

NEO-DYNAMICS OF INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN

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Abstract

In the post-Cold War era, India and the United States forged a strategic partnership and developed a complex interdependence in the form of civil nuclear deal, missile defence cooperation and space cooperation. By using the theoretical framework of realism especially offensive realism and complex interdependence, the study explains the factors that led to the evolution of Indo-US strategic partnership and consolidation of their relations into a comprehensive strategic partnership. The main argument of the study is that Indo-US strategic partnership is based on offensive realism which has led to develop India as hegemonic and aggressive power. The study finds out that the main purpose of the US strategic partnership with India is to contain the rise of China and maintain its primacy by making India as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific region. However, contrary to United States objectives, it has negatively affected the regional security by affecting balance of power in favour of India vis-à-vis Pakistan. Pakistan is facing multifarious challenges due to Indian aggressive policies towards Kashmir, deadlock in bilateral talks and challenges of hybrid warfare. The study recommends that Pakistan should carefully design its strategy to counter Indian designs by developing cordial relations with the US.

Keywords: India, United States, Strategic Partnership, Civil Nuclear Deal, Missile Defence Cooperation, Pakistan.

Introduction

The United States has considered India a 'linchpin' in a new military strategy focussed on Asia.¹ In this context, the US new strategy forges strategic partnership with India based on two kinds of objectives. First, to make India in a strong defensive position vis-à-vis China. Second, the US has approached by viewing China as a revisionist power which can be balanced by its strategic partnership with India.² For Pakistan, the strategic partnership between the US and India has made Pakistan less relevant in the US foreign policy and more gap of balance of power between India and Pakistan. Pakistan now has faced the US economic and military support unrealistically. The US-India strategic partnership has pushed Pakistan and

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China closely cooperating where China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a prime example.³ Against this backdrop, the strategic partnership which has emerged a new archetype of alignment and alternative to alliance system pushed the US policy makers by building close strategic interdependence with India in the post-Cold War era. The nature of the US and India strategic interdependence includes promoting global security, stability, trade, connectivity joint effort for promoting common and shared interest in the Indo-Pacific region. For this purpose, the foundation of Indo-US strategic partnership was laid down by the US President George W. Bush which was consolidated in key areas by concluding civilian nuclear deal, missile defence cooperation and the addition of neo-dynamics signed in the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) in January 2004.⁴

The US missile defence program seeks to elevate India's missile capability to the same status as the America's allies in North Atlantic Organization (NATO). Experts have noted that the US willingness in Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) agreement with India impacts the South Asian strategic stability.⁵ BMD cooperation has been considered by the Obama administration to manipulate the growing threats faced by the US in Asia such as from Iran and China. Obama expressed at Prague to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons and to proceed to cost-effective and proven system of missile defence.⁶ The US BMD programme would create offense-defence arms race in Asia.⁷ In the case of India, the US has recognised its missile programme. India would adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) without giving up its missile program like China and Russia. India's test-firing of Agni-III in July 2008 was reacted by the US unlike the past. According to the experts, the US' missile cooperation is another strategic step to counterweight Beijing influence in the region.⁸ India would be in better position with the US cooperation to counter against the burgeoning Chinese missile might.⁹ India after decades in background in the US foreign policy has elevated India to the stature of enduring global partner in the 21st century. Consequently, India has become more aggressive and harder in its attitude towards its close neighbours such as Pakistan.

The current situation needs to reconsider the US courtship with India which has greatly affected Pakistan in many areas. This study has categorized the current challenges for Pakistan due to the addition of neo-dynamics in many sections. First, the study has advanced theory of complex interdependence which has explained US increasing cooperation in multilateral avenues such as defence, economic and social cooperation in one hand, and on the other hand, theory of realism has guided the current study to explain the partnership objective such as making India a strong defender in the form of security linchpin in the post-Cold War era. Second, the paper has explained the concept and factors shaping strategic partnership. Third, the study

has highlighted the two states areas of cooperation. Fourth, the paper has examined the effects of neo-dynamics of Indo-US strategic partnership such as India's mounting aggression in Indian occupied Kashmir where the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir through Article-370 ended on August 5, 2019, deadlocks in bilateral talks and evidence of India's involvement both at the regional and international platforms through hybrid warfare.¹⁰

Theoretical Context

Many theories such as Liberalism and Realism which have an explanatory power by highlighting what lies at the core is the maximum extraction of self-interests, which mainly cater to the strategic, political, economic and security domains. An overlapping may take bilateralism to a friendly and cooperative stature while if the operation is an emblem of disjoint sets, there will be animosity. As Joseph Nye's theoretical interpretation of interdependency and its complex and intricate channels, are applicable to Indo-US strategic cooperation and can be well translated into the current study. The multi-dimensional cooperation ranging from cultural exchanges to strategic hues has an impact that sets all the components of the modus operandi of the state that is likely to boost the development in the context of India and the US evolving courtship, in all the right directions. Nevertheless in the literature on the context of bilateralism of India and the US, has been analysed in contours, that only discuss the synapses and the fruits of it, but simultaneously the other side of the coin is indeed is the rise of China which has made the US to think it is a revisionist power within the purview of its massive projection of military and economic power in Asia and beyond.¹¹ This has created in the US policy makers the fears being replacing the American hegemonic position soon or later and this situation can be well explained by theory of Realism.

Experts have maintained the view that strategic partnership entails loose form of alignment between the two states. This non-binding nature makes the relations either comprehensive partnership or comprehensive strategic partnership. It is acknowledged that strategic partnership has been employed as an instrument of grand strategy by state in the post-Cold War period by evaluating this notion through both offensive and defensive realism. According to Sean Kay, a new type of post-Cold War international relations has arisen. States have achieved their dual goals of predominance and balance via this structure. For other nations, primacy may be used for global politics in support of multipolarity in the international system rather than maintaining unipolar supremacy and administration. Diplomats who can help them through the rough edges of international politics may also use it as a rhetorical weapon. Due to the term's vagueness, policy experts in the US prefer the rhetoric and operational qualities. The significance of certain strategic alliances

sets them apart from others. Some have a definite purpose, while others are hazier in their structure. Foreign policy alliances have been affected by strategic partnerships. United States involvement in different programmes including alliances, reassurance-based cooperation, controlled power decline, justifiable cooperation and eventually balancing has been made possible by its foreign policy arrangements. To retain its position as the world's preeminent power, the US employs a strategy known as "balancing".¹² According to realists, governments use strategic cooperation to preserve the balance of power in international affairs.

Indo-US Strategic Partnership

The "cold peace" and "comrades at odds" have been used to define the relationship between the world's two major democracies.¹³ The Indo-US strategic alliance has been studied from many different perspectives by eminent experts. During the Cold War, for example, New Delhi and Washington had a problematic bilateral relationship, which prevented strategic alliance from developing. Scholars have discovered that the US and Indian strategies on limiting communism across Asia and beyond were at conflict. Other problems that prevented an alliance from being formed during the Cold Conflict period were the US' personal disdain for India, Pakistan's status as a strategic ally of the US and other wars and crises including the Korean and Hungarian crises as well as the Vietnam war. Other strategic analysts, on the other hand, have underlined that the geostrategic and geopolitical factors have transformed India's domestic and foreign policies, as well as those of the US, since the fall of the former Soviet Union. Arthur Rubinoff claims that events such as the fall of the Soviet Union, India's rise to neoliberalism, and the 1998 nuclear tests by both India and Pakistan have not changed the US strategy of prejudice towards Asia and especially India.¹⁴ When the Cold War pattern of alliances was crumbling and new forms of alliances were forming in Asia, the relationship between India and the United States was no longer alienated. To preserve their shared and common interests, Indians and Americans needed to develop a new style of security governance known as strategic partnership, which is a new type of alignment.

The 21st century transformed the US relations with China when the US President George W. Bush described US-China relations from peer competition to a new brand of strategic competition.¹⁵ In the context of India and the US relations, it ushered the addition of new dynamics. For example, leaders from both sides concluded on General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002. This agreement facilitated intelligence sharing and military exercises of 1990s as a Malabar military exercises in 1992. Another breakthrough was signed such as New Framework for Defence Cooperation in 2005. In addition, Defence Technology

and Trade Initiatives (DDTI) at leadership level to come out from the traditional “buyer-seller” dynamics. The US secretary of defence and India’s defence minister reaffirmed the “New Framework” in 2015 to put DDTI into action and boost the military trade. From a low of \$0, the military industry has grown to a high of \$ 8 billion. Under the article 41 of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), an End Use Agreement was signed in 2009. In the meantime, other agreements, such as the Logistic Exchange Memorandum Agreement, which is a modified version of a Logistic Support Agreement (LSA) also known as an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), the Communication Capability and Security Agreement (CISMOA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECGI), remained controversial.¹⁶ As a result of the inclusion of “neo-dynamics”, a new phase in Indo-US ties began. A system was devised to allow several specialised bodies to communicate with one another.

Indo-US strategic ties have been so far facilitated by Defence Policy Group (DPG). DPG consists of sub-groups. First, Defence Production and Procurement Group (DPPG). Second, Military Cooperation Group (MCG). Third, Joint Technology Group and Senior Technology Group Report for the DPG. The DPG have facilitated and led to the Joint Statement of 18 July 2005 which revealed India and the US as global partners. The July 2005 agreement further led to Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) launched by Bush and Vajpayee in 2004. Both states agreed to expand cooperation in civilian nuclear technology, civilian space technology and high technology trade and the missile defence as well. The NSSP created civil nuclear cooperation which became in 2006 as Henry J. Hyde Act.¹⁷ The Hyde Act has provided permission to bilateral pact between the two states in which the US would grant civilian nuclear technology and nuclear fuel to India for substitute of IAEA safeguards to Indian reactors.¹⁸ After the Indo-US nuclear accord, the US has approved the H.R. 4825 which is known as US- India Defence technology and Partnership Act. This act has institutionalized the Indo-US security partnership.¹⁹ These basic steps led both the states towards cooperating in special areas.

a) Civil Nuclear Deal

The US foreign policy towards India saw a paradigm shift related to nuclear areas. Both states signed civilian nuclear agreement which is also known as 123 civilian nuclear agreement on October 1, 2008. The deal was clinched despite India is not a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The US went through this deal with India by incorporating legal framework which is known as the Hyde Act. The act provided India by exempting it India from special requirements of the atomic energy act of 1954.²⁰ Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) an international regulatory body of nuclear non-proliferation regime admitted India for access to

nuclear technology.²¹ India on its part by placing 14 of its nuclear reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The deal retracted India's civilian and military reactors separately. In addition, India would not give up its nuclear weapon program.

The US for securing strategic partnership with India, the US President George W. Bush agreed members in the US Congress which was aimed at changing the US laws and outside the US jurisdiction, Bush also worked with the US allies for adjusting international regimes to enable India and the US nuclear cooperation and trade. Looking the deal by other aspects, it has emboldened India's position at the strategic level vis-à-vis China and Pakistan. For the US, the deal is serving its geopolitical strategy against China's massive political, military and economic clout in Asia and beyond.²²

b) Missile Defence Cooperation

The world order works under the norms and rules of a hegemon. The hegemon decides the security and stability of international system. Against this backdrop, other states would cooperate with a benign hegemon as they benefit from the collective good the hegemon provides.²³ This phenomenon is applicable in the case of Indo-US missile defence cooperation works under the rubric of Defence Policy Group (DPG). DPG is the highest body to regulate the Indo-US relations bilaterally. Indo-US missile cooperation was marked in the first place when the Indian team visited to Colorado to participate in the missile defence simulation and in 2002 attended the conference in Dallas. India participated multinational missile defence workshop in 2003 in Japan and in 2004 attended the missile defence conference in Germany. In 2005, India was invited to the "Roving Sand" air and missile defence exercises in New Mexico. The Bush administration permitted clearance for a classified technical presentation of the Patriot advanced capability (PAC-2) anti-missile system to India in 2005. India has already requested for such a clearance in 2002. The addition of PAC-2 to India which is used as an air defence system to intercept or counter tactical ballistic missile, cruise missile and advanced aircraft in a long range and all-weather and high-altitude. India was pleased with the PAC-2 and it would pave way towards the latest PAC-3 anti-missile system.²⁴

Indo-US cooperation in PAC-3 would strengthen India to counter nuclear blackmail from its neighbours. PAC-3 according to the expert lead to strategic instability particularly vi-a-vis Pakistan. China has opposed such technology transfer to India. The strategic impacts of BMD for Indo-US missile cooperation have been focused towards China. China has been a long threat for Indian security. BMD in Indo-US relations has played an important milestone to forge a closer strategic

partnership. The Indo-US strategic partnership invokes changes in strategic stability in Asia and beyond. The missile cooperation would advance India's revolution in military affairs. This cooperation has led multifarious challenges for Pakistan.²⁵

c) Recent Developments

India is more arrogant, harder in attitude, difficult and aggressive towards Pakistan since the US has collaborated in many areas of strategic interdependence. The first and second terms of the US President George W. Bush established solid foundation for strategic cooperation which was termed as historic events. The Obama administration also increased and maintained cooperation in areas such as security, counter-terror, disarmament, non-proliferation, trade and economics, high technology, clean energy, and the fight against climate change as well as agriculture, education, health care, and development, as well as export control cooperation, women's empowerment, innovation and these all agreements were discussed under new formats which was termed first as strategic dialogues then strategic and commercial dialogues and then that format changed to 2+2 dialogue in the US President Trump administration since 2017.²⁶ The 2+2 dialogue has guided India and the US representatives in different areas of cooperation. The first such 2+2 dialogue took place in India in 2018 and the second such meeting ended in the US on December 18, 2019. In the new format, both the US and India have revised continuously matters related to security, defence and strategic partnership.

At the second 2+2 dialogue, both sides have committed to deepen military to military cooperation in air forces and navies. In addition, in the third 2+2 dialogue on October 27, 2020, it has further deepened India and the US strategic partnership in new areas. The new areas are healthcare which has included collaboration in vaccine development, therapeutics, essential medical equipment and taking initiatives for establishing International Centre of Excellence in Research to deal with infectious diseases. Other areas included cooperation in energy security, cyber security, counterterrorism, sustainable development, extending Global Partnership Nuclear Energy.²⁷ Besides, the most crucial component of strategic partnership is the independent variable of agreement in Basic Exchange and Cooperation.

Challenges for Pakistan

a) Military Security

The addition of neo-dynamics to India and the US strategic cooperation have affected Pakistan's military security. The first implication is due to defence and nuclear cooperation which would negatively affect strategic deterrence in South Asia in the context of Pakistan strategic equation. On its part, Pakistan would indulge in arms race with India for balance of power to ensure its military security. This would

result in spending more budget for defence and leaving meagre resources for economic development. The independent variable which has affected Indo-US strategic partnership is the neo-dynamic of BECA which would help India to get high-end military technology, classified satellite data and critical information. It will help India get real-time access to American geospatial intelligence that will enhance the accuracy of automated system and weapons like missile and armed drones. Through the sharing of information on maps and satellite images, it will enable India access to topographical and aeronautical data, and advanced products that will aid in navigation and targeting.²⁸

United States sharing of such information with India would create more asymmetry in Pakistan and India strategic balance having serious consequences for Pakistan's national security. In addition, the US has also helped India in getting waivers and membership in various technological control regime such as NSG, MTCR, Australia Group and Wassenaar arrangements.²⁹ As all these regimes work on consensus bases to admit new members, so India would never allow Pakistan's membership in these regimes especially if India is granted membership in these regimes, Pakistan would be marginalized in peaceful nuclear cooperation with other states. With all these developments, Indian attitude is becoming more assertive and hegemonic in South Asia. For instance, Indian provocations across the border have been intensified in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Will

b) India's Increasing Aggressive Policies in IIOJK

The fall of Great Britain as a hegemon gave the US a vacuum to play a proactive role after the World War-II in world politics. Pakistan's efforts on the issue of Kashmir ventured to capitalize by winning the US support at the political level in different platforms such as the United Nations by putting pressure on India to resolve the issue during the Cold War era.³⁰ However, the US role has neither been uniform nor persistent in resolving the Kashmir dispute. This situation has led to increasing Indian ire and badly affected the US resolve to play the role of mediator due to New Delhi jumping into American bandwagon. Against this backdrop, the US put diplomatic and economic pressure on Pakistan echoing with India. The culmination of India's strategic ties with the US further emboldened New Delhi aggressive policies against Pakistan but also in the Kashmir valley.

Many factors are responsible in Indian attitude such as its posture and actions towards Pakistan. India's increasing military acquisitions and development program where the United States has agreed to provide India most advanced weapons making its defence budget over \$ 70 billion one new conventional and non-conventional weapons on sea, land, air and space. India's new military acquisitions

includes anti-ballistic missiles, developed and tested debris-generating anti-satellite weapons. The range of these weapons constantly increasing in sophistication and diversification in all types of delivery system and platforms. Different sources have shown that 70% of India's military belligerence is against Pakistan and the net result is the exacerbation of tension and arms race jeopardizing peace and stability in South Asia.³¹

At present, India striped out the special status of Indian Occupied Kashmir on August 5, 2019. With the absence of the US diplomatic pressure on India, not only violence has been increased but also it has further clouded Pakistan's relations with India. These challenges are multiple in nature ranking from increasing military aggression, deterioration of political contacts between the two states, cross-border trade activities and social disruption. At the military level, Indian atrocities was reacted by local Kashmiri with a suicide attack on Indian troops resulting in major casualties in Kashmir in February 2019. In this respect, the year 2019 brought doctrinal changes in India and Pakistan defence policies. For example, at the operational level, India demonstrated by sending its jets across Pakistan which happened for the first time since the Bangladesh War in 1971. In reaction to Indian illegal intrusion, Pakistan retaliated with six air strikes which resulted into shooting down of Indian Mig-21 with a captured pilot.

c) Deadlock in Bilateral Dialogues

Dialogue has played an important role for the settlement of conflicts among nations. Classical diplomacy has highlighted that the skills in negotiation and dialogues are the basic repertoire towards the management of disputes. Dialogues can be at the grass-root level to leadership level. Track-I and Track-II are means among the disputants for management of conflicts. Experts have believed that protracted conflicts among nations can only be resolved through efforts which can address structural causes and political aspects of a conflict. Dialogues can help by understanding the psychological aspects of both the disputants.

In the context of India and Pakistan disputes, India's attitude has not shown serious attention towards the protracted conflict of Kashmir. For example, India's Secretary for External Affairs S. J. Shankar wrote a letter to Islamabad, in which it was mentioned that India would not hold dialogue with Pakistan over Kashmir issue. Pakistan from its part time and again has invited India for dialogue on Kashmir, however, India rejected the Pakistani proposal for talks. Although, Pakistan on several occasion has highlighted the international obligation to resolve the Kashmir dispute which can minimize the security threats to their homeland. Pakistan has realized that leaving the dispute to linger on will jeopardize peace and security in

South Asia. The US along with India has been assertive on the issue of terrorism towards Pakistan. Pakistan despite its role to eliminate terrorists' networks, India has influenced the US lobby by pressurizing the demand for 'do more' which has been frequent during the Obama and Trump administration especially. Although China has acknowledged Pakistan's pivotal role by eradicating terrorism, however, in case of India it has been all the way with the US keeping Pakistan in a position of great challenge to face ahead.

d) Indian Hybrid War Against Pakistan

Hybrid warfare received its first airing in a policy brief for the Potomac Institute by Frank Hoffman in 2007. Hybrid warfare comprised of both application of kinetic and non-kinetic conventional and un-conventional means. This warfare has served three objectives of war. First, by imposing the will on an enemy, second, to make them powerless and to use maximum force available. Like India, Pakistan has also conceptualized its hybrid warfare strategy to serve its military security. The purpose of this strategy to increase force capability and break hostilities. In this context, Pakistani hybrid warfare strategy has intended to reduce its conventional weaknesses and engage India's sub-conventional operations. Creating an environment to delay Indian military operations to disrupt an Indian war waging strategy.

India has decided to lash out an all-out hybrid war against Pakistan because of conflicting and competing interests. To put it another way, major Indian objectives of targeting Pakistan include making Pakistan abandon all moral, political, and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri freedom struggle, branding Kashmir's legitimate freedom struggle against illegal Indian occupation as terrorism, disrupting the China Pakistan economic corridor, and weakening Pakistan so that India can establish its undisputed hegemony in the region. The most notable means of hybrid warfare that India has resorted to is the weaponization of economy. India by virtue of being a large economic market has time and again used this leverage in influencing international actors in not aiding and supporting Pakistan. Indian lobbying tactics in IMF, FATF and World Bank illustrate Indian motives economically strangulating Pakistan.

Indian hybrid warfare doesn't mean abandoning kinetic means of warfare altogether rather it blends regular and irregular means of war to achieve strategic ends. For example, India sponsors, trains and assists recalcitrant organizations and proxies in Pakistan. The aim of these Indian backed groups, organizations, is to seriously challenge and undermine the writ of state by

provoking, exploiting, supporting unrest and dissension among indigenous population.

Being the geostrategic and geo-economic pivot of Asia, Pakistan was bound to face a catch 22 situation. Its geography not only has bestowed upon it many advantages but has also encumbered it with special perils and problems. The centrality of location, growing strategic significance, and competing interests in the region placed Pakistan in an uncomfortable equation with hegemonic India. Consequently, Pakistan remains a continuous target of Indian coercion. India, irrespective of its comparative military standing with Pakistan, a much smaller landmass has employed hybrid warfare in a bid to achieve its intended strategic objective i.e., unrelenting quest to dominate South Asia.

Conclusion

United States developed strategic partnership with India to maintain its influence in the Indo-Pacific by containing the rise of China. The study notes that United States' strategic partnership has negative implication for regional security. The country which suffered more is Pakistan. Under strategic partnership, both the states developed complex interdependence through signing of various agreements to enhance defence trade and economic cooperation. All these agreements enhanced Indian power and made its attitude and behaviours arrogant and hegemonic in the region. Indian attitude is reflected in its policies towards Kashmir, the dialogue process with Pakistan and in the form of hybrid warfare against Pakistan in the regional and international level. In this scenario, Pakistan needs to further consolidate its strategic partnership with China, strengthen its relations with Russia and develop cordial relations with the US.

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