

**THE U.S.-INDIA RELATIONSHIP:  
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP  
OR COMPLEMENTARY INTERESTS?**

**Amit Gupta**

**February 2005**

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This manuscript was funded by the U.S. Army War College External Research Associates Program. Information on this program is available on our website, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/>, at the Publishing button.

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The author would like to thank Dr. Steve Metz and Dr. Antulio Echevarria for their support and an anonymous reviewer for his comments.

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ISBN 1-58487-186-5

## FOREWORD

This monograph examines the U.S.-India security relationship and argues that significant differences in their worldviews precludes the development of a strong strategic relationship at present. However, India's continued economic and military growth, as well as its ongoing commitment towards secularism and democracy, makes it a future ally towards establishing strategic stability in Asia and in assisting future nation-building efforts across the globe.

In the short run, therefore, the relationship should be based on securing complementary interests: ensuring stability in the Indian Ocean; democracy across the world; and getting the Indian government to work proactively to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their associated systems.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr." in a cursive script.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

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## SUMMARY

Can India and the United States create a strategic partnership that will further the security and foreign policy interests of both countries? This monograph argues that given the divergent worldviews of the two countries, it would be difficult to develop a strategic partnership. Further, the two countries differ about India's nuclear status, with the United States not in favor of making India into a *de jure* nuclear weapons state. Indian analysts also remain concerned about the reliability of the United States as a supplier of high technology, and continued U.S. support to Pakistan is also seen as slowing down the positive growth of the relationship.

The two countries do, however, have complementary interests, and it is in American interests to facilitate the development of a strong India that can play a role in ensuring strategic stability in Asia as well as promoting shared values of democracy and secularism. One needs to qualify this statement by saying that, given the self-imposed limitations on India's part, any such partnership would only evolve in the long term. In the short term, U.S. interests partially are served by having India work to secure multilateral security initiatives in Asia, particularly in the Indian Ocean littoral.

From an American perspective, the following steps can be taken to enhance the U.S.-India relationship and to make India play a more proactive role in furthering U.S. international security interests. First, the United States could further develop Indian educational capabilities to provide higher technological and managerial education to a growing number of students from West, Southwest, and Central Asia. Second, the Indian Navy could be used to enforce a broader maritime security framework in the Indian Ocean. Third, India has the capacity to provide significant numbers of troops for peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and nation-building efforts. Fourth, the United States should expect India to play a more proactive role in nonproliferation issues. Fifth, Indian diplomatic assets can be used to start a substantive dialogue with Iran. Sixth, the United States must expect India to continue to develop its nuclear and conventional military capability and use this capability, as Henry Kissinger has

suggested, to “prevent the rise of another dominant power to emerge between Singapore and Aden. And this is compatible with American interests.”<sup>1</sup>

For India to carry out such a role and emerge as a long-term strategic partner, the United States has to reshape some of its own policies to permit the rise of India to the status of a major power. Reshaping American policies would specifically include:

- Supporting India’s quest to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.
- Reshaping international nonproliferation regimes to permit India, Israel, and Pakistan to become de jure nuclear weapons states.
- Eventually, recognizing the Line of Control in Kashmir as the international border and, therefore, freezing the territorial status quo in South Asia. This would help reduce India-Pakistan tensions and permit India to play a greater international role.

## ENDNOTES

1. “Analysis. On the record: Dr. Henry Kissinger,” *The Indian Express*, November 16, 2004.

# THE U.S.-INDIA RELATIONSHIP: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OR COMPLEMENTARY INTERESTS?

## **Introduction.**

Can India and the United States create a strategic partnership that will further the security and foreign policy interests of both countries? Since the advent of the second Bush administration, there has been a warming in relations between the two countries, with increased military contacts and talk of technology transfers. Further, the two countries share democratic values and are concerned about the spread of terrorism in the broader Asian region. Economically, India remains a large and relatively untapped market that would be of interest to American multinationals. These ties have led to some speculation about a potential U.S.-India security partnership emerging.

This monograph argues, however, that given major differences in the worldviews of the two countries, it would be difficult to develop a strategic partnership. The two countries do, however, have complementary interests and, therefore, it is in American interests to facilitate the development of a strong India. That country can then play a role in ensuring strategic stability in Asia, as well as promote American values of democracy and secularism (which India also shares). One needs to qualify this statement by saying that, given the self-imposed limitations on India's part, any such partnership would only evolve in the long term. In the short term, U.S. interests are partially served by having India work to secure multilateral security initiatives in Asia, particularly in the Indian Ocean littoral.

## **Background.**

In the past, U.S.-Indian relations have been marked by divergent worldviews that led both countries not to develop the type of relations that the United States had with other major democracies, despite several instances of overlapping security interests. Initial suspicions about post-independence India stemmed from its unwillingness to

commit to the western alliance in the emerging Cold War, as well as India's adoption of a quasi-socialist economy. While the relationship briefly blossomed during and immediately after the Korean War with India as a member of the United Nations (UN) armistice commission, it soon ran aground with the twin crises of 1956 – Hungary and Suez. India condemned the Israel-French-British invasion of Suez but was far more reluctant to condemn the Soviet Union's brutal crushing of the Hungarian revolt. Relations between the two countries again briefly flourished after the Sino-Indian war of 1962 when the United States transferred conventional weapons to India, discussed covering India under its nuclear umbrella, and for a while was inclined to set up intelligence posts in the country to monitor China. At the economic level, India became a major recipient of U.S. assistance. The United States provided significant amounts of food aid to India in the 1960s first to tide over the country during the Bihar famine and, later, to start an agricultural Green Revolution in the country.

Subsequent attempts to get India and Pakistan to negotiate a settlement on the disputed state of Kashmir, however, made the Indian government distance itself from the United States. At the same time, growing Soviet problems with China led to a strengthening of the India-Soviet Union relationship—particularly in the sphere of military cooperation. The two countries signed a peace and friendship treaty in August 1971 that allowed New Delhi greater diplomatic and military freedom to counter Pakistan.

Difficult relations with the United States continued in 1971 during the Bangladesh war. Indian officials believe that the Nixon administration sent an aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, into the Bay of Bengal to put pressure on India to halt the military campaign against Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

The relationship remained cool in the 1970s both due to American disinterest—the Vietnam war and events in the Middle East had taken priority in U.S. foreign policy—and because India, in 1974, decided to test a nuclear device. U.S. nonproliferation measures automatically were implemented against India, and the 1974 test led to a strengthening of both U.S. nonproliferation policies (with the Glenn-Symington Amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act and the 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act) as well as those of other



western suppliers—through the creation of the London Club in 1975 and the decision by Western nuclear suppliers to ask for “fullscope” safeguard over any future technology transfers to other countries. At the same time, the United States had decreasing interest in Pakistan because it was no longer relevant as a frontline state in the Cold War.

The situation of disinterest changed after the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The United States, seeking to contain Soviet expansion toward the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, decided to supply arms to Pakistan and to use Pakistani territory as a conduit for supplying weapons to and for training the Afghan *Mujahideen*. This was done even while it became apparent that Pakistan had decided to follow India’s example and initiated a nuclear weapons program. Although the personal relationship between President Reagan and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was cordial, and her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, was able to garner considerable goodwill in the United States, the rationale of the Cold War kept the two countries apart. It was also during the Rajiv Gandhi period (1984-89) that the first discussions about transferring defense related technology began. India expressed an interest in purchasing American avionics and powerplants for its Light Combat Aircraft program.<sup>2</sup>

It was only after the end of the Cold War and the coming to power of the Narasimha Rao government in India in 1991 that relations began to improve. The new Indian government, recognizing that the economy was in a crisis, sought to carry out a series of structural and market reforms that relaxed previous obstacles to foreign investment in the country and allowed the economy to be rejuvenated. Indian and American groups began to meet to discuss defense cooperation, especially the transfers of technologies to assist in the development of India’s conventional weapons production programs. At the same time, the first Bush administration declared in 1990 that Pakistan was not complying with the nonproliferation measures and cut off military and economic assistance to Islamabad (the President could not certify under the Pressler Amendment of 1985 that Pakistan did not have a nuclear device).

The Clinton administration sought to improve relations further, but the May 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan led to

another series of sanctions being imposed on both countries. While subsequent congressional amendments were to pull back most of the economic sanctions, key ones remained, particularly in the area of military technology transfers. India's Light Combat Aircraft program was delayed because of its inability to obtain General Electric F-404 powerplants to power the prototypes. While sanctions led to a cooling down of the relationship, the United States was proactive in keeping the peace between the two nuclear neighbors.

After the nuclear tests of 1998, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott conducted nine rounds of meetings with India's then foreign minister Jaswant Singh in an effort to reduce the dangers emanating from both countries' going overtly nuclear. The discussions led to a shift in U.S. policy on nuclear issues in the region. The earlier position of the Clinton administration was to "cap, reduce, and rollback" the nuclear programs of both countries. This position changed, at least in the short term, to one of urging India and Pakistan to keep their nuclear forces nondeployed and at the lowest possible levels.<sup>3</sup>

The Clinton administration also made a significant differentiation between India, which it treated as a nuclear democracy, and other proliferating states whom it first labeled rogue states and later states of concern. By treating India and Pakistan differently, it was able to continue developing relations with the two countries—although far more warmly with India than Pakistan—while seeking to limit the damage caused by regional proliferation. At the same time the Clinton administration successfully practiced international crisis diplomacy in the region.

In 1999, during the Kargil crisis (which followed a Pakistani advance into a remote, high altitude part of Kashmir on the Indian side of the Line of Control), the United States was instrumental in getting Pakistan to withdraw its troops from the Kargil and Drass sectors of Indian Kashmir and in staving off a potential full-scale nuclear conflict between the two countries. Former White House staffer Bruce Riedel has written that President Clinton applied pressure on the Nawaz Sharif government in Pakistan to back down, and that the Pakistan military was thought to be readying its nuclear warheads.<sup>4</sup> The United States, however, did proceed to develop bilateral linkages with India on issues of mutual interest—one such forum being the Joint Commission of Counterterrorism.

The relationship took a turn for the better with the advent of the second Bush administration which saw India as playing an important role in future U.S. foreign policy towards Asia. As Secretary of State Colin Powell put it in his confirmation hearing:

We must deal wisely with the world's largest democracy. Soon to be the most populous country in the world, India has the potential to help keep the peace in the vast Indian Ocean area and its periphery. We need to work harder and more consistently to assist India in this endeavor, while not neglecting our friends in Pakistan.<sup>5</sup>

Some have argued that this appraisal of India's position came from the administration's stance that China was no longer just a major trading partner but had become a strategic competitor that needed to be contained in Asia. This proposed strategy gained further credence after the April 2001 collision and forced landing of a Navy PC-3 surveillance aircraft by the Chinese Air Force.

By mid-2001 it seemed that India and the United States were building a new relationship that was based on military ties and an increasingly similar worldview. Thus the Indian government was one of the first to endorse the Bush administration's National Missile Defense proposal, especially welcoming the fact that missile defense would go hand-in-hand with deep cuts in U.S. nuclear arsenals. There was also some degree of agreement between the two countries on the limitations of the International Criminal Court, particularly on the issue of peacekeepers. In addition, the two governments decided to not criticize each other in public—moving away from a policy that the Indians had followed in the Cold War days. Indian concerns about the U.S. stand on the Kyoto treaty were conveyed privately to the Bush administration. The administration, similarly, muted its criticism of India's test of a 700-kilometer medium range *Agni-1* missile in early 2002.<sup>6</sup>

The attacks of September 11, 2001, however, saw the United States, much to India's consternation, renew its security relationship with Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> India offered unconditional support to the United States, including basing rights for carrying out an air campaign over Afghanistan, but Pakistan's proximity to Afghanistan made it necessary for the United States to renew its alliance with Islamabad. India's concerns about terrorism were highlighted by the attack on

the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001, which was viewed in New Delhi as an attack carried out reportedly by the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba group at the behest of Pakistan's InterServices Intelligence (ISI).<sup>8</sup> India mobilized its armed forces and placed them along the border with Pakistan but decided not to pursue a military action, following a U.S. undertaking to put pressure on President Musharraf to halt cross-border infiltration. New Delhi remains dissatisfied with these efforts because it argues that infiltration has not been totally halted. Thus there has been talk among some analysts in India that the U.S. ability to intervene successfully in South Asian crises is declining, and that India in future crises will have to rely on itself to address the problems posed by Pakistan-sponsored infiltration.<sup>9</sup>

After 1 year of exceptionally hostile relations between India and Pakistan (with then Indian foreign minister Yashwant Sinha stating that India had a much better case to go for preemption against Pakistan than the United States had against Iraq),<sup>10</sup> the Indian prime minister, in April 2003, offered to talk to the Pakistani leadership in a third and final attempt to secure peace between the two countries (the first attempt was the Lahore summit of 1999, and the second, the Agra summit of 2001). The Indian government set aside its precondition that Pakistan halt all cross-border infiltration and Pakistan, in turn, ratcheted up its demands for negotiations on the "core issue" of Kashmir.

Since then India-Pakistan talks have taken a more positive turn as both countries have conducted negotiations on a range of issues including Kashmir. India has proposed a list of 72 confidence-building measures, and Pakistan has responded with its own set of proposals. More importantly, the two countries agreed to a ceasefire along the Line of Control in Kashmir, which was extended in September 2004.

The U.S. role remains one of facilitating negotiations between the two sides which has left the two countries somewhat dissatisfied. India would like the United States to put more pressure on Islamabad to halt cross-border infiltration, while Islamabad would like the United States to act as an intermediary between the two countries—carrying out the same role it fulfills for Israel and Palestine. The dissatisfaction with U.S. efforts is compounded because the two countries have somewhat contradictory worldviews.

## U.S. Worldview and India.

As the remaining superpower, the United States is in a unique position in contemporary international relations. Not only does it have military and technological superiority over its closest rivals, but also is positioned to dictate political and diplomatic outcomes in a way that it never has before. This was brought home during the buildup to the Gulf War when the United States withdrew its resolution in the UN Security Council and, with limited international support, successfully carried out regime change in Iraq. The U.S. strategic superiority is unlikely to fade away in the near future for three reasons. First, American military superiority continues to grow not only in terms of technological prowess but increasingly in terms of training and tactics.

As Barry Posen has argued, America's military supremacy rests on its control of the commons—the deep seas, airspace over 15,000 feet, and outer space.<sup>11</sup> While no nation has sovereignty over these environments, a country must have control over them to prosecute modern warfare successfully.

America has control over all three commons and is likely to retain this advantage for some time because of its commitment to military research and development (R&D) that provides it with a growing technological edge over potential challengers (as Posen points out, current U.S. R&D expenditure almost matches the combined defense budgets of Germany and France).<sup>12</sup> This capability is enhanced by two additional factors: a world-wide network of bases that extend the U.S. military reach; and the division of the world into a series of commands that can work together effectively to prosecute U.S. military strategy.<sup>13</sup>

This military capability can prevail over any standing military in the world and permitted the second Bush administration to believe that it would militarily prevail in Iraq, establish democracy there, and set the template to bring about change in the Middle East.

While the United States has control over the commons, one environment in which its military preponderance can be challenged is the land environment. There, regular and irregular forces that have sufficient manpower, are motivated, and know the terrain will fight

American forces. As we have seen in Iraq, such forces, despite their technological backwardness, have been able to exact a considerable toll from the technologically superior and better-trained U.S. forces. In short, technology does not successfully substitute for personnel on the ground.

Having said that, the costs are high for a regime that opposes U.S. interests. While the United States has had problems with regime installation in Iraq, it easily succeeded in toppling Saddam Hussain's Baathist government. Any country opposing U.S. security interests, therefore, runs the risk of having its regime overthrown unless it has a high level of domestic legitimacy. In fact, this lack of legitimacy may have made the Libyan government of Colonel Mohammar Qaddafi recognize its vulnerability and move to dismantle its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs and sue for peace with the United States.

Second, the U.S. economy remains attractive enough for foreign and domestic investors to continue to keep their investments. Neither Europe nor Japan will be able to completely take over as an economic alternative to the United States. While there has been some discussion of how the United States suffers from an economic deficit,<sup>14</sup> and this may lead to a pullout of funds from this country to more lucrative foreign markets, the fact remains that the United States continues to attract high levels of external investments, thus making it possible to sustain its domestic and foreign policies.

The third factor that works in the favor of the United States is its soft power, particularly its attractiveness to global intellectual labor. Much has been written about the flow of migrants from the developing world into the West, but this has tended to focus on those working in the lower economic spheres in western societies—the Mexicans in the United States, the Turks in Germany, and North Africans in Italy. Less discussed is the flow of highly-skilled or intellectual labor across boundaries, and the United States was the clear winner in this process. Highly-skilled labor flows in Europe tended to be between European Union (EU) members or in the sporting arena—the global flow of soccer players into Europe.<sup>15</sup> But the United States was able to attract the best intellectual minds from around the world to work in its universities and high-technology industries for several reasons.

Europe, particularly Britain, had cut off financial aid to foreign students, making higher education in these countries unattractive to prospective intellectual labor imports from the rest of the world. The United States, in contrast, retained a vibrant university system that actively recruited the best minds from around the world.

Racism and cultural intolerance also raised their ugly faces in the 1990s, thus reducing the attractiveness of Western Europe to highly-skilled professionals; the rise of le Pen in France, Haider in Austria, Bossi in Italy, and neo-Nazis in Germany contributed to making the EU the second choice for high-level professionals. Further, the inability of these states to become truly multicultural and accepting made it unlikely that they would be the best targets for anyone seeking to emigrate. A case in point was the flow of Hong Kong Chinese to Canada and the United States rather than to England. Finally, competing European firms and universities could not match the much higher wages in the United States. These three inducements have made the United States not just the military leader of the world but also its economic and cultural leader.

### **America's Security Agenda.**

At the same time, however, the limits of American military power and global leadership are also apparent. While the United States has the military capability to intervene and prevail in any part of the world, the more difficult task is to stay in a country for an extended time to carry out nation-building and the restoration of civil society. The challenges faced in Iraq and Afghanistan with policing the country, restoring civil order, and helping shape democratic institutions point to the need to have forces willing to stay in country for extended periods of time to create the needed civil situation. The coalition of the willing in Iraq lacks enough countries with the military experience to wage a counterinsurgency successfully. Further, the traditional allies of the United States may not be the best suited for carrying out peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations in a non-Western setting. Thus, if the United States is to counter charges of being an imperial power in the Middle East, it will require non-Western states by its side in its military efforts. In

his exasperation with Paris and Berlin, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld may have labeled France and Germany “old Europe,” but, in another way, he was closer to the truth. Using European countries to establish peace only further fuels the allegations that a new kind of imperialism is being imposed on the world.

The other central challenge for the United States is the need to help create secular democracies around the world. While the events of September 11, 2001, demonstrated the need for a proactive military policy to target terrorism, it also brought home the realization that the international system had to be moving in the direction of secular democratic states. This became apparent in Central Asia where the various authoritarian regimes were combating Islamic fundamentalist groups. While the countries of Central Asia cannot be described as democracies, their populations are both educated and relatively secular. Helping to consolidate these trends, while strengthening the role of democracy in the region, will not only combat radical Islam there but also globally serve as a role model for modern Muslim states. With both these issues, the United States may be able to get support from India and develop a series of complementary interests, particularly in the latter area of promoting democratic secularism.

A third important area for the United States is strategic stability and the containment of China. Strategic stability in Asia is affected by the proliferation of WMD, the spread of terrorism, and the rise of China as a potential hegemonic power in the region. Of these, the Indian role may be most influential in future attempts to constrain China.

The Bush administration, unlike its predecessor, was to brand China a strategic competitor,<sup>16</sup> and there was some discussion on how to contain it. China’s military modernization efforts, its territorial dispute with Taiwan, its claims over the Paracel and Spratly Islands (which are rich in energy reserves), and its policy on the transfers of WMD and related delivery systems pose long-term concerns for the United States.

In the aftermath of 9/11, some of these issues have been pushed into the background, and a new level of cooperation has emerged with China, particularly on the issue of Islamic terrorism. China has worked with the United States on the global counterterrorism effort, adopted stringent regulations on dual-use missile technology



exports and other proliferation issues, and facilitated the diplomatic discussions between the United States and North Korea in April 2003. China's concerns about radical Islamic groups helping foment the insurgency in Xinjiang would also work to strengthen the ties with the United States.

On the other hand, the post-September 11 presence of the United States in Central Asia is viewed with concern in Beijing since it puts the United States in another geographic location that encircles China. China also remains as concerned about U.S. plans to carry out a National Missile Defense program as it is about Washington's possible change of attitude to the reunification of Taiwan with China.

Further, the huge volume of trade with China has placed the United States in a situation where it now depends on the cheap supply of goods from China. Breaking away from a trading relationship that is in excess of \$180 billion will be difficult for the United States to do in a relatively short period of time. Yet if the United States at some point is to attempt to put greater diplomatic and military pressure on China, it may precisely have to achieve a lesser trade dependence on that country.

The three challenges of nation-building, democratization, and containing China will require money, manpower, and a new set of alliance partners than those used traditionally by the United States. India could be a useful partner in these endeavors, but it would require recognizing the contradictions between the American and Indian worldviews.

### **The Indian Worldview: The Reformist State.**

Indian foreign policy is best understood by recognizing that the country has assumed a somewhat unique position in international affairs because its leadership has sought to make the country into a reformist state. Typically, the international system is viewed as being divided between status quo and revolutionary states. Status quo states are those that seek to maintain the structure of the international system and the order that ensues from it.

Revolutionary states seek to dismantle the structure and the order that goes with it, partially or completely. Revolutionary states have

been described as rogue states, states of concern, and, more recently, as the axis of evil. While one can question which states are placed in this category, especially since the newer members lack the global capacity to challenge the hegemonic power of the status quo states (unlike the way the former Soviet Union and, to a lesser degree, Mao's China did during the Cold War), the fact remains that such a category of states continues to exist.

India, on the other hand, is a reformist state—one that by and large accepts the structure and order of the international system but wishes to make incremental changes to it in order to improve its own power potential and status within the international system. India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, envisaged such a position for India when he suggested that, while India was a poor country, it was a great country, and that it had a pivotal role to play in world affairs. This role was to try and achieve the needs of world peace and freedom that were not only part of the post-colonial revolution occurring in the post-World War II world but also critical to India's internal development and national security objectives.<sup>17</sup>

As a reformist state, India has sought to participate in maintaining the status quo in the international system while shaping it so that New Delhi gets a greater say in world affairs. Thus India has been a consistent supporter of the United Nations and participated in over 50 peacekeeping operations. But India's objective remains to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. India has refused to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, but at the same time the Indian government has not assisted in the proliferation of nuclear weaponry or its associated delivery systems—in the late 1980s, for example, India refused to sell nuclear weapons to Libya.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, India has joined the Antarctic Club and is a Pioneer member of the Law of the Seas treaty, thus signaling its commitment to international law yet ensuring that it will influence decisionmaking in both bodies.

The second part of the Indian foreign policy, which is also an evolutionary response to the shift in power within the international system in the 1990s, is to seek a multipolar world (as defined by Indian policymakers, it is a quest to strengthen multilateral institutions). During the Cold War, India, through the nonaligned movement, sought to prevent the international system from becoming a tight

bipolar system that put the countries of the world into two armed camps. Now India, like other major actors in the international system, would prefer to have a world order where the United States was counterbalanced by a group of powers. Former Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha alluded to this, as well as to India's international ambitions, when he said:

We must also work to spread democracy at the national and also international level. Sometimes the multilateral vocation of the United States is forgotten. Almost all the significant multilateral institutions were created as a result of U.S. initiative. The United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] reincarnated now as the World Trade Organization. They needed initial guidance. Now several decades after their creation will require changes in their governance. We need to readjust the structures of decisionmaking in international bodies to reflect contemporary reality. We cannot hope to foster a democratic culture in the world until the principal international institutions are themselves democratized and made more representative.<sup>19</sup>

The India-Russia relationship could possibly serve as a basis for future cooperation and for securing a multilateral international order, but it is restricted by the internal weaknesses of Russia and its diminished international stature. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia, as the successor state, sought to distance itself from its traditional ally, India, and pursue a pro-Western policy. During the premiership of Yevgeny Primakov, Russian interest in India was revived, as the Russian premier proposed a strategic partnership between India, China, and Russia.<sup>20</sup> In 2000, India and Russia signed the Declaration on Strategic Partnership but made it clear that it was aimed exclusively at countering terrorism and extremism. Since then, little has happened to suggest that India, China, and Russia will form a strong alliance that could potentially counter the United States. Russian Ambassador to India Alexander Kadakin has argued, "Strategic partners means that we support each other in our joint vision of the world. We are against a so-called unipolar world; we stand for a multipolar world. We are for political cooperation, we are against terrorism together."<sup>21</sup>

India, however, has downplayed the idea of a strategic partnership. At the same time, it has continued to buy significant

amounts of weaponry from Russia, including systems that will potentially enhance its nuclear force structure. These sales should not be viewed, however, as a strengthening of the Russia-India strategic partnership but, instead, as a commercial venture on the part of the Russians. For the Indians, similarly, the purchase of weaponry from Russia comes as much from the inability to conclude domestic weapons programs successfully, as the willingness of Russia to once again throw open its arms cupboard and provide India with weapons systems that it could neither afford or get the permission to purchase from western suppliers. At the same time India-Russia trade relations no longer have the importance that they did during the Cold War. Indian exports to Russia are less than 2 percent of the country's total exports, while its imports from Russia are less than 1 percent of total imports. Optimistic assessments of India-Russia trade suggest that the two countries may reach \$5 billion in bilateral trade by 2005, almost half of what is projected for India-China trade.

But perhaps the most difficult part of creating a Russia-India strategic partnership is how little Russia can now offer politically or economically to India. Politically, Russia is no longer the force the former Soviet Union was and consequently cannot serve as a counter to either China or the United States. Economically, Indian businesses remain pessimistic about the prospects in the Russian market. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov complained in an interview that India had yet to recognize that Russia was a market economy, and that Indian banks and other financial structures needed to accept the guarantees of private Russian banks.<sup>22</sup>

The decline of Russia's fortunes have led the Indian political leadership to recognize the limits of this old relationship, and, while Russia continues to serve as India principal armorer, it is not a relationship that can be used politically to enhance India's ascension to a great power status. Thus while being uncomfortable with America's unipolar status, India will have to rely on the United States to achieve its own great power aspirations.

The third contradictory factor is that India continues to seek a South Asia that is free from the influences of external powers and where it is the paramount country in the region. Such a goal may remain at odds with those of the United States, which views a

relationship with Pakistan as a key part of the War on Terror. India views with concern the perceived American attempt to equate the two countries (particularly in their nuclear policies) and believes that the United States has not put enough pressure on Pakistan to halt its support to jihadi groups operating in Indian Kashmir.

From an Indian perspective, the other important aspect of U.S. foreign policy that has implications for India is that only two long-term strategic partnerships with the United States actually exist—one with Israel and the other with the United Kingdom. With these countries, the United States is the closest when it comes to consulting on operations, commitments of defense, the sharing of technology, and the willingness to apply pressure on other states to facilitate these countries' diplomatic strategies and to enhance their national security.

It would be difficult for India to create a similar strategic relationship with the United States because it neither has the historical and cultural ties that have forged these strategic relationships, nor does it want, as a reformist state, to pursue the types of policies that would cement such a relationship. India would be unwilling to be the type of military partner that the United Kingdom has been in U.S. global military efforts. The Indian unwillingness to commit to the first and second Gulf War coalitions is a case in point. Further, India does not have the type of historical and cultural-emotional ties that have forged a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. While Indian-Americans have played a role in cementing these ties,<sup>23</sup> it would be an exaggeration to suggest that they have the type of political and economic influence that the American Jewish community does.

Lastly, for a congruence of American and Indian worldviews, there has to be recognition of India's quest to become a global power. Yet current American policies, both intentionally and unintentionally, serve to restrict such progress. The first major constraint is the U.S. lack of recognition of India's nuclear status. Despite the 1998 tests and the subsequent lengthy meetings between then Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and then Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, official U.S. policy remains one of not recognizing India as a nuclear weapons state. Instead, the official policy is to get India to become a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and to terminate its nuclear weapons program. As U.S. Assistant

Secretary for Nonproliferation John Wolf stated at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (New York, May 4, 2004):

Turning to South Asia, our focus there is not on compliance, as neither India nor Pakistan is a party to the NPT. While we remain committed to universal NPT adherence, our focus in South Asia has been, and remains, on preventing actions that would undermine the global nonproliferation regime and regional stability—be it through nuclear testing, deployment, nuclear use, or proliferation to other countries. The United States has an active dialogue with both countries on these issues.

We have taken steps recently with both countries to strengthen relations in order to advance our regional goals, enhance the fight against terrorism, and to secure cooperation from both countries on export controls. *These steps should not, however, be taken to suggest that we have “accepted” the status of either country as a nuclear weapon state under the NPT. We have not. Moreover, we will not reward either country for their decisions to acquire nuclear weapons or for the 1998 tests that made the world and the region a more dangerous place (emphasis added).*

*We have steadfastly avoided taking any actions that would be contrary to our long-established nuclear export control policy. India and Pakistan remain ineligible under U.S. law and policy for any significant assistance to their nuclear programs. We continue to call on India and Pakistan not to conduct nuclear tests, to end the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, to take steps to reduce regional tensions and to prevent the use of nuclear weapons (emphasis added).*<sup>24</sup>

Such recognition is crucial, however, because it would lead to a change in the policies of all the de jure nuclear powers that continue to deny India its rightful nuclear status. Further, the lack of a legal nuclear status prevents the transfer of vital technologies that India requires for its own modernization and economic development.

India would like to get a range of dual use and space technologies from the United States since these are crucial to the country's future economic and technological growth. For several reasons, the United States has been reluctant to transfer such technologies.<sup>25</sup> Nonproliferation concerns drive such reservations since American officials are worried about the transfer of sensitive technologies to third parties. While the United States has agreed to ease some of the

restrictions on the sale of dual-use, space, and nuclear technologies to India,<sup>26</sup> the U.S. Department of Commerce has made it clear that such transfers will be for civilian purposes and take place within the limits set by multilateral nonproliferation regimes.<sup>27</sup> This has led to suggestions that the recent reported progress in the National Security Studies Program (NSSP) is cosmetic at best.<sup>28</sup> U.S. officials, however, contend that significant changes have taken place, removing the need for 25 percent of all license applications for U.S. exports to India.<sup>29</sup> At some stage, however, technology transfers in the military field also will have to be considered. And as long as such multilateral limits exist, it could mean the imposition of sanctions when India takes measures in the military field that are inimical to broader U.S. interests.

Coupled with the problems associated with technology transfers are the divergent views on the Indian nuclear program. Despite 14 meetings between Talbott and Singh (after the India's 1998 nuclear tests), the United States remains committed in the long term to having India rollback its nuclear program and sign the NPT. Until this official position is reversed, India will neither achieve its status as a legitimate major power nor can Washington expect New Delhi to be a willing and cooperative partner in matters of international security. This lack of international recognition for its nuclear ambitions has placed India in the position of not being able to utilize its nuclear capability to enhance its security and its international status. Resolving the nuclear issue is vitally important to India, given that it has the status of a third tier nuclear state.

### **India: Third Tier Nuclear State?**

In fact, since 1998, India has been a third-tier nuclear state. First tier nuclear states (the United States and Russia) have far greater numbers of nuclear weapons than their nearest rivals. They also have global reach with their nuclear weapons and can deter nuclear retaliation by other states, particularly those at lower tiers in the nuclear hierarchy.<sup>30</sup>

Second tier nuclear states have smaller nuclear forces with less advanced technological capabilities than first tier states and an extraregional, but not global, reach. While they have a first use

capability against more powerful states, they do not have a first strike capability. Nor do they have a credible deterrent capability against first tier states.

Third tier nuclear states (which currently include India, Israel, Pakistan, and possibly North Korea) have forces that are numerically small, not technologically advanced, limited in range to their regions, and do not have a deterrent capability against first or second tier nuclear states.<sup>31</sup> The management of nuclear crises at the third tier level also has required the intervention of external parties. Additionally, no third tier nuclear state has been involved in the decisionmaking processes that framed the legal and institutional basis of the international nuclear order. Instead, these states have been the targets of the international regimes created to check proliferation.

Indian analyst Sisir Gupta explained the limitations of the third tier state when he wrote that becoming a nuclear state would be insufficient for enhancing the country's security or its international status. Instead, India would become just one of several countries to have a nuclear capability. Gupta argued that if India had to be more than just another nuclear state (the *n* plus 20 dilemma), it would have to use its nuclear status to reshape the international system.<sup>32</sup>

Gupta's analysis is still relevant in the present-day international context. India's current nuclear capability and its glacial progress towards developing a stronger nuclear capability condemn it to the status of a third tier nuclear state. For India to be viewed as more than a regional nuclear power that is obsessed with Pakistan, it has to develop a nuclear deterrent that is taken seriously by China as well as the other first and second tier nuclear states.

In the case of China, India, at present, lacks the ability to target its eastern seaboard and, therefore, lacks a credible deterrent against that country. The Indian government has, in fact, repeatedly postponed the testing of the *Agni III* missile that would give India such a capability. India's reticence to do so may result from technical delays or the desire to not strain a Sino-Indian relationship that is beginning to thaw and move forward along positive lines. Yet without such a capability, India will not be taken seriously in China's strategic calculations.

A credible deterrent also would require the acquisition of a nuclear submarine fleet that would provide a second strike



capability against both China and Pakistan. Indian Navy Chief Admiral Arun Prakash has asked for such a capability, but the indigenous Advanced Technology Vehicle Project is making slow progress, and India, officially at least, has not penned a deal with Russia to acquire the nuclear-powered *Akula* submarines.<sup>33</sup>

The United States is not keen to see the development of an Indian nuclear capability. As Ashley Tellis has argued, the United States would like India to have a nuclear force that has no intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), where the growth of the nuclear force is slow, and the number of weapons built is low.<sup>34</sup> The no ICBM, slow and low approach satisfies Washington because it does not give India a military capability to threaten the continental United States. At the same time, the slow and low approach would ensure that the South Asian arms race did not escalate rapidly or that the rapid growth of a nuclear force presented the problems of ensuring the security of nuclear weapons.

For the United States, the central concerns are that India and Pakistan not enter into a shooting war that escalates rapidly to a potential nuclear showdown. Such a conflict would jeopardize U.S. counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and drag Washington into a South Asian nuclear conflict. The other concern is that both Indian and Pakistani nuclear forces remain secure and do not fall into the wrong hands. Here, too, there is a real problem created by India's *de facto*, as opposed to *de jure*, nuclear status. Lacking legal recognition, neither India, or for that matter Pakistan, can receive technologies like permissive action links (PALs)—electromechanical locking mechanisms that safeguard nuclear weapons from unauthorized use—to make their weapons safer. The American logic is that, apart from being a violation of existing nonproliferation laws,<sup>35</sup> transferring such technologies would make it easier to deploy such weapons and increase the likelihood of their usage.

The three American concerns of no ICBMs, slow growth, and low numbers condemn India to a third tier nuclear status that not only makes it difficult for the country to achieve a credible nuclear capability, but also to be a nuclear state that will not be taken seriously when it comes to engaging in discussions about the future of the international nuclear order. No ICBMs and the lack of a

submarine-launched force essentially would take away the Indian ability to deter China (with Pakistan being a different case).<sup>36</sup> The present nuclear force provides a second use capability against China and that, too, is only against mid-level towns in the southwestern regions of China and not China's industrial heartland.<sup>37</sup> A second use capability provides an ability to hurt China, but it is difficult to say whether an attack on a second level town that is not in China's political heartland would deter military action by Beijing.

A second problem with the possession of a third tier nuclear force is that it does little to enhance the country's prestige or its ability to translate its military capability into political leverage. As Bharat Wariawalla has argued, if nuclear weapons are the currency of international power, then a country has to be able to display that currency.<sup>38</sup> An India that is reduced by international constraints to possessing a third tier nuclear force with limited range and limited capabilities would never be invited by the major powers to participate in global disarmament negotiations since the currency it displays would be a weak one.

Third, if India is to play the role of stabilizer in Asia, it requires fewer restrictions placed on its nuclear and conventional capabilities. This not only requires giving India a freer hand with its nuclear force structure but also providing the technologies to enhance its conventional capabilities. At the conventional level, one such restriction is the denial of missile defense technology to India. If India is to successfully operationalize its no-first use nuclear doctrine, it has to build in a capability to deal with an accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons by an enemy state. To do so, a national missile defense capability is essential since it could help protect against such an attack and maintain a high nuclear threshold. A national missile defense capability would also reiterate India's intention to be a defensive, as opposed to an offensive, nuclear power. On the other hand, some would argue that providing India with a nuclear missile defense (NMD) capability would enhance its ability to wage war against Pakistan and thus destabilize the South Asian region. For this reason, sections of the U.S. Government have opposed the sale of the Israeli *Arrow* anti-ballistic missile to India.

## **Domestic Political Opposition.**

There is also continued opposition among some Indian domestic political groups about forging a closer relationship with the United States. The main party in the ruling United Progressive Alliance, the Indian National Congress, would like to continue India's traditional policy of nonalignment even though it has limited utility in the present-day international system. While in the opposition, current Indian foreign minister Natwar Singh argued that nonalignment had effectively served the country's interests. As he put it, "The broad foreign policy framework left behind by Nehru has stood us in good stead. There is no other foreign policy India can follow without becoming a satellite. The people of India will not allow this country to be a camp follower of any country, howsoever powerful."<sup>39</sup>

Reflecting the continued wariness about unipolarity, the Indian parliament, in fact, unanimously condemned the U.S. attack on Iraq even as the two countries were headed towards joint military exercises. More recently, the various Indian political parties strongly criticized the government when it said it would closely consider a U.S. proposal for sending Indian troops to Iraq. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said in a statement that the foreign minister's ambiguous remarks in Washington (about taking a close look at the idea of sending troops) had to be clarified and that, "The government must make it clear that there is no question of sending troops to Iraq to bolster the American occupation." The statement continued that there had been no change in the situation in Iraq whatsoever and, "Iraq has been under American occupation for the last 14 months. There is a popular uprising against the brutal occupation."<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, the death of the Cold War presented a series of opportunities to India as the constraints of bipolarity no longer shaped the conduct of Indian foreign policy. No longer constrained by Cold War politics that had seen a growing dependence on the Soviet Union and an attempted relationship with the Arab countries, India was to move in the 1990s to forge a closer relationship with the United States. From a military-strategic perspective, it recognized Israel in 1992, and, a decade later, Israel had emerged as the second largest seller of weaponry to India. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

viewed a strong relationship with the United States as essential to its plans for developing India and securing it from external threats. As part of the move towards the United States, India also redefined its policy towards Israel.

In the period of nonalignment, India supported the Arab nations and never gave full diplomatic recognition to Israel. This changed in the early 1990s when the Narasimha Rao government recognized Israel, and an exchange of ambassadors took place. Under the BJP government, the relationship rapidly improved primarily in the area of security cooperation. Israel became the second largest supplier of arms to India. It proved its worth as a reliable supplier by dipping into its war reserves and providing India with the much need artillery shells and mortars to fight the 1999 Kargil limited war with Pakistan.

Since then, a burgeoning military relationship has emerged between the two countries, and Israel is providing the critical subsystems to upgrade India's Russian arsenal. Israel has also sold the *Green Pine* early warning radar to India and would like to complement it with the *Arrow 2* anti-ballistic missile. The sale of the *Phalcon* airborne early warning system has also been finalized.<sup>41</sup>

Israeli analysts and some proponents of the relationship in India view this as a U.S.-Israel-India coalition against terrorism. While this posture has definite advantages, particularly the fact that three democratic nations are cooperating, it has also led to the danger of being branded as a Hindu-Zionist-Christian alliance against the Islamic world.

The Israel-India relationship is unlikely to breakdown since the two countries have complementary interests, and the Indian government is careful to maintain a continued and strong relationship with the Arab nations and Iran. Indian firms have found natural gas in Yemen, Oman is considering investments in Indian industry, and India working with Iran to create a Mumbai-Chah Bahar-St. Petersburg corridor that will cut down the time taken to transport goods, but also work to open economic possibilities along the length of the proposed corridor. India has signed an agreement to purchase natural gas from Iran, and there has been some discussion about extending the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan

pipeline to India. These foreign policy moves brought India into greater consonance with U.S. global strategy.

The tension between such constraints and opportunities is shaping Indian policy towards the United States. India is moving towards a closer relationship with the United States while still maintaining reservations about how strongly to develop these ties. As a consequence, the U.S.-India security relationship is growing along two lines: on the one hand, there is increasing military and other security related cooperation between the two countries, as witnessed by 10 joint military exercises in the past 2 years; on the other, there is a feeling of disquiet in New Delhi that the United States is unable to get Pakistan to halt cross-border terrorism completely. Given these tensions between constraints and opportunities, it is necessary to look at the supposed bases of the current relationship to see which of these can actually help the development of stronger bilateral ties.

### **Basis of the Relationship.**

Analysts argue that the recent upswing in India-U.S. relations has been driven by three factors: the existence of an Indian diaspora in the United States; the tactical need to coordinate strategies with India following the demands of the War on Terror; and the Bush administration's belief that India could play a role in the long run as a strategic partner of the United States.

The long-term effectiveness of all three factors in cementing the relationship has to be qualified. First, the role and influence of the Indian diaspora has been overhyped, and its ability to bring the relationship forward has to be tempered. One of the mistaken beliefs about the Indian diaspora is that it can do for India what the American Jewish community has been able to do for Israel. As the Government of India's High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora put it:

A section of financially powerful and politically well-connected Indo-Americans has emerged during the last decade. They have effectively mobilized on issues ranging from the nuclear tests in 1998 to Kargil, played a crucial role in generating a favorable climate of opinion in Congress and defeating anti-India legislation there, and lobbied effectively on other issues of concern to the Indian community. They have also demonstrated willingness to contribute financially to Indian causes, such as relief for the

Orissa cyclone and the Latur and Gujarat earthquakes, higher technical education and innumerable charitable causes.

For the first time, India has a constituency in the U.S. with real influence and status. The Indian community in the United States constitutes an invaluable asset in strengthening India's relationship with the world's only superpower.<sup>42</sup>

For a number of reasons, however, the Indian-American community is not similar to the American Jewish community and, therefore, it cannot be used as a role model for influencing policy decisions. The Indian American community is relatively small, approximately 1.7 million people, according to the 2000 census, and even if it were to double in the next decade, as it conceivably will, it will only be about 1 percent of the American population of approximately 300 million. Second, the community does not have the spatial concentration that the Jewish community does in New York or the Cuban-American community has in Miami. Its ability to influence elections in key constituencies or states is limited. Third, the Indian-American community gave about \$7 million in election contributions for the 2000 campaign. This is a miniscule amount when compared to the billions of dollars that were raised in campaign contributions. Fourth, the Indian community, for the most part, is a new community, with its most successful members only now reaching that age group, between 50-65, that contributes generously to political campaigns. When compared with the century-long Jewish community's political contributions and public philanthropy—the creation, for example, of first rate hospitals—the Indian community's influence is far more modest.<sup>43</sup>

In some areas, notably on the India-Pakistan issue, the Indian diaspora has played a useful role, but it should be recognized that policy measures taken in this area have been in consonance with American foreign policy objectives and not sharply against them. After 9/11, it was only a matter of time before the United States rescinded the economic sanctions it had imposed on India. Finally, some evidence suggests that the support the Indian diaspora provides India on the India-Pakistan issue may not survive a generational change. The generation of Indians who first migrated to this country are the ones most concerned with the issue. The generation born in

America is less concerned about it and, in fact, some have taken to identifying themselves as South Asian-Americans much in the same way as Latinos or African-Americans. Others, however, have taken the path of calling themselves Hindu-Americans.<sup>44</sup> The ability of the diaspora to significantly shape India-U.S. relations, therefore, must be placed at a more modest level than what some analysts, including members of the Indian government, have been arguing.

### **The War on Terror.**

The second rationale for security cooperation and stronger ties comes from the mutual challenges that India and the United States face in the War on Terror effort. This has seen the growth of cooperation in the areas of law enforcement, intelligence sharing, and, more recently, discussions on technology controls. While these are important steps, they have the tendency of becoming one-sided and may cause legal problems within the country. The United States, as in the case of Pakistan, may ask for an access to Indian airports to conduct biometric scans of outgoing passengers. Such scans can be considered intrusive and may violate the rights of Indian citizens. Further, there is no guarantee that India will get reciprocal rights to identify, track, and extradite people implicated in terrorist activities against it. These, however, are technical issues that can be resolved through bureaucratic negotiations. More problematic are the contradictory views of the United States and India on what exactly constitutes a War on Terror.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the Indian government offered its wholehearted support to the United States because it viewed the U.S. newly declared War on Terror as one that was aimed at comprehensively dismantling radical groups in South Asia. It also erroneously believed that the United States would view the problem of terror as emanating from both Afghanistan and Pakistan and work militarily and politically to isolate both countries.

Instead, the United States took a position that did not satisfy Indian security interests. It agreed to put diplomatic pressure on General Musharraf to halt cross-border terrorism but was unable to bring about a complete halt of terrorist activity. As C. Raja Mohan explains:

In India, there is rising disenchantment at the American unwillingness or inability to deliver Pakistan on cross-border terrorism. This is compounded by renewed calls from Washington for a dialogue with Pakistan. New Delhi says it stood down in the military confrontation with Islamabad last summer following assurances from the highest level in Washington that the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, had promised to put an end to infiltration of terrorists on a permanent basis. Having failed to get Gen. Musharraf to keep his promise, the Government argues, the U.S. has no business to push India into an engagement with Pakistan.<sup>45</sup>

Despite ongoing negotiations between India and Pakistan, disappointment continues in New Delhi about the efforts to get the United States to create an anti-terrorism policy that is in consonance with Indian objectives. This led the Indian prime minister, in September 2004, to express his frustration before the UN:

We speak about cooperation [against terrorism] but seem hesitant to commit ourselves to a global offensive to root out terrorism, with the pooling of resources, exchange of information, sharing of intelligence, and the unambiguous unity of purpose required. This must change. We do have a global coalition against terrorism. We must give it substance and credibility, avoiding selective approaches and political expediency.<sup>46</sup>

Indian analysts also point out that India's dependence on the United States, and its deference to Washington's goals in the region, cost the country its military credibility vis-à-vis Pakistan. While, in the aftermath of the military standoff of May-June 2002, Indian policymakers congratulated themselves on the ability to use coercive diplomacy against Pakistan, the statements emerging from Islamabad suggested that General Musharraf thought otherwise. Instead, the Pakistani government congratulated itself on calling the Indian bluff through a mixture of conventional and nuclear deterrence. Thus Islamabad, much like New Delhi, may have learned the wrong lessons from the 2002 crisis.

### **Strategic Partnership?**

#### **The Constraints of a Hyphenated Relationship.**

The third potential basis for the relationship is the idea of a strategic partnership, but any such partnership would depend on removing the hyphen in U.S.-India relations—by making it separate



from the relationship with Pakistan. On September 9, 2002, Indian foreign minister Yashwant Sinha declared in a speech at the Brookings Institution that the India-U.S. relationship would no longer be a hyphenated one that included Pakistan. Instead, it would be a bilateral relationship where the problems caused by the U.S. link with Islamabad would be downplayed. In fact, India continues to link the Pakistan issue in its dealings with the United States. Before discussing the broader U.S.-India relationship, it is necessary to discuss the misperceptions that complicate Pakistan-India relations and the U.S.-India-Pakistan hyphenated relationship.

### **India-Pakistan Relations.**

The Indian and Pakistani views of each other are based on unrealistic appraisals. Sections of India's leadership view Pakistanis as long-lost prodigal brothers who will one day see the light and move towards a more constructive relationship with people who are culturally and ethnically similar to them. This view was echoed by India former deputy prime minister L. K. Advani who said, "If East and West Germany could unite despite acrimonious political relations, why not India and Pakistan? There may be difficulties, but it is not impossible. A day will come when the people of both countries will realize that partition has done no good to them."<sup>47</sup>

The opposite is true. For Pakistan, a closer relationship with India essentially would mean undoing partition and would place severe challenges on the Pakistani national identity. It would also be the first step in wiping out the political and cultural distinctiveness of Pakistan. Such a distinctiveness could be retained if Pakistan's identity as a nation-state was secure, but two sets of constraints—economic and political—make it difficult to have a concrete Pakistani identity. Economically, the War on Terror has benefited Pakistan by obtaining U.S. assistance in securing International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and in stabilizing the economy, and the country has witnessed creditable economic growth. But the larger structural constraints that drive the economy have yet to be removed successfully, most notably a halting drive towards market reforms and the ability of the Pakistani government to raise revenues. Coupled with this is the problem of alleviating poverty in Pakistan. The last available figures

on poverty levels in the country show an increase in the population share of people living below the official poverty line from 26 percent in 1990-91 to 32 percent 2000-01.<sup>48</sup>

Politically, Pakistan remains a society where ethnic identities supercede national loyalties. Thus both the North West Frontier and Baluchistan remain feudal holdouts as witnessed by the delicate balancing that President Pervez Musharraf has had to undertake to carry out operations against al-Qaeda in these areas. There has also been talk of rising secessionist feelings in Baluchistan. The rise of the fundamentalists in Pakistan, while not threatening the territorial integrity of the state or for that matter the control of the Pakistani military, also suggests that the potential for greater domestic instability exists in that country.

Pakistan's perceptions of India are similarly flawed and come, by and large, from two historical frames of reference—the partition of 1947 and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Thus official Pakistani statements, as well as those of analysts and scholars, continue to harp on the two-nation theory, even though it was discredited with Bangladesh's creation. Within this framework falls the Kashmir issue, which Pakistani analysts argue is a core part of Pakistan's national identity.

President Musharraf has stated that the only way for Pakistan to have a peace with honor is for a settlement to the Kashmir dispute.<sup>49</sup> This denies a fundamental problem in India-Pakistan relations: that Kashmir is a symptom and not the cause of hostile relations between India and Pakistan. The real threat for Pakistan remains India's size (which does matter) and the fact that it remains a multiethnic, multireligious state. Aslam Siddiqi, a Pakistani scholar writing in 1948, argued that when a small nation bordered a larger nation, the larger nation was likely to dominate it. Geo-political considerations therefore, made it necessary for the smaller country to resist such domination.<sup>50</sup> For Pakistan, this geo-political constraint continues to exist, and it grows with the strengthening of the Indian economy and the country's conventional military capability. The other problem comes from the fact that a secular and democratic India makes the need for a Pakistan irrelevant.

Given these facts, resolving Kashmir may not be in the long-term interests of the Pakistani elite. A satisfactory solution for Pakistan,

one that fulfills its national identity, requires a transfer of all, or at least a significant portion, of Indian Kashmir to Pakistan. Yet this is likely to create more problems for Pakistan than it resolves. It would still leave India a large country of a billion people with a rabidly nationalist government armed with nuclear weapons. This would exacerbate Pakistan's security dilemma. On the other hand, continuing a Kashmir dispute, with casualty levels that are acceptable to India, works to further Pakistan's military interests. A low level insurgency keeps significant numbers of Indian troops tied down in Kashmir, thus preventing them from being used against Pakistan. The domestic consequences of such a resolution would be equally problematic. Once Kashmir is resolved, the rationale for high defense expenditure in Pakistan would be removed, thus threatening the power and prestige of the Pakistani military.

From the perspective of U.S.-India relations, the Pakistani link will continue until India attempts to develop a new bilateral means to deal with Pakistan. This includes the ability to communicate with Pakistan in a crisis and, most importantly, to be able to make a range of credible threats to Pakistan to ensure that Islamabad is deterred from carrying out actions seen as inimical to Indian interests. In the existing situation, however, the credibility of India to achieve compellence is limited. Its 2002 mobilization along the India-Pakistan border was claimed as a victory for coercive diplomacy by the Indian government. Yet Pakistani officials issued statements arguing that they were coerced by the Indian threat. Instead, President Pervez Musharraf argued that what prevented India from initiating a war was his threat, conveyed through world leaders, to use unconventional measures to halt an Indian conventional attack.<sup>51</sup>

Coupled with the perceived inability to use nuclear weapons as tools of compellence lies the problem that India and Pakistan are now starting to put mechanisms in place that permit direct communications in a crisis. While a "hotline" exists between the military commanders in the field, it did little to provide any sense of security or information to Pakistan about what Indian motives were in a possible conflict in 2002. In fact, during the May-June 2002 crisis, Ambassador Lodhi claimed that the hotline had not been working "for some days now."<sup>52</sup> Thus Pakistan's leadership had to prepare

for the worst and issue threats for the possible first use of nuclear weapons.

In the past few months, both countries have recognized the need for more effective communications so as to prevent the escalation of tensions and to further confidence-building. In June 2004, the two countries agreed to establish a hotline between their Foreign Secretaries and Directors General of Military Operations “to prevent misunderstandings and reduce risks relevant to nuclear issues.”<sup>53</sup> While establishing direct lines of communications (LOC) is important, the real problem lies in getting both sides to trust the messages they send each other in a crisis. Removing the hyphen thus may seem rhetorically easy, but it cannot happen unless the Indian government is able to negotiate on substantive issues with Pakistan. The problem, however, remains one of how to enter into negotiations without dealing with the Kashmir issue.

A more plausible basis for the relationship comes from the idea that both the United States and India are democracies that share the values of freedom and secularism. Like the United States, India views with concern the breakdown of democracy in the surrounding regions and is also worried by the rise of radical Islamic groups in Central, South, and Southwest Asia. Like the United States, it also would like to see stability in the Indian Ocean littoral and prevent the growth of piracy and maritime terrorism—the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts were done by a group that smuggled eight and a half tons of cyclotrimethylene trinitramine (RDX) explosives into the country by sea. If these mutually shared values and complementary interests are taken into account, then there is a potential for cooperation between the two states on a range of issues.

### **Cooperation and Its Limits.**

In the past few years, India-U.S. relations have focused on military cooperation, the possibility of technology transfers, and discussions about India’s potential as an emerging market. Military cooperation has been the most highly visible aspect of the changed relations between the two countries. The two militaries have conducted 10 joint exercises, and Indian naval vessels have been escorting

American naval assets from the Straits of Malacca to the Arabian Sea, thus freeing up American ships for other operations.

Military cooperation can be carried out in joint operations or in India providing forces for peacekeeping operations. Both technological limitations and political attitudes make joint operations difficult in the near future. At the technological level, Indian military equipment and communications infrastructure is a generation to a generation-and-a-half behind that of the United States. This makes it difficult to launch operations or share information in real time. Unless the United States is willing to transfer the requisite technologies, such cooperation would not be possible. For India to acquire this technology, a qualitatively different relationship would have to emerge where the United States trusted India's ability to keep transferred technology secure from theft or illegal transfers. It would also require the type of close political and military cooperation that the United States has with its NATO allies.

### **Technology Transfers: The Development of India's Space Program.**

The NSSP undertakes to move India gradually from a country that was on various U.S. export control lists to one that can avail itself of civilian nuclear, civilian space, dual-use, and eventually ballistic missile defense (BMD) technology—what has been dubbed the glide path. Of these, BMD technology transfers will only happen in the long run because, given India's creeping weaponization, it will take New Delhi considerable time to figure out what its BMD and theater missile defense (TMD) requirements are. In the short run, the transfer of civilian space technology may work to further the relationship, but here, too, there is a divergence of views on the utility of the NSSP. On the American side, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration Matthew S. Borman has pointed out that the significance of the NSSP lies in the fact that both the United States and India share common interests of nonproliferation and facilitating high-technology trade. Consequently, they have taken a set of reciprocal steps that are consistent with each others' laws. The United States has removed the Indian Space Research Organization's

(ISRO) headquarters from the Commerce Department's entity list. It has also applied a presumption of approval for all dual-use items (although this does not cover the troubled Indian nuclear reactors at Tarapur that come under restrictions placed by the Nuclear Suppliers Group). The United States has also agreed to eliminate the need for export licenses for 25 percent of U.S. items that India seeks to import.<sup>54</sup>

On the Indian side, doubts remain about the reliability of the United States as a supplier and the extent to which restrictions, in fact, have been removed. It has been argued that because the United States will adhere to its international commitments and to its domestic laws, India will acquire few substantive items for its space program. Further, the fact that ISRO's subsidiaries remain on the restricted list means that the space organization will be able to import few of the items it requires.<sup>55</sup>

Traditional Indian concerns about the challenges posed to Indian sovereignty have also been raised. Indian commentators point out that the sanctions on particular Indian scientists have not been raised, that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has not clarified what reassurances India had to give the United States, and that India had to accept the appointment of a technology control attaché at the U.S. embassy in New Delhi as examples of how the country's sovereignty was being restricted.<sup>56</sup>

If the NSSP is to work, therefore, it becomes imperative that a satisfactory level of technology transfers takes place in this area, satisfying supporters of the initiative in the Indian government as well as silencing critics both within and outside it. The only way to do this is to develop a credible record of technology transfers over a period of time. At the same time, the Indian government would need to prove that the technology transfers it receives continue to be protected and are not leaked to third parties. If such a track record is created by both countries, then a level of mutual trust would arise and permit them to graduate to more significant levels of cooperation.

### **Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement.**

India has a long tradition of peacekeeping, and it could play an important part in future nation-building efforts by the United

States around the world. As General Arjan Ray has pointed out, the Indian armed forces have experience, or trained for, diverse military operations that include nuclear war, conventional war, counterinsurgencies, and civilian relief efforts. The Indian armed forces also have combat experience in high altitude warfare, as well as desert and jungle warfare. The strong tradition of civil-military relations in the country are also beneficial to peacekeeping efforts since it means the Indian military force is conducive to receiving orders from civilian administrators and implementing them.

Additionally, the Indians have a rich experience in peacekeeping, having participated in UN efforts since the Korean War. In Somalia, for instance:

The Indian contingent dug a large number of wells, constructed schools and mosques, and ran mobile dispensaries and relief camps, which provided veterinary care, and medical and humanitarian relief to a large number of Somalis and their livestock. It also organized and carried out rehabilitation and resettlement of thousands of refugees and helped to repatriate them to their homes. The Indian contingent played a vital role in reviving the political process by organizing reconciliation meetings.<sup>57</sup>

Politically, peacekeeping missions run into Indian concerns about American unilateralism and the differing worldviews on the threats in the international system. India is unlikely to send troops on peacekeeping or joint military operations unless it is legitimized by a resolution from the UN or some other multilateral institution. The decision to not send troops to Iraq was taken because such a multilateral consensus was unavailable. Having said that, the Indian government would be particularly interested in maintaining peace in the Indian Ocean littoral and in the broader Asian region. It would, therefore, seriously consider all requests for peacekeeping forces. What would make India more proactive in this area would be recognition of its regional role and a formal recognition of its global role through UN Security Council membership. The other area where India could facilitate America's broader military-strategic interests is helping to promote strategic stability in Asia.

## **India in Asia: Implications for the United States.**

India's growing role in Asia and its perceived security challenges mean that it shares complementary interests with the United States. These interests can be summed up in three words: terrorism, energy, and China. From 1962, when India lost its border war with China, until the mid-1980s, when India was to engage in a military show of strength along the Sino-Indian border, New Delhi had maintained a policy on non-antagonism vis-à-vis Beijing. This did not mean that the Indian government did not see China as a threat or that New Delhi had given up its claim to the territories that China had seized in 1962. Instead, there was a recognition that little could be done to get China to withdraw from its aggression. At the same time, India also tolerated Chinese assistance to the Pakistani nuclear program.

After the 1998 nuclear tests, however, India started to show a new confidence in its dealings with China, and the country's strategic analysts began to discuss possible ways to contain China. India's shift in thinking came from a growing confidence in the country's military capabilities, as well as an increasing irritation with China for having provided Pakistan with a missile capability that gave it a credible nuclear delivery system against India.

Since then, India has followed a dual path in its relations with China. On the one hand, it has sought to normalize relations and, in 2003, the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee brought about significant progress in this area. The two countries agreed to appoint special representatives to resolve the border dispute. More crucially, India stated that Tibet was a part of China, thus removing a long-standing irritant in the relationship. China reciprocated by tacitly accepting that the state of Sikkim was part of India.<sup>58</sup> Second, trade between the two countries has flourished as China has replaced Japan as India's largest trading partner in Asia. The two countries expect bilateral trade to cross \$10 billion by the end of 2004.<sup>59</sup>

The burgeoning economic ties also have important consequences for the development of their respective domestic economies. For China, the economic development of its western regions lies in moving south through India and Burma. Lhasa to Kolkota was, until the Chinese takeover of Tibet, a long-standing trade route. For India,



its eastern and northeastern regions would benefit similarly from the opening of trade with China.<sup>60</sup> The Northeast remains relatively underdeveloped, and Indian observers believe that greater trade with China would not only lead to greater prosperity, but also serve to lessen the support to existing insurgencies in the region.

On the other hand, Indian military capabilities that have been growing incrementally provide India with the ability to contain Chinese expansion in Asia. Indian military doctrine has also started to shift from a South Asian focus to one that recognizes the need for a greater role in Asia. Indian Naval doctrine, for example, has been rewritten to give the Navy a blue water role and an operational sphere that stretches from the Straits of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca.<sup>61</sup> With this in mind, the Indian naval chief has publicly asked for the acquisition of two nuclear submarines so that the Navy can be part, ostensibly, of the country's Minimum Nuclear Deterrent, and India is reportedly in the last stages of negotiating the acquisitions of two *Akula* class nuclear submarines.<sup>62</sup>

The Indian Navy is concerned about the growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, particularly its using Myanmar as a location for monitoring facilities. Further, Indian defense analysts point out that the Chinese development of the Pakistani port of Gwadar helps the Chinese Navy encircle India. In fact, the fear of encirclement by China, coupled with the use of proxies like Pakistan, has driven India's plans to build up its long-range military capability. The Indian Air Force is now planning to have its *Su-30s* visit the Andaman Islands (that belong to India but are 1,200 miles from the Indian coastline) so as to give the military a strike capability that can reach Southeast Asia. The obvious mission would be to stop a hostile Chinese incursion into the Indian Ocean. Indian nuclear submarines, armed with the 300 kilometer *Klub* missile or the *BrahMos* PJ-10 supersonic missile, could give the Indian Navy a second use capability against China.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, India has been cautious about provoking China with its military buildup. It has repeatedly postponed the testing of the *Agni-III* missile that would give it the capability to hit targets deeper in China. It has committed itself to a reduction of forces along the Sino-Indian border, and in 1993 and 1996 signed confidence-building measures with China—the Peace and Tranquility Agreements—that reduced force levels and pulled backed forces along the border.

Practical considerations also limit the extent to which the Indians can project military capability against China. India's new aircraft carrier, the *Admiral Gorshkov*, will not enter service till the end of the decade. Nuclear submarines, when procured, are likely to have a similar time frame for induction.

The pace at which Indian nuclearization is being carried out also indicates the Indian belief that, while China's intentions may be suspect, Beijing is unlikely to attempt to alter dramatically the status quo in the near future. Ashley Tellis has described India's nuclear buildup as creeping weaponization.<sup>64</sup> The slow speed at which warheads and delivery systems are being put together would suggest that Indian security perceptions do not require rapid development of a warfighting force.

To sum up, the Indians are cautious about China's future ambitions but, at the same time, are beginning to recognize that India-China relations are not necessarily a zero-sum game. India-China relations could go in three possible directions—coexistence, cooperation, and conflict. Coexistence would entail the following trends:

- A slow movement towards the resolution of the Sino-Indian border dispute. While there might be rhetorical exchanges, a backslide in the progress made in the resolution of the dispute is unlikely.
- A growth in trade with slower movement on the Indian side towards greater regional integration between the Chinese west and the Indian eastern and northeastern states.
- A slow move to build up the conventional and nuclear forces so that India would be in a position to deter China's extraregional power projection, should the political-military situation change.

A cooperative relationship, on the other hand, would mean:

- Continuing progress that led to the relatively quick resolution of the border dispute.
- A move towards force reductions, especially reducing Chinese nuclear force levels.

- A concerted move by both countries towards regional economic integration, and attempts at joint research and development of civilian and possibly defense related technologies.
- China's recognition of India's role as a major Asian power and commensurate moves by Beijing to accommodate Indian interests. These would include dampening the Chinese relationship with Pakistan.

A conflictual relationship could arise because of:

- The irretrievable collapse of the border talks and hostile Chinese movements in South East Asia. A significant Chinese boost to Pakistan's nuclear and missile capabilities would also provoke a hostile reaction from India.
- A rapid move by India to militarize and upgrade its long range military capability. This would mean a move from creeping nuclearization to rapid nuclearization.
- A growing Chinese military presence in the Indian Ocean, particularly if one sees the entry of Chinese nuclear submarines into the area.

In the two less optimistic scenarios, Indian military power will continue to develop and serve to counterbalance Chinese military growth. The optimistic scenario, on the other hand, can only happen when there is a transformation of Chinese behavior that leads to a more cooperative framework of relations with all the major countries of Asia. If that happens, not only would the Chinese threat be reduced, but also true strategic stability would be established in Asia. Since the coexistence and conflict scenarios are more likely, it remains in American interests (as well as in those of the smaller Southeast Asian and East Asian nations) to see the emergence in Asia of a counterbalance to China. This particularly would be the case if China sought to use force to change the status quo vis-à-vis Taiwan.

As an Asian power, India would be ideologically and militarily different from China. Being a democracy that espouses social justice and economic growth, India provides an alternative role model to the

nations of Asia that have based their economic growth models on the Chinese approach—one that places community rights over individual liberty. In its external policies, India, as a democracy, believes both in multilateralism and the rule of international law. While China also officially subscribes to both, its totalitarian structure and past behavior make it suspect in the eyes of its neighbors. Economically, India is a large market with a burgeoning middle class and technologically skilled labor force. This provides an alternative to China, although substantial reforms will be required before India becomes as attractive a market for foreign direct investments as China is.

The other area where Indian military capability could be harnessed to facilitate American interests is in Central Asia. Indian interests there are driven by three factors: the need for energy resources and the potential of the Central Asian market; the attempt to counterbalance Chinese and Pakistani presence in the region; and the concern about radical Islam spreading from the region into India (especially Kashmir).<sup>65</sup>

India viewed with concern the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the subsequent destabilization of the region caused by that fundamentalist regime. It provided support to the Northern Alliance and, with the Taliban's ouster, has sought to develop a presence in Central Asia. India has increased its cooperation with the Central Asian states, particularly Tajikistan, where it has reportedly established an air base.<sup>66</sup> Such a base would not only permit military action against anti-government forces in Central Asia, but also serve to counter Pakistan's efforts to establish "defense in depth" in the region. Like India, the Central Asian states are concerned about the growth of radical Islam and the threat it poses to their regimes that, because they are post-Soviet in orientation, tend to be secular.

It has also actively engaged the Karzai government and established a major diplomatic presence in Afghan cities and has reached an agreement to train the Afghan national army.<sup>67</sup> Like most regional countries, India would like to prevent the reemergence of radical Islamic groups in Central Asia and therefore would be willing to help build the indigenous security capabilities of these countries. For a United States strapped for manpower, Indian security assistance

especially would be welcome since it would further Washington's own goal of checking radical Islam in the region—thereby freeing U.S. troops for action in other theaters in the war against terror.

In terms of energy and economics, India would like to play a growing role in Central Asia both to check the role of China and Pakistan but also to satisfy its own developmental needs. By 2010, Indian demand for natural gas may be as high as 77 billion cubic meters, and a steady supply of gas from the resource rich Central Asian countries would satisfy this demand.<sup>68</sup> India, with Russia and Iran, is engaged, therefore, in the development of a North-South corridor (one that passes from Mumbai to Tehran and from there to St. Petersburg) that would, among other things, open the Central Asian economies to the outside world.<sup>69</sup> India's stakes in Central Asia are, therefore, expanding, and we are seeing a series of complementary U.S. interests emerge. For both countries, checking the rise of radical Islam in the region is important. The opening of the Central Asian economies, in which India is participating, will reduce these countries' crippling dependence on the other former Soviet states, particularly Russia. And if India is able to help bring Iran back into the international community of nations, it will create a safer energy corridor than the one currently proposed to run through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier, a growth in security cooperation between the United States and India would rest on the removal of constraints on Indian military and technological development, as well as an appreciation of India's emerging power potential. This, however, is likely to be a long-term process and one marked with several speed bumps as the American war against terror and the global policies of nonproliferation work to limit what can be achieved in Indo-U.S. relations. Given these limitations, it is important that India, in the short-to-medium term, look for other avenues for successfully engaging the United States. Two such avenues are that both the United States and India share democratic values, and the other is to look at nonmilitary approaches to engagement. Both these avenues intersect in the growth of India's soft power.

## **The Value of Indian Soft Power.**

As one of the major democracies of the world, India also has a degree of soft power. It is a secular democracy, with a good and affordable education system as well as an independent media. As a secular democracy, India would like to see its immediate neighborhood and the larger Asian region comprise nations that share its political and cultural values. The spread of these values is important if a long-term solution to the radicalization of Asian societies is to be effected. The War on Terror attempts to deal only with the symptoms of the greater problems of social injustice and economic underdevelopment that plague developing societies. To bring about such changes, there is a pressing need to provide such societies with better educational training—especially for the young people who form the majority populations in some of these countries.

The United States has attempted to do this in Pakistan by providing money to improve that nation's phantom educational system. But this effort is localized to one country, and its effectiveness has yet to be determined. For such measures to have a significant impact, however, there is the need to provide higher technological and managerial education to a growing number of students in such countries. And there the United States runs into to both security and resource problems.

In the post 9/11 world, the United States has started to place restrictions on the entry of Muslim students. Even when it has allowed students in, the high educational costs in the United States make it difficult to educate more than a very small number of students from these countries. India, with its large number of universities and its ability to provide a cheap and good education, makes a very attractive alternative. India has approximately 226 universities, 428 engineering colleges, and more than 100 medical colleges, but the number of foreign students studying in India is small—in 2003, it was only 8,145.<sup>70</sup>

What India needs to do, therefore, is propose that the United States help in expanding the Indian educational sector to make Indian universities a viable and cost-effective alternative for students

from West, Southwest, and Central Asia. The Indian government could ask American educational institutions to collaborate with it to develop educational programs as well as provide fellowships to students from these countries. From an Indian perspective, such an influx of foreign students would increase India's soft power, provide it with greater influence in neighboring countries since it had trained their technocratic elite, and help create a new leadership in these states. For the United States, a population with a modern technocratic education would serve as the entry point for American corporations into such countries.

The other way of spreading Indian soft power is to create a virtual classroom that can be accessed across Asia. Some have discussed making Indian Institute of Technology classes accessible virtually across Asia, and this would be the first step in bringing about a larger educational system that is deliverable across the world wide web. It is envisaged that, "A hybrid satellite-based network capable of digital video broadcast over two or three channels, data broadcasting, to use idle hours between video broadcasting and very small aperture terminal (VSAT), all coexistent on the same transponder, will form the backbone of the virtual institute."<sup>71</sup>

Following the launch in September 2004 of the Geostationary Satellite 3 (GSAT 3 or EDUSAT) by the Indian Space Resesarch Organization (ISRO), the ability to cover other South Asian countries, either partially or fully, already exists.<sup>72</sup> With this comes the ability to impart a quality education in the rural areas of South Asia, thus helping alleviate the problem created by the phantom education system that exists in these areas.

### **Making New Delhi a Partner.**

While such possibilities for cooperation exist, the question becomes, "What incentives must be provided to make New Delhi a willing player in securing complementary security goals?" The Indian government would like to secure three objectives in its foreign relations—the legalization of its nuclear status, a permanent seat on the Security Council, and international recognition of the Line of Control as the border between India and Pakistan.

Although not a member of the NPT, India has adhered to the terms and conditions of the treaty insofar as they seek to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, technology, and materials. Thus the Indian government has not transferred nuclear technology or materials to other states and reportedly refused to sell nuclear weapons to Libya. Yet official U.S. policy, and indeed that of the other established nuclear weapons states, remains one of asking India to rollback its nuclear weapons program and sign the NPT.

The American position of adhering to legal technicalities rather than accepting the nuclear reality in South Asia hurts India's nuclear weapons program, undermines its security, and prevents India from rising to its perceived international status. Given the U.S. role as the remaining superpower and its leadership in nonproliferation initiatives, it is imperative to start a change of official policy in Washington.

The general consensus is that the NPT is set in stone and that the presence of arms control supporters in various branches of the U.S. Government makes it difficult to change this policy. Yet such a belief goes against the actions the United States has taken in reshaping, or moving away from, treaties written during the Cold War. Thus the Bush administration decided to walk out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and instead go ahead with the development of a NMD capability. Despite dire warnings about the consequences, the American action actually elicited no strident and aggressive response from Russia. Similarly, the Bush administration decided to move beyond the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) negotiations and call for deep cuts in the existing nuclear weapons inventories. It is not inconceivable, therefore, that the Bush administration could consider a revision of the NPT to include the three de facto nuclear states that were left out of the original treaty.

A realistic appraisal would suggest that bringing India, Israel, and Pakistan into the nuclear club has advantages, particularly in the attempts to halt the further spread of nuclear weapons. As members of the club, the three countries would have to abide by the rules of membership, which include the refusal to transfer technology and materials.<sup>73</sup> Further, it would permit the legal transfer of technologies like PALs, at least in the case of Pakistan, would help increase



the security and safety of these arsenals. It is also in India's interests to ensure that the Pakistani nuclear arsenal was secure since it would reduce the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch of these weapons.

Both India and Pakistan can also make the convincing argument that the knowledge that their nuclear weapons are secure from international censure makes it possible for them to be more transparent in their dealings with each other and with the greater international community.

The second Indian objective is to attain a permanent seat on the Security Council since this provides formal acceptance of the country's status as a nuclear power and as a major actor in the international system. India has succeeded in getting Britain, Japan, Germany, Russia, and even China to endorse its case. The United States remains opposed to this proposal. There are advantages to the greater international community in Indian inclusion in the Security Council. India has diplomatic links with nations like Iran, Syria, and Libya that, while having rocky relations with the international community, are important to any long-term solution of regional disputes. Further, Indian peacekeeping and peace enforcement capabilities make it a good partner in the quest to maintain regional security and deal with problem of reestablishing order in failed states. A permanent seat in the Security Council would not only give India the encouragement to act more proactively in the quest to maintain international peace and security, but it would also provide greater legitimacy to Indian initiatives in this process.

The third objective must be to get the United States to officially declare its support for the Line of Control as the official border between India and Pakistan. It is stating the obvious that until India is no longer immersed in the India-Pakistan dispute, it will be unable to carry out effectively its policies in the rest of the world. An India that has a less hostile relationship with Pakistan also becomes more attractive to investors, particularly if it means using the economic advantages provided by the geographical linkages between the two countries. Pipelines from Central Asia and Iran make the most sense if they can come through Pakistan to the large energy market that is India.

Potentially, this is not a position that the White House would be averse to taking. In the Arab-Israeli context, it has advocated a two state solution, but one that would require moving away from established UN resolutions to a more pragmatic approach that recognizes the realities on the ground. Further, the legalization of the LOC helps reduce tensions between two nuclear rivals and thus does not complicate American efforts in the War on Terror. Legitimizing the LOC also makes a statement in the global War on Terrorism—that the international community will not reward terrorist actions. While this may be the weakest point to make, given the American focus on anti-American terrorist organizations, it has relevance in sending a clear signal to other terrorist groups about the value of violent actions in precipitating political change.

The question then arises, why would any American administration agree to even consider the Indian policy objectives? The answer lies in the greater problems the United States faces in the pursuit of its post-9/11 international security policy. Manpower shortages, an expanding global battlefield, and a potential resource crunch make the prosecution of the War on Terror increasingly difficult. These constraints are felt not only in the short-term objective of destroying terrorist networks and regime change, but also in the more long-term and problematic issue of nation-building. For both such objectives, India has the trained manpower to be an ally in constructing a more secure world.

In any such arrangement, Indian concerns about deploying troops and using military force will, however, have to be accommodated. Any Indian government would require the legitimacy provided by resolutions from international organizations like the UN or from regional organizations like the African Union. Thus India readily provided naval vessels to ensure maritime security for the 2003 African Union summit.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, the Indian Navy will work alongside its Singaporean, Thai, and Filipino counterparts to check piracy, weapons, narcotics trafficking, and other maritime threats.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, India backed down from providing troops for the Iraq war because of the lack of a UN mandate.

The other aspect of peacekeeping and peace enforcement is the need to give diplomatic efforts a better chance at succeeding and, as mentioned earlier, India has the ability to serve as a facilitator in

discussions with several national regimes that the United States has major problems with. The United States has traditionally depended on its NATO allies and Japan for this type of role but, as the Chinese role in getting North Korea to the multiparty talks shows, new allies can be equally effective. India could, therefore, offer its good offices to help engage the United States in new discussions with, for example, Iran.

A complementary security worldview on Asia would also help build the Indian case to secure its objectives. Maritime security efforts that began with the escort of American naval vessels can now be expanded to create a maritime security framework for Asia that attempts to counter threats that all states face—piracy, weapons trafficking, and the transport of illegal narcotics—and are, therefore, least controversial. If India were to take the first step to develop a Maritime Security Cooperation Regime, this would serve as a major contribution towards developing a common security perspective in Asia.

In conclusion, one must, therefore, argue that there is a need for a more proactive policy towards India that helps secure its national objectives and, in doing so, makes it easier to attain broader U.S. goals.

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