

**“New Kids on the Block”:  
The Indian American Lobby and the U.S-India  
Nuclear Deal**



*Hans Christian Kjølseth*

Master Thesis  
Department of Political Science  
Faculty of Social Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

January 2009

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Stein Sundstøl Eriksen(V08/H08), whose extensive knowledge of both the U.S. and India has proved to be helpful for this thesis work. I would also like to thank the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) for granting me a student scholarship and for the ten extremely stimulating months I spent there. I shall never forget those fine moments and lively discussions about international politics with colleagues around the lunch table, at conferences or simply by the coffee machine.

I am particularly grateful to Sverre Lodgaard for his valuable insights and enthusiasm for the project. I thank the NUPI librarians, Hazel Henriksen and Tore Gustavsson, for excellent service. Moreover, I am heavily indebted to my friends Øivind Bratberg and Vegard Hetty Andersen, who have kept on encouraging me by saying “you can do this”. Thanks to Kim Olsen, Simen Lindviksmoen and Grant Dansie for comments on late drafts. Similarly, this thesis would not have been possible without the support of my relatives Paul Morten Kjølseth and Mary Kay Robertson, who hosted me during my field trip to Washington D.C.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Ole Christian and Kirsti Marie Kjølseth, for their love and support. My strongest wish is for you, *Mother*, to come good and recover from your illness. Your ‘fighting spirit’ is my inspiration.

Oslo, January 2009

Hans Christian Kjølseth

Word count: 35.413

## List of Abbreviations

AAPI.....	American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin
AIPAC.....	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
BJP.....	Bharatiya Janata Party
CANF.....	Cuban American National Foundation
COG.....	Chief of Government
CTBT.....	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
FDI.....	Foreign Direct Investment
FMCT.....	Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty
IAEA.....	International Atomic Energy Agency
NGO.....	Non Governmental Organization
NPT.....	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
NRI.....	Non-Residential Indians
NSG.....	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NUPI.....	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
NWS.....	Nuclear Weapons State
UN.....	United Nations
UPA.....	United Progressive Alliance
USINPAC.....	United States-India Political Action Committee

# Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations .....	i
Table of Contents .....	ii
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	1
1.1 A foreign policy victory for the Bush administration.....	3
1.2 “Bringing the statesmen back in” .....	4
1.3 Research questions.....	6
1.4 Aims .....	7
1.5 Methodological concerns .....	8
1.5.1 A note on the sources: Validity and reliability .....	10
1.5.2 Challenges to validity and reliability .....	11
1.6 Structure of the thesis .....	13
<b>Chapter 2: Theoretical framework</b> .....	14
2.1 Bargaining on two levels .....	14
2.2 The concept of ‘win-sets’ .....	16
2.3 The role of the statesman .....	17
2.4 The domestic constraints .....	17
2.4.1 The statesman’s strategies .....	18
2.5 Ethnic interest groups and two-level theory .....	20
2.5.1 A mobilized Diaspora abroad—a political weapon? .....	20
2.5.2 Ethnic interest groups and relations to ‘host country’ state actors .....	21
2.6 What makes an ethnic interest group powerful?.....	22
2.6.1 Contextual factors .....	22
2.6.2 Group-specific attributes.....	24
2.7 Summary .....	26
<b>Chapter 3: Five decades of missed opportunities</b> .....	27
3.1 “Estranged democracies” .....	27
3.2 The “nuclear difference” .....	28

3.3 The end of the Cold War—new opportunities .....	30
3.4 The Road Block: Nuclear proliferation .....	30
3.5 Finally, engagement.....	31
3.6 Summary .....	33
<b>Chapter 4: The context of domestic constraints.....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 A change in the making? .....	34
4.2 “Bureaucratic combat” .....	35
4.3 New boss, new priorities.....	35
4.4 Keep it secret .....	36
4.5 The Joint Statement .....	37
4.6 Skeptical Democrats .....	38
4.7 The acceptability-set of President Bush.....	41
4.8 The debate in India .....	42
4.9 Summary .....	43
<b>Chapter 5 The Indian American community—a profile.....</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1 Socio-economic profile.....	44
5.1.1 Fund raising .....	45
5.2 Organizational unity and strength.....	45
5.2.1 Organizational development .....	46
5.2.2 International outreach .....	47
5.2.3 The India caucus in the U.S. Congress .....	48
5.2.4 The nuclear agreement: Bringing the community together .....	49
5.3 Demographic factors: Geographic concentration and voter turn out.....	50
5.4 Ties to the motherland .....	52
5.5. Ties to the Bush administration .....	53
5.6 Summary .....	54
<b>Chapter 6: Congress: From Skepticism to Landslide Approval .....</b>	<b>56</b>
6.1 Bush presents a bill .....	56
6.1.1 The Bush administration makes its case .....	57
6.2 What did critics say?.....	58

6.2.1 The question of Iran .....	60
6.3 The “India Lobby” at Play .....	61
6.4 The two-step process .....	63
6.5 Persistence, stamina and financial muscles .....	63
6.6 The killer amendments.....	64
6.7 Back to the negotiating table .....	66
6.7.1 Indian Americans lobby in India .....	66
6.8 Back to Congress in a hurry.....	68
6.9 Summary .....	69
<b>Chapter 7: Did they matter? .....</b>	<b>70</b>
7.1 The “strategy of secrecy” created a <i>fait accompli</i> .....	70
7.2 Successful issue-linkage: economics and geopolitics.....	71
7.3 Procedural rules .....	72
7.4 Other lobbyists .....	72
7.5 Reservations.....	73
7.6 Did the Indian Americans matter? If so how, where and when?.....	75
7.6.1 Getting overlapping ‘win-sets’ .....	76
7.6.2 Helping to hand Bush a victory before he left? .....	77
7.7 Concluding remarks.....	78
<b>Chapter 8: The rise of Indian Americans as a political force—why is it important? .....</b>	<b>80</b>
8.1 The New Kids on the Block?.....	80
8.2 Analogies to other cases: Ethnic interest groups and the national interest.....	81
8.2.1 Getting the right mix: ethnic interest group attributes.....	81
8.2.2 The importance of “role models”.....	84
8.3 Diaspora groups—and two-level theory .....	85
8.3.1 A new kind of ”soft power”—but for whom? .....	86
8.3.2 A political weapon, but for whom? .....	89
8.3.3. Increasing the size of ‘win-sets’ on both sides? .....	90
8.4 Concluding remarks.....	91
8.5 Epilogue: Suggestions for future research.....	92

<b>Bibliography:</b> .....	94
<b>Appendix I:</b> .....	103
<b>Appendix II: Interview guide</b> .....	105

# Chapter 1:

## Introduction

The Indian American community was vital to explaining this strategic bill to our fellow citizens. I appreciate so very much your carrying the message not only here at home, but in India. And I want you to know that your voice was very effective, and I welcome it.

George W. Bush, President of the United States <sup>1</sup>

The historic agreement on cooperation in the development of civilian nuclear energy in India that President George Bush and I embarked upon is nearing fruition [...]. It is in no small measure due to the very supportive role the Indian American community and the friends of India in the US have played. I thank you all for this.

Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India <sup>2</sup>

The U.S.-India nuclear pact, first announced by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and U.S. President George W. Bush over reciprocal state visits in July 2005 and March 2006, caught the world by surprise. Seen as the touchstone of a new strategic partnership between the two democracies, the agreement gives India a status as a *de facto* nuclear weapon state and access to the international market for nuclear material.<sup>3</sup> As India has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or adopted full-scope safeguards, the agreement provides for a unique exception to U.S. and international export laws. Finally taken out of its “nuclear isolation”,

---

<sup>1</sup> President George W. Bush, speech to Congress, 18.12.06. See: White House (2006)

<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, speech at Hotel Waldorf, New York, 28.09.08. See: The Economic Times (2008)

<sup>3</sup> The agreement stopped short of giving India a *de jure* nuclear weapon state (NWS) status. There is widespread consensus, however, that the agreement gives India a *de facto* NWS status. See: Lodgaard, Sverre (forthcoming)



India can expand its civilian nuclear sector to satisfy booming energy needs, vital to keep up current rates of economic growth.<sup>4</sup>

Constituting a path-breaking policy shift that reversed more than 30 years of U.S. policy toward the non-proliferation regime, the deal was also the subject of harsh criticism. Remarkably, as late as in 1998, the United States had imposed economic sanctions and led international efforts through the UN Security Council and the G8 to condemn India to a “pariah status” after it had conducted nuclear tests. By contrast, the deal the Bush administration had negotiated would not only give India the freedom to continue, but even the *possibility* to increase the production of fissile material to make more bombs. Prior to the deal, India was estimated to be able to produce 6-10 weapons annually. With the deal, however, experts estimated India could produce up to 50 weapons a year (Kessler 2006a).<sup>5</sup> “A step towards the break-up of the non-proliferation regime”, warned Strobe Talbott (2005), one of the Clinton-administration’s top officials.

Considering the peculiar timing of the policy shift, occurring at a time the U.S. was trying to galvanize international support against Iran’s nuclear program, many feared that to “reward” India, a friend, would create a dangerous precedent and send out signals of double standards to the world. With an increasingly unpopular President Bush, the *New York Times* expected “a contentious battle” in Congress over whether to ratify the agreement, “with an outcome far from certain” (Weisman 2006). Similarly, the *Washington Post* predicted the nuclear agreement would “face a hard sell” (Kessler 2006b). Yet, to the surprise of many, it passed with broad bipartisan support in two rounds, first in 2006 and then finally in 2008.<sup>6</sup> The landslide approval of the deal in the U.S. Congress has by a number of researchers been attributed to the energetic lobby

---

<sup>4</sup> As of 2006, nuclear energy accounted for less than 3 percent of India’s electricity production. By 2030, the Indian government wants to raise this share to 12.5 percent. For 2050, the ambitious target is 25 percent. See: Cooper, Matthew (2007)

<sup>5</sup> India was previously forced to divide its limited domestic resources of uranium between civilian and military purposes. Getting international market access to its civilian program (even without a stop in its production of fissile material as a pre-condition), it was argued that India could free-up its domestic sources of uranium and use it exclusively for weapons purposes. See: Kessler, Glenn (2006a).

<sup>6</sup> The passage of the agreement in the United States took place in a two-step process. The U.S. and India had negotiated a basic framework for an agreement in 2005-06. The first vote, in late 2006, was on the *principle* of making an exception to US laws to permit nuclear trade with India, a non-NPT member. The legislation also specified under which conditions Congress would accept this exception to the law. The second vote, in October 2008, was the final up-down vote on the agreement.

campaign of the Indian American community (Andersen 2006a,b; Gottschlich 2006; Kirk 2008). This thesis investigates that claim. As late as at the turn of the millennium, Smith (2000:3) concluded that “no group of Asian Americans today has an important place at the table in [U.S.] foreign policy discussions as an ethnic constituency”.<sup>7</sup> With the massive mobilization of the Indian Diaspora to ratify the nuclear pact, is the time ripe to revisit Smith’s conclusion? Moreover, what has enabled the Indian immigrant group to form an active and seemingly strong foreign policy lobby?

### **1.1 A foreign policy victory for the Bush administration**

Finally signed into law on October 8, 2008, after passing multiple hurdles—domestically in the United States and India, as well as internationally through the Nuclear Suppliers Group, a cartel of states regulating trade in nuclear materials—the passage of the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement represented a rare foreign policy victory for President Bush. At the signing ceremony in the White House, President Bush had indicated that he wanted to use the opportunity to thank those who had worked to secure the passage of the deal; of 200 invited guests, more than half of them were Indian Americans (Haniffa 2008a).

Present at the signing ceremony, Swadesh Chatterjee, leader of the U.S.-India Friendship Council, proudly stated: "When we started this journey three years ago, no one thought that the deal would get through the U.S. Congress. But the skeptics underestimated the respect and influence of the Indian American community" (Haniffa 2008b). Nicholas Burns, the U.S. Chief Negotiator on the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement, has also acknowledged the effort of the Indian American community to secure the passage of the controversial deal. Speaking to a largely South Asian audience he declared: “This has been your coming out party in our country [...] passage of the legislation [on the U.S.-India nuclear agreement] could not have occurred without the strong support of the Indian-American community” (Burns 2006).

---

<sup>7</sup> See also: Khagram, Sanjeev et.al (2001).

True, statements like the ones above could in part be attributed to Indian American leaders own wish to boost their prestige, or in the case of diplomat Burns, as a “party toast” speech to please an enthusiastic audience. In spite of significant media coverage (*the Washington Post* even featured an article with a headline reading “The New AIPAC? Forget the Israel Lobby. The Next Big Player on the Hill is Made in India”), to date only one *comprehensive* case study has been conducted on the influence of the Indian American lobby on the U.S.-India nuclear agreement.<sup>8</sup> In a study published in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Jason Kirk (2008:277) claims:

In 2006, two historical stories converged: one involving the ongoing deepening of the U.S.-India relationship since 1998, the other a general consolidation of organizational capacity within the burgeoning Indian community in the United States. Without the latter, it is unlikely that the bold U.S.-India nuclear agreement would have made it over the requisite congressional hurdles in 2006.

Kirk’s case study, while being highly interesting, has two major weaknesses that this thesis seeks to address. First, the study included only one personal interview with the Chairman of the U.S.-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), one of the two leading lobby organizations for the community, and none with other relevant actors. Second, and related to this, Kirk’s study paid only limited attention to other possible explanations for Congress’s strong vote in favor of the controversial agreement. As a priority for this thesis, I set out to increase the number of interviewees and to try to give a broader overview of other contextual factors surrounding the successful ratification of the agreement.

## **1.2 “Bringing the statesmen back in”**

Ethnic interest groups, as Ambrosio (2002a:2) defines them, can be understood as “political organization[s] established along cultural, ethnic, religious or racial lines by an ethnic group for the purposes of directly or indirectly influencing the foreign policy of their resident country in support of the homeland and/or ethnic kin abroad with which they identify”. Whereas most research traditionally has focused on such groups’ autonomous attempts to influence state actors, the reverse relationship, that is, the possibility that state actors deliberately use ethnic interest

---

<sup>8</sup> To read the article in the *Washington Post*, see: Kamdar, Mira (2007). The *New York Times* even ran a front page story on the Indian American lobbying. See: McIntire, Mike (2006).

groups in order to further policy interests, has largely been neglected by researchers (Haney & Vanderbush 1999; Hägel & Peretz 2005).

While not discarding the agency of Indian American lobby groups, I will argue that one factor that has been largely overlooked is the way both the Bush administration and the government of India have courted the Indian American community. During the ratification process on the controversial bilateral Civil Nuclear Agreement, community leaders cooperated closely with both governments in order to persuade a sceptical U.S. Congress.<sup>9</sup> Vital to the legacy of both President Bush and Prime Minister Singh, the nuclear agreement ran into controversy in both capitals and left both statesmen in need of allies.

The adopted theoretical framework for this thesis, Robert D. Putnam's two-level theory for international negotiations, may serve to frame this reality quite well. Putnam (1988) emphasizes how Heads-of-States are simultaneously involved in bargaining at two levels, as international agreements negotiated with foreign counterparts (Level 1) subsequently must be ratified by domestic institutions at home (Level 2). Putnam's theory opens up for several ways in which creative statecraft from a Chief of Government (COG) can change domestic constraints to get an international agreement ratified. "Coalition building" with different domestic groups, which the Bush administration's *active collaboration* with Indian American groups shows, is just one of the strategies in a statesman's toolbox (Moravcsik 1993:24-27; Putnam 1988:450-452).

*Mother India* has paid close attention to the emerging political activism of the Indian American community too. A 2002-report by a Government of India commission remarked:

---

<sup>9</sup> It is also well worth noting that the same Indian American lobby groups were asked by Prime Minister Singh to put pressure on the reluctant opposition in India. See: Mitra, Devirupa (2007).

Indo-Americans... have played a crucial role in generating a favorable climate of opinion in the [U.S.] Congress... *The Indian community in the United States constitutes a formidable new asset in strengthening India's relationship with the world's only superpower* (Government of India 2002:160)

The Government of India has in recent years enacted a number of reforms to reach out to its extended nation abroad, including the creation of a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. Stephen Walt (2005:211-12), pointing out how focused the Indian government has been on reaping the benefits of its Diaspora, concludes that Indian-Americans are regarded by New Delhi as a “potent political weapon” in a strategy of “domestic penetration” aimed at favorably influencing U.S. policy toward India.

In his two-level framework, Robert D. Putnam (1988) opens up for the possibility that statesmen make efforts to influence the internal politics of a foreign counterpart. Moravcsik (1993:27) even concludes that it is rather common: Statesmen have strong incentives to do so because it “simultaneously increases the probability both of an agreement and of reaching a more advantageous one”. For India— the 2.7 million strong Indian American community, being one of the fastest growing and financially most robust ethnic groups in the United States— this gives rise to an interesting proposition: what are the consequences of having politically mobilized Diaspora participating within the American decision-making arena?

This thesis will argue that it makes sense to conceptualize the role of ethnic interest groups within a two-level theory framework. Ethnic interest groups, I will argue, have a *unique strategic position* in the conduct of international negotiations, and, in a broader sense, bilateral relations. They can participate in the domestic politics of two countries simultaneously. This also explains why state actors— both in the Diaspora’s “ancient homeland” and the “host country”—may have a clear-cut interest in establishing links to an ethnic interest group in order to further vital foreign policy goals.

### **1.3 Research questions**

In wake of Stephen Walt and John D. Mearsheimer’s work on the “Israel Lobby” (2007), the topic of ethnic interest groups has received increased attention from scholars and the media alike. However, as existing scholarly literature on ethnic lobbies and American foreign policy typically

focuses on Jewish, Armenian and Cuban Americans, the Indian immigrant group provides an interesting new case to examine. This thesis asks:

- I. What brought about the Indian American immigrant group's surge of political clout?
- II. How and to what extent did the Indian American community influence the ratification process on the nuclear agreement in the United States?
- III. How can the two-level framework inform our understanding of the role of politically mobilized Diaspora groups?

#### **1.4 Aims**

In order to answer the first research question, I will examine the emergence of the Indian American lobby and look how it corresponds with existing theory. The literature points to certain “scope conditions” under which effective ethnic lobbies operate and succeed. These scope conditions include both specific attributes (financial, organizational and demographic factors) of an ethnic community as well as to contextual factors (features of the American political system, the international context) that favor their success. How does the Indian immigrant group fit this pattern of ethnic lobby empowerment?

Second, determining the actual influence of an interest group is as one lobbyist has noted, “like finding a black cat in the coal bin at midnight” (quoted in Loomis and Cigler 2002:28). Conscious that the influence of lobby groups is highly difficult to measure, this thesis poses the second question in order to map the Indian American lobby efforts, and gather different statements about its impact, it does not expect to discover any *definite* answers as to how far this influence extends. Thus, my study may lay the groundwork for a plausibility probe; could the

Indian American community have played such a decisive role as some researchers, such as Kirk and others actually claim they did?<sup>10</sup>

The third aim of this thesis, as sketched out above, is of a theoretical nature. How can theories from different strands of Political Science be connected in order to gain a better understanding of the role that ethnic interest groups can play? In spite of recent interest in ethnic lobbies, the knowledge-base on the topic is still underdeveloped. While the main focus of this thesis is the ratification process in the United States, I take note of the simultaneous lobby efforts and potential impact of Indian Americans back in their ‘homeland affairs’. The reason for doing so is because I believe it may yield theoretical gains in understanding the role of ethnic interest groups. The use of concepts from Putnam’s two-level framework should also be understood within this exploratory framework: The goal is by no means stringent theory-testing, but rather to use the theory as my conceptual lenses to explain how ethnic lobby groups can occupy a *strategic space* that is quite unique in bilateral negotiations.

### **1.5 Methodological concerns**

Given the focus on one main unit (the Indian American immigrant group), the form (how/what extent) and the substance (the ratification process on the U.S.-India nuclear deal) of the research questions, a single case study stands out as the most appropriate research design (cf. Yin 2003:5-7). The virtue of the single case study, as practitioners of the method point out, is the *depth* of analysis that it offers (Gerring 2007:49). However, most commonly associated with detailed, holistic and “thick” description of events, many—particularly adherents of statistical analysis—have expressed doubts about the single case study method’s usefulness for general knowledge development.

Case study researchers have delineated arguments to counter this critique: “A case study”, Gerring argues, “may be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of

---

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Gottschlich (2006:19) goes even further than Kirk (2008) and maintains: “The nuclear deal between the two governments [the U.S. and India] in 2006 would have been unthinkable if it was not for the supporting role of the Indian Diaspora in the United States.” Similarly, Walter K. Andersen (2006a) finds that “perhaps most important [for the Congressional approval], was vigorous lobbying, especially the efforts of the increasingly influential Indian-American community.”

that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)” (ibid.:20). Thus, according to this line of thinking, the defining question becomes “*what is this a case of?*” (ibid.:13). The focus for this study is on the specifically *ethnic* component of the India lobby.<sup>11</sup> As such, the broader *population* of cases that my findings can be related to consist of “ethnic groups’ organized attempts to influence U.S. foreign policy.”

Second and related to this, precisely because of the *depth* that the single case study offers, the method is regarded as particularly apt for theory development, which is one of the aims here. Gerring (2007:39-42) points out that the strength of the single case study method lies in its ability to generate new hypothesis, much more so than in theory testing *per se*:

It is the very fuzziness of case studies that grants them an advantage in research at the exploratory stage, for the single-case study allows one to test a multitude of hypotheses in a rough-and-ready way... A large-N cross-case study, by contrast, allows for the testing of only a few hypotheses but does so with a somewhat greater degree of confidence...

(...)Theory testing is not the case study’s strong suit. The selection of ‘crucial’ cases is at pains to overcome the fact that the cross-case N is minimal. Thus, one is unlikely to reject a hypothesis, or to consider it definitely proved, on the basis of a single case.

Yet another advantage that the depth of the single case study can offer, may be the comprehensive overview of *contextual* factors surrounding the outcome of a process. Even though case studies can provide no control over the environment, making *direct* cause-and-effect relationships much more difficult to track than within the scientific experimental method, Robert K.Yin (2003) claims single case studies—if conducted properly—indeed can be a well suited method to investigate claims of causality. As noted, given the intrinsic difficulties of measuring

---

<sup>11</sup> This demarcation is not self-evident. Mearsheimer and Walt (2007:132), in their study of the *Israel lobby* are careful to point out that “[T]he lobby is defined not by ethnicity or religion but by a political agenda.” Even though the Jewish make up the bulk of the lobby, their definition is so broad that it may encompass even Christian, pro-Israeli organizations. If I were to follow the same definition, groupings such as the U.S.-India Business Council, with a significant—but not exclusive— Indian American membership, would be included here. By focusing exclusively on the *ethnic* component of the lobby, however, my study follows the same demarcation as Kirk (2008).



the influence of lobbyists, this study takes a cautious approach inasmuch as its primary aim was not to make causal inferences.

Still, I believe that Kirk (2008), by focusing almost exclusively on the Indian American effort, has downplayed other factors in the ratification process that may have played an equally strong, or potentially more important role than the Indian American lobby. At the very least, Indian Americans' claim of influence must be weighed against other rival explanations of the landslide vote in favor of the U.S.-India nuclear agreement. Thus, in order to give an assessment of the relative importance of the Indian American lobby, I try to identify rival explanations (the strategies of the Bush administration, procedural rules, and the role of other lobbyists) that could have influenced the outcome (successful ratification by the U.S. Congress).

### **1.5.1 A note on the sources: Validity and reliability**

The data material consists of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include official documents (speeches, reports etc.) from the U.S. and Indian governments respectively, as well as testimonies from representatives in the U.S. Congress. The author also conducted a series of interviews with relevant actors during October 2008. Secondary sources include news clippings, books and articles from journals. I have specifically searched the archives of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, as well as that of *India Abroad*, arguably the most important media for the Indian community in the United States, for stories on the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement.

The overall quality of the relevant sources is customarily evaluated according to their *validity* and *reliability*. Validity refers to the relevance of the various sources vis-à-vis the research question. That is, to what extent the data material can reveal something relevant about the research question (Hellevik 1991:103). Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the accurateness of the data material, and to the extent to which one can expect to receive the same result if the analysis is repeated (ibid.). I will in the following elaborate on the challenges to the study's validity and reliability.

### 1.5.2 Challenges to validity and reliability

An important part of my data collection was the interviews I conducted in Washington D.C. I sent out requests to around 20 people whose names I had come over in my research. In the end I conducted 12 interviews, nine of which are included in this study.<sup>1213</sup> The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner in the sense that a set of questions were prepared beforehand (see the attached interview guide in appendix II), but still left the author enough flexibility to probe for details and ask follow-up questions.

A weakness of interview-data is that they can be vulnerable to poorly constructed questions resulting in a response bias or reflexivity—where the interviewee “gives what the interviewer wants to hear” (Yin 2003:86). Problems may also arise from poor or inaccurate articulation on the part of the interviewee (ibid.:92). To account for this, I offered the interviewees the chance to correct their statements in writing after I had transcribed them.<sup>14</sup> Another challenge regards representativeness: Interviews may more than anything else reflect a *personal interpretation* of events. In order to better validate statements from interviewees, Steinar Kvale (2001:148) divides interviewees into *informants* (witnesses) and *representatives* (the study objects). This may be a particularly important challenge to the validity here, especially as the study objects, representatives of the Indian American lobby, may have an interest in promoting their own role in the process for status/prestige reasons.

Aware of this pitfall, my aim was to *mitigate* this problem of representativeness by seeking testimonies from multiple sources on the role of Indian Americans in the ratification process of the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement. Like Kirk (2008), I approached the leader of U.S.-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), but in addition, I interviewed the leader of the U.S.-

---

<sup>12</sup> One challenge to the validity of this thesis might be that it runs the risk of developing a *selection bias*, inasmuch as each interview ended with the interviewee being asked the question; “Do you have any hints regarding who I should talk to in order to gain a deeper understanding of the process?” Nevertheless, I argue that this approach might also have given me an advantage since it has led to access to informants previously unknown. Apart from this potential pitfall, I have no reason to believe that the group of interviewees selected should have any particular bias.

<sup>13</sup> These three interviews, all with political analysts, were not included here because of space limitations. Their names are listed in appendix I as they all contributed with important background information for this thesis.

<sup>14</sup> A side-effect of this was also that some quotes from the interviews were omitted from the final version of this thesis due to requests from the interviewee.

India Friendship Council, the other big, umbrella organization for Indian Americans. Moreover, I approached lobbyists from the opposing side of the nuclear agreement: Washington's non-proliferation lobby. I conducted two interviews with congressional staffers in the Foreign Relations Committee of the House of Representatives. Other key informants include officials from the U.S. State Department and the Embassy of India in Washington D.C as well as analysts who could comment on the issue without being direct participants in the process. More interviews would have been preferable, but this must be understood within the frame of limitations in resources, time and the availability of interviewees.<sup>15</sup>

One common strategy to enhance validity is *data triangulation*, which indicates that each conclusion made is corroborated by multiple sources of evidence. What is essential is that the different data sources lead to the same conclusion about the problem investigated. If this is the case, the validity of the conclusion made is strengthened (Yin 2003: 97). In this case I have tried to achieve a triangulation both by comparing the views expressed of the role of Indian Americans between the interviewees themselves as well as to check and compare the interview-data with other data sources.

Another principle in order to increase the validity is to “maintain a chain of evidence” that makes it possible for an external observer to trace the researcher's argument (Yin 2003:98). In this case, I have tried to achieve this by including numerous citations of and references to the statements that constitute the basis of my investigation. Furthermore, almost all interviews were made with a tape recorder and transcribed, which makes it possible to check them.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the written material, it is all readily available to the public. These precautions also address the question of reliability: demonstrating that a different researcher could collect the same data with the same result (ibid:105).

---

<sup>15</sup> The timing of the data collection, occurring during a hasty “lame duck” session with both the U.S.-India nuclear agreement and the financial crisis on the agenda, in addition to a presidential campaign, made the availability of some potential informants difficult.

<sup>16</sup> Two of the interviewees requested that the interview would not be taped. See appendix I.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two gives a deeper introduction into two-level theory and a review of the literature on ethnic interest groups. Chapter three gives background information on U.S.-India relations and describes how the “nuclear difference” has been a major irritant in their bilateral relationship. The symbolism of this issue can also give an insight into why it mobilized so many Indian Americans.

Chapter four gives a description of the context of the negotiations and particularly on what kind of constraints President Bush would face in order to get this controversial diplomatic initiative ratified. In chapter five the focus shifts and I provide a profile of the Indian American community. I look at the lobby’s relations with the government of India and the Bush administration, and describe how the nuclear agreement may have paved the way for a consolidation of its lobby capabilities. Chapter six discusses the *process* from the day Congress was presented with the first bill until the nuclear agreement was finally passed after two rounds. The role of the Indian American groups is given special attention.

In chapter seven I provide alternative explanations as to why Congress, with the opposition Democratic Party holding the majority, went along with and agreed to pass the deal. With this backdrop I discuss where and when the Indian American lobbying *could* have had an impact in the U.S. ratification process and I make some concluding remarks relevant to research question (ii). Finally, in chapter eight, the main focus is on how and why the community’s political clout surged. In that regard, I highlight the potential similarities and differences between the mobilization of the Indian Americans and other ethnic groups that have established strong lobbies. Thus, I conclude chapter eight by making concluding remarks corresponding to my research questions (i), and (iii): which theoretical lessons can the case of the Indian American lobby—“the New Kids on the Block”—teach us?

## **Chapter 2:**

# **Theoretical framework**

Ethnic interest groups are customarily assumed to be autonomous in their attempts to influence state actors. According to Hägel and Peretz (2005), this may be due to a traditional reliance on social movement theory which views politics from a ‘society versus state’ perspective. Non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), by their very name emphasize independence from the state, and are therefore usually studied in their efforts to influence state actors in order to reach certain material or normative goals. Thus, the reverse relationship is being undermined, and most research neglects the possibility that states use ethnic interest groups for their own interest (ibid).

Why then, would state actors encourage and engage with ethnic interest groups on foreign policy questions? Provided that mutual interests exist, ethnic interest groups can draw attention both from state representatives in the ‘host country’ and those of their ‘ancient homeland’ or country of origin. This “utility” of an ethnic lobby to the state actor, in turn, may be perceived as a function of the lobby’s potential to wield influence. This is the link between the literature on ethnic interest groups and one key question that this thesis seeks to answer: what makes an ethnic lobby effective? In the following section I will present a basic framework to describe how and why state actors may see a utility in ethnic interest groups, but I turn first to Robert D. Putnam’s theory on two-level games.

### **2.1 Bargaining on two levels**

The key player in the two-level approach is the Chief of Government (COG)—variously referred to here as the leader, chief negotiator or the statesman.<sup>17</sup> Participating in negotiations on two tables, the COG has to balance international *and* domestic concerns in a process of diplomacy. The negotiating process is broken down into two stages. At the international (Level I) the COG

---

<sup>17</sup> In reality, however, it may be the ministers or diplomats who carry out the technical aspects of a negotiation. Peter B. Evans(1993:429) writes that “while in many cases the referent for “COG” is an individual leader, it often makes sense to conceptualize the COG as a (relatively small) group of central decision-makers within which particular decisions are generated with varying degrees of collective input.”

meets other heads of states to negotiate a tentative international agreement. At the domestic level (Level II), the respective COG's face their constituents which may include different political parties, interest groups, bureaucratic agencies and legislators in separate discussions over whether to ratify the agreement (Moravcsik 1993:23).

The ratification process is the “crucial theoretical link” between domestic and international politics, although as Putnam(1988: 438-39) makes clear, this is a major simplification, in reality the international and domestic phases are intertwined and simultaneous, as developments in one arena affects negotiations in the other.

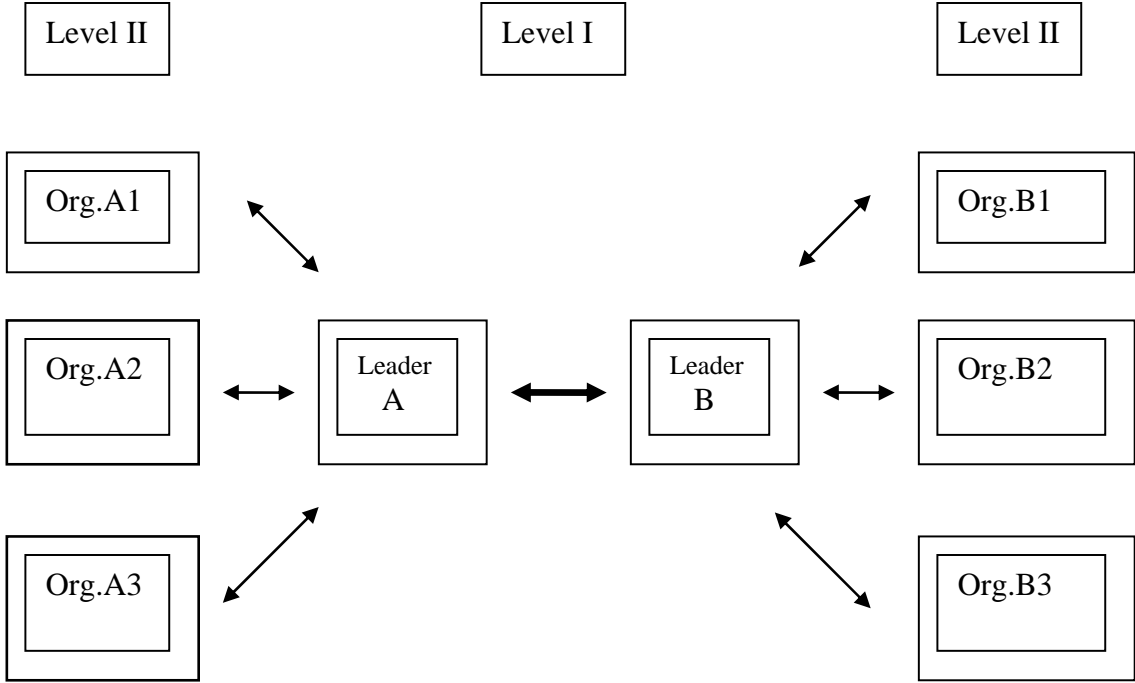


Figure 2.1: International negotiations as a two-level process.

## 2.2 The concept of ‘win-sets’

An important aspect of two-level game is the ‘win-set’, which is defined as the “set of all potential L1- agreements that can be ratified by the domestic constituency in a straight up-or-down vote against the status quo of no-agreement” (Moravcsik 1993:23). The ‘win-set’ constitutes a measure, albeit abstract as such, of how much room for manoeuvre a negotiator has to conclude an agreement and get it ratified at home. As showed in the box below, an international accord is possible only if the Level II ‘win-sets’ of the parties to an agreement overlap.

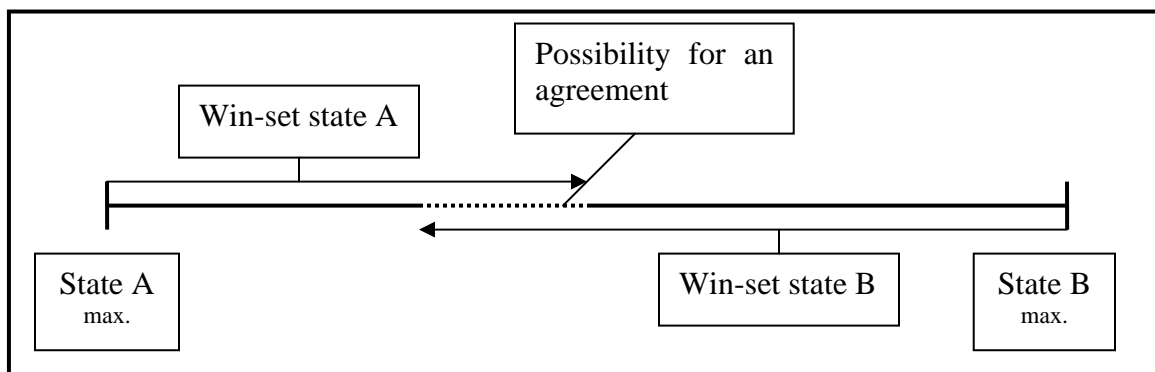


Figure 2.2: The importance of overlapping ‘win-sets’

Hence, larger ‘win-sets’ make an agreement more likely. However, the relative size of the respective Level II ‘win-sets’ will also affect the distribution of the joint gains from the international bargain. The larger a perceived ‘win-set’ of a negotiator, the more he can be “pushed around” by other Level I negotiators. Conversely, as demonstrated by the hypothetical example in figure 2.1 above, state A can strike a deal closer to its preferred outcome (State A max.) because its win-set is smaller than that of state B. A small domestic ‘win-set’ can therefore be a major bargaining advantage: Putnam quotes a British diplomat as saying that “I’d like to accept your proposal, but I could never get it accepted at home” as “the natural thing to say at the beginning of a tough negotiation” (ibid: 441).

### **2.3 The role of the statesman**

With the exclusive power to negotiate internationally (agenda setting), the COG may have extensive autonomy—a freedom from domestic constraints which is likely to decrease over time as agreements face the prospect of a ratification at home (Moravcsik 1993:27). Besides enjoying the exclusive right to submit international agreements for domestic ratification, the COG has a “tacit veto” over any agreement. Even if a proposed deal lies within or outside the national ‘win-set’, a L-1 deal is unlikely to be struck if the COG personally opposes it (ibid:23).

Thus, the policy preferences of the COG *matter*. To better understand them, Moravcsik introduces the concept of ‘acceptability-set’—which encompasses “the set of agreements preferred by the statesman to the status quo” (ibid:30). The political preferences of the COG may reflect (1) a wish to enhance his/her own position domestically through successful participation on the world stage; (2) the wish to find an optimal solution to an international problem or simply (3) individual preferences deriving from personal idealism or historical experience (ibid). Hence the ‘acceptability-set’ of the COG can diverge substantially from the median domestic constituents.

### **2.4 The domestic constraints**

In a two-level framework the most fundamental constraint on the COG is the size of his ‘win-set’, which is primarily determined by the preferences and coalitions among domestic coalitions and the relevant institutional procedures for ratification that an agreement requires. Domestic coalitions form on the basis of an assessment of relative costs and benefits of negotiated alternatives to the status quo alternative of no-agreement. The logic is simple: “The less the costs of no-agreement is, the smaller the ‘win-set’ and vice versa” (Putnam 1988: 442). The domestic constraints on policy-makers depends not only on the different groups calculations of interests, however, but on their political influence and power. Again, as Putnam notes, “what counts [domestically] is not total national costs and benefits, but their incidence, relative to existing coalitions and proto-coalitions” (ibid:451).

The nature of political institutions and the procedures for ratification is the second factor that determines ‘win-set’ size. A two-thirds majority required for ratification as opposed to a mere simple majority decreases the ‘win-set’ size and puts increased constraints on the COG. In the



case of India, the constitution does not stipulate that international agreements must be ratified by parliament. This should theoretically have expanded India's 'win-set', however, other institutional factors than formal ratification procedures can matter too. Some political configurations, such as coalition governments (as is the case in many parliamentary systems), may create more ratification points and potential veto-players, constraining the autonomy of the COG (ibid.:450). On the U.S.-India nuclear deal, the ratification rules became a politicized matter in both Washington and New Delhi. In essence, as the events unfolded, the deal would require a *simple majority* to get passed in both (the U.S. and Indian) parliaments, though the hurdle to secure a final passage was raised somewhat on the U.S. side due to the *suspension of rules* that the agreement required to get passed before the congressional recess in 2008.<sup>1819</sup>

#### 2.4.1 The statesman's strategies

Even as 'win-sets' are fundamentally constrained by the domestic coalitions and ratification rules on Level II, Putnam (1988) allows for the possibility that the COG can influence the size of 'win-sets'. What potential strategies does the statesman have at hand to influence the chances of ratification of an accord?

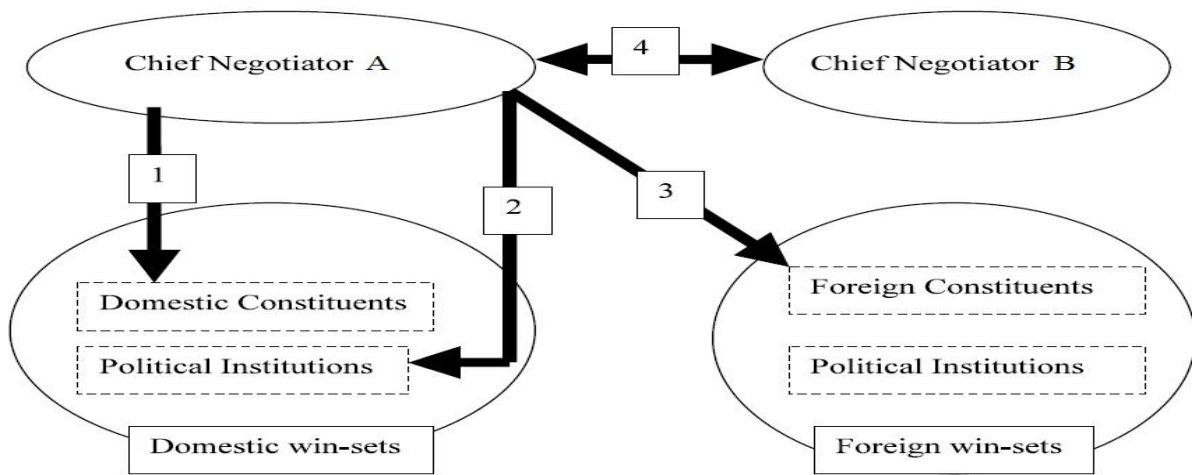
The COG can try to influence 'win-sets' in four basic ways (see figure 2.2 below). First, he or she may attempt actions aimed at domestic constituencies. One strategy is "issue-linkage"—where a statesman may achieve ratification of a "provision previously outside the 'win-set' by linking them to more popular provisions [in other issue-areas]" (Moravcsik 1993:25). Another

---

<sup>18</sup> The opposition to the agreement in India brought the matter in for parliament through a "vote of no-confidence" against Prime Minister Singh. Thus, a *simple majority* could have brought down the Singh-government and in extension (by all probability) the U.S.-India nuclear deal, as the vote was seen as a *de facto* referendum on the agreement.

<sup>19</sup> In the U.S. the agreement was passed in two-rounds, a procedural matter which was decided after some initial wrangling (see chapter six). In the first round, the amendments to the domestic law to facilitate for the agreement required a *simple majority* in both chambers of Congress. The final, bilateral 123-agreement was classed as a congressional-executive agreement (not a treaty, which would require a 2/3 majority in the Senate). Congressional-executive agreements are normally ratified by a simple majority. However, as the bill was introduced to Congress late in 2008. The Bush administration, nevertheless, wanted to conclude the deal while it was still in office and before the Congressional recess. Thus, the Hyde Act of 2006 - which required that Congress be in 30 days of continuous session to consider the final deal - had to be sidestepped. Passage of the deal under such circumstances required a 2/3 majority in the House of Representatives. In the Senate, even a *single lawmaker* could prevent the bill from coming up for a vote during the session. Once this hurdle was cleared, the agreement's passage would require a *simple majority* in the Senate. See: Kerr, Paul (2008:13)

option is “side payments”—where domestic constituents disgruntled by a proposed agreement could be compensated with a benefit that is unrelated to the agreement as such, but sufficient to “sweeten the pie” so that the agreement can be ratified. Moreover, compared to domestic constituents, the COG almost certainly has more information about a proposed agreement, which he can manipulate, or simply withhold if it serves the purpose of getting an agreement passed. Other options in the COG’s toolbox may include attempts at “coalition building” through the selective mobilization of domestic groups (ibid.).



**Figure 2.3: The statesman’s strategies**

Second, COG’s may attempt to re-shape the formal or informal ratification procedures in the political institutions by a change of voting rules or by imposing strong party discipline. Third, as shown in figure 2.2 above, the statesman may even try influence the ‘win-set’ of his level-I international counterpart. Moravcsik (1993) notes that policies aimed at foreign polities are quite common. The leader in country A may target issue-linkages or side payments by offering specific benefits to particularly powerful domestic constituencies or swing groups in a foreign country B (ibid:27). Further tactics includes “reverberation”, which occurs when specific actions by one country alter the expectations about an agreement held by domestic groups in a foreign country. Reverberation can also create a domestic backlash in the foreign country and be detrimental to ratification abroad (ibid:29).

Fourth, chief negotiators may have tactics toward other chief negotiators. Each chief negotiator has a strong interest in the popularity of his opposite number, as the popularity of the foreign party increases the foreign ‘win-set’ size, thereby increasing the odds for success. For this reason, Putnam (1988:451) finds that chief negotiators may cooperate tacitly toward successful ratification of an agreement by exchanging “political assets” to strengthen each others’ prestige.

## **2.5 Ethnic interest groups and two-level theory**

In the two most important works on two-level theory, Putnam’s original article and “Double-Edged Diplomacy”, a work co-edited by Putnam which seeks to elaborate two-level theory, international human rights organizations and multinational corporations are mentioned as examples of transnational actors. Discussing two-level theory, Peter B. Evans notes that “actors with transnational ties share the statesmen’s privilege, even in an attenuated way, of participating internationally as well as domestically” (Evans 1993:418). Ethnic interest groups can be conceived of as “two-table players”— as participants in the domestic politics both in the host country and in the ancient homeland (Level II of both state A & B, see figure 2.0 ). Second, they may relate to state actors both in the ‘host country’ and the ‘ancient homeland’ (Level I actors, state A & B). This is what gives ethnic interest groups a *unique strategic position*.

### **2.5.1 A mobilized Diaspora abroad—a political weapon?**

As Putnam’s model shows, state actors should theoretically have strong incentives to try to manipulate the ‘win-set’ of foreign counterparts. An expansion of a foreign ‘win-set’ should not only make an agreement more likely, but it would also imply that the odds of getting a more favorable agreement increase (Moravcsik 1993:28).

Following the trends of the traditional ‘state-society’ framework that has dominated research on ethnic interest groups, most of the focus on Diaspora movements has been on these groups efforts to influence the politics of their homelands (Rytz 2008). Yet, in a recent study Shain (2007) draws academic attention to the reverse relationship: that is to state actors in the ‘homeland’ actively seeking political interaction with the political representatives of its Diaspora. While not exactly a new empirical phenomenon, Shain points out that “with ties to home countries reinforced by modern modes of transportation and communication, many home

governments (or their opposition) now make direct patriotic appeals to their diasporas, courting them to influence U.S. policy” (ibid: 71). Taking notice of the growing financial and political clout of their Diasporas, several homeland governments have responded by creating ministries for Diaspora affairs and by allowing dual citizenship, thus encouraging expatriate voting rights (Basch et.al. 1994).

### **2.5.2 Ethnic interest groups and relations to ‘host country’ state actors**

In the literature on ethnic interest groups and U.S. foreign policy, ethnic interest groups are usually assumed to be more successful in establishing close links to members of the U.S. Congress than with the executive branch. This may in part be because Congress is regarded as more porous, with more contact points than the executive branch. Moreover, as ethnic interest groups in some corners of society are looked upon with suspicion because of their foreign attachments, members of the executive may want to keep distance, sensitive to possible accusations that the conduct of foreign policy is somehow not based on the notion of ‘national interest’ alone.

Nevertheless, when interests coincide, the COG could have an interest in establishing close links to an ethnic interest group. Haney & Vanderbush (1999), studying the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), find that “the Reagan administration encouraged and supported the emergence and growth of CANF as a smart political move to help further its policy interests“(ibid:350). CANF was seen as important to help popularize the Reagan administration’s policies and persuade the opposition in Congress. Not only did the Reagan-administration fund the exile TV-and radio-stations that CANF ran, but it even outsourced certain governmental immigration-tasks of processing the entrance of Cuban exiles to the group (ibid: 353).

Ethnic interest groups, meanwhile, gain substantially from getting close to the locus of decision-making because of the early access to information which allows them to mobilize quickly and early (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007:165-67). This can happen through explicit *cooperation* with the governmental officials as in the case of CANF, or alternatively, through a *penetration* of the government apparatus, which may happen when the lobby group succeeds in getting one of its “allies” appointed to a high position within the government, which Mearsheimer & Walt argue is one of the strengths of the Israel lobby (ibid.).

Another interesting perspective, though much less widespread, is that state actors in the ‘host country’ may have an interest in encouraging the political activism of an ethnic immigrant group precisely because these groups can participate in their ancient homelands affairs. Despite their attachments to their ‘ancient homelands’, Shain (1999) finds that ethnic interest groups may not betray American political values and ideals, but on the contrary, their involvement in the ‘homeland affairs’ can be instrumental in the dissemination of American views and values abroad. According to such a view, politically mobilized ethnic interest groups could in fact be quite useful for U.S. policymakers precisely because of their “two-table” qualities.

## **2.6 What makes an ethnic interest group powerful?**

Under which conditions can ethnic interest groups be effective? A wide number of criteria have been suggested, some of which relate to specific attributes of the ethnic community at large, while others refer to the broader political context in which the lobby operates. Starting with the latter, I will give an account of these permissive factors for ethnic lobby empowerment.

### **2.6.1 Contextual factors**

Certain characteristics of the U.S. political system may make the environment especially permissive for ethnic interest groups to thrive. One basic reason is, as Walt and Mearsheimer (2007:140) contend, the “wide-open” nature of the American political system. The late Samuel Huntington (2004:285-86) elaborates on this argument:

[...] The nature of American society and government enhances the power of foreign governments and Diasporas. Dispersion of authority among state and federal government, three branches of government, and loosely structured and often highly autonomous bureaucracies provides them, as it does domestic interest groups, multiple points of access for promoting favourable policies and blocking unfavourable ones. The highly competitive two-party system gives strategically placed minorities such as Diasporas the opportunity to affect elections in single member districts of the House of Representatives and at times even in state-wide Senate elections. In addition, multiculturalism and belief in the value of immigrant groups maintaining ancestral culture and identity provide a highly favorable intellectual, social and political atmosphere, unique for the United States, for the exercise of Diaspora influence.

Moreover, electoral campaigns—which take place in frequent cycles and are very expensive to run—make money an important and enduring feature of politics. This is only reinforced by the weak regulations on campaign contributions. Francisco “Pepe” Hernandez, a former executive director of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) once even made a reference to Adam Smith’s “Money World” to explain how his organization had become so influential: “We are learning from the system. This is exactly what makes the American system so great. And it is that small, very intensely interested groups should go to their government and lobby them and tell them how they feel [...] After all, we are 1.5 million Americans” (quoted in Haney & Vanderbursh 1999:34).

Thus, even relatively small, but well-organized groups can exercise considerable influence if they are strongly committed to a particular issue and the rest of the population is largely indifferent. This may be especially so within foreign policy matters. Alterman (1998:136) highlights survey data suggesting that only about 5 percent of the American public is “active” on any given foreign policy issue (save vital matters of war and peace) and laments how this gives ethnic lobbies opportunities to thrive.

The power of ethnic interest groups is generally believed to have been enhanced by the gradual strengthening of Congress’s role in foreign policy and the end of Cold War and bipolar rivalry (Smith 2000). Nevertheless, it must be noted that ethnic interest groups are still far more likely to succeed when they operate within a favorable international strategic context; i.e. proposals that are framed in a way that dovetail well with existing American interests (Haney & Vanderbush 1999; Rubenzer 2008).

### 2.6.2 Group-specific attributes

In an overview of the scholarly field, Trevor Rubenzer (2008) laments that the literature treating ethnic minority interests and their impact on U.S. foreign policy has developed largely through what he calls an “additive process”: New studies tend to add to the list of criteria developed in older studies. The result is a list of potential criteria that comes dangerously close to exceeding the number of groups whose influence the literature hopes to explain (ibid:170). In the following section I will try to summarize the factors I find to be most frequently cited in the literature into three broad categories.

(1) *The Socio-economic profile* of the ethnic group matters. Smith (2000) argues that groups without financial resources may have considerably more difficulty gaining access to the decision-making process. One basic reason may be that the socio-economic profile of a group may affect the *interest* the ethnic community can garner from politicians looking for campaign contributions. “Cuban Americans and Pro-Israeli groups”, arguably the most successful ethnic lobbies, “are known as generous contributors” (Rubenzer 2008:72). Moreover, groups with an elevated socio-economic profile often have a high education level, making such communities more likely to have the necessary skills to advocate their issues effectively.

(2) *Organizational unity and strength*: In order to maximize its influence, the Diaspora group should be politically unified. Unity implies either the absence of a significant opposition bloc within the group, or at the very least, a heavily divided in-group opposition (ibid.). Organizational strength would also imply a professional lobbying capability, as well as the resources necessary to disseminate information, screen legislators’ voting records and make campaign contributions to favorable candidates. A national outreach; having different local chapters around the country, would also enhance the organizational strength of an ethnic interest group.

Another important feature of the organizational infrastructure of an ethnic interest group is to have a caucus in Congress. Defined as “voluntary groups of members of Congress with shared interests”, caucuses are often “prime players in setting and influencing the legislative agenda” (Hammond 1998:250). The purpose of a caucus for an ethnic interest group, Smith (2000:123) argues, is to “have significant political players in Congress committed to the agenda of an ethnic

community” so that it helps the ethnic community “become part of the system” by having “a place at the table” where decisions are made.

The “institutionalization of access to policymakers” that a caucus represents, may not only be a “one-way” street where ethnic interest groups reach out to their members of Congress, but one of “mutually supportive relationships” (Watanabe 1984). While ethnic interest groups need legislators to do something for them, legislators may also need ethnic interest groups as they can provide a host of valuable resources, including information, votes, and campaign contributions. Because of this, Watanabe (1984:53) finds that legislators even “encourage and aggressively court ethnic groups and encourage their activism”. The more common pattern, however, is that ethnic interest groups ask legislators with a sizeable ethnic community within his or her constituency to become caucus-leaders (Smith 2000:123-24).

Another way by which ethnic interest groups can spread and deepen their influence is through “*alliance building*” with other ethnic interest groups or sectors. (Rubenzer:172). “Alliance building” with other groups may also offer the relevant ethnic group the possibility to learn valuable lessons through the exchange of tactics and experiences (ibid).

(3) *Geographic concentration & voter turnout*: The ethnic group should be numerous enough to be significant in decision-makers’ electoral calculations. In the case of ethnic minority groups, electoral significance often means geographic concentration. Groups such as Cuban Americans, who constitute a small fraction of the U.S. population, constitute a key constituency in parts of Florida and New Jersey (Smith 2000). While an ethnic group may not be large enough to make an impact in state or nationwide political campaigns, it must be noted that the threshold to have an impact in smaller constituency races for the House of Representatives is considerably lower. Moreover, geographic concentration should also for quite obvious reasons make it easier for an ethnic group to organize than if the group is very dispersed.



## 2.7 Summary

I started this chapter by asking why state actors should care about ethnic interest groups. I found that governmental representatives, both in the ‘homeland’ *and* the ‘host country’, could have incentives to establish close links with ethnic interest groups, provided that interests coincide. This attractiveness may, in part, derive from an ethnic interest group’s strategic position as a “*two-table player*”—as participants in the domestic politics of two countries at the same time. As such, lobbying from ethnic interest groups could potentially influence ‘win-sets’ in two different countries and thereby the very possibility of international agreements. While the lobbying capabilities of ethnic interest groups may get a boost from having access to policymakers, a lobby’s ability to wield influence—and thereby also its attractiveness to state actors—is jointly determined by key variables such as the groups’ socio-economic profile, organizational unity and strength, as well as demographic factors.

# Chapter 3:

## Five decades of missed opportunities

Relations between the United States and India, the world's oldest (uninterrupted) and biggest democracies respectively, have for decades been characterised by mistrust. To many, like India's former External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, this represents a lamentable paradox: "Five wasted decades of missed opportunities", he said of post-independent India's ties to the United States at the turn of the millennium (Muralidiharan 2000). Which factors have historically divided the United States and India? Why was the "nuclear irritant" such a crucial barrier in the development of positive U.S-Indian relations? This chapter will take a closer look at these two questions and give a brief account of U.S-India relations from India's independence until President Bush takes office in 2000.

### 3.1 "Estranged democracies"

Perhaps shaped by his country's own ideals of liberty, U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt had even during the Second World War expressed sympathy for India's quest for independence from the British crown (Tellis 2006a:4). Hence, as the United States became the first country to exchange ambassadors with the newly independent India after the war, the hopes for a strong and vibrant bilateral relationship between the two democracies were running high. Yet, for most of the post-World War II period, this was not to be the case.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, historians have presented U.S.-Indian relations as a tale of two "estranged democracies" (Kux 1992).

Ashley Tellis (2006a:4) has identified three historical impediments to closer U.S.-Indian ties. Of these, he argues that India's traditional quest for strategic autonomy has been the most significant. India's wish to choose its own ideology, policies and friends during the Cold War was viewed upon with suspicion by the United States. "Neutralism is immoral", John Foster

---

<sup>20</sup> The first phase after India became independent is generally described as a cordial phase of U.S.-Indian relations. The U.S. became India's largest aid donor in the 1950s and 60s and assisted *inter alia* in the launch the "green revolution initiative", a project led by Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug, which attempted to increase agricultural production.

Dulles, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, famously declared, alluding to India's non-aligned posture (Wallerstein 2005). As a champion of the non-aligned movement, India's moralistic critique of U.S. policy in Vietnam was irritating Washington and started to put heavy strains on the relationship by the mid-1960s.

Engaged in a global confrontation with Soviet communism, American policymakers saw India's policy of non-alignment as a kind of moral indifference in the struggle between good and evil (Tellis 2006a:5). The United States meanwhile, showed little restraint in forming alliances first with Pakistan, through the anti-Communist Baghdad pact in 1955, and later, in the 1970s with China, in pursuit of containing the Soviet Union. This encirclement, in turn, was probably one of the key reasons India eventually ended up with a superpower patron of its own. With the signing of a friendship pact with the Soviet Union, heavy question marks were left beside India's self-proclaimed neutral status in the Cold War. Not long after, when the Nixon administration lent support to Islamabad in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war, the United States and India seemed locked on a collision course.

A second constraining factor in the bilateral relationship, Tellis argues, was India's relative economic weakness as seen from Washington (ibid). India's continued economic underperformance and lack of connection to the Western world's economies, meant its importance to the United States remained limited during the Cold War. As Rubinoff (2005: 175) also points out, American interests were seen as restricted in "a region more associated with problems rather than opportunities". Perhaps as an indicator of its relative low priority during the Cold War, the South Asia region was merely a part of the Near East bureau until 1991, when it was given a separate bureau in the State Department (ibid.).

### **3.2 The "nuclear difference"**

The third big impediment to stronger U.S.-Indo ties has been India's status as an outlier to the non-proliferation regime. Even though the United States and India actually had a long history of cooperation in this field—the United States had built reactors and provided heavy water for India's nuclear facilities since the 1950s—furious disagreements surfaced about the rules of nuclear commerce in the 1970s. India refused to join the NPT at its inception in 1970 on the grounds that it was discriminatory. The NPT only legitimizes those states that had acquired

nuclear weapons prior to 1967 as nuclear weapon states (NWS). As China was among these, India wanted to retain the option of seeking the same nuclear capability as its rival with whom it had fought a war as late as in 1962. From an Indian perspective, the NPT was seen as cementing a “nuclear apartheid”, where the “nuclear have’s” were bound to dominate the “have not’s” (Singh 1998).

Even so, at the formative stages of the NPT-regime, Washington was still hopeful that India would sign up to the treaty. India’s nuclear test in 1974, with the use of plutonium that it had produced in a research reactor built by Canada with the assistance of the United States, clearly demonstrated the danger that nuclear technology—which had originally been transferred for peaceful purposes— *could* be used to produce nuclear weapons.<sup>21</sup> The result of these tests was that non-proliferation was elevated to become one of the core issues of American foreign policy. As Cohen (2000:13) notes: “Americans concluded that the world was on the edge of a rapid burst of nuclear proliferation. Jimmy Carter made non-proliferation the centrepiece of his foreign policy [...] and South Asia became a particularly important target of American non-proliferation legislation that included technology denials and sanctions.”

In reaction to India’s 1974 nuclear tests, the United States moved to create an international body, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), to try to close loopholes in nuclear exports. Domestically, the U.S. Congress enacted the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978, which conditioned nuclear exports to non-nuclear weapon states on having full-scope safeguards. India’s refusal to accept such safeguards resulted in a nuclear embargo by the United States.<sup>22</sup>

The American cancellation of assistance to India’s nuclear program left an enduring distrust of the United States amongst policymakers in New Delhi. The nuclear embargo was expanded in 1992 when the NSG adopted the full-scope safeguards criterion for exports to non-nuclear

---

<sup>21</sup> In the case of 1974 India nuclear test, the charge was too heavy to be carried and therefore not a weapon, but the explosion signalled that India was very close to obtaining nuclear weapons capability.

<sup>22</sup> In response to India’s nuclear tests, the U.S. has systematically denied broad categories of sensitive technologies to India such as supercomputers, missile and space technology, satellites, advanced fighters, microelectronics and fiber optics.

weapon states. As a consequence of these efforts, India's nuclear program remained largely home-grown, cut-off from the international market for nuclear materials.

### **3.3 The end of the Cold War—new opportunities**

The end of the Cold War to a large extent removed the first structural impediment for better U.S.-India relations. The collapse of superpower competition afforded the United States the opportunity to cut Pakistan loose as an ally and re-engage India, treating the two South Asian rivals in a more even-handed manner. The U.S. did not have to, as before, view India through the lenses of its friendship with the Soviet Union. U.S.-India relations could be evaluated much more on their own merits. For India, the rationale behind 'non-alignment' also disappeared somewhat, as the world was no longer bipolar.

Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union, a major trading partner and source of foreign aid, was also partly to blame for India's economic crisis in 1991 as it aggravated the severe balance of payments crisis. That in turn, forced India to abandon old socialist principles of central planning, and to initiate steps to liberalize its economy. Ending many public monopolies and facilitating more foreign direct investment, it spurred economic growth which gradually made India a more important market for American exports.

### **3.4 The Road Block: Nuclear proliferation**

Unconstrained by the pressure of the Cold War dynamics, the years 1991-98 saw renewed efforts to build a new relationship. The Clinton administration adopted a "carve out" strategy, attempting to segregate its disagreement with India on non-proliferation, while proceeding to improve relations in all other issue areas (Tellis 2007: 235).

The limitations of such a strategy, however, soon became apparent. Washington's concern that the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir could lead to an all-out conventional war, which in turn could spur the parties to "go nuclear", meant non-proliferation would continue to dominate U.S. policy towards South Asia. India's unwillingness to sign either the NPT or the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), both top Clinton administration priorities, continued to hamper the relationship.

Finally, when India, under the lead of Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, went ahead with nuclear tests in May 1998 (followed days later by Pakistani tests), it sent shock waves through the world. Washington was devastated and saw the tests as a “reckless Indian defiance of the non-proliferation regime and a major threat to the regional stability on the subcontinent” (Mohan 2006:16). The Clinton administration immediately enacted wide-ranging economic sanctions against both India and Pakistan. It also mobilized several other nations and international institutions to cut economic assistance to India.<sup>23</sup>

### **3.5 Finally, engagement**

Within a month of the nuclear tests, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott was dispatched to hold talks with India and Pakistan. At the outset, Talbott publicly said the purpose of the talks was compliance with the benchmarks derived from the United Nations Security Resolution 1172, which asked for India and Pakistan to:

- Sign up to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT);
- Freeze the production of fissile material;
- Join negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT);
- Tighten export controls of sensitive technologies and commodities;
- Adopt a non-threatening nuclear weapons posture; and,
- To reduce the Indo-Pakistani tensions through dialogue.<sup>24</sup>

The dialogue Talbott had with his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh extended into 14 meetings over a time span of two and a half years. Ultimately it failed to achieve its top-priority of getting India to sign the CTBT.<sup>25</sup> What the talks apparently did achieve, however, was a broader U.S.

---

<sup>23</sup> As a result of the cuts in economic assistance (trade sanctions not included), India lost about \$2 billion in foreign aid from international financial institutions and Japan, and another \$300 million from other Western donors including the United States. See: Cohen, Stephen (2000)

<sup>24</sup> To read the resolution, see: United Nations (1998).

<sup>25</sup> In the end, India expressed that it needed to build its program further up before it could give consideration to a CTBT or FMCT. Its grounds for stating this was that it sought a “minimum credible deterrent,” which it had not yet achieved. See: Weiss, Leonard (2007:433).

understanding of India's security needs than the administration's original non-proliferation "lens" had allowed (Talbot 2004).

Then, in the summer of 1999, when Pakistani military forces penetrated the Line of Control separating Pakistani and Indian-administered Kashmir, Clinton pressured Pakistan to retreat.<sup>26</sup> India, in contrast, was lauded by Washington for demonstrating restraint and not sending its troops into Pakistani territory. President Clinton, who had put off his planned trip to India after the nuclear tests, announced a renewed interest in visiting New Delhi.

Clinton's visit to India, the first visit of a U.S. President since Jimmy Carter, was widely characterized as a success. Interestingly, for the first time, no less than 150 Indian Americans accompanied the U.S. delegation and Clinton's itinerary showcased a "new India"—visiting places such as Hyderabad, "the high-tech city" (Iype 2000).<sup>27</sup> In his address to the Indian Parliament, Clinton "[...] went into an extended critique of India's decision to go nuclear. But the tone was respectful and gave the sense of debate among equals" (Mohan 2006:20).

Instructively, whereas Clinton had stayed five days in India, he stopped only five hours in Pakistan on his way back home. In Islamabad, Pakistan's military dictator, Pervez Musharraf, was urged to return his country to democratic rule. Rather than keeping a Cold War partiality for Pakistan, it seemed U.S. interest in South Asia lay ever more in advancing the dialogue with India. The Clinton-administration, nonetheless, continued to stress until the very end of its tenure that "the full potential of Indo-U.S. relations" would not be realized "until India met the nuclear benchmarks" (Pickering 2000).

---

<sup>26</sup> During the conflict, *The Washington Post* reported how a new Indian American activism "boosted India's fortunes". Indian immigrants flooded Congress offices with e-mails urging Pakistani forces to withdraw: "Ultimately, the lawmakers complied and a few days later, in a White House meeting, Mr. Clinton cited Congressional pressure as one of the reasons in urging Mr. Nawaz Sharif to withdraw his forces." See: Lancaster, John (1999)

<sup>27</sup> Among the many Indian Americans accompanying Clinton's visit, members from the influential organization "Overseas Friends of BJP" met exclusively with the Indian Prime Minister. See: Iype, Georges (2000)

### **3.6 Summary**

India's non-alignment in its foreign policy and its protectionist economic philosophy have traditionally constituted two structural barriers for closer ties with the United States. Coinciding with the end of the Cold War, India started undertaking major economic reforms from 1991 onwards. These events clearly contributed to stronger U.S.-Indo ties, but one road-block continued to hamper the relationship: non-proliferation.

India's 1998 nuclear tests further aggravated this cleavage and put the bilateral relationship at a new, historical low-point with the imposition of U.S. sanctions. Toward the end of the reign of the Clinton-administration, however, a notable warming of relations with India was taking place—though not resolving the “nuclear difference”.



## Chapter 4:

# The context of domestic constraints

The goal of this chapter is to give a description of the context surrounding the negotiations and launch of the nuclear agreement. It will address a number of key questions, including: what kind of domestic constraints did the Bush-team have to take into account when they opened negotiations with India? How did they go about dealing with this opposition?

### 4.1 A change in the making?

In the spring of 1999, George W. Bush, then governor of Texas, was briefed for the first time by the team of foreign-policy advisers. Bush began with the frank admission that he knew little about foreign policy. His foreign policy advisers led by Condoleezza Rice delivered a broad survey of the world, its problems, and its prospects. When the group finished, Bush had only one question: “What about India?” Robert Blackwill, one of the surprised advisers present at the session, recalled asking Bush why he was so interested in India. Bush immediately responded: “A billion people in a functioning democracy. Isn’t that something? Isn’t that something?!” (Dugger 2001, Walker 2006). Some, apparently including Blackwill himself, have suggested that Bush’s interest in India had originally been stirred by his encounters with successful Indian Americans living in Texas.<sup>28 29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Ashley Tellis, one of the U.S. architects of the nuclear deal (and himself of Indian American origin) says his friend Robert Blackwill use to paraphrase President Bush in the following manner on the subject of Indian Americans: “Oh my God, here is a group of people so successful, so dedicated, so evocative of the American dream, then there are a billion of them somewhere in another part of the world; this is a country that we need to reach out to and have a new relationship with.” See: Malhotra, Jyoti (2008)

<sup>29</sup> Another source identifies one of the Indian Americans Bush had been in contact with in Texas as Durga Agrawal. Born in Lakhanpur, a central Indian village without water or electricity, Agrawal had earned a master’s degree at the University of Houston. Agrawal stayed and became a highly successful businessman. Along with a number of other Indian Americans he helped build Texas’s high-tech corridor, dubbed Silicon Canyon. Agrawal was also able to raise more than \$100,000 for the Bush presidential campaign in his local Indian community. After Bush became president, Agrawal was invited to the White House as a guest at the banquet for visiting Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh, where Bush introduced him as “my good friend from Texas.” See: Walker, Martin (2006)

During the presidential campaign, Condoleezza Rice (2000:56) gave an upgrading of ties to India a balance-of-power wrapping:

There is a strong tendency conceptually to connect India with Pakistan and to think only of Kashmir or the nuclear competition between the two states. But India is an element in China's calculation, and it should be in America's, too. India is not a great power yet, but it has the potential to emerge as one.

#### **4.2 “Bureaucratic combat”**

While the intellectual basis for transforming the U.S.-Indian relationship was already firmly in place during president Bush's first term, its implementation was halting due to “bureaucratic combat”. U.S. ambassador to India at the time, Robert Blackwill (2005:9-17), claims two issues continued to hamper the relationship:

The first were the non-proliferation “ayatollahs” [...] who despite the fact that the White House was intent on redefining the relationship, sought to maintain without essential change all of the non-proliferation approaches toward India that had been pursued in the Clinton Administration. It was as if they had not digested the fact that George W. Bush was now president. [...] These nagging nannies were alive and well in that State Department labyrinth.

A second and related obstacle to closer ties, Blackwill notes, was the continued tendency to view India through the Pakistan-India prism (ibid). Colin Powell, Secretary of State in President Bush's first term, was uncomfortable with changing basic rules of the non-proliferation regime due to the regional security implications in South Asia as well as the wider impact such a policy-shift could have on the NPT-regime (Kessler 2006b; Mohan 2006:54).

#### **4.3 New boss, new priorities**

For the President's second term, Condoleezza Rice replaced Powell as Secretary of State. Before Bush was sworn in for his second presidential period, the White House conducted a strategic review based on a report from the National Intelligence Council which laid out the long-term implications of changing international economic, military and demographic patterns: “How China and India exercise their growing power and whether they relate cooperatively or competitively to other powers in the international system are key uncertainties” (NIC 2004:47).

Spurred by this review, a strengthening of ties with India moved up the list of priorities of the “new” administration (Mohan 2006:54).

Rice insisted that India and Pakistan ought to be treated separately from each other, strictly on their own terms (ibid.). The difficulty of such a “policy decoupling” of India and Pakistan soon became evident however. In March 2005, President Bush decided to sell F-16 jets to Pakistan as a part of the global war on terrorism. Rice was concerned the action would reinforce long-standing perceptions in New Delhi of a traditional U.S. bias towards Pakistan. On her first trip to the South Asia region as Secretary of State, Rice therefore put the secret offer of full nuclear cooperation on the table in discussions with her Indian counterpart (ibid.)

#### **4.4 Keep it secret**

The Department of Energy certainly felt blindsided. This was a White House driven, rather than an inter-agency based process. (State Department official, interview 22.10.08)

A radical policy-shift towards India was likely to face stiff resistance, not only from non-proliferation lobby groups and sections of Congress, but from within the non-proliferation bureaucracy in the State Department and the Department of Energy. Only a small circle of advisors initially knew about the initiative during the first six weeks of negotiations with Indian diplomats in the spring of 2005 (Kessler 2006b). According to a report in the Washington Post:

At this critical junction, one of the leading sceptics of a nuclear deal with India—John R. Bolton, the Undersecretary of State for Arms Control—was nominated U.N ambassador. The long battle over his appointment delayed confirmation of his replacement, Robert G. Joseph, until May 26. Other key posts in the non-proliferation ranks were unfilled, leaving officials in that area thinking they no voice in the debate (ibid.)

When Joseph took office on June 1<sup>st</sup>, he and his staff started outlining non-proliferation commitments they wanted to extract from India. The only problem was that by then, negotiations were already at an advanced stage. The Indians had already made it clear weeks earlier that they were not interested in anything that would put limits on their nuclear weapons program (ibid). Senior U.S. officials have rejected complaints that the expertise of government non-proliferation specialists was ignored in the first phase leading to the joint statement. The critical report in the

*Washington Post*, however, quotes one person involved in the policy development as saying: “[I]t is no accident that [nuclear experts] were not included, because you didn't have to be a seer to know how much they would hate this (ibid).”

#### **4.5 The Joint Statement**

As Prime Minister Singh arrived in Washington D.C. on July 18, 2005 negotiations continued even as President Bush and Prime Minister Singh met one-on-one in the Oval office. Essentially, India wanted the coveted status of an official NWS. One senior American official involved in the negotiations was quoted in the *Washington Post*: “They were really demanding that we recognize them as a nuclear weapons state. Thank God we said no to that, but they almost got it. The Indians were incredibly greedy that day. They were getting 99 percent of what they asked for and still they pushed for 100. (ibid)”<sup>30</sup>

The U.S.-India Joint Statement avoided the term “nuclear weapons state” being included in the text. Instead, the Joint Statement said that India, as a “responsible state” with a demonstrated commitment to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, “should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other states with advanced nuclear technology, such as the United States “(White House 2005). In return, Prime Minister Singh pledged that India would “assume the same responsibilities and practices” aimed at preventing nuclear weapons proliferation as other countries with advanced nuclear technology (ibid.). As part of this commitment, India would:

- allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to its civilian nuclear facilities (military facilities, which would be separated from civilian facilities, would not be subject to inspection.);
- negotiate an India-specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA;
- continue its voluntary moratorium on nuclear weapons testing;
- strengthen safeguards on its nuclear arsenal;

---

<sup>30</sup> In reality, however, the nuclear deal gives India a “*de facto*” recognition. This has been implicitly recognized even by U.S. Chief Negotiator Nicholas Burns who told reporters on March 2, 2006, that “India is a nuclear weapons power, and India will preserve part of its nuclear industry to service its nuclear weapons program.” See: White House (2006)

- negotiate in good faith for a future FMCT;
- continue to adhere to self-imposed guidelines comparable to those of the NSG and Missile Technology Control Regime for exports of its own nuclear material and missile technology; and
- allow American and other international companies to build nuclear reactors in India. (ibid.)

President Bush, for his part, promised he would work to amend U.S. domestic laws and persuade the NSG to adjust their guidelines to permit nuclear trade with India. In addition, India would have to negotiate a separate safeguards-agreement with the IAEA.

A bilateral working group started negotiating a separation plan of India's nuclear programs in order to facilitate commerce within civilian nuclear energy. Although the negotiations were entering highly technical issues, the U.S. delegation was to be led by Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns:

You had people with very entrenched non-proliferation standpoints. Bob Joseph [Chief of the Bureau of Non-proliferation]—where this should have rested—he had some real concerns. So Nicholas Burns was tagged to lead. (State Department official, interview 22.10.08)

Presented in March 2006 during the President's visit to India, the separation plan outlined that 14 out of 22 facilities would be designated as civilian, and thus accessible to international inspectors. Eight military facilities would be off-limits for inspectors. Crucially, India was allowed to keep two fast-breeder reactors within its military program. This is important because the fast breeder reactors, when they become operational, can produce large quantities of weapons-grade plutonium (Einhorn 2006).

#### **4.6 Skeptical Democrats**

The critique from many non-proliferation specialists was harsh due to what they saw as overly generous U.S. concessions to India. Even a former non-proliferation official in the Bush administration, John Wolf, came forth saying: "It's disappointing that we've given something to

India and not gotten something substantial in return. This agreement is difficult to reconcile with the international norms advanced by the United States for the last 40 years” (Weisman 2005).

Although it is difficult to estimate a ‘win-set’ of the possible preferences of the U.S. legislators in Congress who would have to give their stamp of approval to the agreement, it is not very controversial to say that the preferences of the President and his close advisors must have deviated from that of many, if not most legislators in Congress. As noted by a Republican congressman, Jim Leach, in a hearing in late 2005:

I don’t know any member of Congress that doesn’t want to have a warming of relations with the government of India...I also don’t know many members of Congress who are pushing for the precise commitment that the administration has made (Kerr 2008:10).

As the ratification process ran into problems, the vote on the nuclear agreement in Congress got delayed and took place in the fall of 2006. By then, the congressional majority had shifted in favor of the opposition Democratic Party. Cultivating close ties to the arms control organizations that formed the backbone of the opposition against the nuclear agreement, the Democratic Party had traditionally been more inclined to support the policies put forth by Washington’s small, but vocal non-proliferation specialist community.

Not constituting a coherent group of legislators, it is difficult to estimate the Democratic Party’s general preferences. The views of people like Strobe Talbott, who had negotiated with India on behalf of the Clinton-administration or Senator Sam Nunn, a long time non-proliferation stalwart, may give some clues however. Talbott (2005) claims that ever since India’s 1998 tests, the U.S. had secretly been exploring possibilities for what he calls “*a genuine compromise*” with India: “Such an agreement would give India more access to technology necessary for its civilian nuclear energy program in exchange for meaningful constraints on its weapon program, consistent with [India’s] own declared policy of wanting to have only a credible minimum deterrent. (ibid)” The Bush administration, Talbott claims, “departed from such a trade-off and granted India the privileges of a NPT member with very little in return.” (ibid.)

Talbott lamented:

In one important respect, the Indians have received more leniency than the five established nuclear "haves" have asked for themselves: The US, Britain, France, Russia, and China say they have halted the production of the fissile material that goes into nuclear bombs, while India has only promised to join a universal ban that would include Pakistan — if such a thing ever materializes. Yet that pledge, in the future conditional tense, was apparently enough for the Bush administration (ibid.).<sup>31</sup>

As the nuclear deal would give India the ability to import uranium to feed its civilian nuclear program, Sam Nunn claimed that India would no longer, as before, be forced to divide limited domestic uranium resources between civilian and military purposes. In the absence of a moratorium in the production of fissile material, India could—because of the access to the international nuclear market—free up its domestic uranium resources to make more bombs.<sup>3233</sup> Furthermore, the permission granted to India to keep the fast-breeder reactors within the military program aggravated this problem and was amply criticized by Democrats in Congress (Haniffa 2006e).

In the aftermath of India's nuclear tests, getting India to sign on to the CTBT had topped the U.S. wish list. Indeed, during the Singh-Talbott talks, Indian officials had hinted they were ready to sign on to the CTBT as a *quid pro quo* for an end to the old sanctions on its nuclear program (Crossette 1998; Mohan 2006:56). As the U.S. Senate has yet to ratify the treaty, a CTBT-signature would not be a realistic demand from the United States in its negotiations with India in any case. Yet, for some non-proliferation advocates within the Democratic Party, not using the nuclear agreement as a bargaining card to get India to join the CTBT, may have constituted a missed opportunity.

---

<sup>31</sup> Negotiations on the envisaged FMCT have been stuck in the UN Conference on Disarmament for over a decade.

<sup>32</sup> The advantage this gives India and its nuclear weapons program has been openly acknowledged by Indian policymakers. See: Subramanyam, K. (2005)

<sup>33</sup> Ashley Tellis, an advisor to the Bush administration, has downplayed the importance of this argument. Tellis holds that India's current lack of domestic sources of uranium is due to a "lack of milling and mining capacity which is being corrected". "The transient shortages of natural uranium", he says, "could disappear within the next several years." The implication, if Tellis is right, is that India would be able to increase its production of nuclear weapons in the future, regardless of the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear agreement. See: Tellis, Ashley (2006b:10)

#### 4.7 The acceptability-set of President Bush

Provided that the assumption that the preferences of President Bush did not originally coincide with most legislators is right, one may ask what made his “acceptability-set“ so large as to accommodate India on questions where the administration was likely to meet stiff resistance from large parts of Congress? The *Washington Post* reported:

U.S. officials said Bush had kept his focus on a core idea—that India is a thriving, pluralistic democracy, one of the good guys in international relations—and thus was willing to sweep away nuclear orthodoxy. The goal, an official said, was to position India to be one of the United States’ two or three closest partners. (Kessler 2006b)

Some claim that the Bush-team originally had wanted to put more constraints on India’s nuclear weapons program, but essentially caved in to India’s demands (ibid.). Others hold that the bargaining outcome— which did not put restraints on India’s nuclear weapons program— was the one that was actually desired by the key players within the administration (see Perkovich forthcoming). A report written prior to the negotiations by Ashley Tellis (2005:25), one of the advisors of the Bush administration, lends credibility to the second explanation:

By integrating India into the non-proliferation order at the cost of capping the size of its eventual nuclear deterrent [...] [the U.S. would] threaten to place New Delhi at a severe disadvantage *vis-à-vis* Beijing, a situation that could not only undermine Indian security but also U.S. interests in Asia in the face of the prospective rise of Chinese power over the long term.

Besides a simple classical “balance-of-power” rationale, there could also be business interests at stake. In selling the agreement to Congress, the potential the agreement could have as a door-opener for U.S. contracts in the nuclear industry and other sectors such as defense and aviation was strongly emphasized (see chapter six). Furthermore, the new engagement with India could be something of a bright spot for an administration that was criticized for the troubles in Iraq and Afghanistan. A *grand* “Nixon to China” approach towards India could give the President a much wanted foreign policy victory important for his legacy.



#### 4.8 The debate in India

Even as non-proliferation experts characterized the U.S. bargaining as “Santa Claus negotiating” (Weisman 2006), what cannot be ignored in this equation is the preferences and power of the counterpart. India, as any power that is strong and ascending rapidly, tends to pursue its interests with a “particular vigor and self-confidence” (Lodgaard forthcoming: 11). Clearly, the concessions that Talbott and the non-proliferation bureaucracy of President Bush had wanted to extract from India would have killed any prospects for overlapping ‘win-sets’. India, engaged in rivalry with both Pakistan and China, had made it clear early on that it would not accept any unilateral constraints on its nuclear arsenal (Kerr 2008:19).

Over the course of the negotiations, India’s bargaining power was further enhanced by the domestic opposition to the agreement. An embattled Prime Minister Singh was held hostage to the opposition he faced from the Left Front, whose support he relied upon in parliament to stay in power. A particular concern for the Left Front was that the nuclear deal would make India’s foreign policy subservient to Washington. The resistance to the nuclear agreement from the BJP, the main opposition party to the UPA-coalition, was a bit more surprising. Indeed, when the BJP was in government, they too had been pressing the Bush administration for an end to the technology denial (Mohan 2006:23-25). As an article in *Time* put it:

The BJP had also agitated vociferously against the deal, but many suspect that had the hawkish, U.S.-friendly BJP been in power, they would have more likely embraced the nuclear treaty. Cynical posturing is a fact of political life in an impoverished India where politicians pander to populist sentiment (Tharoor 2007).

Branding the ruling Singh-government as “soft” on national security may have constituted a welcoming opportunity for the BJP to divert attention from the continued internal problems after losing the 2004 elections (ibid.). Political opportunism or not, the BJP consistently maintained that the nuclear agreement would entail a negative impingement on India’s national security and sovereignty. These complaints became louder as the negotiations evolved, particularly as a result of the demands by the U.S. Congress for an abrupt cancellation of cooperation and withdrawal of equipment in the event India resumed nuclear testing.

#### **4.9 Summary**

The radical reorientation of U.S. non-proliferation policy toward India was likely to meet stiff resistance from elements of the non-proliferation bureaucracy, the opposition Democratic Party and the community of non-proliferation specialists. To maintain autonomy from these potential spoilers, the Bush administration put emphasis on secrecy in the lead up to the first announcement of the U.S.-India nuclear deal. As the following chapters will make clear, this secrecy would cause much damage, particularly in the executive's relations with Congress.

Applying concepts from two-level theory tentatively, it can be said that President Bush's 'acceptability-set' was quite broad, broader than what many legislators in Congress probably appreciated. To secure a successful domestic ratification of the endeavor, therefore, the Bush administration would have to build a strong domestic coalition in favor of the agreement and reach out to, amongst others, the Indian American community.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Indian American community—a profile**

What attributes does the Indian American community have that could make this immigrant group a potent lobby? What made it an attractive partner for both the Bush administration and the government of India in the ratification process of the nuclear agreement? These are the questions this chapter seeks to answer. First I will examine the financial, organizational and demographic characteristics of the Indian American minority. Thereafter, I will highlight the community's ties to the Bush administration and the Indian government.

#### **5.1 Socio-economic profile**

The 2006 American Community Survey estimated that Indian American households had a median household income of \$76,112, 58 percent higher than the average (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). The percentage of Indian Americans aged 25 and older with a college degree (B.A. or higher) was estimated to be 67.3 percent compared to 27.0 percent among the general population (ibid). The achievements of Indian Americans are impressive, but also reflect a “brain drain” effect: the immigrants represented the “cream of the crop” back in their ancient homeland.

Being high-achievers in the academic field, a disproportionate number of Indian-Americans are employed as lawyers, engineers, academics, financiers, and business-owners. There are 46,000 doctors and another 15,000 Indian American medical students in the United States (AAPI 2008).<sup>34</sup> As of 2000, about 300,000 Indian Americans worked in technology firms in California (Embassy of India 2000). 57.7% of Indian-Americans in the workforce are employed as managers or professionals, reflecting the high entrepreneurial skills of Indian Americans (USINPAC 2008). Indian American hotel owners, who together own more than 20,000 hotels in the US, represent over 50% of lodging properties in the economy and own almost 40% of all hotel properties in the United States (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs 2007). A 2003 study by

---

<sup>34</sup> President Obama appointed Dr.Sanjay Gupta, an Indian American CNN-reporter who is also an Assistant Professor of neurosurgery, as Surgeon General to head the U.S. Public Health Service.

Merill Lynch, a consultant firm, estimated that there were over 200,000 Indian Americans with assets worth a million dollars or more (Andersen 2006b; Kirk 2008). Considering that nearly all Indian American immigration has taken place after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, the achievements of the immigrant group represent, as one researcher has noted, “perhaps a record in U.S. social history” (Andersen 2006b).<sup>35</sup>

### **5.1.1 Fund raising**

Strong economic achievements are also being translated into an increasing rate of donations from the community into political campaigns in the United States. In the 2002-2004 election cycle, the Indian American population donated an estimated \$16 to 18 million U.S. dollars to political campaigns (Sharma 2004:9). The prime example is Piyush “Bobby” Jindal, who was elected first to Congress and then later as Governor of Louisiana. In his 2004 election campaign, Jindal was able to collect more than \$2 million dollars from his fellow members of the Indian American community (ibid).

During the 2008 presidential race, Indian Americans contributed significantly.<sup>36</sup> At one Indian American fund raiser alone, held at the Sheraton Hotel in New York, 1,200 of the nation's most prominent Indian-Americans from all across the country flew in and raised around \$2 million dollars for the Clinton campaign (Mcauliff & Kennedy 2007). A memo leaked from Obama's campaign staff described Hilary Clinton as the Democrat from Punjab, a region in India. The episode created sharp reactions within the Indian American community and Obama immediately apologized publicly in a letter to USINPAC (Kornblut 2007).

### **5.2 Organizational unity and strength**

Financial resources may be a necessary, but not a sufficient basis for establishing an effective lobby. A book by a group of Indian-American scholars, written in 2001—characterized the

---

<sup>35</sup> This 1965 law amendment opened up for greater immigration of foreign professionals, scientists and within certain professions with labor shortages.

<sup>36</sup> One news report quotes a source who estimates that Indian Americans donated around \$ 5 million each to Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and half a million to John McCain during the primaries alone. No estimates were included of contributions to other candidates. See: Anburajan, Aswini (2008)

community as “seen rich, but unheard” (Khagram et al. 2001). A news article in the *New York Times* cited political analysts who claimed Indian Americans, in the past, had too often been “content with photo opportunities and lunch invitations with politicians rather than victories on issues like immigration or trade policies” (McIntire 2006).

Organizationally, the Indian American community has been fragmented, with organizational segmentation along lingual, cultural and professional dimensions (Kirk 2008). One primary reason for these divisions has been the cleavages that can be seen within India at large. Some parts of the Indian American community have mobilized under the Hindu umbrella whereas others, more pluralistic groups have emerged that are explicitly anti-Hindutva (Kurien 2007:1). Moreover, personal rivalries have influenced both the internal dynamics, as well as relations between different Indian American organizations, presenting another obstacle to efforts to unify the community (ibid.). Indeed, former Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee once reportedly complained, only half-jokingly, that there were more Indian organizations in the United States than there are Indian-Americans (Hathaway 2004).

### **5.2.1 Organizational development**

Beginning with the 1990s, one witnessed the first emergence of national Indian American political action groups. These groups organized congressional internship programs for young Indian Americans and helped established an India caucus for lawmakers in Congress.<sup>37</sup> One reason behind the political activism may be found in a generational convergence: as the second generation of well-integrated Indian Americans became established in their careers, some began turning their organizational skills toward politics; the first generation-immigrants, meanwhile, were nearing retirement age, with greater leisure time and disposable income to pursue political interests (Kirk 2008:289).

The last stage in the organizational maturity has been the establishment of professional lobby groups. The most prominent of these, the USINPAC, was formed in 2002 by Sanjay Puri, a

---

<sup>37</sup> The Washington Leadership Program, (an internship program) seems to be bearing fruits. For example, today there are at any time more than 40 Indian American staffers working in the House and the Senate. Since its inception in 1994, a substantial number of young Indian Americans have gained internship experience. See: Andersen, Walter K. (2006b)

young IT-entrepreneur, who had been inspired by Jewish friends with experience from lobbyism (ibid:291). From a mere post box “office” USINPAC has expanded quickly and found its place in K-street at the heart of Washington’s lobby-industry. The staffers are mostly young Indian Americans with degrees from U.S. elite universities (ibid.). USINPAC now boasts a membership roster with some 60,000 members, a number that has increased rapidly because of the mobilization on the nuclear deal.<sup>38</sup> Emulating the structure of the Jewish lobby, USINPAC has national outreach with 27 different chapters across the country (USINPAC 2008).

The Jewish lobby has not only been a role model for USINPAC, the group has very actively collaborated with groups such as the American Jewish Committee on issues such as shaping legislation, arranging joint receptions for legislators, holding frequent seminars and even joint delegations to Israel and India (Hathaway 2004).<sup>39</sup> As an example of the close cooperation, the American Jewish Committee threw its weight behind the effort to get the nuclear deal passed by writing letters to all members of Congress urging them to support the U.S.-India nuclear agreement (Ghoshroy 2006:3). “Some of those active in this collaboration argue that because both communities [Indian and Jewish] are highly educated, affluent and disproportionately represented in certain professions such as medicine, engineering, education and high-tech, they share tangible interests that extended beyond opposition to Islamic radicalism“ (Hathaway 2004). In spite of its calls for unity among all Indian Americans, the close *alliance building* USINPAC has had with Jewish organizations has at the same time led to accusations of a pro-Hindu or anti-Muslim tilt of the organization (Hathaway 2004; Kurien 2007).

### **5.2.2 International outreach**

USINPAC is not only active in the United States, but is also increasingly making their presence felt in the corridors of power in India. Indian Americans affiliated with USINPAC created the

---

<sup>38</sup> These numbers are based on information from a personal interview with Sanjay Puri, Chairman of the USINPAC, and deviate from numbers referred to other places. This difference is according to Mr.Puri due to the different levels of membership that the organization offers.

<sup>39</sup> The close cooperation between the Indian and Jewish lobby goes much further back than the founding of USINPAC. For example, in the mid 1990s Ralph Nurnberger, a professional lobbyist for AIPAC was “headhunted” to become the Director of the India Abroad Center for Political Awareness, a position he held for 12 years where he helped establish *inter alia* the Washington Leadership Program for Indian Americans.

ImagIndia Institute, an increasingly influential “public diplomacy” think tank located in New Delhi.<sup>40</sup> On the nuclear deal, apart from being very active pro-deal participants in the media debate, the ImagIndia Institute circulated a research paper to all members of Indian Parliament to explain the economic benefits of the agreement, which attempted to quantify the overall economic benefits flowing from the agreement (Sharma 2007). Moreover, at the 2008 annual Diaspora conference hosted by the government of India, the ImagIndia Institute coordinated efforts to recruit over a hundred overseas Indians residing in various countries to lobby their respective governments in order to gain approval of the nuclear agreement in the multilateral NSG (Guha 2008).

### **5.2.3 The India caucus in the U.S. Congress**

You see the goodwill. You see the largest caucus in Congress. Someone has been pushing this, it’s not a coincidence. (Sanjay Puri, interview 30.09.08)

In the U.S. Congress there are a large number of ethnic caucuses, but perhaps as a sign of its importance, the India caucus is the biggest with 176 members in the House of Representatives and 40 members in the Senate (U.S.-India Friendship Net 2007). That constitutes nearly 40 percent of all legislators in both chambers. The India caucus in the House was established already in 1993, largely in response to the very negative views towards India in Congress and the State Department, particularly on non-proliferation and its human rights policies in Kashmir.<sup>41</sup> The caucus, initiated by an organization called the Indian American Forum for Political Education, secured support from a few Congressmen from New Jersey, a state with one of the highest concentrations of Indian Americans. The mission was to “educate Congress members on issues concerning India, so that the Congress could in turn question the administration and influence policy” (Diwjani 2000). Hosting conferences, caucus days and events whenever there

---

<sup>40</sup> Robinder Sachdev, President of the Imagindia Institute is a co-founder of USINPAC.

<sup>41</sup> In the 1990s, India was almost subjected to economic sanctions several times by the US Congress for perceived violations of civil rights in Jammu, Kashmir and Punjab. At one stage, New Delhi escaped economic sanctions being imposed by Congress by a margin of just three votes. In addition, one Congressman, Dan Burton, proposed “annual” amendments to slash all development assistance to India, many of which almost passed. See: Hathaway, Robert (2001:28)

are important visitors from India, the caucus serves as an institutionalized dialogue between Indian Americans and legislators (Gottschlich 2008).

Robert Hathaway (2001:28) notes how Indian American publications like *India Abroad* gave extensive coverage of the caucus and “encouraged its readers to urge their congressional representatives to join...seeing no downside to enlisting in the caucus and sensing an easy way to please constituents, House members readily complied.” However, although described by some as a “cash cow” for campaign contributions, Indian American organizations increasingly expect something in return (Haniffa 2005). USINPAC’s Sanjay Puri puts it this way:

Also, this caucus, in many ways like it is used by many members, it is for fund raising. So you come to this caucus, and say, I like India, I support India, I like Indian Americans... and... then you vote against our issues, and then you ask us for contributions? No... So I think *that*, kind of, puts it black and white. If you are in this caucus, you’d better have a very good reason for voting against our issues. Otherwise, don’t join the caucus. (Interview 30.09.08)

The “Friends of India” caucus, the first country-based caucus in the history of the Senate, was formed in 2004 after close involvement by the ambassador of India (BBC 2004). Perhaps as a sign of how well-connected the Indian American activists are, it was co-chaired by Hilary Clinton and enrolled both Senate majority and minority leaders. Though constituting a loosely connected grouping, several researchers have noted how the caucus has provided India with an “institutional base of support” in the U.S. Congress, important in raising the awareness about India and negating the influence of Pakistan (Hathaway 2001, 2004; Rubinoff 2005).

#### **5.2.4 The nuclear agreement: Bringing the community together**

“They’re tripping all over each other to get behind this,” Gary Ackerman, a former India caucus chair noted of the Indian-American mobilization on the nuclear deal: “On a scale of 10, this is probably a 15 for them.”(McIntire 2006). Serving as a symbol of India’s position in the world and its relations with the United States, the nuclear agreement pressed a number of hot buttons that unified the community politically.

The U.S.-India Friendship Council is a case in point. Comprising six different organizations, with influential organizations representing the hotel owners and doctors of Indian origin among



them, the grouping was formed as an ad-hoc umbrella organization for the purpose of pushing the nuclear agreement through Congress.<sup>42</sup> As leader of the powerful grouping Swadesh Chatterjee points out, the enthusiasm was unprecedented:

People were so generous when I raised the money. It took me only 24 hours to raise 1 million dollars. [...] They [the members] are personally very well-off and they believe very strongly in this cause. Quite a number of people did go and raise \$60,000, a 100,000, 40,000, 10,000, depending on their capacity (interview 16.10.08)

### 5.3 Demographic factors: Geographic concentration and voter turn out

Currently growing at an annual rate of 10.5 percent, the size of the Indian American community is expanding rapidly (USINPAC 2007). A remarkable number of up to 90 per cent of registered Indian American voters participate in elections, which should make the community an influential voting block (Gottschlich 2008: 2). However, there are two major limitations: First, close to 1 million Indian Americans don't have a U.S. citizenship, according to the estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau (2006). The vast majority of the Indian Diaspora in the United States arrived sometime during the last 20 years. Thus, the number of people eligible to vote becomes markedly reduced. Indian Americans increasing influence in U.S. politics is therefore more due to their position as a "donor machine" rather than as a "voter machine".

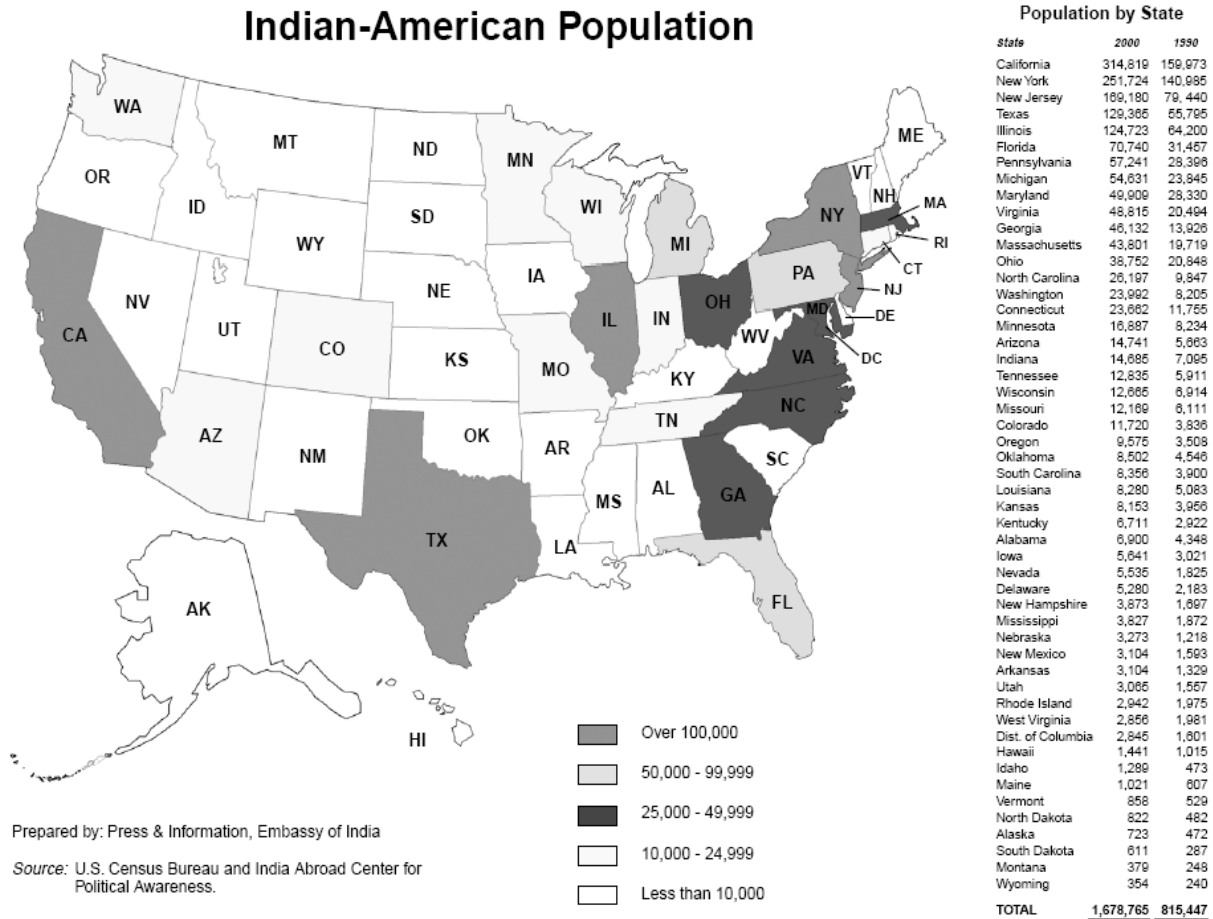
**Figure 5.1: Indian American population in the United States by decade**

Year	Number
1920	2,544
1930	3,130
1940	2,405
1950	2,398
1960	8,746
1970	13,149
1980	387,221
1990	815,447
2000	1,678,765

---

<sup>42</sup> The organizations that were brought under this "umbrella group" were: The Association of Indians in America (AIA), Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE), National Federation of Indian Associations (NFIA), the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), and Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA).

Figure 5.2: Patterns of Indian American settlement<sup>43</sup>



<sup>43</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau makes annual estimates, but the decennial count is the only comprehensive overview. The last was held in 2000.

Second, the community is relatively dispersed geographically. Although there are certain regional concentrations of Indian Americans in California, Chicago, Detroit, Houston and the New York metropolitan area, the settlement pattern of Indian Americans, according to one researcher, “resembles the average American population to an astonishing degree” (Gottschlich 2006:18).<sup>44</sup> Contrary to assumptions in the literature on ethnic interest groups, Andersen (2006b) claims that this dispersal works to the benefit of the Indian American community; because of its wealth and organizational skills it can give Indian Americans a broad impact across the country.

#### **5.4 Ties to the motherland**

Political activism among Indian Americans predates the attention it has received in recent years from the Indian government. Indeed, in official language referred to as Non-Residential Indians (NRI’s), Indian Americans and others from the over 20 million large Diaspora were in the past often dubbed “not-required Indians” (The Economist 2003). When the BJP came to power, however, this started changing. The Indian government initiated a High Level Commission on the Indian Diaspora. The report of the Commission highlighted how the Diaspora could be both a political and economic asset to India (see Government of India 2002).<sup>45</sup>

Following the recommendations of the report, a Ministry of Overseas Affairs was established exclusively to reach out to Indians living abroad. Moreover, the report prompted the government to permit Indians living abroad dual citizenship. The Ministry of Overseas Affairs, which hosts annual “Diaspora conferences” addressed by the Prime Minister, helps keep a constant focus on how India can reap the benefits of its “extended” nation abroad (Mohan 2003).

---

<sup>44</sup> Kirk (2008) actually claims Indian Americans largely fulfill the criteria of “geographic concentration”. He does not, however, encounter much support of this claim from other researchers such as Andersen (2006b) and Gottschlich (2006). The only statistical evidence the author could find is referred in figure 8.1 and, in a comparative perspective with other ethnic groups, it would indicate that Indian Americans are fairly dispersed group.

<sup>45</sup> In response to the earthquake that hit India’s Gujarat state in 2001, the American India Foundation (AIF) was founded by influential Indian Americans, reportedly at the urging of former President Bill Clinton (who serves as the foundation’s chair). The AIF has raised more than \$35 million in its first five years of existence, fighting water scarcity, thereby making the community a philanthropic force. See: Kamdar, Mira (2008:10)

The economic reasons for Mother India to reach out to its Diaspora are obvious.<sup>46</sup> India is now the world's top destination for remittances. Of an estimated \$27 billion that migrants send home, 44% come from North America (Patnaik 2008). Remittances still account for three times the size of all foreign direct investments (FDI) into India, but following the example of China, the Indian government is in the process of easing restrictions to attract more FDI from its Diaspora (Zhu 2007).

The potential “political assets” that a large Diaspora can bring has also been recognized by top policymakers. In the words of former BJP minister of External Affairs, Yashwant Sinha, Indian Americans are an “extremely important source of support for the Indian Government in the execution of its policies through the influence and respect they command” (Mohan 2003). The particular attention given to the Indian American community is also demonstrated in the way the Indian government has dispatched its own “NRI-ambassador” to the United States, to work exclusively on engagement with the Indian American community (Kamdar 2004:342).

With regards to the nuclear deal, Indian American community groups, though denying in any way being directed by the government of India, consulted with their representatives on how to lobby Congress (McIntire 2006). A diplomatic representative of India in Washington D.C. confirmed having contact with the Indian American interest groups, but pointed out that there is nothing abnormal with an embassy keeping in close touch with its Diaspora abroad, saying: “We have meetings with them, they have meetings with us. It's a pretty intensive engagement” (Interview 26.10.08).

### **5.5. Ties to the Bush administration**

The value of having the Indian American community lobby Congress on the nuclear deal was not missed by the Bush administration either. Invited Indian American groups received “training” by the State Department in non-proliferation issues to better lobby Congress. According to

---

<sup>46</sup> An article in the *New York Times* cites a report by McKinsey & Company which found that the Indian Diaspora generates an annual income equal to 35 percent of India's GDP. See Waldman, Amy (2003)

USINPAC's Sanjay Puri:

I would say we had pretty significant contact [with the Bush administration] because they wanted to make sure that this got through Congress. We are not experts on thorium and uranium. So to make sure we were educated, that the thousands of Indian Americans that we had put up on the street, nobody of these knew the difference between IAEA and NSG, we said, you know, we need to know when we talk to lawmakers. Most of us are not nuclear engineers or scientists. What we care about is the relationship (interview 30.09.08)

The close contact with the executive was also confirmed by Swadesh Chatterjee, who noted: “One meeting we had at the White House, we met Karl Rove. Then we had quite a number of meetings with the State Department and conference calls with the White House” (Interview 16.10.08).” Chatterjee led a delegation of no less than 200 Indian American community leaders to the White House in May 2006, besides attending “victory celebrations” in 2006 and 2008. The meetings with the State Department included briefings by top officials such as U.S. Chief Negotiator Nicholas Burns and Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Richard Boucher. In addition, through the conference calls with the White House, Indian American groups were kept constantly updated and encouraged to lobby Congress (Haniffa 2006a; Krishnaswami 2008).<sup>47</sup>

## 5.6 Summary

Indian American political activism has been building quietly for some time and predates any close involvement with government representatives from the U.S. and India. The nuclear deal, however, can be understood as the catalyst that has paved the way for a consolidation of this ethnic lobby (Kirk 2008). The close ties established with state actors in India and the United States gave the lobby access to information which in turn enhanced the community's ability to lobby legislators.

---

<sup>47</sup> Unrelated to the nuclear deal, but perhaps as a sign of its close contact with the Bush-presidency, influential Indian Americans are actually permitted to hold an annual Diwali-party at the White House. Originally arranged through personal acquaintances to the President, it has now become a tradition. See: Haniffa, Aziz (2006g)

The Indian American community displays both strong organizational skills and financial wealth. Demographic factors (being a geographically dispersed group that does not make up a very strong voting block) should theoretically limit Indian Americans' scope of influence. It could be, however, that this geographical dispersal actually works to the advantage of the community, given the organizational skills and the financial wealth that the group exhibits.

The India caucus in both houses of Congress represents an interesting construction: For sure, at least among Indian Americans, it has created an expectation of support from legislators on issues that are important to them, such as the nuclear deal was. Indian American groups, it seems, have become more assertive and increasingly want something in return after generous contributions to legislators, not only lunch and photo opportunities.

## Chapter 6:

# Congress: From Skepticism to Landslide Approval

When President Bush announced the initiative in 2005, the reaction on Capitol Hill was one of complete surprise. That is because the administration gave absolutely zero forewarning to Congress. So there was surprise and skepticism, even among Republicans.

(Interview, Congressional staffer I, 14.10.08 )

The joint statement President Bush and Prime Minister Singh had presented in July 2005 represented no fixed agreement, but rather the basic framework of such a deal. Joe Biden, the highest ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, characterized the initiative as a “gamble” (Tate 2005). Even usually reliable allies of the Bush administration such as Republican Senator Richard Lugar expressed concern that the U.S.-India nuclear deal would undermine the NPT (McIntire 2006). This chapter tracks the nuclear agreement’s passage through Congress from the hearings that were held on the matter in the fall of 2005—which reflected considerable congressional skepticism—to the agreement’s eventual landslide approval in 2006 and 2008.

### 6.1 Bush presents a bill

The Bush administration, eager to get early approval, formally introduced a bill in March 2006, without even having completed a finalized nuclear agreement with India.<sup>48</sup> The administration’s bill would essentially have authorized a *future* agreement with India—leaving the final terms in considerable part to the U.S. and Indian governments to negotiate—without any requirement for final approval of the agreement by Congress (Weiss 2007:439). The administration’s bill even

---

<sup>48</sup> By March 2006, the administration had finalized negotiations with India over a separation plan for India’s nuclear facilities. The negotiations of a formal agreement specifying the technical details of the agreement, a 123-agreement, still awaited.

allowed the president extended authority to waive all sanctions, endowed in the Atomic Energy Act, that would result from an Indian nuclear test (ibid).<sup>49</sup>

Both the Republican and the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives made it clear that they did not necessarily support the legislation, even as they agreed to introduce the bill to Congress (Brinkley 2006). As a reporter from *Time* described the situation:

Even though it is too early to tell whether opponents will build enough momentum to block the landmark agreement, what's already striking is how silent—and unenthusiastic—Congress seems over an agreement the Bush Administration hails as critical for cementing a strategic alliance with the world's largest democracy (Waller 2006).

When the Bush administration presented its bill, the *New York Times* reported a bipartisan scepticism on Capitol Hill and an emerging “alliance of conservative Republicans, who are concerned that the [nuclear] deal will encourage Iranian intransigence, and liberal Democrats, who charge that the Bush administration has effectively scrapped the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty” (Weisman 2006).

### **6.1.1 The Bush administration makes its case**

The Bush administration stressed how the nuclear agreement would lay the foundation for a strategic partnership with India, a rising global power, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The administration claimed this strategic vision could not be fully realized, unless the nuclear “irritant”, which had complicated efforts to improve bilateral relations over the last 30 years, could be removed once and for all. Rice also warned Congress in hearings that if the deal got defeated or altered in any fundamental way, “all the hostility and suspicion of the past would be redoubled” between the two countries (Rice 2006:6).

---

<sup>49</sup> Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Henry Hyde commented: “[T]he original Bill was conceived in a profoundly unsatisfactory manner in several aspects. It would have granted the administration an unprecedented and sweeping freedom of action by waiving almost wholesale the existing laws regarding civil nuclear commerce with foreign countries, even as it reduced the role of Congress to a bare minimum. In effect, Congress was being asked to remove itself from the process entirely and abandon its constitutional role.” See: Ramachandran, R. (2006)



Second, the administration pointed out how the initiative would enhance India's energy security. Civil nuclear energy cooperation would limit India's demand for fossil fuels and thereby also ease pressure on global energy markets and be in the U.S. self interest. Third, nuclear energy was presented as a way for India to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gasses, shifting India's demand for energy away from burning coal, which today accounts for around 50 percent of India's total use of energy (ibid.).

Fourth, the Secretary of State emphasized how the agreement would create new opportunities for American businesses, particularly, but not exclusively in the nuclear sector. In her testimony on the nuclear deal, Rice also pointed to corporations like Boeing, Intel and Microsoft and their expansion into the Indian market. Indeed, Rice even went so far as to say: "At its core, our initiative with India is not simply a government-to-government effort. It was crafted with the private sector firmly in mind" (ibid: 10).

Finally, countering the claims of the non-proliferation lobby, the Bush administration claimed the civil nuclear agreement represented a "net gain" for non-proliferation efforts, a claim which was boosted when IAEA-boss Mohamed El-Baradei expressed support of the agreement (El-Baradei 2006). Moreover, it was emphasized that India had a good non-proliferation record of not exporting nuclear secrets or material. Additionally, India's acceptance of safeguards on its civilian nuclear program, representing a total 65% of all its reactors, would imply much greater IAEA oversight and safety than without an agreement. "We are better off having India most of the way in, rather than all the way out", Rice stated, claiming that the agreement would bring India closer to the NPT-mainstream (Rice 2006: 11).

## **6.2 What did critics say?**

The streams of critique followed multiple paths. Many pointed to the potentially dangerous precedence the agreement could bring. A key complaint was that U.S. non-proliferation policy had become "more self-serving, and less principled". The fear was that the non-proliferation rules the U.S. had initiated and championed through the NPT would be perceived as less binding

and more optional to member states. According to this argument, “Russia and China would feel less inhibited about engaging in nuclear cooperation that the U.S. might find risky and objectionable with special friends of their own – Iran and Pakistan” (Einhorn 2005).<sup>50</sup>

Marking a major departure from the “country-neutral” norms that for decades had defined the regime, the U.S.-India nuclear agreement was also seen by many as undermining what was the basic bargain of the NPT—which obligates signatories to the treaty to forswear nuclear weapon ambitions in exchange for peaceful civil nuclear cooperation. What signals would it send out to other signatories of the NPT when India was given access to civil technology *and* the ability to keep its weapons, indeed even the *possibility* to expand its production of fissile material to make more nuclear weapons? Critics complained this could complicate the case against Iran: Indeed, why should Iran be punished on mere suspicion of weapons intent when India, a non-member—condemned as a “nuclear pariah” less than ten years earlier—now could “have its cake and eat it too”?

Many arms control experts claimed the Bush administration should have bargained harder, and that India—in order to deserve the deal—should have taken on more non-proliferation obligations (Einhorn 2005). As pointed out by Sandy Spector (Council on Foreign Relations 2008), a non-proliferation expert:

When you go down the list of elements of the deal, and then you ask, "What are we getting for ending this embargo?" there isn't very much. India's agreed to continue its moratorium on nuclear testing. That's fine, but they were doing that already. They've agreed to adopt export controls. That's fine, but that's already required by UN Security Council Resolution 1540. They've agreed to place certain civilian facilities under inspection. That's nice, but they're not going to allow inspections of a large group of other facilities. This group includes all of the facilities contributing directly to India's nuclear weapon program. So from the inspection standpoint you don't get much.

Apart from the focus on non-proliferation, there were also claims that the Bush administration had exaggerated the benefits of the deal. Ashton B. Carter (2007), a former official in the

---

<sup>50</sup> Almost immediately after the U.S.-India nuclear agreement was passed in October 2008, China agreed to sell Pakistan nuclear reactors. See: International Herald Tribune (2008)

Clinton-administration, summarized some of the critiques of the Bush administration's arguments:

What did the United States get for its gift to the Indians? The Bush administration initially made some over-the-top claims—for example, that nuclear commerce with India would be big business for the much-shrunken U.S. nuclear industry and that nuclear power would significantly blunt India's impact on the global oil market and the environment. In fact, Russian, French, and other foreign firms might benefit most from liberalized nuclear trade with India. And nuclear power will not fuel India's cars and trucks; oil will. Nor will nuclear power stop the growth of polluting coal burning, which is needed to meet India's increasing electricity demand. Some of the Bush administration's arguments seem to have been made in a desperate attempt to claim a rare foreign policy victory. The benefit sought by most Americans who favored the India deal was a "strategic partnership": the important but elusive long-term goal of having India—a democratic, multicultural, strategically located state—as a new partner for the United States. But there is little evidence so far that India's policies across the board have changed in favor of the United States.<sup>51</sup>

### **6.2.1 The question of Iran**

Carter's words, describing the nuclear agreement as a "gift" to India is quite instructive for the American debate. Rightly or wrongly, a perception held by many in Congress was that the agreement was asymmetric, that India was given a de facto nuclear weapon power status and access to the international nuclear market upfront in exchange for what was seen as highly moderate non-proliferation concessions and insecure strategic gains for the United States. These gains would be contingent on India's future behavior.

India's good relations with Iran, a close partner through the non-aligned movement, had hardly played a major role in U.S.-India relations until September 2005 when they became politicized after India's foreign minister, Natwar Singh, made public remarks supportive of Iran's position on the nuclear issue (Fair 2007:146). Members from across the political spectrum in Congress

---

<sup>51</sup> As an example, in the fall of 2006, India participated at a meeting organized by the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana. Among the guests, apart from Prime Minister Singh, was Hugo Chavez and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. One analyst referred to the content of the meeting as "thumping anti-American". See Carter, Ashton (2007)

made it clear that India's failure to side with the U.S. on the Iran nuclear issue would jeopardize any congressional support for the nuclear deal (ibid.).

India eventually voted against Iran in the IAEA later in September 2005 and February 2006. The second of these votes recommended that Iran be referred to the UN Security Council for violating international obligations. Mr. Singh's government, which also came under pressure from the U.S. to abandon a pipeline-project with Iran, was accused by the opposition of betraying a friendly country by "capitulating" to U.S. pressure.

Moreover, press reports of Iranian naval ships visiting India's Kochi port for "training" appeared right before congressional hearings on the nuclear agreement in March 2006. The Bush administration, under heavy questioning first denied the exercise took place and then dismissed it as exaggerated (ibid: 146). Other Congressional reports revealed Indian transfers of heavy-water and chemical-related technology transfers to Teheran (Kronstadt 2006:4). In July, just days after the House of Representatives held its vote on the nuclear agreement, the State Department released an intelligence report, much delayed, which made clear that two Indian firms had provided Iran with missile technology (Linzer 2006). Critics asserted the report was delayed for tactical reasons (ibid).

### **6.3 The "India Lobby" at Play**

After the nuclear cooperation plans were announced, media reports were quite critical and the Bush administration was forced on to the defensive. Speaking about the initial response to the nuclear initiative among legislators, Swadesh Chatterjee, leader of the Indian American Friendship Council, claimed the agreement was "dead on arrival" in Congress (interview 19.10.08). Sanjay Puri, Chairman of the USINPAC, also emphasized how many lawmakers voiced strong concerns about the NPT-regime. However, Puri also highlighted how many lawmakers had little prior knowledge of what the civil nuclear initiative was about: "You can't expect every member of Congress to be informed about all issues. So, a large part of our job was to educate them (interview 30.09.08)." Yet, as he also points out: "Then you had many traditional friends of India, who we knew we could count on, [who] said yes, it is time India is taken out of this nuclear isolation (ibid.)."

Not all of India's traditional friends on Capitol Hill were forthcoming, however. When a dozen members of the India caucus, predominantly Democrats, came out against the agreement, it created calls in the Indian American press for "tougher admission standards" to the caucus (Krishnaswami 2006). Newspapers and journals established for the Indian American community, like *India Abroad* and *News India*, carried a constant stream of articles explaining the bill and reporting on who had — and who had not — expressed public support. "Behind this reporting was a not-so-subtle message that those opposing the bill might lose the vote—and the money — of the Indian American community in their constituencies" (Andersen 2006b).

The Indian American Friendship Council sponsored several ads in newspapers around the country, including full-page color advertisements in the *Washington Post*, to urge fellow Indian Americans to support the agreement. Indian American groups, the *New York Times* reported, were "organizing fund-raisers and blanketing Capitol Hill with briefings, phone calls and petitions" (McIntire 2006).<sup>52</sup> As Swadesh Chatterjee points out:

Our goal was to let Congressmen and Senators know that the whole Indian American community is behind this [...] We bombarded Congressmen with thousands of letters and e-mails. We had signature-campaigns, letters from all across the country with hundreds of names. We jammed their fax machines (Interview 16.10).

On May 3 2006, over 200 Indian American community leaders from all across the U.S. went door to door to their respective Congressmen and Senators to press for the nuclear deal after a meeting at the White House (Haniffa 2006a).

Before that, there were only five sponsors of the bill, after this event in Washington it went from five to ten to fifteen so that in the end we had 45 co-sponsors of the bill. The ball started moving and everybody came and joined to support it. (Chatterjee, interview, 16.10).

16 out of the 45 original co-sponsors who publicly backed the U.S.-India deal were from Texas, a fact largely attributed to the intense lobbying from the very active Indian American community

---

<sup>52</sup> USINPAC organized no less than 17 fund-raisers on Capitol Hill from January to June 2006. See: Forsythe, Michael & Veena Trehan (2006)

leaders there (Andersen 2006b). Indian American community leaders in Texas had counterparts in every state with a significant Indian American population (ibid.) “A lot of people don’t understand this. This was a domestic issue, not only a foreign policy issue”, USINPAC’s Sanjay Puri points out (Interview 30.09.08).

#### **6.4 The two-step process**

After a proposal by congressman Tom Lantos in May 2006, a two-step legislative process that would delay a final vote was adopted. First, Congress would vote on the *principle* of making a “unique exception” allowing for nuclear trade with India, a non-NPT member. The bill would simultaneously hammer out the conditions under which Congress would consider this exception. If this was accepted, the executive would have to negotiate the final, technical aspects of the nuclear agreement with India and achieve approval from the IAEA and NSG before the bill could come back to Congress for a final up or down vote. Accordingly, when the Senate and House produced their own bills, sanctions that would result from an Indian nuclear test were retained (Weiss 2007:439). In the next couple of weeks and months that followed, lobbying efforts for and against the agreement grew in intensity.

#### **6.5 Persistence, stamina and financial muscles**

The first voting on the nuclear deal was announced to be held in June and July 2006 through the Foreign Relations Committees of the House and the Senate. In the lead up to the votes, Senator Barack Obama—one of the members on the Senate Committee, commented: “there appears to be a very coordinated effort to have every Indian-American person that I know contact me” (Forsythe & Trehan 2006). The persistence and stamina of the Indian American groups was a very notable feature. Swadesh Chatterjee elaborates:

I personally had to go to my Congressman eight times, and after the fourth time, he said, Ok, I will support it, you are my friend, I will do it for you. I said no, I don’t want you to do it for me, I want you to do it because you believe in this (interview 16.10.08).

The lobbying efforts of the Indian American community were sometimes very direct. Ramesh Kapur, a high ranking member of the Democratic Party, who attended the two Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee conferences in California and New York in the lead up to

the 2006 fall elections, privately told then-House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi that Indian Americans were “watching the deal” (Kirk 2008:295). Kapur’s message was reinforced when some 95 percent of the New York meeting’s fund-raising target was met by Indian-Americans alone (ibid.)

Daryl Kimball, leader of the Arms Association, a non-proliferation advocacy group heading the campaign against the agreement, highlighted some of the efforts of his opponents in the Indian American lobby:

I could just mention one thing that I’m aware of, I didn’t spend as much time to find out about all this, but you know, the campaign record shows that a guy named Ken Ajars, who was a wealthy Indian American, hosted a fund raiser for Joe Biden, on June 30 2006, which was about two days after the Senate Foreign Relations committee held its vote on the version of what was to become the Hyde Act. At that event 30 000 dollars were raised for Joe Biden’s re-election campaign. I’m sure that happened in other cases too... (Interview 15.10.08).

Even though the *views* of vocal non-proliferation advocates was frequently reported in the news media, as Perkovich (forthcoming:13) observes; “they[non-proliferation groups] were unable to mobilize financial contributions or blocks of potential election votes to compete with the Indian Diaspora and business communities for congressional favor.”

## **6.6 The killer amendments**

After key Democratic Senators, such as Joe Biden, came out in favor of the agreement and the preliminary vote in both the House and the Senate Foreign Relations Committees had indicated an ample majority in favor of the agreement, it became clear that the real battle would be not over whether or not the agreement would get the nod, but over the *amendments* that Congress would attach to the deal.<sup>53</sup>

The sensitivity of the nuclear question in India meant the concrete wording of the legislation would be of crucial importance. Pointing to the strong domestic opposition at home, India’s

---

<sup>53</sup> The nuclear agreement passed with an overwhelming 37-5 in the House Foreign Relations Committee and 15-2 in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran made it clear on a trip to the United States that “any amendments will kill the deal” (Bidwai 2006). A large segment of Congress, nonetheless, was unhappy and wanted to attach more conditions. At one point, rumors said the number of potential “killer amendments” could number eighteen (Haniffa 2006b). The U.S.-India Friendship Council, knowing the stakes were high, sent out “SOS” messages to congressmen, imploring them to reject any amendments (Haniffa 2006c).

In the House of Representatives, at least three “killer amendments” that could have scuppered the agreement were defeated. An amendment by Representative Howard Berman requiring the United States to withhold transfers of fuel until India ceases fissile material production for weapons lost by 241-185. Another amendment which would have the U.S. audit India’s fissile material stock annually was rejected by a 268-155 margin. The one overwhelming issue, however, was India’s relationship to Iran. A third amendment, offered by Ed Markey, tried explicitly to link India’s support for the U.S. non-proliferation campaign against Iran as a binding condition to be included in the agreement. The amendment was defeated 235-192.

A similar amendment was proposed in the Senate. Senator Barbara Boxer introduced an amendment which would set a ban on all military-to-military contact between India and Iran as a pre-condition to the agreement. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 59 to 38 votes. Joe Biden, the chair proceeding over the debate, who had come out in active support of the agreement, told the media he was positively “surprised” by the extent of support against the Boxer-amendment (Haniffa 2008d).

After hearings in April and May, the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee considered bills in late June 2006 that would provide an exception for India from certain provisions of the Atomic Energy Act related to the signing of a peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement. On July 26, 2006, the House passed its version of the legislation by a vote of 359 to 68. On November 16, 2006, the Senate approved a similar bill by a vote of 85 to 12.



## **6.7 Back to the negotiating table**

The Hyde Act, in spite of the defeat of the “killer amendments” in the U.S. Congress, came under heavy critique in India. The final 123-agreement, that was to spell out the technical details of the bilateral nuclear cooperation therefore required hard negotiations over a period of months during the spring of 2007.<sup>54</sup> The Bush administration could not ignore the specific elements of law written into the Hyde Act pertaining to a mandated cut-off and the right of return of transferred items and materials in the case of an Indian nuclear detonation. Prime Minister Singh, meanwhile, was under heavy domestic pressure from the opposition right-wingers who claimed such provisions put India’s nuclear sovereignty in peril. The text of the 123-agreement, therefore, was rather vague on the issue of the consequences that would follow an Indian nuclear test (Lodgaard forthcoming:10).

The release of the text of the finalized 123-agreement did not silence critics in India. Opponents continued to make reference to sections of the Hyde Act which they opposed. Statements from Stephen Rademaker, a former Bush administration official, which suggested that India’s anti-Iran votes at the IAEA had indeed been coerced, reinforced perceptions in India of “hidden costs” attached to the deal (Varadarajan 2007). Not willing to risk early elections at this point, Prime Minister Singh called his counterpart President Bush in late October 2007 to inform him that the agreement would be put on hold until domestic consensus could be achieved in India (Page 2007).

### **6.7.1 Indian Americans lobby in India**

Against the prospect of a collapse of the agreement, several Indian American groups dispatched delegations to strengthen the pro-deal lobbying in India. USINPAC, being one of them, sent a ten-member delegation to meet with Prime Minister Singh, the leadership of BJP and the Left Front. Prime Minister Singh reportedly asked the group to try to influence the opposition, whilst the media highlighted how Indian Americans were involved in the shuttle diplomacy between the

---

<sup>54</sup> The agreement was made on the basis of Section 123 in the US Atomic Energy Act, hence the references to “the 123 Agreement”.

government and the opposition (Mitra 2007; The Hindu 2007). Asked about the role of USINPAC in lobbying in India, Sanjay Puri responded:

We go often to India, a lot of Indian Americans do. In USINPAC we specifically take delegations of influential people in the sense they have done a lot for this [U.S.-India] relationship. We have access to the political leadership in India too. We were able to explain to the leadership, in many cases how the Americans felt and how they also need to understand the other side's point of view. So we were able to do that because we are part of the system, we are kind of like a bridge. But once, in one delegation, we had to ask what the hell is going on? We, in USINPAC, are representing 60,000 Indian Americans who are neither nuclear scientists nor engineers, but doctors, IT-people, taking time off from their work, to push this (Interview 30.09.08).

USINPAC and other Indian American organizations made no secret of their disappointment at the BJP's stance on the deal. Given that the BJP is widely believed to have tapped significant donations from the Diaspora, particularly in the U.S., its stance on the nuclear deal may have come at a price.<sup>55</sup> Apart from a few defectors, however, the BJP did not change its official position the nuclear deal. Swadesh Chatterjee and the U.S.-India Friendship Council lobbied fervently, among others, the ruling Communist Party leaders in West-Bengal, and were thought to have made a "little dent" on the uncompromising stance of the Communists (Haniffa 2007a).

After heavy pressure from the Singh-government, the Left Front-coalition gave a reluctant nod to allow the government to negotiate a separate safeguards agreement with the IAEA, one of several major steps needed to implement the deal. The Left Front issued the threat, however, that any further steps, beyond opening negotiations with the IAEA, could not be taken without the support of the Left Front. Should the government go further, the Left Front threatened it would withdraw its support for the Singh-coalition in parliament and thus cause it to fall.

After the IAEA-agreement was negotiated in May, the nuclear agreement was again put on hold until the Singh-government decided to go ahead in July 2008, regardless of the furious

---

<sup>55</sup> Rubinoff (2005:183) claims the Indian American community has become a magnet for politicians engaged in fundraising for electoral campaigns in India. Though data on this is difficult to find, it is widely believed that the BJP through its affiliate groups, such as the Vatan Hitkari Party and the Overseas Friends of BJP, has been especially active among the expatriate community in the United States (ibid.).

opposition from the Left. As promised, the Left Front moved to withdraw their support for the Congress-dominated government and called for a vote of no-confidence in parliament. Prime Minister Singh convinced the Samajwadi Party, a regional party from Uttar Pradesh which had previously argued strongly against the nuclear agreement, to change its position on the nuclear deal, essentially in exchange for electoral cooperation with the Congress Party in that state. That was sufficient to tip the balance and to save the government in the Indian parliament, and thereby also the fate of the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement.

### **6.8 Back to Congress in a hurry**

After securing approval from the NSG in the beginning of September 2008, the nuclear agreement came back to Congress on September 10. The Bush administration, even as it was keen to seal a foreign policy victory before it went out of office, faced significant hurdles to do so. Lawmakers' attention had been diverted to deal with the growing financial crisis. Another problem was the procedural hurdles. The Senate's complex rules meant that even a single senator could interfere with the necessary "unanimous consent" needed to put the deal to a vote. (Kerr 2008:6).

To put the deal on "fast track", Howard Berman, now chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee had to be persuaded. Berman had been highly critical of the Hyde Act in 2006. Would the Democrats, controlling both houses of Congress deny President George Bush a foreign policy victory at the end of his term? News media in India reported how the White House "roped in the Indian American community to influence reluctant senators" (Kumar 2008).

It is learnt that the administration reached out to a small group of powerful members of the Indian American community through a conference call. From the administration side, the conference call had the participation of senior officials of the White House, the National Security Council and the State Department. One of the things that the administration conveyed to the community leaders is the imperative to start reaching out to Congressional leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate very similar to the lines that had been done in the run up to the passage of the Hyde Act in 2006 (Krishnaswami 2008).

Following a dinner at the residence of the Indian ambassador, a core group of two dozen Indian American community activists under the leadership of Swadesh Chatterjee met with Under

Secretary of State, Bill Burns, for a briefing, and later with the U.S.-India Business Council to strategize on how to lobby Congress (Haniffa 2008c). Community activists all across the country were advised to contact their congressional representatives in order to get the deal passed (ibid.).

In the end, none of the reluctant Senators decided to oppose the bill coming up for a vote. On “overtime”, as Congress was busy with the bail-out plan to rescue financial markets, both chambers of Congress passed the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement with a vote of 86-12 in the Senate and 298-117 in the House of Representatives.

## **6.9 Summary**

In the United States, a widely held perception was that the nuclear agreement provided asymmetric benefits to India. This led to efforts from the U.S. Congress to “rebalance” the agreement. A number of amendments were offered which sought to condition the deal on India’s policy toward Iran or India accepting more non-proliferation obligations. This was seen in New Delhi as U.S. attempts to “change the goalposts” from those which had been agreed upon in the Joint Statement of 2005. The pressure, particularly from the U.S. Congress, reverberated and created a domestic backlash in India, thus reducing India’s ‘win-set’. These developments meant the agreement balanced on a razor-thin line in order to achieve overlapping ‘win-sets’.

Indian American groups were active both in the United States and India. Their relative importance and the extent to which they mattered in the *U.S.* ratification process, is the theme for the next chapter.

## Chapter 7:

### Did they matter?

How was it possible to achieve ratification— through a Congress controlled by Democrats— of an agreement representing such a dramatic departure from previous non-proliferation policy? Where, when and how *could* the Indian American community have an impact? Corresponding with my second research question in the introductory chapter, this chapter seeks to assess the role of the Indian American community in the ratification process in the United States. As any evaluation of the impact of the Indian American groups' risks being heavily exaggerated without a consideration of other pull-factors, I start this chapter by presenting four alternative explanations (two different strategies of the Bush-administration, procedural rules and the role of other lobbyists) behind Congress's ratification of the agreement before I turn to the efforts of the Indian American community.<sup>56</sup>

#### 7.1 The “strategy of secrecy” created a *fait accompli*

At least a part of the explanation as to how this dramatic U.S. policy shift became possible has to take into account the tactical strategies applied by the Bush-team to carry it out. It kept potential spoilers both from within the non-proliferation bureaucracy and Congress out of the process leading up to the first announcement of the deal in 2005. These constituents would probably have demanded concessions from India that would have been unacceptable to the latter. Once announced, the agreement with India was difficult to undo. The substantive issue, India having nuclear weapons wasn't going to change anyway—and past policy hadn't worked to change that

---

<sup>56</sup> Three of the explanations I present here, correspond with Andersen (2006b): “What happened to turn this widespread skepticism into trust? First was the judicious White House decision to support a modification of the draft bill to give the Congress a role in the implementation of the deal that was missing in its original version. Second the supporters were quite effective in convincing members of Congress that the strategic gains outweighed the risks to nuclear non-proliferation. Third and perhaps most important, was vigorous lobbying, especially the efforts of the increasingly influential Indian-American community.” Andersen's first explanation corresponds to my “procedural rules”, the second would seem to be in line with what I term the Bush-administration's strategy of issue-linkage (One of the two strategies I consider), and like Andersen, I evaluate the explanation— “lobbying”—including other actors than just the Indian American community.

fact. Moreover, India was gaining importance in the global political spectrum. An outright rejection or attempts to change the fundamentals of the deal, the Bush-team maintained, would be a major setback for bilateral relations and too costly. The Bush administration, by its “strategy of secrecy”, had effectively created a *fait accompli*. A statement from Joe Biden may be instructive:

The Administration did not consult us as it negotiated the July 18 Joint Statement between President Bush and Prime Minister Singh. It paid little attention to our concerns as it negotiated with India regarding India’s plan for separating its civil nuclear facilities from its military ones. And it submitted a legislative proposal to us and a decision proposal to the Nuclear Suppliers Group that were so poorly drafted as to cast doubt on the Administration’s seriousness of purpose. Despite this, I indicated three weeks ago that I will probably support the agreement at the end of the day. I did so because I agree that the time has come to develop a new relationship between India and the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. And I did so also because undoing this deal could do more damage – in terms of our relationship with India – than approving it with carefully drafted conditions (Biden 2006).

## **7.2 Successful issue-linkage: economics and geopolitics**

Another effective strategy employed by the administration was *issue-linkage*. Abandoning decades old principles of the NPT wouldn’t be a very popular thing to do, thus linking it to more popular issues was essential. The administration sold the nuclear agreement as a symbolic centerpiece that would bring Indian-American relations up to another level where “economic relations, defense relations, a whole range of relationships, including business relationships, will flourish” (Rice 2008). One official in the State Department put it this way:

At some point this stopped being about civil nuclear energy. India is seen as the next big, untapped market. This was what should blaze the path for other things (Interview, State Department official, 22.10.08).

Framing the nuclear deal as the agreement as one that would “unlock the door” and yield vast long-term geopolitical and economic gains proved to be successful. Rapidly ascending India, a democracy situated between Pakistan and China, is an important partner both in the war on terrorism and for creating a strategically stable Asia. However, the Bush administration was careful, at least in its public rhetoric, not to frame the U.S.-India agreement as a containment

policy toward China, but as Ghoshroy (2006:1) points out: “many in the Congress were not so reticent.”

### **7.3 Procedural rules**

Another factor that eased the American ratification of the U.S.-India nuclear agreement was the decision to adopt a two-step ratification procedure. The bill the Bush administration introduced for ratification in March 2006 had, as two Council on Foreign Relations scholars wrote at the time, “put Congress in the seemingly impossible bind of choosing between approving the deal and damaging nuclear non-proliferation or rejecting the deal and thus setting back an important strategic relationship” (Levi & Ferguson 2006:13). The importance of the procedural rules for the successful outcome was underscored by one congressional staffer:

The explanation why the vote was so large on it was that it [the Hyde Act] had something for everyone. It enabled those who were mainly concerned about non-proliferation to vote to set the conditions of the things they wanted to see. It also allowed the people who wanted to be very pro-India to vote for the principle of expanding nuclear trade with India.[...] The form of the Hyde Act, with the two-step process, reassured everyone sufficiently (Interview, Congressional staffer II, 23.10.08).

An important part of legislators’ initial antagonism toward the nuclear deal lay in the *way* the agreement had been negotiated and subsequently presented for congressional approval. The two-step legislative process, which the Bush administration eventually accepted, reinstated congressional authority and reconciled some of the differences between the legislature and the executive branch.

### **7.4 Other lobbyists**

Indian American groups, though important, were far from the only lobbying actors working for the deal’s passage. The Indian government, for its part, signed a contract worth \$1.3million with Barbour Griffith & Rogers, a professional lobby firm with a former Bush appointee and ambassador to India, Robert D. Blackwill, on its payroll (McIntire 2006).

The powerful U.S.-India Business Council was advocating the commercial benefits of the deal, particularly—but not exclusively—on behalf of the nuclear industry. Representing some 300

firms with business interests in India, the group had many important clients. One congressional staffer said:

Well, there was lobbying, but frankly, the lobbyists didn't do very much. They weren't very effective in my opinion. The most effective were probably several individuals and business groups. The U.S.- India Business Council was out there, and they probably had some effect on people who were, who didn't know very much or were insecure about the whole thing. They were probably the most effective...

(...) There were all sorts of Indian groups trying to take credit. I don't think they deserve it. I think that there was some individual lobbying by significant Indian Americans when the agreement came up to specific members of Congress, but in terms of organized efforts...the Indians weren't very organized in their lobbying efforts and I don't think they had much impact (Interview Congressional staffer II, 23.10.08).

Many analysts ascribe far more importance to the lobbying of interest groups in the ratification process on the nuclear deal than the statement from this congressional staffer would indicate. Just as the efforts of the Indian American lobby are frequently mentioned, a number of articles give equal attention to the push by the civil nuclear industry and defense sector in order to explain the landslide vote in Congress (Ghoshroy 2006; Weiss 2007).

## **7.5 Reservations**

The geopolitical rationale of the U.S.-India agreement is quite obvious. Systemic theories about international politics, with their tendency to diminish the role of domestic factors and indeed to treat states as "black-boxes", may give parsimonious explanations for foreign policy outcomes. But should systemic imperatives behind states' actions discourage scholars from looking inside the "black boxes"?

Scholars of integrative approaches such as two-level theory think not. As Evans (1993:397) points out: "International bargains are not simply about relations between nations. They are also about the distribution of costs and benefits among domestic groups and about domestic opinion divided on the best way of relating to the external environment." Opponents of the U.S.-India nuclear agreement, as one analyst points out, "came dangerously close to setting the terms of the



debate” (Andersen 2006b). Indeed, many non-proliferation specialists warned that the agreement would be a “pandora’s box”, which could have many unintended effects on the global non-proliferation regime. Giving India a deal with the *possibility* to increase its nuclear weapons production, while at the same time trying to uphold global norms against proliferation, could make the U.S. seem ever more like the priest preaching temperance from a bar stool.

Moreover, in order to effectively employ a strategy of “issue-linkage”, it must be noted that the Bush administration’s own goodwill on Capitol Hill was limited. Attempts to almost remove Congress entirely from the process had antagonized legislators from both parties. Thus, the administration may have needed “*carriers*” of its message. To reach out to the Indian American community was, as I have argued, very much a part of the administration’s strategy.

This also reveals a problem with the different explanatory factors highlighted here. The geopolitical and economic benefits of the agreement were stressed by both the administration, *and* the Indian American lobbyists. A somewhat similar problem may arise from an explanation that emphasizes “other lobbyists”; for example; this thesis has focused on the *ethnic* Indian American lobby. One may ask if it makes sense to distinguish groups that are exclusively Indian American from other groups where ethnic Indians make up a substantial part of the membership. Not only is the U.S.-India Business Council, with membership from all over corporate America, chaired by an Indian American; the U.S.-India Business Council cooperated actively and co-hosted several events with Indian American groups under the joint banner “Coalition for a partnership with India” (Haniffa 2008c).<sup>57</sup>

Second, and therefore related to this, it may be pertinent to ask if the lobby by a group like the U.S.-India Business Council could somehow diminish the role of the Indian Americans in the process. Ron Somers, President of the U.S.-India Business Council, specifically pointed to the Indian American mobilization as the “*main reason*” why the enabling legislation to facilitate the US-India civilian nuclear deal was approved so overwhelmingly by both the House and Senate (Haniffa 2007b). In any case, a notable part of the rise of the Indian American as a political

---

<sup>57</sup> Chairman of the board of the U.S.-India Business Council is Indra K. Nooy, an Indian American who is also CEO of Pepsi-Cola. Note also that the group has an Executive President, different from the Chairman.

force, is this seemingly successful *alliance building* that the immigrant group has been doing not only with the Israel lobby (as noted in chapter five), but with corporate America, of which Indian Americans form an ever more important part.

### **7.6 Did the Indian Americans matter? If so how, where and when?**

Two-level theory, at its most basic level, holds that the *possibility* as well as the *content of* international accords is *jointly* determined by domestic and international factors (Evans 1993: 397). How did Indian American groups influence the possibility of the U.S.-India nuclear agreement getting passed?

What would not be an overstatement, it seems, is that the Indian American community played a role in shaping the momentum for the deal. One congressional staffer was very impressed by the community's lobby campaign:

It has been called their coming out party. Even though they represent a significant minority, up until now, they haven't really exerted their political power if you will. And this deal kind of served as their symbol to support better U.S.-India relations. And so we saw a huge outpouring of the Indian American community and a significant amount of lobbying from that community to members of Congress, which I think had a huge impact. (Interview, Congressional staffer I, 14.10.08)

Asked when he thought Indian Americans had had an impact, the staffer responded: "Early on in the process, they were really flexing their muscles (ibid.)"

Still, in retrospect, and considering the *wide margin* on the vote in favour of the agreement, it seems likely that the agreement would have passed through Congress even without the Indian American lobbying efforts. One close observer, Robert Hathaway, doubted claims put forth by many Indian Americans that the agreement was "dead on arrival" in Congress:

I know that much of the Indian American press claimed the agreement was dead. It ran into a lot of trouble, it was clumsily handled, but the agreement was never dead. Bush had defined it as an important issue, for that reason alone he could expect the support of at least 80 percent of Republicans, many of whom in any event don't feel an allegiance to the NPT. On the Democratic side there was a lot more skepticism, but I had a feeling even back in 2006 that Bush could count on getting a substantial number of Democrats too. A large number of Democrats had identified themselves as friends of India by joining the India caucus. Now, that alone isn't going to define how you vote, but in addition, you had the business community which was strongly in favor of this, so I don't think the agreement was ever dead. (Interview, 16.10.08)

Given that 115 out of 176 members of the India caucus in the House of Representatives are Democrats and that the Democratic Party has a tradition for cultivating close ties to the community of non-proliferation specialists, many legislators were put in a cross-pressure situation. Co-chair of the India caucus, Congressman Joe Wilson acknowledged that the *margin* on the vote was “*much better than expected*”(Haniffa 2006f). This fact he attributed to the Indian American community.

It really did reflect on something I knew would be important, and that is that the Indian American community is very well respected and by contacting their members of Congress and that was the first advise that I gave, that Indian Americans needed to meet with their members of Congress and express how supportive they were; This was the result of their efforts (ibid.)

### **7.6.1 Getting overlapping ‘win-sets’**

Even if there is very good reason to doubt the claim that Indian Americans somehow singlehandedly “staved off defeat”, another related question may be posed as to *how* the agreement passed and the *conditions* that were attached to the deal in the U.S. ratification process. Could the Indian American lobby effort in any way influence the content of the agreement?

Two-level theory, which holds that ‘win-sets’ of parties to an agreement need to overlap for a deal to be successfully consummated, can illustrate this point. Prime Minister Singh was “boxed in” by domestic opponents to the agreement, thus the Indian ‘win-set’ was very small. This made the continued survival of the agreement extremely sensitive to changes in its content. In the

United States, meanwhile, due to the radical departure from past non-proliferation policy, there were several attempts to amend the U.S.-India nuclear agreement.

Despite this pressure for amendments, in the end Congress added only a few conditions to the deal in the final bill—most of them non-binding on India (Carter 2007). Had the amendments been included that, for example proposed to make an agreement contingent on India's production of fissile material or policy on Iran (as a binding obligation)—as many in Congress actually wanted—it may well be that the agreement would have collapsed due to opposition in India.

To conclude that the Congressional rejection of these amendments was due to the frenetic lobbying of the Indian American community, however, is ultimately nothing more than speculation. Nevertheless, it can be noted that Swadesh Chatterjee and Daryl Kimball, lobby representatives for opposing sides on the nuclear agreement, both attributed the defeat of the killer amendments partly to the efforts of the Indian American community.

Whenever we have charited in the last two years, we kept every chip we had for this cause. So that people who were against it, all the killer amendments, none of them could pass because of our follow-up. We did not convince them with our pocket book, but with the hard-arguments that we had. (Interview Chatterjee, 16.10.08)

Similarly, perhaps somewhat less predictable, Daryl Kimball of the Arms Association argued:

Members of Congress, I think, at a certain point became fearful of taking actions that offended the Indian American community. The perception is that the community is wealthy and powerful, and that they [Congressmen] may lose votes or campaign contributions. [...] Even if there weren't campaign contributions to a particular candidate, that member of Congress became fearful of the possibility that Indian Americans would penalize them for voting no or offering killer amendments" (Interview, 15.10.08).

### **7.6.2 Helping to hand Bush a victory before he left?**

The agreement's long hold-up in India meant that that when Prime Minister Singh survived the vote of no-confidence in July, it would be a race against time to assure that the bill got passed during President Bush's tenure. The Bush administration was keen to land the nuclear agreement, deemed as important to its foreign policy legacy, while still in office:

The bill was introduced to Congress with 13 days left on the congressional calendar. For us to get a committee hearing and then a vote, an actual floor vote, it amazed even us. Passage this quickly can probably be attributed directly to the Indian American community. Their mobilization was key, that's where the extra push had to come from. I don't think it could have happened without a mobilized constituency.

Two-three days before the Congress recess, you're in a lame duck session. So you had a sort of obscure civil nuclear agreement with India and a bill all about saving our financial markets and they dealt with the India bill first! (U.S. State Department official, interview 22.10.08)

While it may be a puzzle why Democrats would be in a hurry to give President Bush a foreign policy victory, it must also be pointed out that there may have been a sense of "commercial urgency" and push from the nuclear industry not to be at a comparative disadvantage as India, after the green light from the NSG, was free to negotiate contracts with other supplier countries such as France and Russia.

## **7.7 Concluding remarks**

I started this chapter by looking into alternative explanations as to why Congress ratified the nuclear agreement. The strategies of the Bush administration (both tactical-- one emphasizing secrecy and another issue-linkage particularly to strategic gains), procedural (the two-step process) and the lobbying from other business groups (explaining the economic benefits) were all important to increase the U.S. 'win-set' size. Seen jointly or separate of each other, these explanations would suggest that the role of the Indian American mobilization was *not as decisive* as some researchers and Indian American leaders themselves portend.

Nevertheless, based on data from interviews and different media statements, I found three different stages in the process where Indian Americans *could* have played a role, though the extent to which they did so is difficult to estimate. Indian Americans seem to have played an important part in creating a momentum early on in the ratification process by demonstrating their strong support to members of Congress. Moreover, the Indian American lobbying *may* have played a role in defeating the "killer amendments" – which was essential because these conditions that Congress wanted to attach had the potential to derail the whole agreement. Last, but not least, Indian American mobilization could have been a central factor in getting the

agreement up for a vote during the lame duck session in 2008, thereby handing the Bush administration the foreign policy victory it had longed for.

## **Chapter 8:**

# **The rise of Indian Americans as a political force— why is it important?**

Under what scope conditions could the Indian American immigrant group emerge as an actor on foreign policy matters? How can the role of these politically mobilized interest groups be understood within a two-level framework? This chapter seeks to give some concluding remarks on my findings relevant to the research questions (i) and (iii) in the introductory chapter. Towards the end of the chapter, I will point to future, potential fields of research that may flow out of this thesis.

### **8.1 The New Kids on the Block?**

In a 2002 overview of ethnic interest groups in the United States, James Lindsay, a former Vice-President of the Brookings Institution, tipped that Indian Americans would emerge as a political powerhouse:

One [immigrant group] likely to be active in coming years is Indians. Not only does India face military threats—from both Pakistan and China—but Indian Americans are one of the most affluent ethnic groups in the United States. They have become active in politics, contributing an estimated \$8 million to federal election campaigns over the last three elections. Congress has taken notice...

(...) Not only are they [Indian-Americans] affluent and interested in India, but China's rising power and India's decision to move toward a market economy means their calls for a more "India friendly" foreign policy are likely to meet a receptive audience in Washington (Lindsay 2002: 38-39).

With the massive mobilization on the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement, Lindsay's predictions about the Indian American immigrant group are showing signs of materializing. Lindsay's quote above also demonstrates the favorable domestic and international context that has facilitated the empowerment of Indian Americans. The peculiarities of the American political system leave a space for ethnic interest groups to rise, especially if such groups exhibit certain financial, organizational and demographic characteristics. What lessons can be drawn from the case of the

Indian American lobby? Can a “success formula” for the empowerment of ethnic interest groups be found?

## **8.2 Analogies to other cases: Ethnic interest groups and the national interest**

As noted, the timing of the “coming out party” of Indian Americans corresponds with what seems like an emerging, broader U.S.-Indian strategic alignment. In the literature, ethnic interest groups are widely tipped to be more successful in getting “Uncle Sam’s ear” when the policies they advance coincide with broader strategic U.S. aims. Securing U.S. support for the security of a lone democracy in the Middle East, as has been the aim of Jewish Americans, or fighting the communist Castro-regime, as is the case of Cuban Americans, also seem to be cases that dovetail well with U.S. strategic priorities.

Nevertheless, to treat the “national interest” as a given can be problematic too. As is evident by the critique of Mearsheimer and Walt (2007), both seasoned neo-realists; the *Israel lobby* may over the years have acquired such power that it can influence U.S. policy to significantly deviate from what (at least in the view of the authors) “the national interest” is or should be. Similarly, the Cuban lobby is often blamed for contributing to the upholding of sanctions against communist-Cuba, which according to many within the U.S. business sector represents a Cold War anachronism (Donohue 2000; Haney & Vanderbush 2005). A possible interpretation of this may be that ethnic lobbies emerge and grow strong when structural patterns in the international system allow for them to do so. Over time, however, these ethnic lobbies could acquire a power that helps to reinforce the very structural tendencies that helped their emergence. Sometimes, as the examples of the *Israeli* and *Cuban* lobbies could indicate, they even help policies that by most standards should be passé, to remain in place.

### **8.2.1 Getting the right mix: ethnic interest group attributes**

To be in “sync” with broader international, structural tendencies *may* be a necessary, though not a sufficient condition for a strong ethnic interest group to emerge. In an overview of American ethnic groups, Indian Americans were ranked as having the highest socio-economic status and education level of all groups (Jews included, note the statistic resemblance --table 8.1 below).



**Figure 8.1: Data on selected ethnic groups in the United States. Source: Grossman, Matt (2005:19)<sup>58</sup>**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Socio Economic status</b>	<b>Education level</b>	<b>Geographic concentration</b>
African Americans	-6.54	-0.99	34.5
Mexicans	-5.27	-1.09	96.1
<b>Cubans</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>108.5</b>
Puerto Ricans	-2.9	-0.68	79
Chinese	9.48	2.3	64.9
Japanese	9.64	1.84	75.9
<b>Indians</b>	<b>13.82</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>24.8</b>
Arabs	4.16	1.56	30.2
Italians	2.04	-0.1	61.7
Greek	3.54	0.4	36.2
Irish	1.19	0.12	14.3
Russians	7.31	1.38	50.6
<b>Jewish Americans</b>	<b>13.35</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>63.4</b>

In a measure of “geographic concentration”, however, the Indian American community came out in the lower end of the scale, with Cubans being number one in this characteristic. Geographically quite dispersed and not (yet) constituting a very strong voting block, this is a factor that may make the Indian American community distinct from other groups that have

---

<sup>58</sup>Table entries are based on pooled General Social Survey (GSS) data. The first two columns measure the difference between the group mean and the overall mean. The final column measures the geographic concentration of these groups. The findings related to the different ethnic groups in Grossman’s study must be treated with some caution. The “populations” representing the different groups in the survey are of different size, making the margin of error somewhat larger among the groups with a small N. See: Grossman, Matt (2005)

established prominent ethnic lobbies. It *could* be, however, that strong financial and organizational muscles outweigh this “demographic” weakness. Another interpretation, though one cannot generalize from one single case, would be that whereas votes matter for the power of ethnic interest groups, financial clout matters more.

While material power could be one factor behind the empowerment of Indian Americans as a political force, another and easily forgotten factor is indeed that of the community’s strong intellectual capacity. Highly educated, the group may not only have the political muscles, but indeed the “brain muscles” not only to care about politics, but also to participate with a respected and articulate voice.

Indeed, Indian Americans have for quite some time had ambitions to gain a political influence commensurate to their high achievements in fields like business, science and the media. To win a *political* clout, it seems, was also matter of *pride* to many community leaders, sort of like that one last step up the ladder to status and recognition in their new, adopted American home.<sup>59</sup> This goes right into the “agency versus structure” debate. Two things must be pointed out. The emergence of the Indian American lobby has been helped by a general geopolitical rapprochement between the United States and India. Second, and in extension of this, the lobbying from the community was surely encouraged and helped by the consultation and “information-sharing” with both the Bush administration and the Indian government. Nevertheless, activism within the community has been building for years, so that when their influence was called for, Indian Americans saw the nuclear deal as their chance to show they “had come of age”—ready to “come out and party”.

---

<sup>59</sup> To understand how Indian Americans have acquired this image of notorious high-achievers, take a look at this list: Rono Dutta was the president of United Airlines, Rakesh Gangwal is former president and CEO of U.S. Airways, Rajat Gupta is managing director of consulting giant McKinsey & Co. Or they have founded companies of their own: Sabeer Bhatia is founder of hotmail, Vinod Khosla the founder of Sun Microsystems, Vinod Dham is the founder of the Pentium-processor. Other famous Indian Americans include Fareed Zakaria, Jagdish Bhagwati as well as several Nobel Laureates.

### 8.2.2 The importance of “role models”

The Jewish lobby, already for decades established as *the* quintessential ethnic lobby in the United States, is frequently looked upon as a model for other groups to emulate. Apart from using the Jewish lobby as a role model, a very notable feature of the Indian American mobilization, particularly represented through USINPAC, has been its very active collaboration with Jewish groups. This phenomenon, in the literature sometimes referred to as “*alliance building*”, bears resemblance to other cases of ethnic interest group empowerment. In the 1980s, AIPAC reportedly trained staff of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) “in tactics for transforming a foreign policy issue into a domestic one that would be susceptible to interest group pressure” (Haney & Vanderbush 1999:349). Similarly, Ambrosio (2002b) describes how Jewish groups have collaborated with Turkish American organizations.

Still, it must be noted, this close “alliance” with the Jewish lobby still represents an asymmetric relationship where Indian Americans—particularly through the network of USINPAC—are the junior partner. The strength of the Jewish lobby is unparalleled, as demonstrated by its fund-raising ability.<sup>60</sup> The Indian American fund-raising potential is beyond doubt, but hitherto it seems that the bulk of it is channeled through specific Indian American wings of the Democratic and Republican parties, not as much through USINPAC and other interest groups *per se*.<sup>61</sup> A very notable feature of the Jewish fund-raising is how much of it that is channeled through their organized interest groups, thus maximizing the influence of these organizations (Mearsheimer & Walt: 156).<sup>62</sup> The organizational apparatus of Indian Americans, by comparison, is characterized more by an ad-hoc, “grassroot” mobilization, as exemplified through the U.S.-India Friendship Council. Nevertheless, efforts to build a stronger organizational infrastructure are underway.

---

<sup>60</sup> *The Washington Post* once estimated that Democratic presidential candidates “depend on Jewish supporters to supply as much as 60 percent of the money raised from private sources.” See: Edsall & Cooperman 2003. Other estimates are lower, but contributions from Jewish Americans form a substantial share—between 20 and 50 percent—of the contributions made to the Democratic Party and its presidential candidates See: Mearsheimer & Walt 2007:163.

<sup>61</sup> From 2003-2006, USINPAC donated more than one million dollars to congressional campaigns. See: Andersen, Walter (2006b).

<sup>62</sup> *The Economist* (2007) estimated that pro-Israel interest groups raised \$57 million from 1990-2004 for congressional campaigns.

Highlighting the Israel lobby as a model, leader of USINPAC, Sanjay Puri, maintains that “It’s pointless to reinvent the wheel” (Hathaway 2004).

The strong political activism has long been underway within the Indian American community. The internship programs and the size of the India caucus, currently the largest in the U.S. Congress, are signs of how active the community has been in trying to build its presence on Capitol Hill. Although previously quite fragmented, the nuclear agreement helped to unify the community into two strong organizations. *Unity* on this cause proved to be a success. If the organizational infrastructure and network is left intact, as seems likely, the Indian American political machine is available for future mobilization. Ray Vickery, a former Assistant Secretary for Commerce who worked as a lobbyist on behalf of the U.S.-India Business Council, expects the community’s political power to grow in years ahead:

The nuclear matter has brought the Indian American community together as never before. As you probably know, with many of these Indian American organizations there has been tremendous infighting, tremendous divisions within the organization. The civil nuclear issue brought them together and I believe they will be more united in the future. They are interested in having across the board political influence equivalent to that of the Jewish Americans in regard to Israel, and I think that is probably going to come about...

(...) The Indian American community is the fastest growing ethnic community in the nation, they are growing faster than Latinos on a percentage basis. Indian Americans have the highest per capita income of any ethnic group in the United States and they are learning to combine policy with their resource and fund raising potential. I think that augurs well for their future... (Interview, 24.10.08).

### **8.3 Diaspora groups—and two-level theory**

I have argued that the two-level framework is a useful starting point to conceptualize the role of ethnic interest groups. The literature on ethnic lobbies highlights how Diasporas relate to their “homelands” and “host countries”: as noted, ethnic interest groups can interact with two-sets of state actors and can be players on two “domestic tables”. An Indian diplomatic representative pointed to how Indian Americans have been important in the recent rapprochement between the U.S. and India:

Indian Americans surely have played a role. This role is at two different levels. One, by their daily lives, they have in a sense showcased the entrepreneurial, technological skills of India, which has drawn many ventures into India. The second is, the community has expanded, today it counts 2.7 million, it is very prosperous, it has a high level of achievement. They have been able to reach out to the political leadership in the United States. That is an autonomous development, they have made people familiar with what is the best India has to offer.

(...) At a political level, as their [Indian American] leadership has matured, they have gotten more organized and been able to reach out to the leadership not only in the U.S., but in India. They act as a bridge. [...] In India they have reached out to the leadership of all the political parties, to explain, to garner support for bilateral initiatives, like now with Civil Nuclear agreement (Interview 26.10.08).

The way Indian Americans are having an impact around the respective “domestic tables”, as the quote from the Indian diplomatic representative demonstrates, may have an indirect, “soft power” element and a more tangible, “political power” component . In the following I will elaborate on these two.

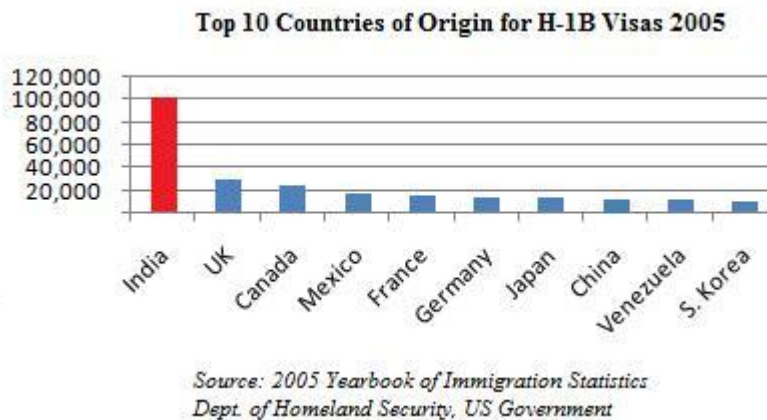
### **8.3.1 A new kind of ”soft power”—but for whom?**

C.Raja Mohan, an influential academic and journalist, has branded the Diaspora as India’s biggest instrument of “soft power”—that is, “the ability to influence other societies through such real but intangible elements as culture and values” (Mohan 2003). Hard power, the traditional currency in international relations, may demonstrate a country’s ability to get the outcomes it wants through inducements (“carrots”) or threats (“sticks”). “Soft power”, on the other hand, is the power of attraction—it is about “getting others to want the outcomes that you want” (Nye 2004:5). The end result, ideally, is a more favorable public opinion and credibility abroad (ibid.). Thus, soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of other people, not through coercion but through co-option.

Indian Americans, typified by physicians and Silicon Valley computer technicians have, as Rubinoff (2005:169) notes, strongly contributed to changing the image of India in the United States: “In the time span of a single generation the image of Indians, in the United States and the subcontinent, has been transformed from a malnourished skeleton in a filthy dhoti to a highly educated prosperous professional in a designer business suit”.

But the potential “soft-power” impact of the Indian American community can also be of help to the United States. Indian Americans have played a major role in transforming the face of the Indian society by infusing new ideas—formally or informally—as well as economic, human, and social capital from the United States (Rubinoff 2005; Waldman 2004).

**Figure 8.2: India topping grants of H-1B visas**



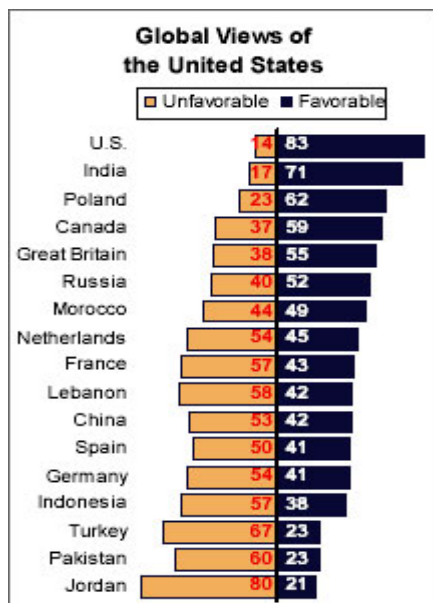
In addition to the estimated 2.7 million strong Indian American community, on an annual basis about 100,000 Indians are granted H-1B visas, a temporary work-permit for specialized occupations (see figure 8.2).<sup>63</sup> Of these many stay on in the U.S., but an increasing number have started to return home—frequently employed in businesses engaged in the outsourcing of services and with vested interests in good bilateral relations (Waldman 2004).<sup>64</sup> The entrepreneurial success of Indian Americans has also influenced Indian policymakers as they undertake economic reforms, a reality acknowledged by Prime Minister and former Finance Minister Manmohan Singh (Rubinoff 2005:170). The almost 80,000 students from India in the United States now make up the biggest group of foreign students in the country, a number that is

<sup>63</sup> H-1B-visa is a non-immigrant, temporary visa that allows U.S. employers to employ foreign guest workers in occupations requiring highly specialized knowledge and the attainment of a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent at the minimum. The duration of stay of a H-1B Visas is 3 years, extendable to six. See: U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2005)

<sup>64</sup> By one estimate, there are 35,000 returned NRI’s working in the high-tech sector in Bangalore. See: Waldman, Amy (2004)

still growing by a high percentage every year.<sup>65</sup> It is estimated that sixty percent of retired Indian generals have children studying abroad—over half of them in the United States (ibid: 178).

The United States remains “the land of opportunity” for Indians. Asked where they would recommend that a young person move in order to lead a good life, a 38% plurality of Indians choose the United States (Pew Research Center 2006). These numbers were the highest of all the 17 countries polled; in none of the other countries did even a plurality recommend the U.S. to the hypothetical young person searching for a better life (ibid.).



**Figure 8.3** Data collected from Pew Global Attitudes Survey 2005 (see Pew Research Center 2006)

Indeed, the Pew Global Attitudes survey found that about seven-in-ten Indians (71%) have a favorable view of the United States. Of all the countries polled in the survey, only Americans themselves held a more favorable view of the U.S., its people and foreign policy (ibid.). While these findings cannot be attributed to the highly successful Indian Diaspora in the U.S. alone, it *may* well be one important contributing factor.

---

<sup>65</sup> Of 123,000 Indians studying abroad, 76,000 of them are at universities in the United States. See: White, Andrew (2007)

### 8.3.2 A political weapon, but for whom?

Indian Americans serve as a stable reservoir of support for an India-friendly foreign policy in Washington. Though it is hard to prove their exact effect on the nuclear agreement, it is entirely possible that India in the end could get a better deal with the defeat of the killer amendments, in part thanks to the efforts of their Diaspora. In this regard, Indian American interest groups can be seen as a “potent political weapon” for India (cf. Walt 2005). A well-known columnist and editor of the *Times of India*, Swaminathan S.A Aiyar (2002), expects Indian Americans to be of enormous diplomatic value to New Delhi in the future:

If 100,000 Indians per year enter henceforth on H1-B visas, I suspect four-fifths will stay on in the US and bring over an additional four relatives each. If so, in 10 years the US will have over 5 million Indian Americans, most in positions of power and influence. They will constitute a stronger foreign policy tool than anything Indian diplomats can devise.

Even so, to put the tag “agents” of New Delhi on the Indian American interest groups (cf. Walt 2005) is not entirely accurate either. Although Indian Americans generally work for an “India-friendly” U.S. foreign policy, on the nuclear deal the Indian American groups “tended to evince a keener appreciation for how accommodative of Indian interests the U.S. already has been, whereas Indian government officials remained more uncompromising with respect to certain aspects of the deal” (Kirk 2008:278).

Precisely because of the suspicion that ethnic lobbies put the interests of their ancestral homelands before those of the United States, such groups have passionate critics (Huntington 2004; Smith 2000). With this backdrop, the finding that the Bush administration cooperated so actively with the Indian American groups and encouraged their lobbyism may be surprising. For the Bush administration it could make sense because Congress was skeptical to the nuclear deal. The well connected activists in the Indian American community had ties with many Democratic legislators in Congress. Moreover, the endorsement of the Indian American lobbying, as the statement from President Bush (see quote, p.1) would indicate, was probably also valued because they could disseminate American views in their “homeland’s affairs”. Contrary to the view exposed by Mearsheimer and Walt (2007), where ethnic interest groups tend to be perceived as liabilities rather than assets in the U.S. foreign policy arena; this finding would correspond well



with Shain's(1999) observation that ethnic lobbies indeed *can* be of benefit for American policymakers.

An observation made by no other than K. Subrahmanyam, the legend and doyen of India's strategic community, may underscore the argument made here that the potential gains of the *Indian American factor*, may in fact be just as beneficial for the United States.<sup>66</sup>

In all probability India may prefer a preeminent US to a preeminent China. People have asked whether India would lean towards China on the basis of Asian solidarity. But soon there will be a few million Indians in the US, and it is hardly likely there would be even a few tens of thousands of Indians in China. That factor will decisively tilt India in favour of the U.S. The time has come for the U.S. and India to get closer and assert their natural friendship, validating what Bhishma said on his deathbed: "Circumstances determine friends and enemies." (quoted in Mohan 2006: 78)

### **8.3.3. Increasing the size of 'win-sets' on both sides?**

Two-level theory holds that statesmen are Janus-faced, bargaining internationally with other governments and domestically with political parties and interest groups to get an agreement ratified. Members of ethnic interest groups, by their very nature, are Janus-faced too, with *dual* loyalties: as in the words of Sanjay Puri:

That is what globalization has done. That's the beauty of globalization. You can take the best of both places. Big market here, big market there. That's the thing, Indian Americans have a lot of business activity going back and forth, but we don't take orders from anyone. (Interview 30.09.08)

Having access to the political leadership in the U.S. and India, the lobby activity of the Indian American community may increase the respective 'win-sets' and make the "domestic tables" in both India and the U.S. more amenable to future bilateral undertakings. In short, it may help bring promising U.S.-India relations, so often troubled by mutual mistrust in the past, on a firmer footing in the future.

---

<sup>66</sup> K. Subrahmanyam has had a large number of prominent positions in the government of India, being inter alia the governor of the National Security Council Board in the BJP-government. At present he heads the task-force appointed by Prime Minister Singh on 'Global Strategic Developments'.

## 8.4 Concluding remarks

Indian Americans, it seems, *have* established themselves with a place “around the table” in the U.S. foreign policy arena (cf. Smith’s statement p.3). This thesis has looked into what lays behind the surge in the Indian American community’s political clout. A few factors stand out:

- *A favorable international strategic context.*
- A strong *financial, intellectual* and *organizational* capacity that gives the group disproportional influence considering its still modest demographic strength.
- Previously fragmented, the nuclear deal was a catalyst that *unified* the community and helped *consolidate* lobby capabilities.
- *Alliance building* first and foremost with the Israel lobby, but also with the wider U.S. business community. This networking has expanded Indian Americans’ scope of influence, but even more important; there is a learning-effect—Indian Americans have been taught the rules of the game.

Another aim of this thesis was to look at how a two-level framework could shed light on the role of politically mobilized Diasporas. The case of the Indian American lobby reveals how such groups can have a quality as “*two-table players*”—able to participate in the domestic politics of two countries simultaneously.

- This *unique strategic position* (as carriers of a message—whether lobbying Communists in West Bengal, the BJP or Democrats) *is indeed also a part of the groups’ power base* and an additional explanation why its political clout has surged;
- State actors, both representing India and the U.S., therefore, saw the Indian American lobby as a particularly useful ally and interacted closely with these groups. Because of their distinct “two-table” quality, the Indian American scope of influence was not limited to influencing domestic opposition, but even the ‘win-set’ of the respective, ‘foreign’ counterpart. Attempting to increase win-sets on two sides, Indian Americans should, theoretically at least, have increased the chances of *overlapping ‘win-sets’*.

Given how recent Indian immigration is (almost all came to the U.S. in the period after 1965, with the Indian American population now growing by an impressive 10.5% annually), there is

good reason to believe that this distinct “two-table” quality will remain a particularly strong feature of the Indian American group, with a potential to grow even stronger. From a two-level theory perspective, the Diaspora constitutes an asset for the homeland, inasmuch as the immigrant group is generally well-connected, financially strong and interested in the well-being of *Mother India*, which is still a country where a majority of 75.6% of the population, 828 million people, live on under \$2 dollars per day (Chen & Ravallion 2008). Interestingly, this feature of the ancient homeland should undoubtedly result in Indian Americans having a disproportional influence “back home”.

The effect of the growing importance of Indian Americans is by all probability also a gain for U.S.-India relations. The Indian American community may influence “win-sets” in both countries either through “hardball lobbying” (as on the nuclear deal), or alternatively, through a more subtle, long-term “soft-power” impact.

### **8.5 Epilogue: Suggestions for future research**

To many Indian Americans the triumph on the nuclear agreement signaled their definite breakthrough on the U.S. political scene, but also something more. Swadesh Chatterjee explains:

We have never given up, and we believe that we have got tremendous power and influence and now people in Congress know that this community is strong, this community has got influence. So from the community’s point of view, we have gained something. It was a historic moment for the Indian American community, but really what it tells, I think, it is the beginning of the greatest alliance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is between the U.S. and India (interview 16.10)

Similar sentiments have also been expressed by top U.S. officials: Phillip Zelikow, one of the Bush administration’s top bureaucrats, bluntly stated at a press conference that the goal behind the new approach to New Delhi was “to help India become a major world power in the 21st century” (Kessler 2006b). How did this development in bilateral relations from 1998-2005/6 come about? Is this an emerging alliance? Such a study may look at relevant “drivers” (fear of China, war on terror, shared values, Indian American lobby and business advocacy) and constraints (India’s non-aligned posture, Iran/Pakistan, asymmetry/American tendency to treat India as a “junior-partner” etc.) in this bilateral relationship.

Another field of research relevant to the U.S.-India nuclear deal could be to look at the consequences of the agreement for global non-proliferation efforts. The agreement challenged the world nuclear order at a time when it was already fragile. Were non-proliferation goals sacrificed at the altar of U.S.-India strategic cooperation? Have the pessimistic predictions (arms races, the breakdown of rules/consensus etc.) of the deal's opponents shown any signs of materializing? Or, conversely, could the agreement serve as an example for the treatment of other NPT-outlier states such as Pakistan and Israel?

A third field of research flowing from this thesis may focus further on Diaspora groups. One question to pose is: "only in America?!?" Could the phenomenon of strong ethnic interest groups be observed elsewhere? Another way forward may be a more focused, larger-N (statistical) comparison of the ethnic communities that have forged strong interest groups in the U.S. or alternatively, it could follow my study and see if other ethnic interest groups have similar "two-table" qualities as the Indian Americans do? A deeper look into the role of such groups in their ancient homelands affairs would be particularly interesting. In the case of the Indian (American) Diaspora: what are the political/economic/social/ and other impacts and influences that this stunningly resourceful immigrant group has in *Mother India*, still a developing 3<sup>rd</sup> world country?

# Bibliography:

- AAPI (2008). "American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin", official website.  
[online] <http://www.aapiusa.org> [Accessed 12.10.08]
- Aiyar, Swaminathan (2002). "The Foreign Policy Impact of Indian Americans", *Times of India*, January 13
- Alterman, Eric (1998). *Who Speaks for America? Why democracy matters in foreign policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Ambrosio, Thomas (2002). *Ethnic identity groups and U.S. foreign policy*. Westport: Praeger Publishers
- Ambrosio, Thomas (2002b). "Entangling Alliances: The Turkish-Israeli Lobbying Partnership and Its Unintended Consequences", in: Ambrosio, Thomas(ed.) *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Westport: Praeger Publishers
- Anburajan, Aswini (2008). "Indian Americans gaining political clout", September 26  
[online:] [http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/09/26/pm\\_indian\\_clout/](http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/09/26/pm_indian_clout/) [Accessed: 02.11.08]
- Andersen, Walter K. (2006a). "The Nuclear Deal in US Congress: from skepticism to trust", *Indian Express*. July 10
- Andersen, Walter K. (2006b). "The Indian-American community comes into its political own", *India Abroad*, September 1
- Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller & Cristina S. Blanc (1994). *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation States*. Longhorne: Penn, Gordon and Breach
- BBC News (2004). "US Senate launches India caucus", April 30  
[online] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3672821.stm> [Accessed:10.10.08]
- Biden, Joseph (2006). "Opening Statement. Hearing on U.S.-India Atomic Energy Cooperation", Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington D.C.: April 26
- Bidwai, Pinful (2006). "Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal Takes Flak, No Eject Option", *Inter Press Service*, April 6.
- Blackwill, Robert D. (2005). "The India Imperative", *The National Interest* (issue 80): pp. 9–17
- Brinkley, Joell (2006). "Many in Congress Want to Change Nuclear Deal With India", *New York Times*, March 17
- Burns, Nicholas (2006). "U.S. Policy in South Asia, Address to Asia Society", New York: November 27  
[online] [http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/06ny\\_burns.html](http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/06ny_burns.html) [Accessed: 09.08.08]
- Carter, Ashton (2007). "How Washington Learned to Stop Worrying and Love India's Bomb", *Foreign Affairs*, January 10 (online only)  
[online] <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070110faupdate86175/ashton-b-carter/how-washington-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-india-s-bomb.html> [Accessed:10.02.08]

- Chen, Shaohua & Martin Ravallion (2008). *The Developing World Is Poorer Than We Thought, But No Less Successful in the Fight against Poverty*, World Bank Policy Research Paper No. 4703
- Cohen, Stephen (2000). "India and America: An Emerging Relationship", paper presented to the Conference on The Nation-State System and Transnational Forces in South Asia. Tokyo, December 8-10. Conference paper.
- Cooper, Matthew (2006). "The President's Passage to India", *Time*, February 23
- Council on Foreign Relations (2006). "*Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act*", December 18  
[online][http://www.cfr.org/publication/17425/henry\\_j\\_hyde\\_united\\_statesindia\\_peaceful\\_atomic\\_energy\\_cooperation\\_act\\_of\\_2006.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/17425/henry_j_hyde_united_statesindia_peaceful_atomic_energy_cooperation_act_of_2006.html) [Accessed:06.04.08]
- Council on Foreign Relations (2008). "Symbolism Tops Substance in U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement", Interview with Sandy Spector, July 15  
[online][http://www.cfr.org/publication/16803/symbolism\\_tops\\_substance\\_in\\_usindia\\_nuclear\\_agreement.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/16803/symbolism_tops_substance_in_usindia_nuclear_agreement.html) [Accessed: 17.10.08]
- Crossette, Barbara(1998). "New Delhi pledges to sign world ban on nuclear tests", *New York Times*, September 25
- Diwani, Amberish (2000). "The India Caucus Still has a Long Distance to Go", *India Abroad*, September 18
- Donohue, Thomas J.(2000). "The Cuban Economic Embargo: Time for a new approach?", speech at the Cato Institute, Washington D.C.: February 15
- Dugger, Celia (2001). "U.S. Envoy Extols India, Accepting Its Atom Status", *New York Times*, September 7.
- Edsall, Thomas B. & Alan Cooperman (2003). "GOP Uses Remarks to Court Jews", *Washington Post*, March 13.
- Einhorn, Robert (2005). "The U.S.- India Nuclear Deal", statement before the House International Relations Committee, Washington D.C.: October 26
- Einhorn, Robert J. (2006). "The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal", statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington D.C.: April 26
- El-Baradei, Mohamed (2006). "Rethinking Nuclear Safeguards", *Washington Post*, June 14
- Embassy of India (2000). "Indian American community: A story of achievements", *India News*, March  
[online] [http://www.indianembassy.org/inews/2000\\_inews/march\\_2000.pdf](http://www.indianembassy.org/inews/2000_inews/march_2000.pdf) [Accessed:10.08.08]
- Evans, Peter B. (1993). "Building an Integrative Approach to International and Domestic Politics", in: Evans, Peter B., Harold K. Jacobson & Robert D. Putnam (eds.) *Double Edged Diplomacy*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Fair, Christine C. (2007). "India and Iran: New Delhi's Balancing Act", *The Washington Quarterly* 30 (3): pp.145-159
- Forsythe, Michael and Veena Trehan (2006). "Friends in high places help India", *International Herald Tribune*, July 17

- Gerring, John (2007). *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ghoshroy, Subrata (2006). "The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal: Triumph of the Business Lobby", *MIT Center for International Studies: Audit of the Conventional Wisdom*, 6 (13): pp.1-3
- Gottschlich, Pierre (2006). "Diasporas and Diasporic Communities as New Sources of Power in International Relations", in: Goga, Slavomir (ed.) *Current Issues of the International Politics through the Eyes of Young Europeans*. Prague: Jan Masaryk Centre of International Studies.
- Gottschlich, Pierre (2008). "The Indian Diaspora in the United States of America: An Emerging Political Force?", in: Raghuram, Parvati and Dave Sangha (eds.) *Tracing an Indian Diaspora: Contexts, Memories, Representations*. London: Sage Publications
- Government of India (2002). *Report of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs
- Grossman, Matt (2005). "Just another Interest group? Organized ethnic representation in U.S. politics", Paper prepared for the 2005 annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 7-10. Conference Paper.
- Guha, Seema (2008). "NRI push for nuclear deal", *Daily News & Analysis*, July 3
- Hägel, Peter & Pauline Peretz (2005). "States and Transnational Actors: Who's Influencing Whom? A Case Study in Jewish Diaspora Politics during the Cold War", *European Journal of International Relations* 11 (4): pp. 467-93
- Hammond, Susan W. (1998). *Congressional Caucuses in National Policymaking*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Haney, Patrick J. and Walt Vanderbush (1999). "The role of ethnic interest groups in U.S. foreign policy: the case of the Cuban American National Foundation", *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (2): pp. 341-361
- Haney, Patrick J. and Walt Vanderbush (2005). *Cuban Embargo: Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press
- Haniffa, Aziz (2003). "India Sends Maximum Students to the U.S.", *India Abroad*, January 28
- Haniffa, Aziz (2005). "Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans: Sometimes People Expect a Lot, Says Pallone", *India Abroad*, May 6
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006a). "Bush aide slammed at N-deal meet", *India Abroad*, May 12
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006b). "Understand killer amendments to N-Bill, says Kerry", *India Abroad*, November 16
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006c). "Supporters ask Senators to ignore killer amendments", *India Abroad*, November 17.
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006d). "No evidence that India has transferred lethal weapons to Iran", *India Abroad*, December 4
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006e). "US Congressman vows to scuttle nuclear deal", *India Abroad*, March 3

- Haniffa, Aziz (2006f). "Defeated N-deal amendments were not wrong: Congressman", *India Abroad*, June 29
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006g). "Indo-US ties lauded at White House's Diwali reception", *India Abroad*, October 20.
- Haniffa, Aziz (2006h). "How the vote went", *India Abroad*, July 27.
- Haniffa, Aziz (2007a). "N-deal: Cautious optimism in US govt over Left go ahead", *India Abroad*, November 28
- Haniffa, Aziz (2007b). "24 NRIs, USIBC president Ron Somers honoured", *India Abroad*, October 5
- Haniffa, Aziz (2008a). "Bush signs N-deal, allays India's fears", *India Abroad*, October 9
- Haniffa, Aziz (2008b). "It's the greatest moment in Indian-American political history", *India Abroad*, October 2.
- Haniffa, Aziz (2008c). "N-deal: Indian Americans swing to action again", *India Abroad*, August 6
- Hathaway, Robert M (2001). "Unfinished Passage: India, Indian Americans, and the U.S. Congress", *The Washington Quarterly* 24 (2): pp. 21-34.
- Hathaway, Robert M. (2004). "Washington's new strategic partnership", July 14  
[online] <http://www.india-seminar.com/2004/538/538%20robert%20m.%20hathaway.htm>  
[Accessed:03.07.08]
- Hellevik, Ottar (1991). *Forskningsmetode i sosiologi og statsvitenskap*. Oslo:Universitetsforlaget
- Huntington, Samuel P. (2004). *Who are We? The challenges to America's national identity*. New York: Simon & Shuster
- International Herald Tribune (2008). "China to help build 2 Pakistan nuclear plants", October 18
- Iype, George (2000). "PM's cold shoulder upsets NRIs", *India Abroad*, March 21
- Kamdar, Mira (2004). "India and the New American Hegemony", *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 19 (3): pp. 335-344
- Kamdar, Mira (2007). "The New AIPAC? Forget the Israel Lobby. The Next Big Player On the Hill is Made in India", *Washington Post*, September 30
- Kamdar, Mira (2008). *Planet India: The Rise of the World's Largest Democracy*. New York: Scribner Publishing
- Kerr, Paul (2008). *U.S. nuclear cooperation with India: Issues for Congress*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service. Report RL 33016
- Kessler, Glenn (2006a). "Nunn Urges Congress to Set Condition on U.S.-India Nuclear Pact", *Washington Post*, March 21
- Kessler, Glenn (2006b). "India Nuclear Deal May Face Hard Sell", *Washington Post*, April 3
- Kessler, Glenn (2008). "Congress May Not Pass U.S.-India Nuclear Pact", *Washington Post*, July 9



- Khagram, Sanjeev, M. Desai, & J. Varughese (2001). "Seen, Rich, but Unheard? The Politics of Asian Indians in the United States", in: Chang, Gordon H. (Ed.) *Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press
- Kirk, Jason (2008). "Indian Americans and the U.S.-India Nuclear Agreement: Consolidation of an Ethnic Lobby?", *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, (3): pp. 275-300.
- Kornblut, Anne E. (2007). "Obama Apologizes For Punjab-gate", *Washington Post*, June 19
- Krishnaswami, Sridhar (2006). "India's efforts to drum up support for N-deal hit glitch", *India Abroad*, April 1
- Krishnaswami, Sridhar (2008). "Bush admn woos Indian Americans to push N-deal", *India Abroad*, September 14
- Kronstadt, Alan (2006). *India-Iran Relations and U.S. Interests*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service. Report RS 22486
- Kumar, Arun (2008). "Bush trying hard to keep n-deal date with Manmohan Singh", *Indo Asian News Service*, September 16
- Kurien, Prema (2007). "Who speaks for Indian Americans? Religion, Ethnicity and Political Formation", *American quarterly* 59 (3): pp.759-783
- Kux, Dennis (1992). *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press
- Kvale, Steinar (2001). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. Oslo: Gyldendal
- Lancaster, John (1999). "Activism Boosts India's Fortunes", *Washington Post*, October 9
- Levi, Michael A. & Charles Ferguson (2006). *U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation : A Strategy for Moving Forward*. Washington D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations Press. CSR report 16
- Lindsay, James M. (2002). "Getting Uncle Sam's Ear: Will Ethnic Lobbies Cramp America's Foreign Policy Style?", *The Brookings Review* 20 (1): pp. 37-40.
- Linzer, Dafna (2006). "House Voted on Indian Deal Unaware of Iran Missile Sales", *Washington Post*, July 29.
- Lodgaard, Sverre (forthcoming). "The three state problem", Chpt.6 in Lodgaard, Sverre (ed.) *Nuclear Disarmament and World Order*, (unpublished manuscript, contact author). Oslo: NUPI
- Loomis, Burdett A. and Cigler, Allan J. (2002). "Introduction: The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics", in: Loomis, B. & A. Cigler (eds.) *Interest Group Politics*. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Malhotra, Jyoti (2008). "De facto, not de jure—India is the world's sixth nuclear power", *Wall Street Journal*, September 28.
- McAliff, Michael & Helen Kennedy (2007). "2M for Hil after Bam Indian dis", *New York Daily News*, June 25 [online] [http://www.nydailynews.com/news/us\\_world/2007/06/25/2007-06-25\\_2m\\_for\\_hil\\_after\\_bam\\_indian\\_dis.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/us_world/2007/06/25/2007-06-25_2m_for_hil_after_bam_indian_dis.html) [Accessed:25.04.2008]
- McIntire, Mike (2006). "Indian Americans Test Their Clout on Atom Pact", *New York Times*, June 5

- Mearsheimer, John D. & Stephen Walt (2007). *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
- Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (2007). "American hoteliers make a difference", Overseas Indian, (official e-zine of the Ministry of Overseas Affairs), January issue.  
[Online] <http://www.overseasindian.in/2007/jan/news/2media.shtml> [Accessed:10.10.08]
- Mitra, Devirupa (2007). "Indian Americans become conduit between PM, BJP", *Hindustan Times*, October 28
- Mohan, C. Raja (2003). "Indian Diaspora and Soft Power", *The Hindu*, January 6
- Mohan, C. Raja (2006). *Impossible Allies: Nuclear India, United States and the Global Order*. New Delhi: India Research Press
- Moravcsik, Andrew (1993). "Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining", in: Evans, Peter B., Jacobson, Harold K., Putnam, Robert D. (eds.) *Double Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Muralidharan, Sukumar (2000). "Clinton's Yatra", *Frontline* 17 (7): pp.2-6
- NIC (2004). *Mapping the Global Future*. Washington D.C.: National Intelligence Council
- Nunn, Sam (2006). "Nuclear Pig in a Poke", *Wall Street Journal*, May 24
- Nye, Joseph (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs
- Page, Jeremy (2007). "Phone call derails controversial deal to attract India into nuclear fold", *The Times*, October 17
- Patnaik, Ila (2008). "Home is where the dollar goes", *Indian Express*, February 14
- Perkovich, George (forthcoming). "The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal", (unpublished manuscript, contact author). Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Paper.
- Pew Research Center (2006). "India: Pro- America, Pro Bush", March 1  
[online] <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=7053> [Accessed: 10.10.08]
- Pickering, Thomas (2000). "U.S. policy in South Asia: The Road Ahead", speech at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C.: April 28
- Putnam, Robert D. (1988). "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organization* 42 (3): pp. 427-460
- Ramachandran, R. (2006). "India and the U.S.: Cooperation and hurdles", *Frontline* 23 (15): pp.112-116
- Rice, Condoleezza (2000). "Promoting the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs* 79 (1): pp. 45-62
- Rice, Condoleezza (2006). "The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement", statement before the House International Relations Committee, Washington D.C.: April 5
- Rice, Condoleezza (2008). "Remarks En Route to New Delhi, India", October 11 [online]  
<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/10/110618.htm> [Accessed:14.10.08]

- Rubenzler, Trevor (2008). "Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes and U.S. Foreign Policy Influence: A. Qualitative Comparative Analysis", *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4 (2): pp. 169-185
- Rubinoff, Arthur (2005). "The Diaspora as a Factor in U.S.-India Relations", *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 32 (3): pp.169-187
- Rytz, Henriette (2008). "Explaining the influence of ethnic interest groups in foreign-policy making: The role of ideas and multi (meta) theory approaches", Presented at the International Studies Association's 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. San Francisco, March 25-29. Conference paper
- Shain, Yossi (1999). *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and their Homelands*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Shain, Yossi (2007). *Kinship and Diasporas in International Politics*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press
- Sharma, Kapil (2004). "Indian Americans and the 2004 Election", *ORF Monitor* 1 (23): pp. 8-12.
- Sharma, Rajeev (2007). "Indian-Americans lobby MPs on N-deal", *The Tribune*, November 27
- Singh, Yaswant (1998). "Against Nuclear Apartheid: The case for India's tests", *Foreign Affairs* 77 (5): pp.41-52
- Sirohi, Seema(2005). "Historic breakthrough for India-US relations", *BBC News*, July 19.
- Smith, Tony (2000). *Foreign Attachments: the power of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy*. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press
- Subramanyam, K. (2005). "India and the nuclear deal", *The Times of India*, December 12
- Talbott, Strobe (2004). *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and The Bomb*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press
- Talbott, Strobe (2005). "Good Day for India. Bad Day for Non-Proliferation", *International Herald Tribune*, July 23
- Tellis, Ashley (2005). India as a New Global Power: An Action Agenda for the United States. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Paper.
- Tellis, Ashley (2006a). "The transforming U.S.-Indian Relationship and Its Significance for American Interests", Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Paper.
- Tellis, Ashley (2006b). "Atoms for War? U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation and India's Nuclear Arsenal" Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Paper.
- Tellis, Ashley (2007). "What should we expect from India as a strategic partner?", in: Sokolski, Henry (ed.) *Gauging U.S.-Indian Strategic Cooperation*. Washington D.C.: The Strategic Studies Institute Publications Office
- Tharoor, Ishaan (2007). "The demise of an India nuke deal", *Time*, October 22
- The Economic Times (2008). "PM thanks Indian Americans for pushing deal up the Hill", September 29
- The Economist (2003). "Didn't they do well", January 25
- The Economist (2007). "Taming Leviathan", March 15

- The Hindu (2007). "Indian-Americans to persuade BJP, Left to accept deal", October 27
- United Nations (1998). "UN Security Council Resolution 1172", June 6  
[online] <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/158/60/PDF/N9815860.pdf?OpenElement>  
[Accessed:10.06.08]
- U.S. Census Bureau (2006). "American Community Survey 2006: SO 201. Population group: Asian Indian alone or in any combination."  
[online] [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/IPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=01000US&-geo\\_id=NBSP&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201PR&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201T&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201TPR&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_&reg=ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201:032;ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201PR:032;ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201T:032;ACS\\_2006\\_EST\\_G00\\_S0201TPR:032&-\\_lang=en&-redoLog=false](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/IPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-geo_id=NBSP&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201PR&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201T&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201TPR&-ds_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_&reg=ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201:032;ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201PR:032;ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201T:032;ACS_2006_EST_G00_S0201TPR:032&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false) [Accessed:10.09.08]
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2005). *2005 Yearbook of Immigrant Statistics*. Washington D.C.: Office of Immigration Statistics
- U.S.-India Friendship Net (2007). "Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans: Members of Congressional Caucus", March  
[online] <http://www.usindiafriendship.net/congress1/housecaucus/members.htm> [Accessed:17.04.08]
- USINPAC (2007). "Indian Americans: Vital Statistics", official website.  
[online] [http://www.usinpac.com/indian\\_americans2007.asp](http://www.usinpac.com/indian_americans2007.asp) [Accessed: 10.06.08]
- USINPAC (2008) "National Outreach Program", official website.  
[online] [http://www.usinpac.com/nat\\_outreach\\_program.asp](http://www.usinpac.com/nat_outreach_program.asp) [Accessed: 10.06.08]
- Vardarajan, Siddharth (2007). "India's anti-Iran votes were coerced, says former U.S. official", *The Hindu*, February 16
- Waldman, Amy (2003). "India Harvest Fruits of a Diaspora", *New York Times*, January 12.
- Waldman, Amy (2004). "Indians Go Home, but Don't Leave U.S. Behind", *New York Times*, July 24
- Walker, Martin (2006). "India's Path to Greatness", *The Wilson Quarterly* 40 (3): pp. 22-30
- Waller, Steven (2006). "Would Congress Block the India Nuclear Deal?", *Time*, March 22
- Wallerstein, Immanuel (2005). "The U.S., India and China", June 16  
[online] <http://www.binghamton.edu/fbc/166en.htm> [Accessed: 10.10.08]
- Walt, Stephen (2005). *Taming American Power: The global response to U.S. primacy*. New York: W.W. Norton
- Watanabe, Paul (1984). *Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy: The Politics of the Turkish Arms Embargo*. Westport: Greenwood Press
- Weisman, Steven R. (2005). "U.S. allies and Congress 'positive' on Nuclear Deal", *New York Times*, July 20
- Weisman, Steven R. (2006). "Dissenting on Atomic Deal", *New York Times*, March 3.
- Weiss, Leonard (2007). "U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation: Better Later than Sooner", *Non-Proliferation Review* 14 (3): pp. 429-457

White, Andrew (2007). "Indian Students Flock to the United States", August 13  
[online] [http://www.forbes.com/2007/08/05/india-america-students-oped\\_cz\\_aaw\\_0813students.html](http://www.forbes.com/2007/08/05/india-america-students-oped_cz_aaw_0813students.html)  
[Accessed:12.10.08]

White House (2005). *India-U.S. Joint Statement*. Washington D.C. : July 20  
[online]<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/07/20050718-6.html> [Accessed: 10.04.08]

White House (2006). *Press Briefing by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nick Burns*. New Delhi: March 2  
[online] <http://z22.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060302-11.html> [Accessed: 10.04.08]

Yin, Robert K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publications

Zhu, Zhiquin (2007). "Two Diasporas: Overseas Chinese and Non-resident Indians in Their Homelands' Political Economy", *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 12 (3): pp. 281-296

## **Appendix I: Interviewees**

**\*Andersen, Walter K.** Professor of South Asia affairs at Johns Hopkins University. Interviewed October 8, 2008. (not quoted)

**Congressional staffer I.** House of Representatives, assigned to the Foreign Relations Committee. Interviewed October 14, 2008.

**Congressional staffer II.** House of Representatives, assigned to the Foreign Relations Committee. Interviewed October 23, 2008

**Chatterjee, Swadesh.** Chairman of the U.S.-India Friendship Council. Interviewed October 16, 2008

**Diplomatic representative of India.** Working at the Embassy of India in Washington D.C. Interviewed October 26, 2008. \*(Interview not taped.)

**Kimball, Daryl.** Executive Director of the Arms Association. Interviewed October 15, 2008.

**Hathaway, Robert D.** Director of the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Studies, previously worked 12 years at House Foreign Relations Committee. Interviewed October 16

**\*Perkovich, George.** Vice President for studies, Director of the Non-Proliferation Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Interviewed October 21, 2008. (not quoted)

**Puri, Sanjay.** Chairman of the U.S.-India Political Action Committee. Interviewed September 30, 2008

**U.S. State Department official.** Working at the Bureau of South and Central Asian affairs. Interviewed October 22, 2008. \*(Interview not taped.)

**Vickery, Raymond.** Researcher at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Studies. Former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Commerce. Hired as a lobbyist for the U.S.-India Business Council on the nuclear agreement. Interviewed October 24, 2008.

**\*Squassoni, Sharon.** Researcher on non-proliferation issues at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Interviewed October 14, 2008. (not quoted)



## Appendix II: Interview guide

- (1) How was the initial reaction among the lawmakers on Capitol Hill to the U.S.-India nuclear agreement?
- (2) The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement passed overwhelmingly in Congress. What is your explanation of this? i.e. What changed the opinion of legislators?
- (3) Can you identify any “tipping point” in which the debate shifted in favor of the agreement’s passage?
- (4) Which actors (i.e. interest groups) do you consider most important for the Congressional approval of the deal?
- (5) In the U.S. Congress: What issue did you see as the biggest threat to the passage of the agreement? Why didn’t more of the “killer amendments” pass?
- (6) How, where (which sections of lawmakers) and when (in the process) do you see the Indian American lobby being influential in the ratification process?
- (7) How would you describe the contact between Indian Americans and (a.) the Bush administration? (b.) The government of India? (c.) Other domestic interest groups?
- (8) How would you describe the role of the *India caucus* in Congress?
- (9) Where did you focus your lobbying efforts? With whom did you coordinate your efforts?
- (10) Why has the political clout of Indian Americans grown in recent years?
- (11) In what ways and to what extent did Indian Americans influence the debate back in India?