Chapter – VI

CONCLUSION

The foregoing pages, it is hoped, make it clear that Indo-US relations during the Clinton administration though witnessed both “ups” and “downs”, “ups” were more prominent and sustained than the “downs”. While the first term of the Clinton administration witnessed major areas of disagreements on issues such as Kashmir, human rights, intellectual property rights and nuclear non-proliferation, his second term saw accommodation inspite of India’s nuclear tests in 1998. Indo-US relations during the Clinton administration thus moved from estrangement to accommodation. The present study attempts to examine the factors responsible for and manifestations of this transition of India-US ties from estrangement to accommodation during the period under review.

Dashing of Hopes

To begin with, the hopes about a paradigm shift in India-US relations generated by the assumption of power by a President belonging to the Democratic Party, which had traditionally been sympathetic to the democratic India, as well as the collapse of India’s time-tested friend, the USSR, and the end of the Cold War, were dashed to ground when the
Clinton administration continued to maintain Washington’s traditional pro-Pakistan tilt on Kashmir. To this was added their criticism of India’s human rights record in Kashmir and elsewhere.

The Clinton administration perceived the Kashmir issue as a perennial flash point of South Asian region and therefore expressed its concern regarding the high probability of nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan. For, the Kashmir issue had been the bone of contention leading to two major wars in 1947 and 1965 between India and Pakistan. As explained in Chapter II, various statements of the US leaders on Kashmir generated strong resentment in India, because the Indian Government as well as the Opposition and press perceived these statements as a part of broader US policy aimed at cultivating Pakistan at the cost of India. New Delhi was especially concerned about the fact that at a time when Pakistan’s significance in American strategic perception as a bull-work against Soviet expansion in Afghanistan had lost after the Cold War, Islamabad was able to reinvent its importance for the US as a moderate Islamic state capable of serving American interests in the oil rich Gulf countries and the Central Asian Islamic States that emerged after the Soviet disintegration.

If Pakistan’s re-emergence as an important strategic partner of the US belied the hopes about the correction of pro-Pakistan tilt in US-Pak-
India triangle after the Cold War, President Clinton’s rhetoric on human rights and non-proliferation for domestic consumption dashed the hopes for any improvement in India-US ties on coming into power of a President belonging to the Democratic Party. On the contrary, human rights and non-proliferation lobbies that were sidelined by the Pentagon due to realist imperatives of the Cold War now became active. Since the Clinton administration was not in a position to attack China despite its flagrant violation of human rights and clandestine help to Pakistan and North Korea in their nuclear pursuit, Washington chose a soft target, India, for placating its human rights and non-proliferation lobbies. This explains Indo-US differences over these issues.

To take the human rights issue first, New Delhi resented Washington’s criticism of India’s human rights record in Kashmir as interference in India’s internal affairs. India attempted to present the case of human rights record in Kashmir to be seen in the context of cross-border terrorism and the situation, which was vitiated by external agencies. India, therefore, wanted the international community to understand its predicaments in observing human rights while dealing with Pakistani sponsored cross border terrorism in Kashmir.

Another dimension of human rights that troubled India-US ties was the issue of child labour. The deployment of child labour especially
in industries manufacturing garments and carpets accounts for a large part of India’s exports. But the United States vehemently opposed the employment of child labour in these industries and therefore the products made by children were kept out of the American market under Harkins Bill on child labour. Washington failed to understand that the withdrawal of the child labour force is not that easy in India because of certain constraints. The United States chose to ignore Indian sensitivities because of the complex nature of the problem, which no doubt needed the attention of the Indian Government. The problem of child labour could be resolved only gradually, but not the way the Americans expected. The problem of child labour therefore caused a lot of anxiety and tension between the two countries.

Towards a New Pragmatism

The aforesaid divergence on certain vital issues not withstanding, one could see pragmatism shedding the style and the agendas of the past. Several factors compelled the Clinton administration to move closer towards India. The first and foremost factor that pushed both the democracies towards mending their fences was globalisation and liberalisation of economy. Even though ‘power’ and ‘security’ constituted the nuclei of foreign policy of many countries, the emphasis on economic aspect assumed greater significance after the Cold War.
As discussed earlier in Chapter IV, the post Cold War dynamics had tremendous effect on the United States policy outlook towards other countries, for the end of the Cold War, shifted the focus of debate in the US. During the Cold War the main debate was between the Idealists, who argued that America’s relations with foreign countries should depend on the latter’s human rights record and the Realists, who argued that America cannot afford to isolate dictatorship in such places as Pakistan, Philippines or Iran because they needed the support of those countries against the former Soviet Union. After the Cold War, the Idealists still continued to advocate human rights, but increasingly they began to find themselves debating not with the hawkish generals but with the General Electric, the General Motors and other American multinational corporations who argued that the US cannot afford to ignore the growing economies like China, Vietnam and India.

Moreover, by the time President Clinton assumed charge of the White House, American economy was no longer self-sufficient, but had become deeply dependent on export-led growth. The US, therefore, supported the Indian Government’s economic reforms and efforts to cut Government red tape, encourage foreign investment, reduce the number of imported goods that required licenses and in general stimulate the economy.
It was against this background that India assumed new significance for the United States. Although poor, India's expanding middle class offered a prospective market for the US exporters. At a time when the US was groping to give its foreign policy a new shape, India too, began adjusting itself to a new environment. When Bill Clinton won the 1992 presidential elections, a mini economic revolution had already begun in India under P.V.Narasimha Rao's Government. Rao chose an experienced economist Manmohan Singh, to head the finance ministry, who initiated a policy of economic reforms, aimed at making the Indian economy a part of the international economic activity. This change attracted the imagination of American commerce, treasury and energy departments as well as American corporations and business houses.

Some of the US firms and business groups showed interest in investing in India not only because of the availability of a vast market, but also due to the fact that skilled labour and services are more cheaply available in India than in developed countries. Besides, India has a stable political atmosphere and well-defined and established legal system, which attracted the Americans to invest more in India. In the post-liberalization phase, therefore, the nature, magnitude and scope of Indo-US economic relations underwent a sea change especially after 24 July 1991, when India's New Economic Policy was announced.
The growing significance of economy in bringing India and the US was reflected in the carefully planned visit of Prime Minister Rao to Washington in the Summer of 1994, when he took 30 business delegates with him to impress the American investors in general and the Americans of Indian origin in particular about the economic changes in India. Not surprisingly, Prime Minister Rao was able to blunt the edges of Indo-US divide on several issues including critical economic issues like Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Rao’s trip to Washington in 1994 thus no doubt cleared the clouds in Indo-US relations generated by certain uncalled for remarks of the US leaders and over reactions to such remarks and statements on the part of India.

At the same time, India took a number of initiatives to improve its human rights record. This included the setting up of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to investigate allegations about human rights abuses in India and allowing of Western diplomats to visit Kashmir and verify India’s track record of honouring human rights even while fighting terrorist menace with bound hands.

As discussed in Chapter II, while India was engaged in improving its track record on human rights, America itself got the blow of terrorism. Islamic militants identified the United States as an enemy of Islam and Washington became the victim of terrorism after the explosion the World
Trade Centre (WTC) in New York, on 26th February 1993. For the first time, America could feel the impact of terrorism in its own soil. The second instance of international terrorism that shook the United States took place in 1998 when the American Embassy in Tanzania and Kenya became the target of attack. The fight against terrorism called for a visible and more sustained co-operation between India and the US in security relations. These two incidences, to a great extent, brought India and the US closer for containing international terrorism during the Clinton administration. This was reflected in the setting up of a joint working group to coordinate the activities of both the countries against international terrorism.

The Nuclear Divide

The above discussion of Indo-US engagement should not, however, blind us to the continuing difference between the two countries. As explained in Chapter III, the greatest obstacle in expanding strategic co-operation between the two countries had been the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. Though both India and the US shared the common goal of global nuclear disarmament, they differed on means and priority. While New Delhi regarded the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 as discriminatory, which must not be imposed on a sovereign country like India, the US championed its extension. It was during the Clinton administration that the issue of the extension of NPT came for

In addition to the problem of the NPT, another issue which surfaced during the Clinton era (in 1996) was the CTBT, which India considered as a “critical adjunct” of the NPT. India also resented the fact that when the States having nuclear weapons assembled to sign the CTBT at Geneva in 1996, they already possessed 35,000 nuclear weapons: Russia 22,500, the US 12,070, France 500, China 450 and Britain 380. To cap it all, the CTBT proposed to ban only nuclear explosions, but allowed other high-tech forms of testing. India therefore, rejected the CTBT arguing that it was not a nuclear disarmament measure and it was against the security interest of countries like India.

India’s gate crashing into the privileged nuclear club in May 1998 deepened the Indo-US divide over this issue. Apart from the strong verbal disapproval, the Clinton administration initiated several measures against India. In addition to imposing economic sanctions against India, Washington prohibited nearly 200 Indian institutions and organisations from contributing to India’s space and nuclear programmes. As a result, no scientific exchange with the US could take place, nor could they sell any equipment to these institutions. Washington cancelled contracts of many Indian scientists working in American scientific organisations and
directed them to leave America. These measures were initiated since economic sanctions had only marginal impact on India’s economy. The issue of NPT, CTBT and Pokhran-II thus weakened the ties between these two countries.

**Reviving of Friendship**

Paradoxical though it may appear, the sharpening of Indo-US nuclear divide after Pokhran-II acted as a catalyst of accommodation in Indo-American relationship. As discussed in Chapter III in addition to the globalisation and liberatilisation of India’s economy that generated American interest in the vast Indian market and India’s efforts to improve its human right record, several other factors contributed to repairing the bridges of friendship between the two countries. These factors included: the triumph of India’s science and technology as demonstrated by India’s successful conduct of nuclear tests despite intrusive international surveillance; India’s capacity to withstand economic sanctions imposed by the US after the tests; Washington’s failure to carry the European Union and other powers with it in imposing tough sanctions against India; pressure generated by two million strong Indo-American community within the US in favour of continued business and close cultural US ties with India; America’s need for Indian software professionals; demonstration of India’s responsible defence posture; and a quiet diplomacy pursued by India’s then External Affairs
Minister Jaswant Singh and the then US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott. Finally, as stated earlier, terrorist attacks on the US institutions in 1993 and 1998 obliged Washington to realize the dangers of Islamic terrorism and thereby better understanding of India’s sufferings in Kashmir.

Not surprisingly, the Clinton administration took initiatives to relax certain sanctions it imposed on India, and this facilitated quiet diplomacy between the above mentioned representatives of both the countries. By the end of January 1999, they were able to bring down the number of do’s and dont’s for India from 13 points listed in the United Nations Security Council resolution to four items. These four benchmarks included: (a) Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); (b) Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT); (c) Related Initiatives of Exports Controls; and (d) The Defence Posture of India. As regards CTBT, India was already informally observing the provisions of this treaty by announcing voluntary moratorium on underground nuclear tests. It must be noted in this context that though there was division of opinion about the signing of CTBT by India, all parties agreed on the moratorium on further nuclear tests.

With respect to FMCT, India expressed its willingness to join the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva provided it
was non-discriminatory in nature. So far as the issue of controlling the exports of nuclear material was concerned, as already explained, India has had an excellent track record in this regard. It is heartening to note the discussion in this area-registered progress during the Clinton era.

Finally, India though categorically asserted, and legitimately so, its sovereign rights to define its defence requirements in accordance with its threat perceptions, it reiterated its commitment to peace and stability in the world in general and South Asia in particular. India formally announced a policy of no-first-use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. This policy of no-first use with the minimum nuclear deterrent implied deployment of assets in a manner that ensures survivability and capacity of an adequate response. At the same time, India continued to adhere to its goal of nuclear disarmament.

In the economic field, emerging reciprocity of interests between the two countries forced them to reach out to each other—the US in search of new markets for its exports and India to seek soft loans and foreign investments in various sectors of economy. In fact, the Clinton administration saw a definite link between commercial policy, domestic policies and foreign policies. This wholesome approach was aimed at improving the country's economic competitiveness and production in industry and agriculture and the reduction of trade deficit, which
consequently needed markets for American exports. This need to look for markets turned the Clinton administration towards India.

In the political field, though US policy makers and strategic thinkers viewed the Kashmir issue as a potential nuclear flash point, the Clinton administration, after its initial phase, took efforts to bring both India and Pakistan towards better understanding and resolving their differences through persistent dialogue and initiating a series of Confidence Building Measures (CBM). When, however, such efforts could not positively materialise due to Pakistan's (mis) adventure in Kargil, Washington did not hesitate to take initiatives to restraint Pakistan. In addition to the sacrifice of the Indian forces, it was the US pressure that obliged Islamabad to withdraw its forces from the Indian side of the Kargil, Drass and Batalick sector. This role of the United States during the Kargil conflict demonstrates that the Clinton administration understood India's position and predicament.

This shift in the US policy towards Kashmir got confirmed when President Clinton visited India in March 2000—a visit of any US President to this country after a gap of 22 years — and advised Pakistan to the respect Line of Control (LoC) and to maintain restraint. In the ‘Vision Statements’ he signed together with Vajpayee on 21 March 2000, both the leaders stressed on common interests and partnership
between the two countries. They moreover agreed to institutionalise a whole series of high-level, multi-faceted consultations between the two countries.

Prime Minister Vajpayee’s US visit was equally significant. His meeting with President Clinton on 15 September 2000 and their joint statement while acknowledging the differences over issues like nuclear non-proliferation, expressed their determination to narrow Indo-US differences and concentrate on consultations and work on a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and areas of co-operation such as containing terrorism, trade investment, agriculture and information technology.

In Perspective

This, of course, is not to argue that all the differences between the two democracies were bridged during the Clinton Presidency. In fact, they continued to differ on several issues including nuclear and missile proliferation, Kashmir, speed of India’s liberalisation programme and so on. What, however, cannot be disputed was that both the States were able to leave acrimony of the past behind and explore areas of co-operation. This shift was not produced by any sentimental factors like democracy or liberal values but by a careful consideration of national interests.
As stated in Chapter I, if India and the US differed during the Cold War despite sharing of democratic values, most important reason was India's attempt to emerge as an independent center of power due to its strategic location and ancient civilisation, democratic political system and aspirations of its leaders. For, the US, being a global power after the Second World War, could not like the emergence of any independent center of power that could circumscribe its global influence. This contributed to Indo-Soviet friendship on the one hand and US-Pakistan alliance on the other. It was only India's emergence as an important market and other factors discussed earlier that motivated the Clinton administration to move closer towards India. The study therefore confirms the usefulness of the Realist perspective of international relations, which tries to explain the conduct of international relations on the basis of national interest and power. It may be reasonably argued that so long as the States will continue to exist as important units of international relations, the Realist view will remain largely valid.

The study also confirms the significance of domestic environment in understanding bilateral relationship between the two States. As discussed in Chapter I, if the process of accommodation in India-US relations that begin during the Reagan administration, got derailed during the initial phase of the Clinton Presidency, one of the important reasons for this was President Clinton wanted to appease his domestic
constituency of non-proliferation and human rights lobbies. If both the countries moved closer, it was mainly due to changes in Indian economy and the interest of American multinational corporations and other pressure groups in better ties between the two democracies.

It will, however, be misleading to ignore the role of personality factor in the shaping of bilateral relationship. The visible shift from bitterness to harmony in Indo-US relations during the period under review cannot be explained without reference to the personality of the US officials. Though the President had been in power for eight years, the frequent change of officials in US administration contributed to the shift in the relationship between Washington and New Delhi. While the then US Under Secretary of State for South Asia, Robin Raphel’s statements invited sharp reactions from India, a quiet and careful diplomacy pursued by Strobe Talbott on American side and Jaswant Singh from Indian side contributed to narrowing of the divides in general and the nuclear divide in particular between the two States.

Postscript

Though the present work confines itself to the Clinton era, in view of the significant events that took place in the post Clinton period, which considerably influenced India-US relations, a brief overview of some of these developments will be in order.
One of the most important events that occurred during the Bush administration having a significant bearing on US foreign policy in general and on US policy towards South Asia in particular was the terrorist attack on the American centers of economic and military power on 11 September 2001, known as 9/11 incident. The manner in which the terrorists used civilian aircrafts as missiles destroying New York’s Twin Towers and attacked Pentagon, forced Americans to understand the dangers of terrorism. This pushed the Bush administration towards realism and relegated ideological issues such as democracy and human rights, etc, which were championed by the Clinton team, to the background. This got vividly reflected in US policy towards South Asia.

To begin with, the tragic event of September 11, 2001, forced the Bush administration to reexamine its policies towards Pakistan in view of three major factors namely, Pakistan’s geography, its strong lobby within the US, and its social composition. First, geographically, Pakistan’s physical proximity to Afghanistan, not to mention its close links with Taliban and its connection with the Al-Qaeda network compelled the US to consider Pakistan as a subservient partner. Geographically adjacent to and having a long common border with Afghanistan, Pakistan was in a position to provide logistical, intelligence and other support services to the US in mounting operations in Afghanistan. Pakistan exploited this opportunity to her strategic advantage, as any refusal on the Pakistan side
to support the American war on terrorism in Afghanistan would have had serious consequences on Pakistan being branded as a terrorist State. Moreover, Pakistan was also keen to capitalize this opportunity to her advantage by making use of the economic promises made by the US to mitigate its economic crisis by lifting sanctions and also providing huge economic assistance. Pakistan’s post September relationship with the US thus was based on their desire to gain mutual benefit from each other in general and Pakistan’s eagerness to use the US in settling scores with India in Kashmir.

The second factor that helped Islamabad to emerge as a valuable ally of Washington in its war against terrorism was the presence of a strong Pakistan lobby within the US. Over several decades a large number of Islamabad’s power brokers, both civilian and military, had carefully cultivated friendly ties with Washington. These bonds of friendship were carefully maintained even during the lean years of the Cold War.

The third factor that obliged Washington to rely on Islamabad was its social composition. Since American war on terrorism was seen by a section of the Islamic world as America’s fight against Islam and Washington had many stakes in the Islamic world, it was necessary for the Bush administration to seek support from Islamic States like Pakistan to portray its war on terrorism as against terrorists rather than against
Islam. Not surprisingly, the Mushraff regime managed not only to avoid American censure on a plethora of issues, but also succeeded in obtaining the coveted status of “a major, Non- NATO ally”. Further, Pakistan’s continuing involvements in Kashmir and its deep involvement in proliferating nuclear weapons technology were mostly forgiven. Its strategic location, its possession of its nuclear weapon, its social character and lobbying capacity along with its fitful cooperation in the American initiatives to eliminate the remnants of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban thus enabled Islamabad to remain in the good books of Washington.

On the other hand, Bush administration ignored India’s prompt offer of military bases, airfields and intelligence to American forces in that campaign, even though this offer marked a seismic shift in New Delhi’s strategic posture with far reaching implications for its foreign and defence policy and India’s strategic shift came before the United States crowned Pakistan a key player in its counter terrorist coalition. New Delhi’s action to extend full military support which came voluntarily and enthusiastically, was thus neither well received nor appreciated by Washington’s largely due to its rediscovery of Pakistan as a strategic ally for certain obvious reasons.

India however, was not the lonely loser in Washington’s war on terrorism. Pakistan also had to pay a price for getting US cooperation in
the sense it had to give up its support, to Taliban, its own baby. On the other hand, the Bush administration’s policy of favouring democracies and acknowledging India as a raising power also made this country hopeful of developing good relations with the United States. One could therefore witness positive trends in their relations. The terrorist attack on Srinagar Legislative Assembly on October 1st and attack on the Indian Parliament by the Pakistan sponsored terrorist group- Jaise-e-Mohammed and Laskar-e-Toiba on December 13 2001 and India’s subsequent demands put the United States in a quandary. The American official could hardly continue to overlook Pakistan’s complicity in the terrorist activities of the Kashmiri separatist groups. While addressing India’s concerns, the Bush administration developed a two pronged strategy; counseling restraint on the part of India while placing Laskar-e-Toiba and Jaise-e-Mohammed on the State Department’s list of terrorist organizations and freezing their assets in the United States. Moreover, Washington also strongly urged Musharaff to renounce the Pakistani Government’s support for the insurgents. This demonstrated positive trends in Indo-US relations.

Given its objective of improving ties with India, the Bush administration realised that it would have to offer India other inducement apart from exerting pressure on Pakistan to curb its support for the insurgency in Kashmir. To this end, it undertook to initiate military
cooperation with India and a renewed discussion with the Indian Government, culminating in a new technology transfer regime in early 2003. The willingness of the Bush administration to develop this military relationship with India reassured New Delhi that the US reliance on Pakistan in the war against terror would not be to India's detriment. In addition to expanding the scope of military to military contacts, the Bush administration also signaled willingness to sell India various forms of weapons technology; including previously embargoed aircraft engine and artillery locating radar. Further, the Bush team initiated regular diplomatic consultation on such matters of common interest such as terrorism, peacekeeping operation, protection of sea-lanes and piracy.

There are other indications of consolidation of US India ties during the Bush Presidency. In the area of strategic convergence, for instance, both India and the United States, see China as a threat to the future security. The view on both sides seems to converge on this issue, though from slightly different standpoints. The Indians identify China as a long-term strategic threat as well as an economic rival. India has a persistent border dispute with the Chinese. Beijing has already helped Pakistan with its nuclear weapons programme and might be intent on encircling India by establishing base facilities in and defense pacts with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Mynmar. The Americans see China's long-term challenge in a broader Asian context, in East Asia as well as in the
subcontinent. Both agree that China represents a threat to their future security as an economic and military competitor. Accordingly US and Indian interests appear to converge in keeping China out of Indian Ocean. To substantiate this, one could find the two nations’ navies conducting a number of joint exercises, including anti-submarine training and combating piracy, which is aimed, in part, at containing China. Similarly the two navies are jointly patrolling the straits of Malacca, where China’s navy may be vying for control.

However, military thinkers on both sides do not think that China should be the primary focus of the Indo-US military relationship or a rationale for broader strategic ties. China will inevitably figure in US-India strategic thinking, and an economically and militarily strong India, especially as an American friend, will create a counter-veiling force to China and a hedge against Chinese ambitions. But the Indo-US bond must be a multifaceted, mature relationship sustained by a range of shared interests.

India sees the Persian Gulf as another region for potential Indo-US cooperation and strategic dialogue for a number of security interests such as energy security, regional stability, and proliferations of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Counter terrorism. India is strategically positioned to assist United States in the region for three reasons. First, India sits in
the middle of Islamic world, which stretches from North Africa to South East Asia. Secondly, it has good relations with most of the Islamic countries in the Gulf and South East Asia. Thirdly, with one of the world’s largest Muslim populations, it can help the United States to understand the Muslim psyche better.

In the economic field, the United States is India’s primary trading partner, as one could see from the growing trade and investment taking place between these two countries, laying a strong foundation for marked improvement in economic ties. Further Indo-US trade continues to grow from year to year as cited earlier. In 2002 for example when the world merchandise exports to United States grew by only two percent, India’s merchandise exports to America expanded by twenty one percent. Similarly, US merchandise exports to India shot up by nine percent. Thus US exports to India continued to grow in 2003 at an even faster pace. Further America lifted import duties on forty-two Indian commodities worth nearly $600 million, which reflected US pragmatism.

During the Cold War, the relationship between the US, India and Pakistan was zero-sum. US-Pakistan relationship was against India; however the September 11 incident brought a considerable rapprochement between India and the US, which was not the zero-sum relationship. To America, Indo-US relations could co-exist with US-Pakistan relationship.
Thus, the Indo-US relations by and large during the post Cold War, seems more to converge than diverge.

There are, of course, some persisting problems such as Kashmir issue, the nuclear proliferation and the American led war against Iraq. The unresolved question of Kashmir again comes to haunt the Indo-US relations even during Bush tenure and will continue to remain till it is resolved. Despite the success of counter terrorism measures under a joint working group on terrorism, three areas of divergence remain in this regard. There are differences in defining the threat; Americans see it as a global challenge; Indians are more preoccupied by the regional eruptions in Kashmir, Nepal, Srilanka, and occasionally along the Indo-Mynamor and Indo-Bangladesh borders. There are divergent views on the roots of terrorism, with Indians seeing Pakistan as the root of the problem, not a solution, and Americans viewing Pakistan as a key ally in the overall war against terror. It is also clear that the US is unlikely to get involved in resolving the Kashmir question without the explicit request of both India and Pakistan. In the recent years both Democratic and Republican administrations have clearly emphasized the importance of bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan for settling the dispute.

Another major issue which continues to act as a thorn in US-India relationship is the nuclear issue like NPT, MTCR, FMCT and CTBT, etc.
India has to evolve a calibrated approach to issues concerning nuclear policy that would nurture national interest in the long term with the right mix of principle and pragmatism, even as it strives to stabilize its multi-faceted relationship with the major post Cold War states and imperatives of globalization.

The American intervention in Iraq raised the central question of the boundaries of power and the apprehension among nations outside the United States about its possible abuse. Consistent application of moral and political standards at home and abroad would certainly enhance the acceptance of American leadership in promoting internationally the values invoked in the use of American power. But unfortunately the Iraq war and its aftermath have shown yet again the limitations of unilateral armed intervention.

The Bush administration justified its doctrine of pre-emption and regime change on the touchstone of the primacy of individual human rights against State rights. Pre-emption as a tool as a last resort can achieve its purpose only when backed by the widest possible consensus and collective conscience of the international community. The United States has been unable to demonstrate the moral justification for the exercise of force by securing a broad and willing acceptance by the Iraqis, of one of its stated objectives of ensuring democracy and human rights.
Against this background, the Indian Parliament’s unanimous resolution disapproving of American military intervention in Iraq should be seen as a principled objection to the modalities and the process of war, rather than a defence of Saddam Hussein or of his ways. Such a conscientious reservation expressed through a unanimous Parliamentary vote of a democratic nation ought not to be viewed by the US as an unfriendly act; India seeks to build its relationship with the US around shared goals based on values of democracy and the rule of law.

India therefore diligently avoided getting into Iraq quagmire citing relevant United Nations resolutions and did not approve unilateral actions against a member state and world opinion that was largely opposed to any such move against Iraq. Despite legitimate differences in perception on contentious issues, both moved closer towards mutually beneficial strategic and economic partnership.

In the last several years, despite important and continuing disagreements, Indo-US relations continued to blossom slowly regardless of which regime assumed power in Washington. South Asia will remain a region of great concern for foreign and security policy makers of the US. Significant economic ties have been forged and are expanding in the areas of economic and military cooperation in addition to overall marked improvement in diplomatic ties between the two countries.
Pakistan will, of course, will continue to be valuable ally of the US even if a Kerry administration assumes power in Washington next year, because the Kerry administration will be loath to ignore the strong recommendations of the 9/11 commissions. Secondly, it will be extremely difficult for the new administration to abruptly reverse the course in Pakistan and end American military involvement before seriously denting the Al-Qaeda. Finally, Pakistan quite expectedly, will step up its diplomatic efforts through its extensive array of well-tended contacts in Washington. But as stated earlier, Washington is likely to maintain close relations with both India and Pakistan, because it requires both for its global interest and design.

The future administration in Washington must, however, understand sensibility and domestic imperatives of a country like India and refrain from the kind of remarks aired by American leaders during the first Clinton administration. On the part of India, Indian leaders too need not react to each and every statement coming from American side, in quite disproportionate manner. For instance, the manner in which Indian leaders belonging to both ruling and opposition parties reacted to the statement of a junior American official like Robin Raphel was unnecessary and counter productive. This precaution is necessary to realise the strategic and potential areas of co-operation between India and the US in diverse fields including political, economic, military,
technological, environment, tackling drug trafficking, terrorism and HIV/AIDS. To put it differently, patience and perseverance must be the watchwords to bridge differences, rather than rhetoric and exaggerated expectations from each other.

The future Indo-US relationship could be a mature, normal and friendly one and may include defence cooperation between the two countries as agreed upon by Jaswant Singh and Donald Rumsfield during their meeting. During the recent years both India and the United States have come a long way from ‘estrangement to a phase of constructive cooperation’. It is to be seen how best India utilizes this opportunity with the help of overseas Indian community in this process. The economic development and the marketing of India’s interest will come naturally as a key to any policy decision. However a lot depends on what the US and India expect from each other and what they can give to each other.

It is heartening to note that the process of accommodation witnessed in India-US relations during the latter phase of Clinton administration is continuing during the present administration of President George W. Bush, and likely to continue in the foreseeable future despite certain setbacks. The present study, it is hoped, will stimulate fresh thinking on deepening India-US relations and promoting peace, understanding and development.