PREFACE

Ever since the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as a sole surviving superpower, one of the important goals of India's foreign policy has been to improve her ties with the US. Despite such efforts, the first half of the Clinton administration witnessed more 'downs' than 'ups' in India-US ties due to several reasons. It was only during the second half of the Clinton administration that both the democracies began to move closer.

Indo-American relations during the second half of the Clinton administration, of course, suffered because of India’s nuclear tests at Pokharan in 1998, which led the US to impose economic sanctions on India under the Glenn Amendment and also to advice other members of the G-8 countries to follow suit.

This trend did not, however, continue for a long time, because India was able to tide over the crisis and demonstrate maturity in its approach towards the US. American interest in India’s vast market, a large number of Americans of Indian origin within the US, Washington’s need of India’s software professionals and the virtual ineffectiveness of its sanctions against India discouraged Washington from continuing with its anti-India policies. In addition, emerging tensions in US-China and US-Russia relations, imperative of cooperating with India for
containment of international terrorism and certain other factors forced the Clinton administration to modify its policy towards India. The pursuit of quiet diplomacy by India's then Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh, and the then US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, also facilitated the revival of US-India friendship.

It was in this backdrop that President Clinton's official visit to India was timed to bridge the gap between the two countries. From then onwards, the relationship moved in rapid strides towards the goal of co-operation and negating the earlier confronting trend. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's US trip in September 2000 consolidated this trend in the positive direction.

Despite these drastic 'ups' and 'downs' in India-US ties during the Clinton administration, a systematic effort has hardly been made to examine the factors and forces that led to these shifts and suggest guidelines for the future. Numerous works have, of course, been done on India-US relations after the Cold War that include Clinton era also. But these works are either too specific focusing on any single aspect of India-US relations like economic policy and nuclear policy or they only marginally focus on the Clinton era. Moreover, most of these works are descriptive in nature. In fact, why and how the Clinton administration dashed hopes of deepening of Indo-US co-operation that had begun...
during the Reagan administration and why the same leadership moved closer to India despite this country’s defiance of the US led nuclear club remains largely an unasked and unanswered question. The present work, therefore, is a modest attempt to fill this void.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Accordingly, the present study intends to examine fundamental factors and forces leading to ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ in Indo-US relations during the Clinton era. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Why the process of accommodation in India-US ties got derailed during the beginning of the Clinton Presidency?

2. What factors prompted India and the US to come closer after initial bickering during the period under review?

3. How far the Clinton administration succeeded in implementing its policies towards India?

4. Whether and to what extent the Clinton administration extended assistance for India’s economic development?

5. What were the issues that obstructed Indo-American relations during this period?

6. What lessons can be drawn for the future from the conduct of India-US relations during the period under review?
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study has been conducted within the broad framework of "Containment" and "Accommodation" model. The study begins with the basic assumptions that a superpower like the US, while dealing with middle powers like India, tries to bring them to its fold or camp. When, however, a middle power refuses to align with the superpower, the latter tries to contain the former through various methods including diplomacy, denying foreign aid or transfer of technology, and threat or actual use of military power. But when the rebellious middle power gathers certain clouts to inflict damage to the superpower, it may extend the policy of accommodation towards the non-cooperative emerging center of power such as India. Though these strategies appear to be distinct from analytical point of view, they may be simultaneously employed by the super power, while dealing with an emerging great power or middle power.

Accordingly, the study relies more on the 'Realist' approach to international relations that highlights the significance of power and national interest in the making of foreign policy for explaining 'ups' and 'downs' in India-US relations than the 'Liberal' approach that focuses on shared values. In addition to the Realist approach, the linkage politics model that stresses on the co-relation between domestic milieu and
foreign policy also needs to be used for explaining Indo-US relations in general and during the Clinton administration in particular.

HYPOTHESES

In the light of the above-mentioned conceptual framework, the present work examines the following hypotheses:

1. The upward swing in Indo-US ties at the end of the Clinton era was not an overnight development, but it was the culmination of a gradual, though interrupted process of accommodation, which had ironically begun at the height of the second phase of Cold War in 1979.

2. The Clinton Presidency viewed the acquisition of nuclear weapons or proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia as a major disturbing factor for the US interest. That is why, India’s defiance of the exclusive nuclear club led by the US, motivated Washington to try to contain India by imposing sanctions and other means.

3. However, New Delhi’s demonstration of its science and technological capability, the clout of Americans of Indian origin within the US, America’s search for India’s vast market and so on compelled the Clinton regime to accommodate India to a certain extent.

4. Though the role of personality of leadership such as a good personal rapport between India’s then External Affairs Minister, Jaswant
Singh, and the then US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, in cementing India-US ties after Pokharn-II cannot be denied, yet such a considerable improvement in US-India relations witnessed since the Kargil conflict cannot be explained by the personality factor alone.

5. Shifts in India-US equation in general and during the Clinton Presidency in particular cannot be adequately explained without a reference to the changing relations in international politics as well as domestic politics of both the countries.

6. The Clinton administration considered Kashmir as an important issue in its agenda of policy towards South Asia.

7. The process of globalisation and liberalisation had its own consequences for Indo-US relations during the period under review.

METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted with the help of historical and analytical method. Both primary and secondary sources such as Congressional Records, Governmental publications, reports, books and articles in journals, periodicals and newspapers available in various libraries of Pondicherry, Chennai and Hyderabad have been critically used.
THE CHAPTER SCHEME

Divided into six chapters, the first chapter of the dissertation traces the roots and manifestations of conflict and collaboration between India and the US as a backdrop to our discussion of Indo-US relations during the Clinton era.

The second chapter, entitled, "Kashmir, Human Rights and Terrorism", focuses on the significance of the Kashmir factor in influencing relations between the two democracies. In this context, the issues of human rights and terrorism in shaping the contours of US-India ties during the Clinton era have also been examined in depth.

The third chapter, namely, "Managing the Nuclear Divide", examines how the nuclear and missile proliferation issues created gulf in India-US ties and how both the countries tried to bridge this divide after India's gate crashing into the privileged nuclear club in 1998.

The fourth chapter concentrates on "The Economic Imperatives" between India and the US with reference to trade, investments, intellectual property rights, General Agreement on Trade and Tariff and World Trade Organization in the era of globalisation.

The fifth chapter focuses on "Domestic Inputs of Relationship" and attempts to examine the US-India relations during the Clinton Presidency in the light of domestic environment of both the countries.
Finally, the main findings of the study have been summed up and the nature and tenor of India-US equation during the Presidency of President Bill Clinton has been appraised in the concluding chapter. The study, I hope, throws a new light on India-US ties during the Clinton era and it is likely to stimulate fresh thinking on the subject.