relations, security environment

Introduction

The terrible incident having far reaching effects on international scenario took place on September 11, 2001, when Pentagon and World Trade Centre, two symbols of US military and economic powers were hit by the severe terrorist attacks. The Jihadi Terrorist organization, Al-Qaeda was blamed. “Nineteen terrorists of this organization”, it is said “hijacked four passenger planes and crashed them into the twin towers in the New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia and a field near Shanksille, Pennsylvania. The Twin Towers warped killing thousands of people” (Hussain, 2010).

Whole of the world was actually shocked at this utmost inhuman activity and resultantly the western countries decided, as a response to “launch a war on Terror to hunt out individuals responsible for this tragic happening” (Hassain, 2010). Osama bin Laden the founding member of Al Qaeda was considered the “mastermind” behind the incident. He also claimed the responsibility who later took shelter in Afghanistan therefore, US forces launched a war in Afghanistan. “The US attack on Afghanistan”, says Hussain “was projected as a legitimate act of self-defense to defeat Al-Qaeda and to over throw the Taliban government

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which was accused of providing sanctuary to Al-Qaeda” (Hussain, 2010: 9). Concluding the Post 9/11 International Scenario ‘Javid Hussain’ writes: “The post 9/11 international scenario is undergoing a gradual but definite transformation. While the US by far remains the most powerful nation in the world militarily, economically and culturally, its ‘unipolar moment’” has already passed. It is facing growing challenges from rising powers in different parts of the world, the most important being China. The international trend is, therefore from a unipolar to a multi-polar world in which the US, China, Japan, EU, Russia, India, Brazil, Mexico, ASEAN, South Korea, Turkey, Australia, South Africa and Nigeria will play a dominant role in international affairs. The rise of China and India will also transform the strategic scene in Asia” (Hussain: 11-12). Ever rising economic growth of China is an alarming threat for America. Moreover, China needs steady, reliable and cheap energy supplies while peace and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan would ensure faster, stable and easier access to Eurasian energy resources. However, the race to access and capture energy has been proved to be one of the major reasons for growing terrorism and instability in Pakistan and Afghanistan and one of the aims of the ‘war on terror’ baloney could be to obstruct energy supplies to the Asian economic giants and discourage any efforts for cooperation and integration in Asia. This war is considered the war of deception and the intelligence operatives of several countries pursue their own agendas through violent means and where all sides could be sponsoring terrorist groups to fight proxy wars on their behalf. US is not only scared of China as a rising economic competitor, but China as a rising economic super power

Probably, for this very reason, US wants to create a new Cold war era by strengthening India in face of China to compete China economically, politically and even militarily because a mini super power like India is more in favor and benefit of America than a rising super power like China. Hussain is of the view:

“The US is deeply concerned about the growing economic and military power of China which can pose a challenge to it on the Asian mainland within the next two decades and globally in the second half of the 21st century. It is, therefore pursuing a well-calculated policy of containing China through building up India as a counterweight, strengthening its alliances with South Korea, Japan and Australia, and developing its relations with the ASEAN. The recently signed Indo – US agreement for cooperation in civilian nuclear technology despite the fact that India delivered a serious blow to the international nuclear nonproliferation regime through its nuclear explosions of 1988 was motivated by the US desire to build up India as a major world power of the 21st century” (2010: 6).

India-an Aspiring Hegemon

India is the biggest country of South Asia with reference to her population, area and resources for having 78% of the area, 73% of the population and 77% of GDP. She has a fast developing economy and her leadership has set a national target to make India an advanced country by 2020 AD. It is due to many reasons particularly her educational system, technology, a wide railway system, consistency of political system as well as a huge and well organized army,

equipped with the latest Russian and American weaponry etc. “Indian economy” writes Riaz Ahmad Chaudhry, “had been as fast as Chinas and other developed states (Chaudhry, 2010: 9). She has also joined the Atomic Club due to two nuclear explosions in Pokhran (Rajasthan) in 1974 AD and 1999 AD. She has also signed a Civil Nuclear deal with America and trying to sign such deals with Russia, France and even “to further enhance her position on international level”, writes Dr. Tamimi, “India has very skillfully determined her objectives at international level, that is to make her a big power and for the same objective she is declaredly trying to get a permanent seat in the Security Council of UNO, along with Veto power like other five world powers” (Tamimi, 2010: VII).

However, America and its European partners have decided to assign India as a regional supervising policeman to counter China as well as to keep watch on different geographical units by strengthening and making her a (mini super) power for small countries of the region. This whole action is now attractively, “wrapped in a beautiful diplomatic term of “strategic partnership”. On the other hand, India has also determined her objectives of international level, that is to become a big power and for the same objective she is declaredly trying to get a permanent seat in the Security Council of UNO, along with veto power like other five world powers. “The friendship treaty with Russia”, says Dr. Tamimi, “on one hand and strategic relations with America on the other hand are like a double share market that may be called a policy to pressurize People’s Republic of China” (2010: vii).

India as a big country has established her relations with small neighboring countries filled with anxiety and tension or even disputes instead of balanced relations. The small neighboring countries feel a threat to their internal security and solidarity due to her huge geographical figure.

Indo-US Strategic Ties

From the very beginning, the US-India relations had been unfriendly because India became an ally of USSR. This circumstances remained to be continued for almost fifty years of ‘Cold War’. However, the cold situation went through a gradual change in the post – Cold War era and both USA and India started cooperating in various fields including industry, agriculture, space technology and nuclear energy. Aggressive strategic relations between US and India based on acrimony and mistrust went through a significant change when Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state visited India in March, 2005. “There remain significant, albeit surmountable, difference between the two states, particularly regarding India’s reluctance to support the US operation in Iraq and its desire to develop every link with Iran and US concerns about India’s reluctance to conform to the NPT and CTBT; agreements, it should be noted, that India never agreed to sign in the first place” (Ganguly, Shoup & Scobell, 2006: 1). “The main emphasis”, write Mussarat Jabeen and Ishtiaq Ahmed, “was civilian nuclear cooperation. On July 18, 2005, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh paid a visit to the US and signed a joint agreement with President Bush. This visit was reciprocal and President Bush was in India in March 2006” (2011:411). The conclusion of these bilateral visits was that “US was willing to help India to become a major power in

the 21st century” and American cooperation for this objective was assured (Balachandra, 2005: 2002). However, the reasons behind the growing US-India strategic relations are the American realization of Indian emergence as a key regional player in swift economic growth which is also backed by its military strength like extension of its blue water navy. India’s fear of China is also shared by US who wanted to present India as counter weight to China to safeguard US interest in the region. Indian offer of all her support after 9/11 against war on terrorism is also considered important in such a difficult situation in Afghanistan and even after war the building up of infrastructure of war ragged country. Moreover, India estimated to access US and European markets for its goods and concession.

Although there are some current factors working behind the improvement of US-India relationship but China factor is the most significant and fundamental among them. “In many respects” writes Shoup and Ganguly, “The India-US relationship is evolving in response of the changing role of India as a regional power (and potential counterweight to China), the growth of India’s economy and its attendant impact on US interest in such varied realms are energy policy planning and foreign trade, and Washington’s interest in continued stability in the subcontinent in light of its stated objective in the war on terrorism” (Chaudhry: 2010). The authors also note that “Recent improvement in Indo-US relations have largely been based on defense policy cooperation. This is not a trivial matter as a meaningful bilateral relation must have a sound footing in defense related issues” (Chaudhry, 2010: 4). After attaining the US status of sole super power of the world, China evolved as a problem for USA. However, India did not lag behind. “India’s nuclear programs must be analyzed as both a consequence of its own border regional security interests, particularly as they pertain to China, and also as a result of its burgeoning energy needs”. Such a rapid economic growth of India required equally rapid increase in energy availability. India’s rapid rate of economic expansion required an attendant increase in energy availability. This need for energy reserves is a powerful motivator behind New Delhi’s close relations with Iran, a state whose vast reserves of oil and natural gas are viewed as a viable source of power of India’s growing economy” (Chaudhry: 2010).

Indo-U.S. Defense Relations

Initially, India had to face severe US apprehensions on her nuclear program and “Indo-US Nuclear relations of last six decades saw fundamental difference. This conflicting situation jeopardized the bilateral relations for three decades” (Jabeen & Ahmed, 2011: 111) now the focus of Indo-U.S. ties is civilian nuclear cooperation. “The 10-years Defense framework agreement was signed for mutual cooperation in different areas of security. Agreed minutes were already signed in 1995” (<http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/ipr062805>).

Five permanent members of the UN Security Council were legalized nuclear powers under NPT, because they achieved nuclear capability before 1967. NPT does not allow any country of the world to become a nuclear state. “Article 9 of the Treaty”, says Epstein “provided the definition of NWS as one which had

conducted nuclear tests and built nuclear weapons before January 1, 1967 and others were defined as non-nuclear weapons states as they did not detonate nuclear devices" (1976: V.C.) Trivedi calls it "global nuclear apartheid" because according to it "India remained an 'underdog' in nuclear order" (Ibrahim 2007: 6). "This discrimination", opine Jabeen and Ahmed, "was alarming for India, which was wrestling to keep its nuclear option open" (413). The NPT was enforced in 1970 and India, Pakistan, Israel and Cuba refused to sign CTBT (Comprehension Test Ban Treatises), on the other hand, "globally constrain legal mechanisms for solving down and eventually halting the increase in nuclear weapons" (Jabeen & Ahmed, 2011: 413). The NPT was considered as plan to dishearten innate resentment in nuclear arena. However, "The NPT made no efforts to discourage the state to get nuclear weapons as source of prestige or power but froze the nuclear status quo effectively" (Ibrahim, 2007: 7). For the very same reason India denied to sign NPT after detonating her first plutonium device; Pokhran I in Rajasthan desert and being sixth nuclear state in the world. "After this explosion, Indira showed her global approach to nuclear disarmament and repeated its rejection of the NPT on the ground that it was discriminatory" (2004: 14). On the other hand, India incessantly advanced in her missile capability for the deployment of nuclear weapons. The US did not like this progression and India had to face US nuclear sanctions which damaged Indian nuclear program.

The Indian missile and nuclear programs were not only an intimidation for regional security but it was also a danger signal for American military installation in Diego Guracia. The rage of Agni – III ballistic missile fired on February 2010 was 3, 500 km. that could carry a payload of 1.5 tones. "The Director-General of Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) and Scientific Adviser to Defence Minister Dr. V.K Saraswat called the test of Agni-III 'a fantastic launch and a hat-trick'. He added: 'It shows the development of the missile's design and the quality of its systems because we have had three successes in a row without any mark. The flight gave us the full range and pinpoint accuracy. The missile traveled accurately its entire range to its last decimal place as we had planned'" (Policy Reports, Feb, 2010).

The nuclear test conducted by both India and Pakistan; two South Asian states in May 1998 made very critical situation. However Indian Foreign Minister tried to stabilize the situation during his stay in Washington by pleading the case of India then a return visit of Clinton to India was considered to be dawn of new era in Indo-US relation. Eight rounds of discussions between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott in different countries provided a sound base for new relations.

U.S. tilt towards India has made India a potentially important power for U.S. and India's hegemonic aspirations has made regional security in general and Pakistan's security particularly much more vulnerable. Pakistan's policies, in these circumstances have always been concentrating on to counter Indian threats, deter against any sort of aggression and even fight if needed. In order to address India's aggressive designs, Pakistan tries to address the problem adopting two methods; by making alliances with major world powers to augment defense capability, and

from the 1970s onward, nuclear deterrence to offset India's conventional superiority that has deteriorated the regional balance of power.

Areas of Convergence and Interests between India and U.S.

Both India and the Defence department of United States had been trying to find out some other areas for the nuclear program to make their relation better and more useful. Therefore, both the countries were successful to explore certain areas of convergence of interests at political and strategic levels that supported in constructing a strategic partnership for gaining certain goals. These are:

- “The United State has vital strategic interests in the world's largest reserves of energy lying in the Middle East, Gulf region and South Asia. India occupies the strategic location linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- Other common value is ‘the freedom of the high seas’ and more specifically the sea-lanes emanating from the Hormuz Straits and branch out in the West and East. The US military presence in this area has been strengthened by occupying the base facilities, particularly in South Asia.
- Chinese military power in the Asia Pacific is a challenge to the US dominance. This region has the largest reserves of energy in the world. India also perceives China as a security threat to its vital interests because it is becoming a more powerful by the passage of time with its preponderance of nuclear weapons and military might. Chinese assistance in missile development has strengthened Pakistan in South Asia.
- In international relations, geo-economic and geo-strategic considerations are very crucial and partnerships in enhance the strength of the nations. The US and Indian strategic partnership is inevitable as it is increasing relations and economic interests. For India, the US provides important, dynamic and strategically rich options to counter the emerging threats in the region” (Kapilia, 2006).

Moreover, Indo-US strategic partnerships are directed against Pakistan with ulterior designs and hence a huge threat to Pakistan's security.

India-Pakistan Strategic Rivalry

The security environment of South Asia has always been characterized by the traditional rivalry between Pakistan and India; the key states in the region. India and Pakistan relations have passed through many crises and conflicts that have added in flux between India-Pakistan ties. Pakistan has concentrating her defenses on eastern frontier but since India is augmenting her presence at the western front, Pakistan has to reevaluate and restructure her military policy. Aggressive India on east, pro-India Afghanistan on western boundary and Indian intelligence network in Afghanistan are posturing security threat. For Pakistan, there is grave

competition, even risks from other regional actors already extant in Afghanistan, one of them is India. Followings are some major issues that have destabilized the strategic balance of the region:

Kashmir Issue

Pakistan had been a main problem for India since their inception as India considers the creation of Pakistan amounts to hack mother India to pieces. Countering Pakistan's stand on Kashmir and tilting balance of power in south Asia have been the corner-stone of Indian strategic policies. To India the existence of Pakistan is the main impediment in her solidarity and achieving her national goals of being a super power and to get a permanent seat in the Security Council of UNO with veto power. But it is impossible until India resolves her controversies with Pakistan. For this reason, many negotiations have been set but they bore no fruit. Pakistan in technical complications as she did in Indus Water Treaty. However, the major clash of all is on Kashmir issue.

At the time of partition of India, Kashmir was considered to be included in Pakistan due to its geo-strategic, religious, civilizational and cultural positions. 90 percent Muslim population of Kashmir was also in favor of Pakistan. On October 27, 1947, Mountbatten ordered Indian force to enter Kashmir and thus India made Kashmir her colony. Since that day Kashmiris are facing humiliating atrocities of the Indian. India tried to make this imperialistic occupation perpetually by force instead of trying to win the hearts and minds of the people. Pakistan demanded the extraction of Indian forces from Kashmir and plebiscite under the joint control of both the governments but India did not agree. The Kashmiris retaliated with the moral and military help of Pakistan. When the Indian advance met with reverses, she went to the Security Council on January 1, 1948. The Security Council appointed the United Nations Commissions for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate the factors and mediate between them on January 20, 1948.

Water Issue between India and Pakistan

India wants to choke Pakistan by usurping water supplies that rightfully belong to Pakistan under Indus Water Treaty of 1960. "Under the treaty, Pakistan was awarded exclusive rights to Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers. The treaty proved uninterrupted water supply from India for ten years and in the meantime World Bank provided loans to build three dams – Warsak, Mangla and Terbela. Eight link canal and five barrages were also built under the treaty" (*Policy Report*, Nov 2009: 12). The violation of this treaty by India has caused water shortage in Pakistan.

"India has started construction of the 1,030MW Basrur Multipower project, 1,200 MW Sialkot dam and 1,000MW Pakot Sul dam on Chenab after the completion of the Baglihar Hydropower project. It had not provided any technical information about the new dams to Pakistan as required under the Indus Water Treaty. India is not only building projects on Chenab but was also building 240MW Uri Power Project and 330MW Kishan Ganga Power Project on the Jhelum River. India plans to build a 21-Kilometer-long tunnel for diversion of the Neelum, Jhelum and the

Kishan Gunga water Project, which threatened Pakistan 's 930 MW Neelum – Jhelum Project. India is also using more than its permitted water share through Ranber and Partab canals” (Chaudhry, 2010: 173-74).

Among the recent issues are two main issues: Indo–Afghan nexus and Indian interference in Baluchistan.

Indian Activities in Afghanistan

Sadly, enough India is ever busy in subversive activities in Afghanistan against Pakistan, a front line ally, in spite of much sacrifice in war on terror. To Riaz Ahmad Chaudhry:

“Pakistan is frontline ally of the US in war on terror still the US never snubs India who is buy in subversive activities against Pakistan and that too using Afghan soil. It depicts India enjoys full US support and its patronage for doing the same. Without American patronage, it is impossible for any country to make its own infrastructure in Afghanistan and that too at time when Afghanistan is under American control. Indian agencies have been running training camps in Afghanistan” (2010: 128). However, Pakistan has clearly and severely warned to check their activities. Gen. Kayani has clearly warned that: “Pakistan will never accept such move which permits India to train Afghan national army... and are continuously sending their lots to Pakistan for different assigned tasks i.e. bombs blasts, suicidal attack and other activities to destabilize Pakistan by creating uncertainty among the masses, crushing economy and spoiling the infrastructure of the country to declare it as a failed state. To fulfill all the above mentioned designs, India is looking forward to have some sort of permanent role in Afghanistan to get its vested agenda to be met by destabilizing Pakistan and establish it as the only power which can see into its eyes and possesses the strategic and military strength to wipe of Indian designs against Pakistan” (Chaudhry: 2010).

Indian Interference in Baluchistan

The province of Baluchistan which is prolific in material and significant strategically is now extremely involved in active militancy that is worsening its security situation day by day. Among many others two main problems have become very serious: target killings and missing persons. It is very regretful that India is also plotting behind these problems on the incitement of America and Israel. All the three countries want to check China's influence in Baluchistan as well to use this region for various vicious objectives through providing funds, arms and training to the insurgents. According to a news reporter, “A few weeks ago more than one hundred Pakistani Baloch dissidents were sent to Indian consulate located in Kandahar for six months training” (www.dawn.net/ddarnew.asp?id5669). Thus these forces are promoting terrorism, insurgency and instability in Baluchistan.

Conclusion

An analysis of India-United States strategic partnership suggests that it will have a lot of implications for Pakistan. According to the national agenda, India is permanently and continuously proceeding and trying hard to become a regional and international power and a permanent member of Security Council with veto power. She is showing progress on military, technological advancement and economic front and proceeding with national spirit in the field of education and organizing her institutions and striving for potential hunt and then patronizing it. Continuity in their judiciary, constitution, parliament and democracy have helped her to get better and progress on external and foreign fronts. She is vigilant and ever ready in her foreign policy to achieve her national targets. India and Pakistan, in order to attain strategic peace in the region should pay their consideration to their inner problems as well as try to address and resolve their mutual disputes by substantial, useful and fruitful bilateral talks. In this way, both the countries can achieve their goals.

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