CHAPTER IV

Indian Diaspora and the Indo-US Relations
The Asian Indian community in the United States has been playing a very important role in raising the issues of concern to India in the United States from the very beginning of their settlement in the US. Now with their numerical strength and affluence, the Asian Indians are playing a very important role shaping in the improvement of bilateral relations between the two countries. They have grown in numbers, have organized themselves into associations, their agenda has also not only grown from citizenship issues to sharp interest in American political process and Indo-US relations. They have also spurred fresh research to assess their role and impact on bilateral relations. The Asian Indians with their various organizations have come together on issues related to India and Asian Indians in the United States. This chapter is based on public documents, organizational resources and articles published in the media.

John Gunter Dean, former American Ambassador to India had described the Indian community in the United States as a “bridge”. Indians in America he said, could “soften” the edges in our relationship and being technology and investment from the United States to India. Scientists, businessmen, and academicians of Indian origin in the United States could play the
role of brokers in furthering American investment and collaboration agreements in industry, for instance, there are now numerous technology agreements between the United States and India and investments by American corporations in which United States-based Indian engineers, scientists, and managers play an important role.¹

The earliest effort on the part of the Asian Indian community to involve in the issues related to India was the launching of the Ghadar movement in 1913 in San Francisco, which has been discussed in the previous chapters. What needs to be reinforced is that, as early studies have shown, the “trading diaspora”, comprising of merchants and “agro businessmen” financially supported India’s independence movement in the U.S. According to some, the early middle class played a significant role in the intellectual exchange and struggle for rights in India and the United States.

The India League of America led by Sardar J.J. Singh actively took up matters of India’s interests with the members of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee and writing to the

American President. When India's official delegate could not bring up the question of India's right to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, his perseverance got Congressman Karl E. Mundt, a member of the committee and other Congressmen to finally succeed in the passage of amendment in the Congress to allow India the benefits of famine relief. A prosperous Sikh businessman with great powers of persuasion earned him the sobriquet of “One Man Lobby” from Robert Shaplen, in the New Yorker, newspaper.2

J.J. Singh also took up the issue of the passage of an amendment to the immigration laws permitting a hundred Indians a year to enter America to become permanent residents and citizens. Meetings were organized in New York and Washington DC to gain support for this issue. The legislation co-authored by Emanuel Celler and Clare Booth Luce, was introduced in 1944, and passed by the House of Representatives in 1946 and by the Senate thereafter. During the later part of 1944, Vijayalakshmi Pandit joined the Indian nationalists in the

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United States. Both Pandit and Singh were on hand to press for India's liberation.³

After the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948, the Indian League lobbied for a Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Bill in the U.S. Congress through Congressman Cellar from New York, which was passed by the Congress in 1949. The bill, was first of its kind, authorized the Indian League of America to erect a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi (the first non-American leader to be respected in this manner) on U.S. government land in Washington D.C. The memorial could not be constructed because fifty percent funds had to be managed by the Indian community living in the United States and other fifty percent by the Government of India within a period of 5 years.⁴ The Asian Indians at that time were not rich enough to collect the money. In 1998 the Senate and the Congress passed resolutions to authorize the government of India to establish a memorial to honor Mahatma Gandhi in the District of Columbia.⁵

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⁴ Jagat K. Motwani America and India in a Give & Take Relationship. New York 2003, p.21
After being elected to the Congress in 1956, Dilip Singh Saund, was appointed to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In this committee he argued to have better relations with India.\(^6\)

In the 1950s and 1960s the Cold War phenomenon affected the Indo-U.S. relations but during Eisenhower and Kennedy period, Indo-US trade and economic relations expanded. During President Eisenhower’s second term, US assistance grew substantially. Eisenhower even signed a US $12 billion PL 480 food agreement in 1960. This agreement called for the export of 12 million tons of US wheat over a period of four years.\(^7\)

The Indo-US relations were marked by the Indian relations with Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute and supply of arms to Pakistan by the United States.

During Kennedy term, the relations improved. The economic assistance from US also increased in volume but the reclamation of Goa in 1961 from the French by force was disapproved by the United States.

\(^6\) Dilip Singh Saund, Congressmen From India, New York, 1960, p. 57
In the Indo-China war of 1962, the United States was sympathetic to India’s cause and sent equipments to India. The Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 over Kashmir was another land mark, in which US played a very important role by not getting involved directly and press for the United Nations to come in front.

During the tenure of Indira Gandhi 1965-1984 the relations between India and U.S. saw ups and down. While economic, educational and cultural relations were maintained at nominal levels, political and strategic differences continued to affect Indo-US relations. The East Pakistan crisis leading to the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 brought Indo-US relations perhaps to the lowest. Henry Kissinger’s psychological war tactics during his visit to Delhi in August 1971 and ultimately the dispatch of the US Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal in the middle of the Indo-Pak war created a stalemate in Indo-US relations.8

On May, 1974, the Indian Atomic Energy Commission exploded an underground nuclear device at Pokhran in Rajasthan. The explosion made India the world’s sixth nuclear power. The United States initially criticized the tests but was of

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the view that Indo-US dialogue should carry on and should not isolate India.

President Jimmy Carter visited India in January 1978. To emphasize the importance of Indo-US relations, "Delhi Declaration" was issued at the conclusion of the trip. Carter and Morarji Desai emphasized on common support for democracy and economic development, expressed their deep opposition to "the specter of war" and pledged that India and Unites States, "will do their utmost to resolve disputes with others amicably." In keeping with the personal convictions of the two leaders, the Delhi Declaration closed on a note of principle---"Ends can never justify evil means. Nations, like individuals are morally responsible for their actions."9

The attention of the US nonproliferation lobby turned to the nuclear power plant at Tarapur, built as a show piece AID project and the major element in Indo-US nuclear cooperation. Tarapur received U.S. enriched uranium supplied under a 30 year commercial contract in return for which the Indians agreed to bilateral and later International Atomic Energy inspections and safeguards designed to ensure that sensitive material not to be

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diverted for non-authorized uses. After the explosion, the supply of enriched uranium for Tarapur became a major problem between India and the United States.\textsuperscript{10}

The National Federation of Indian American Association (NFIAA) had organized its members to pressure Congressmen and administration to relax the U.S. policy over selling fuel to India for its Tarapur reactor, trade in garments, and sanctions.\textsuperscript{11}

The element of political differences was compounded by the international developments such as Soviet incursion in Afghanistan, which was opposed by the United States, between 1966 and 1980. However, the period also witnessed an increase in the US investment in India and USA’s emerging as India’s largest trading partner. Despite differences of opinion on nuclear non-proliferation and related issues, Indo-US cooperation in the spheres of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and exploration of outer space also expanded. An interesting facet of Indo-US relations in the 1980s was the close friendship and understanding which developed between Indira Gandhi and Roland Reagan. Gandhi’s meetings with Reagan at Cancun in

\textsuperscript{10} Dennis Kux, 1993, footnote no. 7, p. 317
\textsuperscript{11} Interview with Dr. Parthasarthy Pillai on November 14, 2003 Washington D.C. Dr. Pillai is Chairman, NFIA and Past President.
Moscow in October 1981 to consider global economic issues and in Washington in 1982, helped in tempering the contradictions and tensions in Indo-US relations and in encouraging cooperation in those fields where the two countries could interact positively outside the ambit of the strategic differences which remained.\textsuperscript{12} The issues of U.S. interest in South Asian stability became the focus of many Indian associations in the U.S. The community had come to realize that managing the core of Indo-US differences was of significance to them, partly, due to their dual roots. Many also carried the burden of Indo-Pakistan relations and continued to voice opposition to the United States assistance to Pakistan as detrimental to US interest in regional stability.

Thus Asian-Indian community staged a demonstration against the AWACS to be sold to Pakistan. In 1987, the National Federation of Indian American Association (NFIAA) was invited by the U.S. Senate to send its representative to the Senate Foreign Relations Sub Committee hearing on “Proposed American massive military and package to Pakistan” which included highly sophisticated airborne early warning surveillance system (AWACS) to testify why AWACS should not be given to Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{12} J.N. Dixit, 2002, footnote no. 8, p. 296
NFIA's the then executive Director, Dr. Jagat K. Motwani, representing the three national Indian organizations – National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA) and Association of Indians in America (AlA) – testified on March 23, 1987 in Washington D.C. before the Senate Sub Committee for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs chaired by Senator Sarbanes (Democrat, Maryland).¹³

Dr. Motwani voiced strong opposition to the proposed supply of AWACS to Pakistan under the pretext that they would be used to monitor the Soviet-backed military movements near the Afghanistan border to blunt any border attacks. He asserted that there was sufficient evidence to show that the hilly border between Pakistan and Afghanistan would severely limit the effectiveness of such sophisticated systems. They would be used, he said, by Pakistan against India. It would escalate military technology and upset military balance in South Asia. The U.S. finally did not supply the AWACS to Pakistan at the urging of the Asian Indians and the Government of India.¹⁴ Prof. Surender K.

Saxena, former President of Association of Indians in America appeared before the sub-committee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law on October 26, 1981, a branch of the House Committee on Judiciary. He also appeared before the Senate Committee on Immigration on November 23, 1981. His testimonies were aimed at safeguarding the interest of the Asian Indians living in the United States.

Several other activities of the community are also indicative that the Asian Indians had turned more active with focus on Indo-US relations.

The Indo-US relations stabilized in President Reagan’s second term to President Sr. George Bush’s tenure from 1989-1992. The Indo-US relations also took a turn after the collapse of Soviet Union in December 1991 and the Gulf war of 1991. India also liberalized its economy by opening up foreign investment policies. These steps and the international situation were seen to pose a new trajectory in the Indo-US relations. The fundamental differences between India and US remained over nuclear nonproliferation, disarmament, but they remained less confrontational, the situation was under control and seemingly
there was political will to continue the dialogue between the two countries.

The 1990s saw a surge of activities in the Indo-US relations. Though the breakdown of talks of NPT on 1993-94, and the Kashmir issue coincided with the liberalization of the India economy, the technological and defence cooperation continued between the two countries. The major political issue between India and United States remained to put Pakistan on the list of countries supporting terrorism—especially in Kashmir. Significantly a flurry of activities by the Asian Indians began to focus on the legislators in order to garner their support.

The Asian Indians with the help of the U.S. lawmakers formed the India Caucus in 1993 in the House of Representatives. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans has members from both the Republican and Democratic parties. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans was founded with the official objectives of "pushing the Indian American community's agenda on the Hill and promote better Indo-US ties." It was founded by Congressmen Frank Pallone, a Democrat from New Jersey and Bill McCollum, a Republican from Florida with the help of Asian
Indians, for example, Kapil Sharma, Himanshu Shekhar among others. The membership of India Caucus is at present 186\(^{15}\) (112 Democrats and 74 Republicans) Congressmen from both the Democratic and Republican Parties in the 108\(^{th}\) Congress. Joseph Crowley (Democrat, New York) and Joe-Wilson (Republican, South Caroline) are the two present Co-chairmen. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans primarily focuses on:

1. US India Relations – to include trade, security cooperation, global terrorism and economic and humanitarian assistance.

2. Issues of interest to the Asian Indians community including the facilitation of trade and commerce with India, small business, visas, education, health care, and the promotion of Indian culture in the United States.

3. Developments in India and on the Indian Sub-continent include economic development, health care, inter-communal relations, the status of religious and other minorities and corruption.

\(^{15}\)Membership of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, Washington D.C.,

www.iaclfpa.com also see, www.usinpac.com
The Asian Indian community is now financially funding the members of the India Caucus and in return, they ask the Congressmen to support issues concerning India and Asian-Indians. Not at all times have the Indian Americans and their American lawmaker friends succeeded. In 1995-96, this lobby found it hard to persuade matters that strained Indo-US relations. For example, the State Department pronounced “Kashmir a disputed territory and the status of which need to be resolved”, and added that “the 1972 Shimla Accord between Pakistan and India to resolve the issue bilaterally had been ineffective”. There was a broad hint of plebiscite as U.S. policy to decide the future of Kashmir. Then, the Clinton Administration proposed the sale of 38 F-16 fighter aircrafts to Pakistan that are capable of nuclear delivery systems. This, despite Pressler Amendment prohibiting the sale of any arms to Pakistan unless the President certifies that Islamabad neither has nuclear weapons, nor is it trying to develop them. (The Administration and the Congress had evidences from official reports about Pakistan nuclear development). Finally, this was achieved by the passage of the anti-India Brown Amendment leading to the dispatch of 370 million dollars
worth of arms to Pakistan. "The vote on the amendment was close and if the Asian American community had been more organized and able to convince five more senators on this political injustice, the Brown Amendment could have been defeated.16

The highly fragmented structure of policy-making process of the American political system is being comprehended by some Indian American groups like IAFPE and IACPA. The other associations like Association of Indian American (AlA), Federation of Indian Association (FIA), Indian American Foundation (IAF) etc. have been playing very vital role in improving the bilateral relations between the two countries and taking up the issues affecting the Asian Indian community. They have been trying to bring all the organizations and the Indian community together. They have been organizing Annual India Day Parade, celebrating Indian festivals and on these occasions they invite the political leaders. The first India Day Parade was organized in New York city under the leadership of Sureshwar P. Singh.

National Association of Americans of Asian Indian Descent (NAAAID) was formed in Philadelphia under the leadership of Dr.

K.G. Jan Pillai, also actively campaigned on several issues. This association was responsible for securing minority status for Asian Indians so that Asian Indian businessmen might get special consideration given to minorities by the US government agencies. It organized the Asian Indians Chambers of Commerce to support Asian Indians businessmen. It ceased to exist after a few years as its goals were fulfilled.\(^{17}\)

They have adopted politics of pressure and learnt how to deftly manipulate power structures (Congress and its committees) in Washington D.C. by pursuing productive contacts with Congressmen having empathy for or some inclination to appreciate India’s points of view. In the process, they have shrewdly used their contacts for mobilizing relations and subcommittees on South Asia.

IACPA conducts activities to make American political leaders aware about India and the special concerns of the Indian American community. It seeks to facilitate the goal of ‘educating’ the American populace and political leaders on foreign and domestic issues of importance to the community and India. The Center also seeks to ‘educate’ the community on how individuals

\(^{17}\) Arthur Helweg, Usha M. Helweg, *An Immigrant Success Story; East Indians in America*, Oxford University Press, Philadelphia, Delhi, 1990, p. 149
become politically aware and effective. This is necessary as, till recently, the general populace of the Indian community has been reticent or indifferent to let American political leaders know its views and concerns on the issues, which affect its interests. For example, in an article published in *India Abroad* in early 1994, leading Congressman Alcee Hastings (Democrat, Florida), opposed to Burton Amendment to cut aid to India, explained that even during the heat of the debate on such a vital legislation concerning India, he received only one letter one the subject from the Asian Indian community.\(^\text{18}\)

Most remarkable was the role of Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE), then led by its dynamic leader Swadesh Chatterjee in winning over the die-hard anti-India critic senior Senator like Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina).\(^\text{19}\) Helms was the powerful and fearless chairman of the crucial Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate. Till 1996 he had supported the annually ritualized anti-India Burton Amendment in the Senate, seeking drastic cut in the U.S. aid to India. At such time, Helms was noted for his caustic remarks highly critical of India. More than a decade ago, Helms had

\(^{18}\) Pravin Sheth, 2001, footnote no.3 p. 275. also see www.iacpa.com
\(^{19}\) Pravin Sheth, "America, Rajkaran and Bhartiya", *India Abroad*, New York, October 20, 1997
managed to enable the London-based Khalistani leader Jagjit Singh Chauhan by circumventing even a denial of visa to him by the U.S. authorities. He managed to do so officially by calling a separatist leader to appear before the Senate Committee on the ground that his presentation before the committee was necessary.

Senator Helms contacted Chatterjee to help him by collecting a good campaign fund in North Carolina, and give it to him in a reception meet attended by Asian Indians. Chatterjee, who was the President-elect (1997-98) linked his funding campaign with the change in his political line. Chatterjee made it explicit that the Asian Indians strongly believed that his voting record in the Senate demonstrated that he had consistently taken an anti-India stance. Helms asked him: “What steps do you suggest to change such an opinion of the Asian Indians?” Chatterjee suggested that for this to happen, Helms would have to do three things.

First, Helms should meet the Asian Indians community, explain his position, and listen to what they had to say. Secondly, he should give an interview to *India Abroad*, the ethnic news weekly having the largest circulation among South Asian
paper published in America. Thirdly, Chatterjee suggested that
the Senator should agree to meet India's Ambassador in
Washington, S.S. Ray. Earlier, Ray had been trying to seek
meeting with the powerful committee chairman for over two years
without success. Helms responded in positive manner on all
these three points. He attended the IAFPE convention in Raleigh
(Fall, 1997), heard the Indian members and declared that he will
foster the US friendship with India, whatever position the State
Department may take on contentious bilateral issues, or pass its
words to his committee on any such issue. Thus, such a
hardened India critic, following the tactful persuasion of the
president-elect of this IAFPE, changed track and supported the
India Caucus in the Congress to give a resounding defeat to
Burton's anti-India amendment. Secondly, as arranged, Helm's
interview was published in *India Abroad*. Chatterjee also
succeeded in arranging a meeting of S.S. Ray, the Indian
Ambassador to Washington D.C. with Helms in that Fall.

The IAFPE reciprocated by raising an initial campaign fund
of more than $30,000 for Helms which Chatterjee along with the
office-bearers of the IAFPE handed over to the Senator.20

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20 Pravin Sheth, 2001, footnote no. 3, p. 350
Senator Helms did not even convene the meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee for hearing – notwithstanding President Clinton’s pleas for Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). He was reported to have stated whether India signed the treaty or not “is not relevant to us at this time”. Earlier, after Pokhran tests in May 1998, Helms had said: “India’s actions demonstrate that the CTBT, from a non-proliferation standpoint, is scarcely more than a sham.”

Swadesh Chatterjee had been able to persuade such a tough leader positioned in the foreign policy-making structure.

The AIFPE, organized a seminar on Immigration on February 20, 1996, in Washington D.C. on the bill proposed in the 104th Congress in the shape of S.1394 and H.R. 2202. The AIFPE members had invited the lawmakers such as: John. D. Trasvina, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, Senator Charles S. Robo, Virginia, Warren Leiden, Executive Director, American Immigration Lawyers Association and Commissioner, US Commission on Immigration Reforms, and prominent Asian Indians and discussed the problems and consequences of this bill faced by
the Asian Indian community. These bills were designed to restrict and control migration to the US.

The bill was proposed by Congressman Lamar Smith (Republican, Texas), chair of the House Judiciary Committee's Immigration and Claims sub-committee. H.R. 2002 which seeks to drastically alter current law on illegal and legal immigration. A similar bill was proposed in the Senate on June 14, 1995 by Senator Alan Simpson, (Republican, Wyoming) known as S. 1394, and in November 1995 this bill was combined with proposed legislation on illegal immigration.

Mr. Surbroto Mitro, chair IAFPE, Virginia Chapter had said that "we strongly recommend separation of legal immigration issues from the illegal issues within the bills. We believe legal immigrants contribute to a better living standards for all Americans. Hiding in these bills, the continuity of world leadership of USA is at stake. Immigration should be totally open in the US and not to be restricted and controlled as is proposed presently in the Congress. We condemn illegal immigration and support effective methods to deter it. Law and order is not served by legalizing the unlawful, as it was recently done, or with cruel and harsh punishment as it has been planned. It is better served
by opening legal doors and solving the roots of their unlawful actions." The Forum tried to put forward its viewpoint to the law to allow the legal migrants entry in the US.

IAFPE had organized another seminar on "Indo-US Relations: Emerging Opportunities" on June 17, 2000. They pledged to engage the US law makers in a regular dialogue to enhance the relationship between US and India towards mutual benefits and everlasting friendship and to share the information with the fellow Asian Indians. In the seminar, speakers included Michelle C. Maynard, Senior Adviser for South Asian Affairs, US State Department, Richard Harding, US Department of Commerce, Senator Leslie Byrne (Democrat, Virginia), Katherine K. Handley, Chairperson, Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County, Virginia, Anil Choudhary, Minister of Community Affairs, Embassy of India and Ajai Malhotra, Minister of Commerce, Embassy of India.22

The India Abroad Center for Political Awareness (IACPA) influences the process of policy making related to the Asian Indians as well as issues impinging in the Indo-US relationship.

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21 Seminar organized by IAFPE on "Immigration" on February 20, 1996, Washington D.C.
22 Third Biennial Luncheon Seminar organized by IAFPE on "Indo-US Relations: Emerging Opportunities" on June 17, 2000, Washington D.C.
IACPA conducts activities to make American political leaders aware about India and the special concerns of the Asian Indian community. It seeks to facilitate the goal of ‘educating’ the American populace and political leaders on foreign and domestic issues of importance to the community and India. The center also seeks to ‘educate’ the community on how individuals become politically aware and effective. This was deemed necessary as, till recently, the general populace of the Asian Indian community had been reticent or indifferent to let American political leaders know its views and concerns on issues, which affect its interests. For example, Congressman Alcee Hastings (Democrat, Florida) had opposed to Burton Amendment in 1994 to cut aid to India, received only one letter on the subject from an Asian Indian.23

The Center has established itself as one of the major sources for accurate information. It has provided relevant information to members of the Congress on U.S. trade with India, India’s economic conditions, human rights conditions in India including Kashmir, other developments in Kashmir, India’s nuclear tests and nuclear policies.24

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23 mentioned in the brochure of the India Abroad Center for Political Awareness, Washington D.C.
24 Interview with Mr. Christopher Durnm, Executive Director, IACPA, On October 27, 2003, in Washington D.C.
The Asian Indian community lobbied with the India Caucus members after the May 11 & 13, 1998, nuclear tests by India. The Asian Indian community even presented a memorandum to the President Bill Clinton and explained him the reasons as to why India carried out the nuclear tests.\textsuperscript{25} The Asian Indian community lobbied effectively for the removal of a number of sanctions placed on India following its nuclear tests.\textsuperscript{26}

The then chairperson of Indian Caucus, Gary Ackerman, wrote to the then US President, Bill Clinton, asking him to lift the World Bank sanctions against India. He had argued that the sanctions imposed on India have had the unhelpful and unproductive effect of curtailing US-India business ties and also pleaded for a re-adjustment of America’s non-proliferation objectives in the light of India’s security concerns.\textsuperscript{27}

There were many Congressmen and Senators who had argued in support of the Indian nuclear tests and that the sanctions should not be taken far, as to hurt the Indo-US

\textsuperscript{25} Interview with Dr. Sambhu N. Banik, Washington D.C. on November 14, 2003. Dr. Sambhu N. Banik had been appointed as Executive Director, President’s Committee on Mental Retardation by President George W. Bush, Sr. He is now functionary of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), Washington D.C. Chapter


relations. For example, Senator Lauch Faircloth wrote a letter to the President Clinton, about the effects of sanctions imposed on India. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, spoke in the Senate on May 13, 1998, in favor of India’s nuclear tests, and elaborated on the positive aspects of India-US relations and how India has been following the non-proliferation regime of not transferring the nuclear technology to rogue states and terrorist organizations.28

The Indo-US relations had been derailed after the May 1998 nuclear tests by India, but India carried on and had nine rounds of talks between Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and India’s External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. These bilateral talks helped clear the air and gave both Washington and New Delhi a more distinct picture of what each wanted and could expect from other. These dialogues were helped at various places. The meeting was held by Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott in London on November 16, 17, 1998. In this meeting they discussed issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation treaty, focused on Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), control over

exports of sensitive products and technologies. They also discussed issues related to defence.29

They had another round of talks in Rome on November 19, 20, 1998. The two sides reviewed issues related to disarmament, non-proliferation and bilateral relations as well as regional and international developments.30

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, presented a detailed report in the parliament about the Indo-US relations on December 15, 1998. He informed the parliament that he was in regular touch with the U.S. President Bill Clinton and the relations are improving after the May 1998 nuclear tests.31

The Talbott-Singh dialogue was followed by the forceful intervention of President Bill Clinton in July 1999 to pressure Pakistan to withdraw its forces after its rash attempt to seize strategic heights near Kargil on the Indian side of the line of control in Kashmir. In this episode also the Asian Indian community played a vital role in influencing the Congressmen

and lobbied at the Capitol Hill. Although the Americans acted from fear that Pakistan's action trigger broaden conflict possibly involving nuclear weapons, India interpreted the presidential arm-twisting of Prime Minister (Pakistan) Nawaz Sharief as a sign that Washington no longer automatically backed Pakistan on Kashmir.32

The Asian Indian community played a vital role in lobbying with the members of the US Congress and India Caucus. The House of Representatives passed a resolution on July 1, 1999, expressing the sense of the Congress in opposition to the Government of Pakistan's support for armed incursion into Jammu & Kashmir, India. The resolution was introduced by Benjamin A. Gilman, Gary Ackerman, Frank Pallone and others resolved:-

1. that it should be the policy of the United States to oppose the Government of Pakistan's support for armed incursion into Jammu & Kashmir, India.

2. that it should be the policy of the United States to support the immediate withdrawal of intruding forces supported by Pakistan from the Indian side of the

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Line of Control, to urge the reestablishment and future respect for the Line of Control, and to encourage all sides to end the fighting and exercise restraint.

3. that it should be the policy of the United States to encourage both India and Pakistan to adhere to the principles of the Lahore Declaration.\textsuperscript{33}

In March 2000, President Bill Clinton visited South Asia for five days, one day in Bangladesh, few hours in Pakistan and rest 3 days in India. The US administration and policy-makers were keen that the visit should end Cold War suspicions. A distrust that arose out of India's close relationship with the USSR and dedication to non-alignment, through which it exercised moral superiority to gain world status. But in the last few years, the current of higher morals has given way to a new pragmatic currency 'money'. Economically, the Americans are determined to get their share of the Indian market in a steadily liberalizing economy.

Influential Asian Indians had persuaded the then President Bill Clinton to visit India.\textsuperscript{34} Capitol Hill is awash with young ethnic Indian congressional staffers. They are lawyers and lobbyists and are revolutionizing politics in Congress. The new thinking of India lobby is more pragmatic, is frankly interested in business and contributes financially to political campaigns. They are second generation who now link themselves with other strong lobbyists like the Irish, Jewish and the Greek.

In 2002, the US India Political Action Committee (USINPAC) was founded with Sanjay Puri, as Executive Director in Chantilly, Virginia, a suburb outside Washington D.C. USINPAC's mission is to impact policy on issues of concern to the Asian Indian community in the United States and strengthen US-India bilateral relations.\textsuperscript{35} USINPAC provides bipartisan support to candidates for federal, state and local office and support the issues that are important to the Asian Indian community. These issues include :-

\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Mr. Sanjay Puri, on October 28, 2003, Langley Park, Maryland.

2. **Immigration**: Promote a fair and balanced policy on immigration.

3. **Anti-Hate-Crime Measures**: Ensure protection from hate-crimes.


5. **Civil Rights**: Ensure equal protection under the law, and protection of rights.

6. **Entrepreneurship and Business**: Advocacy for issues such as small business.

The US India Political Action Committee has established the following objectives to achieve as its mission:

- To consolidate individual contributions by actively engaging with every politically active Asian Indian organization and individual via an effective platform and leverage the combined strength of contributor and community concerns.
• To financially support candidates for public office, on a bipartisan basis, who proactively address the concerns of the Asian Indian community.

• To create a platform that enables entry of Asian Indians in the political process.36

The leaders in the Asian Indian community have recognized for many years that they could learn much about using the US political system effectively from the US community. The US-India Political Action Committee is widely credited with a leading role in deliberately reaching out to American Jews for the purpose of promoting a sustained partnership. In the two years of its existence, USINPAC has been remarkably successful in establishing a presence on Capitol Hill and in forging friendships with key US legislators, including Republican Orrin Hatch, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, republican Charles Grassley, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Republican Richard Lugar, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Democrat Joseph Biden, former chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Democrat Tom Lantos, the top ranking minority member of the House International Relations

36 Interview with Mr. Sanjay Puri, on October 28, 2003, Langley Park, Maryland.
Committee. USINPAC has worked closely with a variety of Jewish groups to promote ties between Asian Indians and US Jews.37

USINPAC, America Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) and American Jewish Committee (AJC) are working in collaboration with each other to promote issues concerning India and Israel. In 2003, pro-Israel and pro-India lobbyists successfully worked together to gain the Bush administration’s approval for Israel to sell four Phalcon early warning radar planes to India for about $1 billion, a deal that has alarmed the Pakistani government.38

The USINPAC organized first-ever India Caucus Day at the Capitol Hill on February 13, 2003, and urged all the members of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, the largest Caucus in the House, to proactively engage with the Asian Indian community in resolving its concerns. USINPAC delegates urged lawmakers to link US aid to Pakistan with its pledge to permanently ending infiltration of armed terrorists to India.39 At the urging of the USINPAC, the International Relations

Committee of the US House of Representatives unanimously passed an amendment to H.R. 1950, on May 7, 2003.\textsuperscript{40} The amendment titled, ‘Section 710 Report on Actions Taken by Pakistan’, states :-

For each of fiscal years 2004 and 2005, the President shall prepare and transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains a description of the extent to which the Government of Pakistan:-

1. has closed all known terrorist training camps operating in Pakistan and Pakistani-held Kashmir;

2. has established serious and identifiable measures to prohibit the infiltration of Islamic extremists across the “Line of Control” (LoC) into India; and

3. has ceased the transfer of weapons of mass destruction, including any associated technologies, to any third country or terrorist organization.

This landmark vote marks the first time that Congress has acknowledged the role of Pakistan in abetting terrorism and in the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. By focusing

entirely on the behavior of Pakistan in promoting terrorism as an instrument of state policy, and in the proliferation of nuclear technology, the US Congress had taken the first tangible step in decoupling the US relationship with Pakistan with that from India. The Asian Indians community rallied strongly behind USINPAC’s effort’s to petition lawmakers to bring peace to the Subcontinent. USINPAC members from all over the United States, their representatives in Congress, had urged them to support passage of this amendment.41

In September 2000, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh had said that there is now a ‘completely altered equation’ between the US and India as a result of growing confidence in India and recognition of the country as a great democracy. The candor and confidence in the relationship is unique and the ability of the relationship in both the countries to contain their differences and forge closer ties has emerged as new reality, he said at a dinner hosted by Indo-US entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. The essence of relationship between India and America, said Singh, is based on creativity, continuity, stability and confidence between them. “It is this context that the role of

successful Asian Indians as heroes need recognition," he had said. He also commended the role of Asian Indians, referring to them as ‘great ambassadors’ and also said that their success has made every Indian proud and has boosted their aspiration in India and abroad.42

The Republican administration assuming charge under President George Bush Jr. from January 2001, had generated some concern in India on whether the contents and the momentum of relations with the USA would be maintained, given the general public perceptions in India that Republican administrations have been comparatively distant towards India. The attitudes and approaches of President George Bush Jr. manifested so far have been a pleasant surprise. There is not just continuity but also an emerging ingredient of focused optimism in USA’s India policies. While the Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh was holding talks with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice in April, 2001, President Bush’s dropping by and holding a cordial 40 minute talk in the

Oval office demonstrated America’s alacrity to strengthen ties between India and the United States.43

In the exchange of views between Bush and Vajpayee in September 2001, as well as meeting between Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra, their counterparts in the Bush team, it was indicated that Bush if came to power would not only sustain but augment Indo-US relations in range and content. That assurance has been translated into policy decisions and governmental interaction.

The points to be taken note are: President Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfield, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, have had detailed exchanges with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra. Secondly, for the first time in the last four decades or so, the frequency and level of bilateral discussions has been more than what had occurred in previous administrations. Apart from these exchanges, Deputy Secretary of State Armitage, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff

General Henry Hugh Shelton and Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca have visited India. The US Trade Representative Robert Zoelick, visited India for consultations not only on bilateral trade, but also to explore the possibilities of cooperation at the WTO discussion at Doha in 2001.44

All this apart from the regularity with which discussions between the Indian Foreign Secretary and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the US have met, Armitage and General Shelton affirmed US intentions of expanding Indo-US cooperation in political, strategic security and defense matters. Assistant Secretary Christina Rocca had emphasized that the Bush administration did not intend to structure Indo-US relations through the prism of the Pakistan factor. India is considered an important and independent entity in the US scheme of things. Trade Representative Zoelick had made a policy statement soon after his arrival in 2001 that USA considered India a major player and an important partner in structuring new economic and trading arrangements. He assured India's Minister for Commerce Murasoli Maran that the Bush administration will attend to the issues of concern to India.

44 J.N. Dixit, 2002, footnote no. 8 p. 300
related to the faulty implementation of some of the stipulations agreed upon in the WTO agreements. These signals could augur well for Indo-US relations. It also means that the Bush administration is moving away from the punitive policy stances towards India which were adopted after the Pokharan nuclear tests of May 1998. While acknowledging these constructive orientations, India should not forget that USA’s India policies as well as its foreign policy in general, would be basically rooted in Bush administration’s concerns about US national interests with the additional element that this US administration is more assertive about furthering these interests.

The Indo-US Parliamentary Forum (IUPF) has been formed to foster closer relations between India and the United States, the world’s largest democracies. It was formed on March 27, 2002. Constituted on the lines of the “India Caucus” in the U.S. Congress, the IUPF involves Indian Parliamentarians from various political parties from both Houses of Parliament – the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The IUPF is supported by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).45

With backing of Indian American Friendship Council (IAFC), pro-India lawmaker Juanita Millender McDonald, introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives, ‘lauding the role of Asian Indians and benefits of working with India ‘to promote peace, prosperity, and freedom’. The resolution noted that ‘people of Indian origin, who have for decades immigrated to the United States, have made extraordinary contributions to the United States, helping to make the United States a more efficient and prosperous country.’ It praised the ‘generations of doctors and nurses, scientists who have helped in defense, space, medical and computational research’. It highlighted their participation in the space shuttle program, ‘at great personal sacrifice’, a reference to Dr. Kalpana Chawla, who died in the Columbia space shuttle disaster in 2003 along with six of her colleagues. It was passed on May 12, 2004.46

These positive orientations detailed above does not mean that there is an across the board agreement on all issues affecting Indo-US relations. Basic differences remain, on non-proliferation issues between India and US. But there is a

qualitative difference in the Bush administration on the issue towards India. The new US administration has moved back from the admonitory and punitive postures against India on nuclear issues. While remaining committed to the traditional non-proliferation's agenda, the US now seems to be inclined to acknowledge the reality of India's nuclear weaponization. The US would advocate that India refrain from enhancing its missile capacities to ICBM levels. The US has not limited potentialities of expanded cooperation between the two countries. The US welcomed the general endorsement given by India to the NMD but the US realized that India had not supported the weaponization of Outer Space. India's response had been meticulously planned. India had only supported those segments of the rationale of the NMD which aim at elimination of nuclear weapons and missiles. This is a nuance which is not taken note of in public perceptions. But the Bush administration understands the logic of India's response on the subject. While the US acknowledges the potentialities of expanded economic and commercial cooperation, the US has reservations about the manner in which some of the important US projects in India have run into difficulties; the foremost among them being Enron
Project. Despite Zoelick's assurances India and the US have
difference of opinion in interpreting the WTO framework as they
affect bilateral trade relations.

US reactions to the Indo-Pak summit at Agra have been
significantly nuanced. The Bush administration had refrained
from any value judgment of critical evaluation of the manner in
which the summit ended. Official US spokesman welcomed the
initiative of Prime Minister Vajpayee and stated that despite the
apparent failure of the Agra summit, they endorsed the decision
of India and Pakistan to continue bilateral talks at the political
and official levels. The US has also been meticulously and
politically correct in underlining that while the US would
encourage the process, US has no desire for any mediatory role.
Two issues on which there is convergence of views between India
and the USA are the expansion of bilateral economic cooperation
and institutional consolidation of bilateral arrangements to
counter terrorism. One should expect initiatives from both sides,
governmental and non-governmental, to make cooperation in
these two spheres contentful.

The "strategic partnership" between India and the US is
most prominently focused on military-security issues. Joint
professional military exercises have been undertaken by all the three wings of security forces of India and the United States in the past few years. While the focus of Indo-US strategic partnership has been in the field of military relations, there has been progress in other areas as well. India was one of the first countries to offer unrestrained cooperation to the US in the "global war against terrorism" after 9/11.47

The intensity of Indo-US bilateral cooperation in the economic and social fields has also enhanced. The two-way trade, which was less than US $8 billion in 1994, is now nearly US $15 billion. The US is the largest source of FDI in India accounting for more than 33 percent of the cumulative investments. But this growth is far below the potential and expectations as well as in terms of global comparisons, particularly of the US trade with and investments in China.

The outsourcing of various jobs to India by US has become a very important issue in the bilateral relations between the two countries. India has become the major destination for outsourcing jobs from the United States, followed by China and Philippines. India – with its low wages and highly educated

47 S.D. Muni, "Issues in Indo-US Relations" World Focus, New Delhi, April-May, 2003, p. 24-29
English-speaking labor pool – increasingly is seen as the major rival for U.S. high-tech jobs. Goldman, Sach & Co. estimated that a majority of the 200,000 service jobs – most of them in Information technology – that had been shipped to U.S. foreign affiliates over the past four years have gone to India. In the same time period, the U.S. had received more than 287,000 temporary-visa applications from Indians to work in the United States.48

The U.S. lawmakers had proposed several bills in 2003 to limit the number of guest-worker visas. Senator Christopher Dodd (Democrat, Connecticut) and Representative Nancy Johnson (Republican) had sponsored a bill that required companies using so-called H-1B guest visas to prove Americans aren’t available to fill a job before bringing in foreign workers. Some states, for example, Maryland, Washington, Connecticut, Missouri, New Jersey, etc. were also considering laws banning offshore outsourcing of government tech-services contracts.49

To fight back, the Indian government has been lobbying in the various states. The Asia Indians are also pressurizing the lawmakers not to let these bills pass. The Asian

Indians also outsource their jobs to India, as the wages are cheaper here in India. In 2003, the Indian government with its alliances and a few local Asian Indian lawmakers had succeeded in temporarily blocking the passage of outsourcing bills in the states of Maryland and New Jersey. To bolster India's lobbying muscle, coalition members are urging the Asian Indians to get more involved politically. In a major blow to India's booming outsourcing industry, the US Senate passed a bill in January, 2004 banning American companies from shipping government contracts to low cost destinations like India.

Recently, the Asian Indians have lobbied to form the Senate India Caucus, the first ever country-specific bipartisan coalition body in the United States. It was inaugurated on April 29, 2004 signaling a major diplomatic victory for India and Asian Indians, who have a Caucus in both the chambers of Congress. The Caucus is co-chaired by Senator John Cornyn (Republican, Texas) and Senator Rodham Clinton (Democrat, New York), both of them have visited India and impressed with the country and its potential for growth. It has started with membership of 32 senators.

Making a formal announcement about the Caucus at a simple but attended event on Capitol Hill, Senator Cornyn said, "The U.S. and India share a commitment to freedom, representative government principles and the war against terror. So the Senate India Caucus provides a forum for U.S. Senators and Indian leaders to expand an agreement and candidly discuss issues of concern."

He said though a firm plan of action has yet to be evolved, one of objectives of the Caucus is to have better relations with India and discuss a number of issues, including outsourcing, on which he said, "we have some disagreements but we also have the need for better understanding, and that India and United States had nothing to fear from one another. We have great potential." He also spelt out the primary goals that the Senate India Caucus proposed to achieve: support for war on terror, deeper defense relations between the two countries; opportunities for trade and investment to benefit both sides, and stronger economic ties; besides advancing peace, stability and democracy in both countries.

Several Senators, including Trent (Republican, Missouri), Joe Lieberman (Democrat, Connecticut), Kay B. Hutchison
(Republican, Texas), Senate majority leader Bill Frist (Republican, Tennessee), Senate minority leader Tom Daschle (Democrat, South Dakota) and Jeff Bingaman (Democrat, New Mexico) attended the event. The Indian Ambassador to U.S. Lalit Mansingh and a host of representatives of Asian Indian community also attended the meeting.

Senator Cornyn also read out a message from the U.S. Ambassador to India David Mulford, who congratulated the senators for launching the caucus. “Its formation represents another significant step forward in the continuing transformation of the Indo - US relationship” Mulford noted and added, “The U.S. and India today share a new sense of partnership that can be used to further our shared national interests.

Senator Rodham Clinton spoke of the growing importance of India and South Asia in the world and expressed the hope that the caucus would contribute its bit to move both countries towards a strategic partnership. 51

All this leads one to the conclusion that Indo-US relations have at last reached a stage where one can expect a stable and

51 Vasantha Arora, “Senate India Caucus is inaugurated on the Hill with 32 members”, Indian American Center for Political Awareness, Washington .DC. www.iacfp.org, also see www.usinpac.org
realistic structuring of Indo-US relations on practical lines. The Indian Diaspora in the United States will play a very important role in bridging the gap. The second generation Asian Indians is more practical and they just don't want to be seen with the US lawmakers in the Capitol Hill and have photographed. They are now working to improve the bilateral relations between India and The United States. In the Presidential election on November, 2004 the Asian Indians are going to play an important role. They are supporting both the candidates – George Bush (Republican) and John Kerry (Democrat). They have been raising funds for both the candidates. The Indo-US relations cannot remain unaffected by the process of political assertiveness of the Asian Indian community in the United States.