

Indo-US Strategic Partnership Implications for Pakistan

*Sadaf Farooq, Sadia Kazmi and Javaria Javed**

Abstract

[In the scheme of American grand strategy for the 'new world order', India has emerged as the most powerful regional ally. The emerging "strategic partnership" between the US and India is based on a shared view for democracy and concerns about the threat of global terrorism as well as mutual unease considering the long-term implications of the rise of China in Asia and beyond. US and India have complementary economic and strategic security interests as the former desires to maintain her economic and military supremacy in the world. India on her part wants to develop security ties with America to facilitate her becoming dominant regional and global power in the foreseeable future. Shared perception about 'terrorism' has further cemented their relations where India promptly endorses US stance on "War on Terrorism" with a hope to turn US interests to its advantage by labeling freedom struggle in Kashmir as Pakistan sponsored insurgency. Reflections of converging interests include: US-India Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) initiative, signing of 123 Nuclear Agreement, missile defense, and ten-year defense framework agreement that calls for expanding bilateral security cooperation. Pakistan cannot afford to remain oblivious to these developments due to their security implications. Enhanced capacity building of Indian armed forces and nuclear collaborations may undermine the deterrent value of Pakistan's conventional and nuclear weapons. A combination of pragmatic foreign policy backed with credible conventional and nuclear deterrence could serve desired national security interests. While remaining strategically relevant to US, Islamabad will have to continue to cultivate good relationship with Beijing. On internal front, Pakistan must revive her economy and achieve more national cohesion so as to offset the negative effects of Indo-US strategic convergence. – *Authors.*]

Introduction

Owing to its dynamic nature, International politics underwent great transformation after the end of Cold War. With the collapse of Soviet Union, the bipolar world changed into uni-polar system and US emerged as a sole superpower. Changes in global power structure began

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characterizing the relations among states and international relations started to be marked by trans-regional security structures and increased economic cooperation. Along with other regions, South Asia also could not remain unaffected with new developments. After a period of relative marginalization, South Asia emerged as a focus of tremendous international concern and it steadily started to increase its influence in world politics. There were number of factors which encouraged the US to put considerable political and diplomatic efforts for its engagement with South Asia, which developed a new intensity after Sep 11, 2001.¹ The most important strategic priority for US was the transformation of its relations with India. Pivotal geo-strategic location and its emergence as a potential economic power gave India a strategic weight and influence in the region. Consequent to emerging geo-political realities, India readjusted and evolved its foreign policy, enabled her to be reckoned with as potential counterweight to China, liberalized economy and embraced globalization that brought her close to US. Washington reciprocated by supporting its drive for Great Power status in the 21st century and with landmark civilian nuclear deal; the purpose was to integrate India into the nuclear non-proliferation regime, remove the age-old differences between the two over the nuclear issue and create the bases for a stronger bilateral partnership.² As a result, the relations between the two became friendly, cooperative and cordial.

The emergence of India as a potential global power is expected to transform the regional geopolitical landscape. It is therefore prudent to understand India's intentions, strengths and limitations, the contours of Indo-US strategic partnership including Indo-US nuclear deal, joint military exercises, technology transfer and military cooperation etc. and their likely impact on Pakistan's national security. Being one of the dominant powers in Asia, India's strategic relations with US may increase imbalance between two big powers of South Asia, India and Pakistan. Though Islamabad and Washington also have a kind of partnership, yet increasing imbalance between two rivals, India and Pakistan, can impact the nuclear conception between the aggressive neighbors. Moreover, collaboration in the missile defense field system between India and US has a contrary impact on the whole South Asian region.³

¹ C. Raja Mohan, *America's Role in Asia: Asian and American Views* (San Fransisco:The Asia Foundation, 2008), 56.

² Ibid.

³ Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, *The Indo-US Strategic Relationship and Pakistan's Security* (London: South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, 2007): 8.

Historically, with the Indian independence in 1947, the US invited it to join western block but India declared itself as non-aligned state. It not only showed a tilt towards the Soviet Union but also rejected the US arbitrating offer and turned to Soviet Union for backing on Kashmir issue. The relations between the US and India became warmer in 1960s, when rising Chinese dominancy became a threat to the Indian hegemony in South Asian Region. At that time, the US gave confidence to India that it would stand with it against Chinese aggression. It also provided military assistance to India in its 1962 war against China. From 1965 till the end of 1970s, relations between the two became cold because US had joined hands with China and Pakistan and also provided economic as well as military aid to Pakistan. The 1974 Indian Nuclear test resulted in US economic sanctions on India.

The relations between US and India became warmer in 1960s, when rising Chinese dominancy became a threat to the Indian hegemony in South Asian Region.

After 1980 the relations between the two countries reached to new heights when they started to cooperate in the field of defense technology and US shared its technology to help India in modernizing its military technology.⁴ But the ties went back on the thorn path with the 1998 Indian nuclear test and US put strict sanctions on India. With the wake of 21st century, the 9/11 brought major changes in the world politics. Thus, indo-US ties started their journey on the peaceful track. Both the states signed a 10-year Defense Pact, known as 'Strategic Partnership', to strengthen defense and military relations.⁵ This agreement provided a smooth way to Indo-US relations and helped them to come closer to each other to fulfill their goals and interests in this globalized world.

Convergence of Indo-US Interests

Indo-US interests converge on a number of bilateral, regional and global issues. Both the states share values and interests related to peace and stability in South Asia, eradicating terrorism, economic growth and normalization of relations in the region. The two states want to prevent influence of any power in Asia, support democracy, and depend on stable functioning of energy markets and maritime security of the Indian Ocean.

⁴ Deepak Nagpal, "India and the US – from 1947 to Present," *Zee News*, Sep. 23, 2014.

⁵ Muhammad Ishaque Fani, "The Indo-US Strategic Partnership in Post 9/11: Implication for Pakistan," *Journal of Pakistan Vision* 10, no. 2 (2009): 137.

The shared practices of democracy and emergence of India as a regional and global power can assist US to form and safeguard its interests in the emerging multi-polar world order.⁶

With the signing of "inter-regional strategic partnership", Indo-US cooperation has started a new chapter in the history of South Asia. Both have ambitious convergence of interests, which are the base of their partnership. Some of the most important concerns that mark a significant increase for strategic cooperation between the two are:

- Pakistan: as Pinball
- China: a challenge
- Regional & Global Security: War on terror
- Indo-Pacific Region

Pakistan: as Pinball: Despite Pak-US long-standing alliance, US and India think alike in terms of security in the post 9/11 world. For the two states, Pakistan's nuclear proliferation activities and South Asian Islamic fundamentalism (Taliban, Al-Qaeda) is a common concern. There is a school of thought within the US foreign policy formulation that perceives India as a bulwark against these dangers from Pakistan. Pakistan's strategic cooperation with China has also remained critical for both the US and India. Both the states share the concern that China would equip Pakistan with most advanced weapons systems that must be threatening for Indian stability.⁷ The United States has provided strong military and political support to India and has opened all doors to India such as military and technology. In the past eight years, India has emerged as the world's largest arms importer,⁸ bought over \$100 billion weapons each year, two-thirds of this amount has been utilized against Pakistan. In order to oppose Pakistan's defensive response to India's build-up, US has imposed severe sanctions on Pakistan's purchase of advanced technologies and weapon systems from the US or allied sources.⁹ US has also extended its support to share cutting-edge military technologies with India, in order to divert Pakistan's attention from Afghanistan's rebuilding after the destruction of war against terrorism.¹⁰

⁶ Abdul Qadir Khan, "US-India Strategic Bargaining and Power Balancing in South Asia," *Journal of Professional Research in Social Sciences* 1, no. 2 (2014): 45.

⁷ Riaz Haq, "Has Modi Stepped Up India's Covert War in Pakistan?," *Haq's Musings*, December 22, 2014 (9:15 a.m), <http://www.riazhaq.com/2014/12/has-modi-stepped-up-indias-covert-war.html>.

⁸ Rajat Pandit, "India remains world's largest arms importer, with 14% of total share," *The Times of India*, Feb. 22, 2016.

⁹ Munir Akram, "The Indo-US alliance," *Dawn News*, Apr. 20, 2016.

¹⁰ Rajat Pandit, "Doors open for India to military logistics, cutting-edge weaponry," *The Times of India*, Jun. 9, 2016.

China: A Challenge: China remains a major worry for US dominance in the region and it is only logical, in American perspective, to prop India up as a counter weight to china.¹¹ India had long characterized China as a "strategic rival", but it was during Bush administration that US regarded China as a "strategic competitor" rather than a "strategic partner".¹² With the strengthening of relationship through strategic partnership, India and US are sharing their interests for the containment of China from militarily dominating the Asian region.¹³ Though India and China had tried to develop balanced relations and both were having economic engagement yet India is deeply concerned about the increasing Pak-China engagement and China's opposing India's inclusion into the NSG (Nuclear Suppliers Group).¹⁴

For the US, China is still the only regional player that has the courage to seriously challenge or contradict to the US presence in Eurasia. At the same time, India is also deeply concerned about the Chinese military arms and equipment agreement with Pakistan. This situation can also weaken the India's position to play a key role in Asian continent.¹⁵ The two states also view China as playing an assertive role in Asia-Pacific region and want to mitigate its influence. For this purpose, naval collaboration is a key point in Indo-US partnership. In the Indo-US 2016 joint statement, the two states have reaffirmed their commitment to work for the safeguard of maritime security and freedom of navigation and protection of over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea.¹⁶

The United States has an interest in balancing any future Chinese expansion in Asia, and the Indo-US strategic partnership could play a very important role.¹⁷ The US needs India's partnership to sustain US pre-eminence in this global balance of power and to win the peaceful competition with other powers, especially China and the European Union,¹⁸

¹¹ Denny Roy, "The" China threat" issue: Major arguments," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (1996): 762.

¹² Mohan Malik, "High hopes: India's response to US security policies," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 30, no. 2 (2003): 108.

¹³ Vikram Mansharamani, "Obama in India: Time to Get Serious on Common Goals," *Yale Global Online*, January 22, 2015, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/obama-india-time-get-serious-common-goals>.

¹⁴ Saira Bano, "India and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) membership," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27, no. 2 (2015): 130.

¹⁵ Mohammad Samir Hussain, "India-United States Strategic Relations: China as a Factor," *Journal of Political Studies* 19, no. 2 (2012): 79.

¹⁶ Seema Sirohi, "India-U.S.: Convergence and Divergence," *Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations*, April 16, 2016, <http://www.gatewayhouse.in/india-u-s-convergence-divergence>.

¹⁷ Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, *op.cit.*, 10.

¹⁸ K Subrahmanyam, "Why the United States needs India," *Rediff News*, Jan. 2, 2006.

Regional & Global Security: The Indo-US counterterrorism partnership can be recognized as an important turning point in their relationship. The Indo-US leaders have accepted the continued threats arising from terrorism and criticized the terrorist incidents from Paris to Pathankot and from Brussels to Kabul.¹⁹ They are focusing to sharpen their efforts, bilaterally and with other countries to curb all the threats arising from what they see as radicalization.²⁰ US expects India to work for maintaining a balance of power in this region as per US choosing. On the other hand, according to US strategists, United States is fighting India's battles, as the spread of what they view as a radicalized version of Islam is dangerous for India as well, which is home to over 150 million Muslims.²¹ Number of steps have been taken to strengthen cooperation against the full range of terrorist threats that include an agreement to encourage sharing of terrorist screening information and their support for a UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).²²

Indo-Pacific Region: As Indo-Pacific region is an emerging hub of global and regional politics having the fastest economy and human resource potential, both the US and India have declared each other as 'priority partners' in the region.²³ Both are concerned about China's military presence in Indo-Pacific region. India has been seeing the China's "string of pearls" strategy as an attempt to pacify India's role in the Indo-Pacific region. Indian strategic planners are also concerned about China assistance for ports and refueling stations in Pakistan (Gwadar), Sri Lanka (Hambantota), Bangladesh (Chittagong), and Burma (Sittwe and Kyaukpyu). US has also shown its resentment over China's first stealth fighter, an anti-ship ballistic missile and DF-21 medium-range missile that has the potential to change the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific by forcefully pushing the operational US vessels to a greater distance from potential conflict zones.²⁴ To mitigate these

¹⁹ Harsh V Pant, "Modi's Unexpected Boost to India-US Relations," *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2014): 103.

²⁰ Bruce Riedel, "India-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation," *India-U.S. Policy Memo*, September 23, 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/india-u-s-counterterrorism-cooperation>.

²¹ Henry A. Kissinger, "America and Asia Stand to Gain From This New Relationship", *Working with India*, March 20, 2006, <http://www.henryakissinger.com/articles/wp032006.html>.

²² CCIT promotes and strengthens the framework for global collaboration and fortify that no cause or Objection would justify terrorism.

²³ Shreya Upadhyay, "The Indo-Pacific & the Indo-US Relations," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies* no. 256 (2014): 4.

²⁴ Rupakjyoti Borah, "India, Australia, and the United States in the Indian Ocean Region: A Growing Strategic Convergence, Future Directions International, Perth, Australia, 12 May 2011 <http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publications/indian-ocean/27-india-australia-and-the-united-states-in-the-indian-ocean-region-a-growing-strategic-convergence.html>

mutually threats the two states have joined their hands in all areas of cooperation including the anti-submarine warfare and submarine safety.²⁵ Both have common interest to ensure the safety and security of the communicational sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific region.²⁶ The US has also announced to support India's membership in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation APEC.²⁷ The US wants to consolidate its relations with India and wants to enhance the outlook of India as a regional power so as to play a key role in the regional politics.²⁸ According to a Brookings report "India can take on more responsibility for low-end operations in Asia, which will allow the US to concentrate its resources on high-end fighting missions."²⁹

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Indo-US strategic deal has put both on the same path of interests. Now both countries should accept the blunt reality that the United States needs India (as a signal of democratic capitalism in a strategically and militarily crucial part of the world) and India needs the United States (as an economic and military superpower capable of assisting the quest to achieve far reaching status). The strategic partnership has raised concerns for both states about each other, to stay in touch with each others' movements to grab the converged interests.³⁰

Facets of Emerging Indo-US Relations

The July 2005 summit between US President George Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington provided a roadmap for the transformation of bilateral strategic ties. They agreed on several joint

²⁵ Seema Sirohi, "India-U.S.: Convergence and Divergence," *Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations*, April 16, 2016, <http://www.gatewayhouse.in/india-u-s-convergence-divergence>

²⁶ Rupakjyoti Borah, op.cit.

²⁷ Uma Purushothaman, "America and India: Aligned but not Allied," *The Buzz*, June 15, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/america-india-aligned-not-allied-16592>.

²⁸ Ranjan Goswami, "India-US Relations: A Conflict-Ridden Past, A Cooperative Economic Future," *The Yale Political Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1998): 79.

²⁹ William J Perry, *US Nuclear Weapons Policy: Confronting Today's Threats*, ed. George Bunn, and Christopher F Chyba (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 155.

³⁰ Vikram Mansharamani, "Obama in India: Time to Get Serious on Common Goals," *Yale Global Online*, January 22, 2015, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/obama-india-time-get-serious-common-goals>.

ventures that highlighted the breadth of the new Indo-US relationship. Among these were revitalized economic and energy dialogues, a CEO forum, a global democracy initiative, a disaster response initiative, the completion of the Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership (NSSP) process, and a partnership to fight HIV/AIDS.³¹ The agreement was renewed in 2015; President Obama not only endorsed the agreement entered into between Mr. Bush and Dr. Singh but also joined hands with Prime Minister Modi to complete the journey begun a decade ago.³² Ensuing discussion will however, focus on defense, nuclear and economic aspects of the agreement.

Defense Cooperation: Since early 2002 India and the United States have conducted "numerous joint military exercises including all military branches."³³ In 2005, Washington and New Delhi signed a "10 year defense agreement" which called for joint weapons production, cooperation on missile defense and transfer of technology.³⁴ In 2009, India purchased eight P-8I maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft from Boeing.³⁵ In 2010, the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) and the Indian Integrated Defense Staff (IDS) conducted the inaugural Joint Exercise India (JEI) tabletop exercise in Alaska.³⁶ In 2011, the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security agreed to purchase ten C-17 Globe master strategic, heavy-lift military aircraft worth US \$4.1 billion, the biggest-ever defense deal to be signed between the two countries.³⁷ In 2013 both the sides agreed for cooperation to improve the use of earth observation data to promote sustainable development, compatibility and interoperability in satellite navigation systems.³⁸ India imported almost \$2 billion of military equipment from the United States in 2013, up from \$237 million in 2009.³⁹ One of the major developments regarding their defense relations is the Rim of the Pacific 2014 (RIMPAC)

³¹ R Nicholas Burns, "The US and India: The New Strategic Partnership," (Speech to the Asia Society, New York, October 15, 2005).

³² Sanjaya Baru, "An agreement that was called a deal," *The Hindu*, Jul. 21, 2015.

³³ K. Alan Kronstadt. "India-US Relations," *Library OF Congress Washington DC Congressional Research Service*, (2009): 47.

³⁴ Ashish Kumar Sen, "India, US sign 10-yr defence agreement," *The Tribune India*, Jun. 30, 2005.

³⁵ Lindsay Hughes, "India-US Relations – Part Two: Growing Military and Strategic Co-operation," *Strategic Analysis Paper* (2016): 5.

³⁶ Report to Congress, "Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation," ed. U.S. Department of Defense (2011).

³⁷ Lindsay Hughes, "India-US Relations – Part Two: Growing Military and Strategic Co-operation," *Strategic Analysis Paper* (2016): 5.

³⁸ Ajey Lele and Munish Sharma, "Indo-US space cooperation: Synergies and differences," *South Asia Monitor*, September 30, 2014, <http://southasiamonitor.org/detail.php?type=sl&nid=9137>.

³⁹ Joshua White, "The Modi Visit and U.S.-India Defense Cooperation," *War on the Rocks*, October 6, 2014, <https://warontherocks.com/2014/10/the-modi-visit-and-u-s-india-defense-cooperation/>.

exercise, the world's largest maritime exercise featuring 22 navies, in which India participated for the first time. India's participation in RIMPAC 2014 signals a more assertive Indian approach to the Asia-Pacific.⁴⁰

In 2005, a pact was signed between the two under which India was offered the facility to acquire an anti ballistic missile defense system. India started constructing an anti-ballistic defense system to protect its land from entry of any nuclear armed ballistic missile. But after 11 failures, it was in 2016 that India was able to successfully conduct Advanced Air Defense test and boost its self-defense capability only with the assistance of US.⁴¹ It became the fourth country after Russia, US, and Israel to successfully test a BMD system.

Economic Cooperation: The idea of cashing in India's 1.2 billion plus large market was the most dominating force in the US thinking of engaging with India. New trade and investment opportunities have made America India's largest trading and investment partner. Trade in goods between the United States and India grew from \$32 billion in 2006 to about \$67 billion in 2014 a growth of more than 100 percent since the deal was signed. In addition, India has taken steps to open its economy to allow foreign investment and privatize previously state-owned enterprises. US companies and investors are very keen to invest in India. India has also reduced government red tape to make it easier for foreign corporations to do business in India.⁴² Since 2014, members of US-India business council have invested 28 billion dollars in India and 45 billion dollars are in the pipeline.⁴³

Nuclear Collaboration: As a part of Indo-US strategic partnership, a civil nuclear cooperation accord, known as the 123 Agreement was signed between the two in 2007. Under the deal US agreed to meet India demand of the right to reprocess spent nuclear fuel and no disruption of nuclear supplies even if India should conduct a nuclear test under compelling circumstances. Besides that, the deal allowed India to stay a non-signatory of the Non Proliferation Treaty and to build military

⁴⁰ Ajai Shukla, "Naval exercises lead up to high-level US-India visits," *Business Standard*, July 28 2014, http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/naval-exercises-lead-up-to-high-level-us-india-visits-114072801289_1.html.

⁴¹ Qaisar Rashid, "India's anti-ballistic missile defence shield," *Daily Times*, May 17, 2016.

⁴² Subrata Ghoshroy, "Taking stock: The US-India nuclear deal 10 years later," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, February 10, 2016, <http://thebulletin.org/taking-stock-us-india-nuclear-deal-10-years-later9165>.

⁴³ Jhon Chambers, "U.S Companies Investing \$45 Billion in India," *Economic Times*, Jun. 8, 2016.

reactors and would be the sole judge to decide which reactors would go for safeguard.⁴⁴

In 2015, the United States gave up its demand that India allow US agencies to track all the fissile material supplied by the United States. In return India also agreed to join the UN Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage that had been a longstanding US demand.⁴⁵ The United States has also extended full facilitation to India for membership into Missile Technology Control Regime and Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Implications for Pakistan

Indo-US strategic partnership has severe implications for Pakistan. The deal is a clear sign that the US no longer will treat India and Pakistan as equal competitor in South Asia and that it has at last recognized India as the leading power in the region.⁴⁶ Pakistan has now become only the tactical partner of US while India has emerged as strategic partner.⁴⁷

- The partnership has paved the way for a deal under which India would buy conventional weapons valued five billion dollars from US which includes supersonic fighter jets, highly sophisticated missiles and other major military equipment. The massive build-up of India's weaponry will increase the already existing conventional imbalance between India and Pakistan and add to the security concerns of Pakistan. This will compel it to re-balance against India and increase its defense spending immediately. This may create a path towards the destabilization of strategic balance in the region. Any increase in defense spending would undermine Pakistan's socio-economic development.⁴⁸
- The deal also aims at to assist India in sophisticated nuclear technology. Recently, India has conducted a successful test of ABM system with US assistance. This would compel Pakistan to opt for a countermeasure and generate an arms race between

⁴⁴ Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, "Indo-US nuclear deal: altering global nuclear order", *Strategic Studies* 27, no. 2-3 (2008): 21.

⁴⁵ Subrata Ghoshroy, "Taking stock: The US-India nuclear deal 10 years later," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, February 10, 2016, <http://thebulletin.org/taking-stock-us-india-nuclear-deal-10-years-later9165>.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Ishaque Fani, "The Indo-US Strategic Partnership in Post 9/11: Implication for Pakistan," *Journal of Pakistan Vision* 10, no. 2 (2009): 140.

⁴⁷ Syed Shahid Hussain Bukhari, "India-United States strategic partnership: implications for Pakistan," *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2011): 13.

⁴⁸ Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, op.cit., 16.

India and Pakistan, which would be detrimental to Pakistan's growing economy.⁴⁹

- 123 Agreement would not only allow India to continue to pursue nuclear program by keeping 8 reactors for military purpose but will also allow assured supply of nuclear fuel by 46 countries (Nuclear Suppliers Group). Thus India would be able to divert available stock of uranium for nuclear weapons. Momin Iftikhar, a Pakistani analyst argues that "India utilized 11% of various available energy sources including oil, gas, coal, wind and nuclear power for producing electricity. Out of this only 2-3% is produced through nuclear power. The civil nuclear cooperation agreement, once materialized in its true essence by 2025 could increase this production to a maximum of 6.5 - 8% only. Therefore, it is not clear how this increase of 4.5 - 6% in nuclear electricity could make any substantial difference in global climatic conditions or in the Indian economy." Therefore it is more likely that India will continue to divert nuclear expertise and materials, provided for producing 'cheap, efficient and clean' energy, towards accelerating her ambitious nuclear weapons' program.⁵⁰
- The deal does not require India to restrict or limit its fissile material manufacturing. When Indian manufacturing would be unlimited, it would be a direct security concern to Pakistan. Pakistan will have to upgrade existing inventory of nuclear weapons to maintain minimum credible deterrence.⁵¹
- The partnership will have political and diplomatic implications as well. The US is not expected to mediate between India and Pakistan as far as the settlement of the Kashmir issue is concerned. Indo-US partnership would encourage India for obtaining permanent seat in Security Council. Once India is in the Security Council on a permanent basis without solving the

The US is not expected to mediate between India and Pakistan as far as the settlement of the Kashmir issue is concerned.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Momin Iftikhar, "India's Civilian Nuclear Energy Program—Hype or Reality?," *South Asia Research and Analysis Studies*, June 12, 2006, www.saras.org.pk/viewarticle.php?topicid=149.

⁵¹ Shaista Tabassum, "Emerging Indo-US Relations: Concerns for Pakistan" (paper presented at the seminar at the Area Study Centre for Europe, the University of Karachi, 2008).

Kashmir issue, it could use its veto to block any initiative by the UN on Kashmir and even bar a discussion in the Security Council.

- US encouragement for Indian presence on the Western borders of Pakistan also sends a signal to Pakistan and the accord would encourage more Indian involvement in Afghanistan. India will be benefited by exploiting its closer relationship with the Northern alliance to pursue her agenda of destabilizing Pakistan.

Keeping this in view, it can be argued that when Indo-US partnership will grow further, ultimately the balance of power between Pakistan and India shall tilt in favor of India not only in terms of nuclear capability but will also affect Pakistan's interests in terms of Defense, Political, Economic and External Relations.⁵²

Options for Pakistan

Option-1 (Maintain Status Quo): Primacy of US is likely to remain unchallenged in near future due to enormous political, economic and strategic clout in prevalent global arena. In order to safeguard her long-term interests, US military engagement in Afghanistan is expected to continue. Therefore, Pakistan is expected to remain strategically relevant in US security calculus. Islamabad should continue to cultivate good relationship with Washington through addressing US concerns with regard to nuclear proliferation and eliminating terrorists' networks from FATA. At the same time, it should persuade US to use her good offices for early settlement of all outstanding disputes especially Kashmir issue with India in a definite timeframe. While pursuing this option, Pakistan must not compromise its strategic relations with China whatsoever.

Option-2 (China-Oriented Policy): Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed strategic relations with China which is emerging global power. The rise of China as great economic and military power, coupled with Russia and Iran, could realize the possibility of bipolar world. Pakistan should come out of western influence and readjust her foreign policy to have more orientation towards China. China and Pakistan have similar threat perception and a formal alliance would be more plausible. Pakistan should, at the same time, improve its economic outlook and strengthen the state institutions. The realization of this option could take some time, as at present, China is more focused on economic development and its movement towards the center-stage of the world is gradual.

⁵² Syed Shahid Hussain Bukhari, "India-United States strategic partnership: implications for Pakistan," *Berkeley Journal of Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2011): 17.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Common interests of both the US and India in containing China, prospects of increased economic integration and common threat perception about terrorism have brought the two states together. India with the status of regional power is likely to be US outpost in South Asia, similar to Israel in Middle East, having assured US backing. Growing Indian stature would influence US decision-making especially with regard to South Asia. Mutual alliance between the two can place Pakistan in an uncomfortable position. Pakistan is likely to be marginalized and made irrelevant in security calculus of US.

In response to such an environment that is threatening Pakistan there are some recommendations that will assist it to reinstall balance of power in the region, decrease negative consequence of the Indo-US strategic relationships and civil nuclear collaboration on Pak-US relationship. In fact, Pakistan is in a paradox. She will have to retain an intricate balance in pursuing policies which are in line with US interests while not losing sight of its own national interests and continuing to maintain cordial relations with China. Following recommendations are forwarded in this aspect:

- Pakistan should continue to align itself to the US-Pakistan common interests in the region. Barring containment of China, cooperative arrangements on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, narcotics control and international terrorism be worked out and institutionalized. Pakistan needs to facilitate in bringing stability to Afghanistan while carefully protecting her own interests. Pakistan's traditional relations with China and those of China with Russia should be further strengthened.
- India is being propped as regional power to safeguard US interests in the Asia / South Asia. Indian aspirations warrant a unified response from Pakistan and China as Indo-US strategic partnership, an unholy alliance having serious implications, is sure to disturb the strategic stability in this region. Transforming traditional friendship between Pakistan and China into a formal alliance or security grouping may also be considered. Under such an arrangement allowing China a strategic foothold on the North Arabian Sea in close proximity of the Straits of Hormuz may be given a consideration. Russia and Iran may be wooed into joining this alliance which would enhance its credibility.

- Pakistan should increase cooperation with China in the nuclear energy field. This collaboration would fulfill Pakistan's energy needs and further boost its bilateral ties with China.
- Pakistan needs to diversify its relations with Iran on equality bases as mutual respect and cooperation with Iran would help Pakistan to solve its energy crisis, overcome economic instability, and advance its military and nuclear capabilities. Pakistan needs to vitally cooperate with Iran in order to meet the energy needs of the country. If the Iran-Pakistan Gas pipeline project would be completed, it would better serve to fulfill Pakistan's energy needs. Only economically and militarily strong Pakistan and friendly neighboring states can make things better to deal with the Indo-US alliance.
- Strategic stability in South Asia rests on credible nuclear deterrence. Pakistan must continue to maintain strategic balance by sustaining and upgrading nuclear weapons. With a continuing American military presence in the region and accessibility to Pakistani soil, safeguarding of nuclear assets is critical. This is not to say that we should confront with the US but must define the limits of our cooperation and enunciate our own national strategic compulsions. Pakistan should enforce strict monitoring mechanism to address the so-called international grievances about nuclear proliferation.

Pakistan must continue to maintain strategic balance by sustaining and upgrading nuclear weapons.

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