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THE INDO-US STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP
AND PAKISTAN'S SECURITY

By Zafar Nawaz Jaspal • Series Editor: Maria Sultan



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Zafar Nawaz Jaspal*

Abstract

With the emergence of the United States as a more powerful actor on the world stage, New Delhi readjusted its foreign policy and began to work closely with this sole superpower. Washington reciprocated by supporting India's drive for Great Power status in the 21st century and striking a deal for a far-reaching strategic partnership. The Indo-US strategic relationship, despite the strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United States, could increase the asymmetry in the balance of power between India and Pakistan, which might lower the nuclear threshold between the belligerent neighbours.

*Mr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Contents

1. Abstract
2. US Primacy
3. India's Efficacy in the US Strategic calculation
4. India's strategic objectives
5. Brief overview: Indo-US strategic cooperation in the 21st century
6. Nuclear cooperation
7. Space cooperation: perfecting missiles
8. The Pakistan – US strategic partnership
9. Pakistan's security puzzle
10. Conclusion

The Indo-US Strategic Relationship and Pakistan's Security

Abstract

With the emergence of the United States as a more powerful actor on the world stage, New Delhi readjusted its foreign policy and began to work closely with this sole superpower. Washington reciprocated by supporting India's drive for Great Power status in the 21st century and striking a deal for a far-reaching strategic partnership. The Indo-US strategic relationship, despite the strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United States, could increase the asymmetry in the balance of power between India and Pakistan, which might lower the nuclear threshold between the belligerent neighbours.

The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed dramatic strategic, economic, and political changes in international politics. The remarkable transformations in the global security structure and in trade and investment patterns continue to influence international relations. Washington's obsession with establishing a hierarchical

authority structure, in which subordinate units are answerable to higher levels of authority, in an international system seems an important factor in understanding contemporary global politics.¹ The unilateral approach of the United States to international developments is typified by its defiance of nuclear non-proliferation regime norms, its regime-change policy in the Middle East, its doctrine of preemption or preventive military operations,² and its

¹ Though the Bush administration, under the influence of neo-conservatives, opted for a unilateral approach in selected areas, it has not been successful achieving its desired objectives. The protracted warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq, President Putin's criticism of US policies at the security conference in Munich, North Korea's nuclear test, and Iran's firm stance on its uranium enrichment programme exposed the limits of Washington's ability to establish a hierarchical authority structure in an international system. In South Asia, however, the United States enjoys decisive influence, especially in Pakistan, which is principally concerned with its military security and pays less attention to non-traditional threats to its national security. The US role in maintaining the stability of South Asian deterrence (Kargil 1999 and 2001–2002 military buildup) was critical. Many scholars still believe that the enormous power and pervasive influence of the United States is generally acknowledged to be the defining feature of world affairs. For understanding Washington's role in preventing war between India and Pakistan, see Devin T. Hagerty and Herbert G. Hagerty, 'India's Foreign Policy', in *South Asia in World Politics*, ed. Devin Hagerty, pp. 39–41 (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

² 'While denying that it has imperial ambitions, the Bush Administration has nonetheless articulated, in the President's June 2002 West Point speech and in the National Security Strategy of the United States (2002), a doctrine of preemption or, more properly, preventive war that will, in effect, put the United

bypassing of the United Nations.³ With the emergence of the United States as a more powerful actor on the world stage, India readjusted its foreign policy, positioned itself to face the rise of China, replaced state socialism with economic liberalism and openness to globalization, and began to work closely with the world's sole superpower. Washington reciprocated by supporting its drive for Great Power status in the 21st century and by striking a deal for a far-reaching strategic partnership. The emergence of India as a major global player is expected to transform the regional geopolitical landscape.

In July 2005 the Indo-US relationship received a major boost, with both countries pledging to step up cooperation on non-military nuclear activities, civilian space programmes, dual-use high-technology trade, and an expanded dialogue on missile

defence. As part of the agreement, President George W. Bush broke with long-standing US policy and openly acknowledged India as a legitimate nuclear power, ending New Delhi's 30-year quest for such recognition.⁴ President Bush's South Asia tour in March 2006 further consolidated this partnership. Today, New Delhi no longer suspects Washington of trying to undercut its influence in the region. Conversely, Washington revised its strategic relations with Islamabad, which were cultivated and sustained through high-level consultations, debt relief, aid commitments, and the lifting of sanctions. Washington's maintenance of strategic relations with both India and Pakistan offers an interesting test of balancing theory and of the political interaction between regional and global power dynamics.⁵ Since the focus of study is on the region (India and Pakistan) rather

States in a position of governing potentially hostile populations in countries that threaten it with terrorism.' Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2004), pp. 127–28.

³ Robert Kagan argued that 'the United States remains mired in history, exercising power in an anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable, and where true security and defense and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might'. Quoted in T.R. Reid, *The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), p. 187.

⁴ Ashton B. Carter, 'America's New Strategic Partner?', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006, p. 33.

⁵ In international and regional setups, all of the competing states strive relentlessly to increase their power. In such a competitive system, one party may need the assistance of others. Ignorance of auxiliary determinants of power may risk one's own destruction. The pressures of competition were rapidly felt in New Delhi and Islamabad and were reflected in diplomatic ventures. For an interesting discussion on balance of power in an anarchic order, consult chapter 6 in Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 102–28.

than on global politics, it is eminently more sensible to assess the Indo-US strategic relationship and Pakistani security in the realist paradigm.⁶ In fact, balancing behaviour is observable between Pakistan and India in the regional context, and therefore structural realist theory (the modern version of the balance-of-power theory) helps us to anticipate future developments in the South Asian region and their likely impact on Pakistan's security.⁷

⁶ Pakistan's strategic outlook has been influenced by a geomilitary disequilibrium that is highly favorable to India. During the Cold War, India and Pakistan – two states unequal in size, population, and resources – maintained the military balance between them through the assistance of external regional actors. This trend of balancing each other in the military realm persists despite the end of the Cold War. Liberal theories of international relations, therefore, seem deficient in predicting the general patterns of relations between India and Pakistan because they are not the principal trading and investment partners in South Asia. Liberal theorists, such as Robert Gilpin, believe that trade and economic intercourse are a source of peaceful relations among nations because the mutual benefits of trade and expanding interdependence among national economies tend to foster cooperative relations. Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 31.

⁷ The structural realism theory posits that the world is an anarchy – a domain without a sovereign. In that domain, states must look to themselves to survive. Because no sovereign can prevent states from doing what they are able to in international politics, war is possible. The key to survival in war is military power – generated either internally or through alliances, and usually both. States care very much about their relative power position because power is the key to survival – both in a physical sense and in the political sense of the continued exercise of sovereignty. Power is also the key to influence in the system. It enables

It is impossible to understand the logic of the Indo-US strategic relationship without reference to Washington's larger strategic goals. To achieve these, the United States has had to build a system of alliances which neutralizes all rivals and dissenters and co-opts previously recalcitrant states, be they 'Old Europe' (which defied the United States on Iraq), members of the Russian Federation, or China. Such alliances must contain or counter possible challenges, which might arise from anywhere.⁸ That is where India comes in. India's pivotal position in southern Asia, its strategic location between western Asia and Southeast Asia, and its emergence as an economic power place it in a special league.

This study examines Indo-US strategic relations and their likely impact on Pakistan's national security. The repercussions of Indo-US strategic cooperation might appear straightforward –

defence and offence, deterrence and coercion. Barry R. Posen, 'European Union Security and Defence Policy: Response to Unipolarity?', *Security Studies* 15, no. 2 (April–June 2006), p. 153.

⁸ Few concepts have received more attention in international studies than the notion of balance of power. Under quasi-anarchy – where there is no highly developed and effective government, policing force, laws, or community above states – today's ally can always become tomorrow's adversary. Steve Yetiv, 'The Travails of Balance of Power Theory: The United States in the Middle East', *Security Studies* 15, no. 1 (January–March 2006), p. 70.

that is, an arms race between New Delhi and Islamabad – but the issues are more complex. Cooperation between India and the United States, especially in the nuclear and space arenas, might increase the asymmetry in the conventional and non-conventional balance of power between India and Pakistan. In spite of the strategic partnership between Islamabad and Washington, that asymmetry may possibly lower the nuclear threshold between the belligerent neighbours. In addition, Indo-US cooperation in the field of missile defence systems has a negative affect on the strategic environment of the entire region.

The following discussion begins with a brief overview of US primacy in current global politics and Indo-US strategic convergence. It is followed by a discussion of the tangible developments between Washington and New Delhi. This, in turn, is followed by a discussion of Pakistan-US strategic cooperation, for the sake of objectivity. The final section describes the anticipated ramifications of Indo-US strategic cooperation on Pakistan's security.

US primacy

The United States holds enormous political, economic, and strategic advantages in the

global arena.⁹ It remains what Bill Clinton called it in 1997: 'the indispensable nation'.¹⁰ It towers above the rest of the Great Powers.¹¹ The much-anticipated global effort to balance against American hegemony – which the realists have been anticipating for more than 15 years – has not matured. According to the realists' paradigm, the Great Powers – China, the European Union as a unified force, the Russian Federation, and India – unilaterally and unaided or in the form of an alliance, could balance US supremacy in global politics.¹² Neo-realism, with its faith in the

⁹ Christopher Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion Revisited', *International Security* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 10–16.

¹⁰ Robert Kagan, 'Still the Colossus', *Washington Post*, 15 January 2006, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17894&prog=zgp&proj=zusr> (accessed 29 January 2006).

¹¹ 'The range of the military, economic, and cultural influence that the United States could bring to bear was impressively wide. Even more impressive was the margin of the power that separated America from every other country. The American economy produced 30 percent of the world's output; no other country was responsible for even half that much. The American defense budget exceeded, in dollars expended, the military spending of the next fifteen countries combined, and the United States had some military assets – its highly accurate missiles, for example – that no other country possessed.' Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case For Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the 21st Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), p. 3.

¹² The Russian Federation and China have not challenged US unipolarity since the end of the Cold War. Nonetheless, neither state was acting in accordance with the dictates of Washington.

automaticity of balancing behaviour, has a hard time with the notion of open-ended unipolarization. Nonetheless, mistrust, insecurity, and the imperatives of self-help incline states to hedge their bets by balancing against the strongest state rather than climbing on its bandwagon. This is the safer strategy because states fear that a strong or potentially hegemonic state could threaten them, even if they initially align with it.¹³ Washington's unilateral approach in global politics, therefore, was censured at different forums. On 15 June 2006 the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, in its Shanghai Summit Declaration, claimed that it would make a constructive contribution to the establishment of a new global security architecture of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and mutual respect. Such architecture is based on the widely recognized principles of international law. It discards double standards and seeks to settle disputes through negotiation on the basis of mutual understanding. It respects the right of all countries to safeguard national unity and their national interests, pursue particular

¹³ Yetiv, 'Balance of Power Theory', pp. 70–71. Importantly, on the issue of the 'war on terrorism' – Operation Enduring Freedom – all the Great Powers supported the United States against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but some of them distanced themselves from Operation Iraqi Freedom.

models of development and formulate domestic and foreign policies independently, and participate in international affairs on an equal basis.¹⁴

In reality, despite their condemnation of US policies, the Great Powers have failed to balance American military supremacy, entailing global hegemony, for three reasons. First, the United States is the bigger spender on armaments. In total Washington spends approximately \$350 billion per year on defence, while the whole of Europe spends less than half that amount. In fact, the United States spends more on defence than the European Union, Russia, and China combined.¹⁵ In 2003 US President George W. Bush proposed spending \$396 billion on national security – more than the next 26 countries' military expenditures combined.

¹⁴ The six original members (the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), the four observer nations (India, Pakistan, Iran, and Mongolia), and Afghanistan, as a special guest of China, participated in the conference. Their participation brought more than half the world's population under the SCO's umbrella. The declaration can be read at <http://www.sectsc.org/html/01470.html> (accessed 6 August 2007).

¹⁵ In the aftermath of 9/11, as the United States went to war first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq, President Bush increased defence spending by about 15 per cent per year. Just the increase in US spending – it came to something over \$45 billion annually – was greater than the total annual defence budget of either France or Britain, the two biggest military spenders in Europe. Reid, *United States of Europe*, p. 180.

It was not a one-time arrangement. Every year the American defence budget increases. The Bush administration planned to spend \$2.1 trillion on the military between 2003 and 2008, which would automatically increase the country's potential military strength in the coming years, and frustrate the emerging balancers. In the words of T.R. Reid, 'the US with its globe-circling missiles and its bristling naval task groups and its fleet of long-range bombers, with planes in the air every minute of every day, has built a military force that can carry American power anywhere on earth, almost instantly.'¹⁶ Thus, in the realm of hard power, challenging the United States is a gigantic – if not impossible – task in the current strategic environment.

Second, the perceived strategic competitors have failed to constitute an alliance against America's unilateral global policies. Under the Bush doctrine, the United States would increasingly rely on unilateral power – or so-called coalitions of the willing – to achieve its aims in foreign and strategic affairs, rather than looking first to the post-World War II global institutions

that it embraced for decades.¹⁷ More precisely, the United States would increasingly use preemptive force, rather than negotiation, to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction and rogue regimes.

Third, the basic structure of the international system is to the advantage of the United States. The problem for any Great Power attempting to balance US power, even in that power's own region, is that long before it becomes strong enough to balance the United States, it may frighten its neighbours into balancing against it. For example, in southern Asia, both India and Japan view China's emerging economic and strategic power as a threat. They are already in a bilateral strategic alliance, and at the same time they are strengthening their strategic cooperation with the non-Asian power, the United States. Similarly, in South Asia, India's growing strategic power is considered by Pakistan to be perilous. Islamabad is exploiting every available option for countering Indian supremacy in the region. It is doing its best to sustain its

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 181.

¹⁷ Josh Kurlantzick, 'After the Bush Doctrine', *New Republic*, 13 February 2006, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=17983&prog=zgp&proj=zusr> (accessed 9 February 2006).

bilateral strategic arrangements with the extra-regional powers – the United States and China – while at the same time ensuring the credibility of its conventional and nuclear forces.

In June 1999, at the Cologne summit, the leaders of the European Union signed a document which formally committed it to a common policy on security and defence. The purpose was to give the European Union the capacity for autonomous action, enabling it to act independently without the support or approval of the United States. To implement that goal, the European Union began to build its own independent ‘Euro-corps’ military force, following the 2000 Treaty of Nice. Despite the decision for Euro-corps, the Europeans have been lagging behind in the military sector. It seems that in the present international system, the traditional or narrow concept of security (military) is not the Europeans’ main concern. China is a potential strategic concern in the American framework, but has little strategic significance for the Western Europeans. To be more exact, Western Europeans no longer feel threatened by the current global (military) powers. They are not, therefore, investing in the military sector and will not pose a military challenge

to the United States in the near future. In East Asia, meanwhile, US relations with Japan grow ever closer as the Japanese become increasingly concerned about China and a nuclear-armed North Korea.¹⁸ China’s growing role in East Asia also reinforces the Australian and Indian desire for closer ties with the United States. It appears that Japanese, Australian, and Indian convergence in strategic affairs would automatically check Chinese power in Asia and the Pacific region.

Despite global opinion polls registering broad hostility towards George W. Bush’s United States, the behaviour of governments and political leaders suggests that the US position in the world is not all that different from what it was before 9/11 and the Iraq war. Today, when crisis threatens around the world, local actors and traditional allies still look primarily to Washington – not Beijing, Moscow, or even Brussels – for solutions. For instance, the United States is the chief intermediary between India and Pakistan as well as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Zbigniew Brzezinski seems right to claim that ‘The United States is likely to remain

¹⁸ North Korea announced its first nuclear test explosion on 9 October 2006. ‘North Korea gatecrashes N-party’, *News International*, October 10, 2006, p. 1.

the only truly global power for at least another generation.’¹⁹

India’s efficacy in the US strategic calculation

The US strategy in South Asia is, and was, derived from its global strategy, which sought to strengthen its ability to direct affairs in all areas of the world and prevent any major power from challenging its leadership. For instance, since 1999 the European Union has proceeded at a steady pace to develop an autonomous capability to act militarily. Barry R. Posen argued that ‘It is doing so because Europeans do not trust the United States to always be there to address these problems and because many Europeans do not like the way the United States addresses these problems. They want another option, and they realize that military power is necessary to have such an option.’²⁰ Similarly in Asia, China’s growing national strength reflects a steady improvement in its long-range military capabilities.²¹ The strengthening of

military muscle by disadvantaged states always poses a challenge to the status quo in the international power structure. It seems natural, therefore, that the increase in the Chinese military profile would be viewed by Washington as an emerging challenge to its global political position as sole superpower. The Americans’ apprehensions over China’s growing power generate misperceptions and scepticism in Sino-US relations. In this context, the Indo-US strategic partnership has been forged to create a second line of defence, which seems to be directed against China. The worst-case scenario of an ‘anti-US hegemony’ coalition pits the Russian Federation, Iran, and China against US-led transatlantic Europe. The United States has an interest in balancing any future Chinese expansion in Asia, and the Indo-US strategic partnership could play an important role. Previously, the Soviets perceived such an Indian role in the Indian Ocean against the United States and the West.

Though the Chinese and the Americans have developed strong economic ties in recent years, they have divergent views over

¹⁹ Quoted in Reid, *United States of Europe*, p. 186.

²⁰ Posen, ‘European Union Security’, pp. 150–51.

²¹ For an explanation of the profile of Chinese growth, see Joshua H. Ho, ‘The Security of Sea

Lanes in South Asia’, *Asian Survey* 46, no. 4 (July/August 2006), pp. 558, 559.

the future of Taiwan. Moreover, Washington and Beijing disagree on a number of political and strategic issues that have weakened their Cold War understanding. For instance, in 1989 the Beijing massacre led to the collapse of the old Sino-American amity; in 1994 came the confrontation over Most Favoured Nation status and human rights. In 1996 militarized confrontation occurred over Taiwan. Three years later, officially condoned Chinese mobs besieged and (in Chengdu) burned US diplomatic facilities because of the 'deliberate' US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. In 2001 came the bitter standoff over the EP-3 collision and US surveillance flights in international airspace off the Chinese coast. Above all, the Chinese and the Americans have adopted divergent stances on regional and international issues, such as North Korean and Iranian nuclear programmes and regime change policy in the Middle East, among others. It is fair to conclude that Beijing's tough, forceful handling of each of these episodes played a significant role in the downward spiral of Sino-US relations, and stimulated growing US apprehension about China's future course. These differences

enhance India's significance in the strategic calculations of the United States.

In the very early days of the Bush administration, influential players were expressing their apprehensions about Chinese development, terming it the predominant threat to American interests. Colin Powell, the former secretary of state, rejected the Clinton administration's depiction of China as 'a strategic partner'. In his 17 January 2001 confirmation hearing, he stated: 'China is a competitor and a potential regional rival.'²² On 1 May 2001, in his speech on missile defences, President Bush spoke of reaching out to both Russia and China. While he was elaborating on his desire to build a constructive new relationship with Russia, he ruled out any such prospects with China. Washington reinforced this message when high-level emissaries sent to consult with Asian leaders

²² The Clinton administration viewed China as a strategic partner, and emphasized expanded trade rather than disagreement over Taiwan. See John Isaacs, 'Bush II or Reagan III?', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May/June 2001, p. 31. But the structure of the NMD system designed by Clinton Administration was East Asia-oriented, especially in its first deployment phase, C1. In the C1 phase, the only new missile tracking radar will be deployed on Shemya, an outpost well located to watch missiles from East Asia, including Russian Siberia, Korea, and China. The only NMD launch site in the C1 and C2 phases would be in central Alaska, which is much closer to East Asia than to the Middle East or the European part of Russia.

on American missile defence plans conspicuously omitted Beijing from their itinerary (a lower-level delegation visited Beijing).²³ In late January 2001, the US Air Force staged a space war game. The possibility of war in space turned from science fiction into realistic planning by the Space War Center at Shriver Air Force Base, Colorado. The simulation was based on a scenario involving growing tension between the United States and China in 2017.²⁴ The concept of a space war exercise is a part of the US East Asian war-fighting strategy. The basic elements of the Americans' East Asian strategy are deterring attacks on allies and friends; maintaining East Asian bases for global power projection; and preventing spirals of tension among regional actors, whose relations are plagued by both historical legacies of mistrust and contemporary sovereignty disputes.²⁵ According to Thomas J. Christensen's assessment, 'with certain new equipment and certain strategies, China can pose major problems for American security interests,

²³ 'China Viewed Narrowly', *New York Times*, 10 June 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com>.

²⁴ 'Self-Fulfilling Prophecy?', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May/ June 2001, pp.10–11.

²⁵ Thomas J. Christensen, 'Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for US Security Policy', *International Security* 25, no. 4 (Spring 2001), p. 7.

and especially for Taiwan, without the slightest pretence of catching up with the US, by an overall measure of national military power or technology'. He added, 'I firmly agree with those who are sceptical about China's prospects in significantly closing the gap with the US.'²⁶

The Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) characterizes Asia as 'emerging as a region, susceptible to large scale military competition with a volatile mix of rising and declining regional powers'. The QDR also emphasizes the existence of Asian friends such as India. The Bush administration's perception of India's role was clearly spelled out in the US National Security Strategy (NSS) released in September 2002.²⁷ It is one of the most consistent policy carry-overs from the Clinton administration. What is unprecedented, in the Bush administration's South Asian policy, is that India is valued

India has been trying to secure US support – or at least US understanding – for strengthening its pre-eminent position in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region

²⁶ Ibid. To many American analysts, China seems devoted to developing new coercive options so as to exert more control over Taiwan's diplomatic policies and threaten or punish any third parties that might intervene militarily on Taiwan's behalf, including the United States and Japan.

²⁷ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 27 September 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.

not only economically but also strategically, as a hedge against China's strategic prominence.

India's strategic objectives

The previous Delhi government, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its coalition partners, brought a paradigm shift from a Nehruvian perspective to realism in India's foreign and security policies. Nehruvians and realists share the same objective of achieving a Great India. The former, however, hold that India should obtain the status of major power through moral superiority, whereas the realists want to achieve that status through power politics. This paradigm shift resulted in increased arms procurement and development by the Indian armed forces. The return of the Congress Party to power, after a lapse of nine years, did not bring a shift in the arms development and procurement policy of the BJP government. According to the Congress leadership, its government would ensure that all delays in the modernization of armed forces would be eliminated, and funds budgeted for modernization would be spent to the fullest. More precisely, Congress is committed to maintaining a credible missile

and nuclear weapons programme as well as conventional military muscle.

The Congress government has been maintaining the BJP policy in the sphere of Indo-US relations because in the post-Cold War international order, New Delhi seems comfortable with the emergence of the United States as a sole superpower and a dominant Indian Ocean player. P.S. Das, the former commander-in-chief of the Indian Navy's Eastern Naval Command, stated: 'However, there is no basic conflict between core American interests and Indian concerns, and in fact there are several areas of convergence. It is, therefore, possible to evolve strategies which further our interests in the new global environment.'²⁸ As for China, the Indians consider it a potential adversary. China's relations with Myanmar and Pakistan,²⁹ its facilities in the Coco Islands (off the Andaman), and its ability to influence political postures in South Asia and in many Indian Ocean littoral states figure prominently in India's security

²⁸ P.S. Das, 'Indian Ocean Region in India's Security Calculus', *Journal of Indian Ocean Studies* 9, no. 3 (December 2001), p. 320.

²⁹ On 18 July 2003 China and Pakistan agreed to conduct joint maritime exercises. It was reported that it would be the first time that the People's Liberation Army navy would conduct joint maritime exercises with any foreign navy. 'Pakistan, China Plan Joint Naval Exercise', *News International*, Islamabad/Rawalpindi edition, 19 July 2003.

calculus. Mohan Malik argued that ‘the US and India have similar geo-strategic concerns about China’s growing power and influence. For India, which has long regarded China as a strategic adversary, the Bush administration’s characterization of China as a “strategic competitor” rather than a strategic partner was a welcome development.’³⁰

The preceding discussion offers evidence that Washington wants to establish strategic relations with New Delhi because India can be used as a core element in balancing Beijing in the post–Cold War international arena. At the same time, India has been trying to secure US support – or at least US understanding – for strengthening its pre-eminent position in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region via transfers of advanced military technologies, training in modern modes of warfare, and so on. The relationship between India’s quest for greater US support and the simultaneous objective of eventually securing US military withdrawal from the South Asian–Indian Ocean region also has merit in Delhi’s strategic calculations. It is argued that

India’s position within the region would grow with US support and understanding. If in the future Washington decides to pull out of the region, it would leave India as the exclusive, paramount power.

Brief overview: Indo-US strategic cooperation in the 21st century

President Bush brought a dramatic shift in the Indo-US strategic relationship. He counted India as a key power requiring substantially greater American attention, C. Raja Mohan argued. ‘Convinced that India’s influence will stretch far beyond its immediate neighbourhood, Bush has reconceived the framework of US engagement with New Delhi. He has removed many of the sanctions, opened the door for high-tech cooperation, lent political support to India’s own war on terrorism, ended the historical US tilt towards Pakistan on Kashmir, and repositioned the US in the Sino-Indian equation by drawing closer to New Delhi.’³¹ In September 2002, President Bush spoke of developing a strategic relationship with India as a component of

³⁰ Mohan Malik, ‘High Hopes: India’s Response to US Security Policies’, *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 2003), p. 110.

³¹ Mr. Mohan is a member of India’s National Security Advisory board. See C. Raja Mohan, ‘India and the Balance of Power’, *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4 (July/August 2006), p. 27.

the US national security strategy.³² Both states have been engaged in charting a new course for the relationship. Consequently, since April 2003 the US intelligence community has discontinued its semi-annual unclassified reporting to Congress on India's nuclear and missile programmes.³³ The suspension of information might have undermined the US Congress's efficacy in intervening in the Indo-US nuclear and missile cooperation. Certainly, it would have helped facilitate the deal approval process.

New Delhi, for the sake of cultivating good relations with Washington, endorsed Bush's Ballistic Missile Defense project – even before his closest strategic allies backed it – and remained silent over the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It is pertinent to

'We are endeavouring to work out together a totally new security regime which is for the entire globe'

note that India opposed President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative.³⁴ In contrast, when President George W. Bush unveiled a 'new framework for security and stability' in May 2001 and revived strategic defences by discarding the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the then Indian minister of external affairs, Jaswant Singh, immediately endorsed the plan.³⁵ On 11 May 2001 he stated, 'We are endeavouring to work out together a totally new security regime which is for the entire globe.'³⁶ It was probably the first time in decades that India had extended such support to the United States on any global armament issue.³⁷ This shift in the Indian stance was due to the promise of technological cooperation, which was critical to India.

India offered military bases to the

³² President Clinton in March 2000 and President Bush in November 2001, together with Prime Minister Vajpayee, affirmed their commitment to set the relationship on a new course. 'India-US Partnership', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 4 February 2003, <http://www.ceip.org/files/events/events.asp?EventID=579>

³³ Richard Speier, 'US Space Aid to India: On a "Glide Path" to ICBM Trouble', *Arms Control Today*, March 2006, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2006_03/MARCH-IndiaFeature.asp?print (accessed 3 August 2006).

³⁴ Ashley J. Tellis, 'The Evolution of US-Indian Ties: Missile Defence in an Emerging Strategic Relationship', *International Security* 30, no. 4 (Spring 2006), p. 114.

³⁵ The global community viewed the Bush initiative as yet another example of American unilateralism, recklessness, and disregard for world opinion. There were no endorsements of the plan from the major European and Asian partners of the United States. For a discussion of the issue, see Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, 'India's Endorsement of the US BMD: Challenges for Regional Stability', *IPRI Journal* 1, no. 1 (Summer 2001).

³⁶ 'India Discusses New World Security Regime with US', *Hindustan Times*, 11 May 2001.

³⁷ Raja Mohan, 'India Welcomes Bush Plan for cuts in n-Arsenal', *Hindu*, 3 May 2001.

United States for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan after 9/11 (something it never offered to the former USSR, despite the Treaty of Peace and Friendship). There are a number of areas in which India gave up its traditional stances and endorsed the US position. These include climate change – incorporating its latest avatar, the Asia-Pacific Partnership – and helping the United States get rid of a Third World director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.³⁸ New Delhi also agreed to work with the United States on multinational military operations outside of the United Nations framework. Twice, in 2005 and 2006, India voted with Washington against Iran – an erstwhile Indian ally – at the International Atomic Energy Agency. India came close to sending a division of troops to Iraq in the summer of 2003, before pulling back at the last moment.³⁹

During the Defence Policy Group (DPG) meeting held 6–7 August 2003 in Washington, the two sides agreed to establish a high-level dialogue on defence-

technology security issues. They reaffirmed their shared view that missile defence enhances cooperative security and stability. They decided to hold a missile defence workshop in India within six months, as a follow-on to an international conference. The workshop, attended by US and Indian delegations, was held at the Multinational Ballistic Missile Defense Conference in Kyoto, Japan, in June 2003. The Indian delegation also accepted invitations to the July 2004 Multinational Ballistic Missile Defense Conference in Berlin and the 2005 Roving Sands missile defence exercise.⁴⁰ Also at the August 2003 DPG meeting, Indian and American delegates approved a range of activities for the coming year, including:

1. Specialized training programmes and joint exercises to be carried out by the armed services of the two countries, including an air combat training exercise.
2. A multinational planning exercise to develop standard operating procedures, hosted by India in coordination with the United States.
3. Continued development of a defence supply relationship, including the

³⁸ Praful Bidwai, 'A Global Bully as a Friend', *Rediff.com*, 6 March 2006, <http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/mar/06bidwai.htm> (accessed 3 August 2006).

³⁹ Mohan, 'India and the Balance of Power', p. 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Government-to-Government Foreign Military Sales programme. The US team was to travel to India in September to discuss details of a possible sale of P-3 maritime patrol aircraft.

4. US sale to India of training materials and specialized equipment to support India's peacekeeping training capabilities.
5. A Defense Planning Exchange to enable US and Indian experts to conduct discussions on defence strategy and planning.

In June 2004, a high-level American delegation visited New Delhi to negotiate the transfer to India of technology related to the missile defence system.⁴¹ The United States also licensed Boeing's satellite systems to the Indian Space Research Organization for construction of a communications satellite. Moreover, the United States did not oppose the transfer of Arrow and Cruise missile technologies to India by Israel and the Russian Federation

⁴¹ Importantly, on 5 February 2003, the United States had eased its rules on the export of dual-use technology to India. Dual-use technology and high-tech products could have military applications. 'US Eases Rules on Export of Dual-use Tech to India', *Dawn*, 7 February 2003.

respectively. Arrow missile technology is very much part of the Indian missile defence system programme. Before Prime Minister Singh's visit to Washington on 28 June 2005, Pranab Mukherjee and Donald Rumsfeld – who were, at the time, Indian defence minister and American secretary of defense, respectively – signed a new framework that would guide the defence relations of the two states for the next decade. They planned to expand defence trade, improve cooperation between their armed forces, and co-produce military hardware.⁴²

The July 2005 summit between US President George Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington provided a roadmap for the transformation of bilateral strategic ties. Both sides agreed to broaden their strategic engagement. They agreed on several joint ventures that highlight the breadth of the new Indo-US relationship. Among these were revitalized economic and energy dialogues, a CEO forum, a global democracy initiative, a

President Bush stated, 'India is a global leader, as well as a good friend'

⁴² Press Releases 2005, Embassy of the United States, New Delhi, India, <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/ipr062805.html> (accessed 5 August 2006).

disaster response initiative, the completion of the Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership (NSSP) process, and a partnership to fight HIV/AIDS. They initiated new efforts in education, agriculture, science, and space exploration, and agreed to send an Indian astronaut on the Space Shuttle for the first time.⁴³

On 17 October 2005, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Indian Minister of State for Science and Technology Kapil Sibal signed an umbrella science and technology agreement designed to boost cooperation in areas ranging from health to space technology. The purpose of the agreement was threefold: to strengthen the science and technology capabilities of the United States and India; to expand relations between the extensive scientific and technological communities of both countries; and to promote technological and scientific cooperation in areas of mutual benefit. On 22 February, President Bush stated, 'We have an ambitious agenda with India. Our agenda is practical. It builds on a relationship that has never been better. India

is a global leader, as well as a good friend. . . . My trip will remind everybody about the strengthening of an important strategic partnership. We'll work together in practical ways to promote a hopeful future for citizens in both our nations.'⁴⁴

On 2 March 2006, the United States and India reiterated their intention to build the foundation of a durable defence relationship that would continue to support their common strategic and security interests. They agreed to pursue the following objectives:

1. Maritime security cooperation: The United States and India are committed to a comprehensive cooperative effort to ensure a secure maritime domain.
2. Counterterrorism: The United States and India are jointly expanding the scope of our counterterrorism cooperation, including work on bioterrorism and cybersecurity.
3. Military logistics support: The United States and India will soon sign an agreement to facilitate

⁴³ Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, 'The US and India: The New Strategic Partnership', *Asia Society*, New York, 18 October 2005, <http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/burns05.html> (accessed 3 August 2006).

⁴⁴ 'Fact Sheet: United States and India: Strategic Partnership', Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 2 March 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060302-13.html> (accessed 5 August 2006).

mutual logistical support during combined training, exercises, and disaster relief operations.

4. Defence trade: The United States reaffirmed its goal to help meet India's defence needs and to provide the important technologies and capabilities that India seeks.
5. Non-proliferation: Both countries support efforts to limit the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies, and also to support the conclusion of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty.⁴⁵

Nuclear cooperation

It was briefly mentioned earlier that on 18 July 2005, the Bush administration announced civil nuclear cooperation with India. President Bush offered to modify US non-proliferation laws and revise the global nuclear order to facilitate full cooperation with India on civilian nuclear energy.⁴⁶ In simple terms, the administration agreed to lift a ban on civilian nuclear technology sales to nuclear-armed India, despite its

⁴⁵ 'Fact Sheet: United States and India: Strategic Partnership', Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 2 March 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060302-13.html> (accessed 5 August 2006).

⁴⁶ Mohan, 'India and the Balance of Power', p. 28.

refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty or give up its nuclear arms. This cooperation would effectively grant India highly sought-after access to sensitive nuclear technology only accorded to states in full compliance with global non-proliferation standards. It would also treat India in much the same way as the five original nuclear weapon states by exempting it from meaningful international nuclear inspections.⁴⁷ It is a virtual endorsement of India's nuclear weapon status. In contrast, previous US administrations adopted the stance that India's nuclear arsenal, which was first tested in 1974, was illegitimate and should be eliminated or at least seriously constrained.

The nuclear deal is very much to India's advantage because it would enable India to obtain enriched uranium to fuel its nuclear reactors, acquire nuclear reactors from the international market, and participate in international nuclear research and

⁴⁷ According to the NPT, the members of the nuclear club are the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, France, and China. These states qualified to be called nuclear weapon states because they tested their nuclear devices before 1 January 1967; all remaining states (party to the NPT) are nuclear non-weapon states. India is not party to the NPT.

development.⁴⁸ The implementation of the civil nuclear energy cooperation deal requires the US Congress to alter US laws and policies.⁴⁹ According to the reports, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee indicated that it would judge the efficacy of the Indian separation plan in terms of three criteria: compliance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards; non-assistance to India's nuclear weapons programme; and transparency.

Under the Bush-Manmohan pact, India agreed to separate its civilian and military facilities in return for full civilian nuclear energy cooperation from the United States. In this context, instead of 'perpetual' safeguards arrangements between India and the IAEA, which would signal finality to civilian separation, New Delhi agreed to a 'voluntary' safeguards arrangement with the IAEA. This arrangement allows Delhi to pull nuclear facilities out of the civilian list in the future and put them back to military use. It seems that the Bush administration has given in to the demands of the Indian nuclear lobby – especially when it is

considered that the United States exempted large portions of Indian nuclear infrastructure from international inspections. To settle the nuclear deal, India classified 14 of its 22 reactors as civilian. These 14 facilities would be under safeguards and opened to international inspections.⁵⁰ Eight reactors are deemed military, making them exempt from inspection. Additionally, there was no mention of facilities such as research reactors, enrichment plants, or reprocessing facilities being declared civilian. Reportedly, implementation would be conducted in phases from 2006 to 2014. India's fast-breeder reactor programme – the Fast Breeder Test Reactor and the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor, under construction – is not included in the civilian list.⁵¹

Whether the perpetual safeguards arrangement would have been able to prevent the Indians from using material from the declared civilian nuclear facilities for military purposes is debatable. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee criteria contain loopholes and do not offer an alternative to comprehensive safeguards. Moreover, India's past record indicates that

⁴⁸ Indo-US Joint Statement, *The Hindu*, <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/nic/indousjoint.htm>.

⁴⁹ Wade Boese, 'Nuclear Deal Center Stage for US, India', *Arms Control Today*, March 2006, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2006_03/MARCH-usindia.asp (accessed 4 September 2006).

⁵⁰ Sharon Squassoni, "India's Nuclear Separation Plan: Issues and Views," *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RL 33292, March 3, 2006. pp.17-19..

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

it would violate the agreement. For example, the 40-megawatt Canadian-supplied CIRUS reactor, located north of Mumbai, was subject to an apparent diversion. It would be difficult to resolve problems when a reactor intended for peaceful use was diverted for military purposes.⁵²

Since March 2006, the process of finalizing a nuclear deal between New Delhi and Washington has not been confronted with any impediment. In the last week of July, there was a major development in Indo-US relations, specifically in the realm of civil nuclear cooperation. The US House of Representatives approved an agreement to share civilian nuclear technology with India. The bill was passed by a vote of 359 to 68, a month after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee endorsed the bill by a 16-to-2 margin. Prior to the endorsement of the Senate (the upper house), some analysts thought that it might seek a few amendments

⁵² India's 1974 nuclear weapon test used plutonium produced by a Canadian-supplied reactor (CIRUS), moderated with heavy water supplied by the United States under a 1956 contract stipulating that it be used only 'for research into and the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes'. To this day, India does not deny that the 1974 device used Canadian and US equipment and material. See 'Historical Documents Regarding India's Misuse of Civilian Nuclear Technology Assistance', *Arms Control Today*, http://www.armscontrol.org/country/india/Historic_Documents_India_Nuclear_Test.asp?p... (accessed 16 May 2006).

to the nuclear agreement. New Delhi, however, had conveyed to Washington that the final legislation must not deviate from earlier agreements between the two countries. The Indian negotiators had categorically rejected any change to the original agreement signed on 2 March 2006. Consequently, the Senate approved the bill on 17 November 2006 with 85 votes in favour and 12 against. President Bush signed the legislation, called the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006, on 18 December. The votes indicate that the Indo-US nuclear deal received significant and bipartisan Congressional support.

The proposed agreement reverses Washington's policy of restricting nuclear cooperation with New Delhi because it has not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has tested nuclear weapons, in 1974 and 1998. The nuclear deal would have serious ramifications for the nuclear non-proliferation regime and for South Asian security. US Representative Edward Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts, argued, 'The

'... build closer ties in space exploration, satellite navigation and launch, and in the commercial space arena'

administration's move to launch nuclear cooperation with India has grave security implications for South Asia and the entire world.' The deal would assist India in increasing its nuclear weapons: by virtue of acquiring nuclear fuel from the United States for civilian use, India would free up its own stocks for weapons.

Space cooperation: Perfecting missiles

Another element of the cooperation between the two countries deserves close scrutiny: the proposals – largely unexamined – for closer space ties. As mentioned earlier, the United States agreed to assist India in space technology and licensed Boeing's satellite systems to the Indian Space Research Organization for construction of a communications satellite. New Delhi got what it wanted when the two leaders resolved to 'build closer ties in space exploration, satellite navigation and launch, and in the commercial space arena'.⁵³ Realistically, it is impossible to separate India's 'civilian' space launch programme –

the incubator of its ballistic missiles – from its military programme.⁵⁴

Indeed, India has already developed nuclear weapons and medium-range missiles. Supplier restraint, however, has slowed down India's progress and made its missiles more expensive and unreliable. Richard Speier wrote that India could still improve its missiles in the following areas:

1. Accuracy: For a ballistic missile, accuracy deteriorates with range. India's long-range missiles could make use of better guidance technology, and it might obtain such technology through high-technology cooperation with the United States.
2. Weight: Unnecessary weight in a missile reduces payload and range or forces the development of massive missiles, such as India's PSLV-derived ICBM. India is striving to obtain better materials and master their use to reduce unnecessary missile weight.
3. Reliability: India's space launch vehicles and medium-range missiles

⁵³ 'Joint Statement between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh', Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 18 July 2005.

⁵⁴ Richard Speier, "US Space Aid to India: On a 'Glide Path', to ICBM Trouble?," *Arms Control Today*, March 2006, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2006_03/MARCH-IndiaFeature.asp?print

have suffered their share of flight failures. Engineering assistance in space launches could unintentionally improve India's missile reliability.

4. Multiple warheads: India's reported interest in missile payloads with multiple nuclear warheads means that certain elements of satellite technology could be diverted to military use. Deliberate or inadvertent transfers of technology associated with dispensing and orienting satellites could make it easier to develop multiple re-entry vehicles.⁵⁵
5. Countermeasures against hostile missiles: Assistance to India in certain types of satellite technology, such as the automated deployment of structures in space, could aid the development of penetration aids for India's long-range missiles. At the same time, it would increase India's abilities to destroy an adversary's missiles at pre-launch or boost phase.

The Pakistan-US strategic partnership

The United States enjoys primacy in the international system because of its immense

⁵⁵ Ibid.

military and economic prowess. It has also been improving its strategic cooperation with India, yet it has high stakes in maintaining good relations with Pakistan. Good US-Pakistani relations will aid in promoting America's global and regional interests, especially in the realms of the war on terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, engaging moderate Muslim countries,⁵⁶ and access to Central Asia. Pakistan is a moderate Muslim country that has constructive influence in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. The tragedy of 9/11 transformed US security policies and changed its geopolitical calculations. The need for logistic facilities in the area and for intelligence about Al Qaeda has dramatically enhanced Pakistan's importance in American strategic calculations. Pakistan's geographical position on the southern and eastern borders of landlocked Afghanistan is the best location for supporting the US/ coalition air campaign against Taliban strongholds, from

⁵⁶ President Pervaiz Musharraf's articulated vision of Pakistan – one which rests on modern and liberal values, what he calls 'enlightened moderation' – is compatible with US objectives.

ships in the Arabian sea or bases in the Persian Gulf.⁵⁷

Pakistan offered the Americans political, logistic, and vital intelligence support – in addition to three crucial air bases – during Operation Enduring Freedom. Thus, as in the 1980s, the country became an active ally in the war on terrorism.⁵⁸ There it remains, labelled a ‘frontline ally’. Accordingly, Pakistan and the United States established a strategic partnership during President Bush’s visit in March 2006. The inaugural session of strategic dialogue was held in Washington on 26–27 April 2006. Under this partnership the two countries maintain regular and close coordination on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest. Separate dialogues in the fields of education, energy, economy, terrorism, and

⁵⁷ India offered logistical support to the United States for air operations against Afghanistan, but aircraft launched from Indian bases would still have had to overfly Pakistan. Pakistan placed a small airport in Sindh and two small airports in Balochistan at the disposal of the United States for logistic and communication support to its counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan. The airbase near Jacobabad has been vital to Operation Enduring Freedom, and the airport of Dalbandin, near the Afghan border, is a key forward operational base.

⁵⁸ Iftikhar H. Malik, ‘Pakistan in 2001: The Afghanistan Crisis and the Rediscovery of the Frontline State’, *Asian Survey* 42, no. 1 (January–February 2002), p. 204. K. Alan Kronstadt, ‘Pakistan-US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation’, Report for Congress, Order Code RL 31624, 28 March 2003, p. 2.

science and technology were initiated.⁵⁹ These mechanisms have strengthened the institutional basis of the Pakistan-US relationship and helped deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields. In late 2001, US economic and military assistance to Pakistan amounted to \$1,766 million. In June 2003, the US finalized a multi-layer assistance package for Pakistan totalling \$3 billion over a five-year period, divided into \$600 million annual increments equally split between economic support and military assistance components.⁶⁰ The US Congress passed an act in December 2004 containing provisions to assure continued

⁵⁹ President George W. Bush paid a visit to Pakistan on 3–4 March 2006. In the joint statement issued on 4 March, the two presidents affirmed the Pakistan-US Strategic Partnership. Riaz Ahmed Syed, ed., *Foreign Office Year Book 2005–2006*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, pp. 78, 79. See also ‘Foreign Minister’s Remarks at the Joint Press Stake-out with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, 27 June 2006, Islamabad’, P.R. no. 227/2006, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, 27 June 2006, http://www.mofa.gov.pk/Press_Releases/June06/PR_227_06.htm (accessed 10 January 2007).

⁶⁰ President Pervaiz Musharraf visited the United States 21–29 June 2003. On 24 June, President Bush received President Musharraf at Camp David. *Pakistan Foreign Relations 2003-04*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, p. 62. The United States is Pakistan’s largest foreign investor. The US share of Pakistan total FDI between 1990 and 2004 was 37.8 per cent, amounting to \$2938.2 million.

assistance after the expiry of the five-year package in 2009.⁶¹

In June 2004 the US President officially announced the designation of Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally, which further facilitated the enhancement of defense cooperation between the two countries.⁶² Subsequently, Islamabad secured deals for the purchase of major US weapons platforms, including 44 F-16 fighter planes,⁶³ eight P-3C Orion marine surveillance aircraft with anti-submarine missiles, Harpoon anti-ship and TOW-2A heavy anti-armor guided missiles, seven C-130 transport aircraft, six Aerostats

⁶¹ Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947–2005: A Concise History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 251.

⁶² Major Non-NATO Ally is a designation given by the US government to exceptionally close allies who have strong strategic working relationships with American forces but are not members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

⁶³ 'Pakistan to Get 44 F-16s: PAF Changes the Number of F-16s Wanted', PakistanDefense.com, May 2006, <http://www.pakistanidefence.com/news/MonthlyNewsArchive/2006/May2006.htm> (accessed 10 January 2007). In December 2005 two used F-16 aircraft were sold to Pakistan under the Excess Defense Articles, in view of its status as a Major Non-NATO Ally. The Bush administration formally notified Congress of the sale in June 2006. The new F-16s would be configured with high-tech avionics, especially airborne intercept radar (AI), and beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missiles would also be incorporated. All 44 planes will be delivered to Pakistan within 30 months. Riaz Ahmed Syed, ed., *Foreign Office Year Book 2005–2006*, p. 80. See also 'Pakistan Details F-16 "Shopping List"', *Military Technology*, August 2006, pp. 79–80.

(sophisticated balloon-mounted surveillance radar), Cobra and Huey helicopters, TPS-77 radars, and 700 air-to-air missiles.⁶⁴ The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) will also purchase TPS-77 Lockheed Martins from the US as tactical support radar for the PAF air defence network. TPS-77 is the latest configuration of the world's most successful 3-D radar.⁶⁵ Pakistan will also buy 700 air-to-air missiles made by the US defence group Raytheon, for \$284 million. The delivery of missiles will start in 2008.⁶⁶ In short, in the last five years (2002–2006) US military sales to Pakistan amounted to US\$823 million.⁶⁷ These deals, of course, have a positive impact on Pakistan's military muscle.

Whether the current strategic partnership between the United States and Pakistan is transient or long-lasting is an important

⁶⁴ Kronstadt, 'Pakistan-US Anti-Terrorism Cooperation', p. 15. See also Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, p. 247.

⁶⁵ It is L-band, solid state, and pencil beam, phased array tactical radar. It provides excellent continuous high-quality 3-D detection of fighter size aircraft up to 260 NM with an altitude of 100000 feet.

⁶⁶ They are divided into two categories: 500 advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles (AAMRAAM); and 200 short-range AIM-9M Sidewinder missiles. 'Pakistan buys 700 air-to-air missiles from US company', *News International*, 17 January 2007.

⁶⁷ The \$300 million was proposed for 2006 and is included in the total amount given above. See K. Alan Kronstadt, "Pakistan-US Relations," Issue Brief for the Congress no. IB94041, Congressional Research Service, Washington, DC, March 2005.

question. Many irritants between Islamabad and Washington remain unresolved. Congressmen and opinion makers in the United States continue to remonstrate about Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability and its role in the war on terrorism. Once Pakistan agreed to assist the United States against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Washington should honour the role Islamabad is prepared to play, governed by its foreign policy objectives, resource endowments, and environmental limitations. Washington's idealistic demands sometimes generate an impression that the US-Pakistan bilateral relationship is fragile, and the strategic partnership may in fact be undermined by potentially disruptive developments in the areas of weapons proliferation, democracy building, and the Indo-US strategic partnership.

Pakistan's security puzzle

The Bush administration emphasizes that since 9/11 Washington has pursued a relatively even-handed approach to relations with the two major powers of South Asia. But the factual record shows Washington's visible tilt in favor of India.⁶⁸ Despite the

⁶⁸ Pakistan expressed its desire to be treated equally with India in the fields of nuclear and space

disparity in relations, Washington can exert more pressure on Islamabad than on New Delhi to comply with US policies. Pakistan, for its part, lacks the capacity to intervene against US interests or even to diplomatically distance itself from the United States in the present situation. Though the United States has no aggressive territorial designs against Pakistan, its policy objectives include containing China in the strategic realm, supporting India's quest for Great Power status in global politics, and eradicating terrorist networks in the entire world, especially in Afghanistan. Pakistan sincerely supports the US war against terrorism. Nevertheless, it is not in Islamabad's interest to be a strategic partner with the United States against China, Iran, and Iraq, or to remain oblivious to India's increasing military strength, because of its own security imperatives. Islamabad seems uncomfortable with the Bush administration's perception of India as a unique state.⁶⁹ Political and military

technological cooperation, but Washington refused to assist Islamabad.

⁶⁹ US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote, 'Our agreement with India is unique because India is unique. . . . India's civilian government functions transparently and accountably. It is fighting terrorism and extremism, and it has a 30-year record of responsible behaviour on non-proliferation matters.'

Pakistan sincerely supports the US war against terrorism

competition with India remains the centrepiece of Pakistan's foreign policy,⁷⁰ and it is sceptical about Indo-US strategic relations. So the situation reflects Pakistani confusion, coupled with its weaker means. In essence, Washington's current approach to relations with India and Pakistan is advantageous for India and entails six serious threats to Pakistani security.

First, Islamabad's diplomatic and soft-image pursuits have been facing serious obstructions as a result of Washington's policy of fostering all-round better relations with India. Admittedly, the United States has been urging both India and Pakistan to reduce tensions between themselves while continuing to maintain that it is playing no real role in resolving the Kashmir dispute – despite the fact that Pakistan desires strong US participation in the resolution of that disagreement. Although Pakistan provided bases and other relevant support to the United States in its war against terrorism, the United States unequivocally reminded Pakistan that it had to stop terrorist organizations operating from within its borders. On 11 September 2003, Ms

Condoleezza Rice, 'Our Opportunity with India', *Washington Post*, 13 March 2006.

⁷⁰ Peter R Lavoy, 'Pakistan Foreign Relations', in Hagerty, *South Asia in World Politics*, p. 49.

Christina Rocca, senior US officer for South Asia, said in New Delhi: 'I can also reassure you that the issue of cross-border infiltration remains a very important issue on our agenda with Pakistan.'⁷¹ This was clearly aimed at addressing Indian concerns over Pakistan's alleged support of terrorists operating in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, India's troop mobilization after the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001, and its refusal to resume talks with Pakistan until there was evidence that cross-border terrorism had stopped, drew no criticism from the United States – apart from the standard comment that the dispute should be resolved through dialogue. Moreover, during the 2002 eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between India and Pakistan, the United States continued its military cooperative programmes with India. In short, Indo-US strategic cooperation hinders Washington's ability to resolve a conflict between New Delhi and Islamabad – the Kashmir dispute – that might lead to nuclear war.

Second, by constituting a strategic partnership with India in order to contain China, the United States creates an

⁷¹ Jawed Naqvi, 'Patch up with Pakistan, US Tells India', *Dawn*, 12 September 2003.

imbalance in the South Asian strategic environment that could contribute to strategic instability between India and Pakistan. Indo-US strategic relations could tilt the balance of power between India and Pakistan, leaving the latter with no option but to increase its defence spending immediately. In other words, the massive build-up of India's conventional and non-conventional military capabilities – including advanced offensive aircraft, ballistic and cruise missiles, missile defence systems, nuclear submarines, and an aircraft carrier – and Pakistan's less-developed indigenous armament-manufacturing capabilities aggravate the security puzzle. If one state improves its relative power position, the other will likely take note and respond. Islamabad inevitably would attempt to re-balance against India, which would certainly increase Pakistan's dependence on arms supplier nations. Further, any increase in defence spending would undermine Pakistan's socio-economic development.

Third, the US strategic engagement with India and Pakistan has failed to defuse – or even effectively address – the security puzzle between them. In April 2004, well after the Composite Dialogue started, the

Indian limited-war discourse was revived and expanded in expert and media discussions of so-called Cold Start military operations. The idea was that well-coordinated conventional military units – air, armoured, infantry, and special forces – could mount high-speed assaults on predetermined military targets inside Pakistan, going over and around rather than engaging the main ground forces and defensive fortifications, and then bargain or retire to base, without triggering a nuclear reprisal.⁷² Such strategies oblige Islamabad to arm with the latest generation of weapons and to compensate for numerical inferiority by solidifying its defensive barrier against those weapons. Islamabad has to strive for a conventional balance at the lowest possible level of armaments, since an imbalance could threaten stability – both conventional and non-conventional. As mentioned earlier, strategic convergence between New Delhi and Washington might destabilize the Pakistan-US strategic partnership in the near future, which would be perilous for Pakistan's security.

⁷² **Rodney W. Jones**, *Conventional Military Imbalance and Strategic Stability in South Asia*, Research Report 1, South Asia Strategic Stability Unit, March 2005, p. 6.

Fourth, by cementing its strategic partnership with India, the United States cleared prohibited-weapons trade between Israel and India. It was reported that Israel would transfer to India, among other materiel, the Phalcon airborne radar system and Arrow missile equipment. The sale of this equipment to India would further increase the weaponry imbalance between India and Pakistan. The Phalcon radar systems would enhance India's detection capabilities, which would be detrimental for the Pakistani security system. Importantly, the United States had previously persuaded Israel to scrap a similar deal with China. India has already received sophisticated American armament technology – the Patriot PAC 3. The transfer of such technology to India undermines Pakistan's defensive nuclear deterrent.

Fifth, in the present strategic environment, nuclear-capable ballistic missiles have an important place in India's and Pakistan's strategic doctrines. India's development of ABM systems with US assistance – whether direct or indirect – would have serious strategic repercussions for Pakistan, despite the claim of Indian pundits that Delhi needs missile defences against China, not Pakistan. The primary

objective of India's missile defence systems is to neutralize retaliatory nuclear strikes by its adversaries. Thus, an introduction of missile defences in the Indian arsenal would necessitate Pakistan's revising of its weapons policy and opting for a countermeasure. This, in turn, would generate an arms race between India and Pakistan, which would be detrimental to Pakistan's growing economy.

Finally, the Indo-US strategic relationship has given the Indian armed forces the opportunity to improve the operational ability and capability of its personnel. For instance, in September 2003, the Indian and American Special Forces conducted two-week exercises close to the Chinese and Pakistani borders in the snow-bound Karakoram ranges.⁷³ Earlier, in May 2002, para-commandos from the Indian Army, along with some 200 soldiers from the Special Forces Group and supporting units from the US Pacific Command, held 19-day joint exercises, code-named 'Balance Iroquois', in India. The exercise was backed by elements of the Indian and US air forces.⁷⁴ These joint exercises provide the

⁷³ 'India-US exercise close to Siachen Glacier', *News International*, 7 September 2003.

⁷⁴ *Hindu*, 20 April 2002; *Indian Express*, 13 May 2002; *Pioneer*, 17 May 2002.

Indian Army with the US Army's superior equipment as well as combat experience in the Siachin Glacier and the Kargil sector in Kashmir.

Conclusion

The strategic environment of the Subcontinent makes it inevitable that any significant cooperation between Washington and New Delhi increases Pakistan's insecurity and necessitates a balancing response. In addition, the preservation of credible deterrence is imperative for Pakistan's security. An increased investment in the deadly business – that is, the procurement and development of military arsenals – would surely hinder economic progress in Pakistan. Realistically, in such a tough situation, Islamabad has limited foreign and strategic policy options. Nonetheless, there is still room for manoeuvring. On the diplomatic front, Islamabad should refrain from its past practice of putting all its eggs in one basket and chalk out a balanced diplomatic strategy which should not undermine its relations with China, should not irritate the United States, and should, above all, improve its bilateral relations with its neighbours. In the

military sphere, Islamabad should undertake pragmatic long- and short-term defence strategies which solidify its defensive barriers without jeopardizing its economic progress.



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For more information visit www.sassu.org.uk

Email: info@sassu.org.uk

36 Alie Street

Aldgate

London, E1 8DA

Phone: + 44 (0) 845 003 0864

Fax: +44 (0) 127.434.7295



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South Asian Strategic Stability Institute

36 Alie Street, London. E1 8DA

Phone: +44 (0) 845.003.0864

Fax: +44 (0) 127.434.7295

Email: info@sassi.org.uk

<http://www.sassi.org.uk>

