CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

In international relations no one can ignore the importance of the concept of security for nation-states. Being a prominent national interest it is the main objective of every country’s foreign policy. To achieve this important goal countries try to develop defence cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels and put emphasis on mutual trust and building bridges of friendship. Such cooperation among nations is essentially based on existing regional and global security environment.

Present global security scenario impinges upon both India and the USA to come closer in the area of defence cooperation. Beginning of defence cooperation since the end of cold war between India and the USA in the form of strategic partnership may have been due to such issues, like; terrorism, China, nuclear, maritime security and trade. To fulfill their security objectives both the countries are identifying these issues as convergence factor. In addition, India’s rising as an economic and military power might have been other factors attracting the USA, to forge such strategic ties.

It is a fact that, during the cold war, world was divided into capitalist and socialist blocs, guided by their own ideological, security, political and economic interests. In this situation, America and Soviet Union were trying to build military alliances against each other and this resulted in an arms race among nations. Any kind of relations with American bloc was viewed as a strategy to undermine the Soviet bloc and vice-versa. In this complex environment, India adopted a policy of non-alignment and kept itself away from the antagonistic bipolar blocs.
and concentrated more on its long term economic and security interest through the policy of non-alignment. Notably, in this period, the US strategic relations with India's rivalry country (Pakistan) was one of main concern for latter’s regional security requirement. This increased in an unfavorable complexity in the regional security environment that compelled India to develop strategic relations with the then Soviet Union. As a result, a meaningful cooperation with the USA, throughout the cold war period, could not develop. Although, at bilateral level there were no serious issues of conflict existed between India and the USA, yet the different foreign policy outlooks on regional and global security environment push them into opposite side.

In brief, Indo-US relations remained shapeless and grotesque in the cold war period. Mutual disbelief and mis-understanding, thus, dominated their bilateral relations in the cold war era. It is because the US disagreed with India’s policy of non-alignment and its tilt towards Soviet Union. Besides, India felt irritated on the issue of the US arms transfer to Pakistan and its continuous inclinations towards latter on the issue of Kashmir. Moreover, growing Sino-US friendly relations in seventies made India further insecure. Finally, India’s differences on the issue of non-proliferation were another reason which raised distrust between the two countries. These issues not only disturbed bilateral relations of both the countries, but also push them to choose different approach to deal with existing global issues. Thus, both India and the United States remain detached in their strategic, economic and political relations during the entire cold war period.

However, global scenario underwent significant transformation in the post-cold war period. During this time, India’s security challenges also enhanced to a greater degree. Hence, its foreign policy, requited
some additional input in the new situation. Therefore, India adopted a realistic, need based and result oriented foreign policy. Besides, economic factors also gained momentum in the functioning of Indian foreign policy. This transformation provided opportunities for both the countries to come out from the cold war estrangement and begin to identify domains of mutual convergence.

In this context, in 1991 the first major initiative has been the ‘Kickleighter proposals’ which was welcomed by both the countries. It gave promise to both India and USA to improve their bilateral defence relationship through dialogue, training, and exchange of visits by dignitaries of both states at senior and staff levels. The emerging defence collaboration proved the most visible and proactive feature in the transformation of India-USA relations in the post-cold war era. In this process, Executive Steering Groups (ECGs) in the defence forces were established by both countries to intensify military-to-military cooperation. It envisaged the way for expanded cooperation and partnership between the militaries of the two countries which marked a turning point in their relationship during early 1990s. These ESGs were mainly aimed at to identify their mutual area of convergence in this changed security environment. The major outcome of these initiatives has been the beginning of joint military exercises between the two countries.

Furthermore, in 1995 the two sides signed ‘Agreed Minute on Defence Cooperation’ for next ten years. Under this agreement, a Defense Policy Group and a Joint Technology Group were established to develop better understanding among the civilians, scientists and the army professional of both sides. However, due to difference of opinion by them on issues of non-proliferation and India’s decision to conduct
nuclear test have created negative atmosphere for their growing defence cooperation in the last decades of twentieth century. But, this breakdown in their defence relations could not remain for long time and both resumed in meaningful dialogue at diplomatic level. It was the result of these conversations that their stand on issues of terrorism, non-proliferation, Kashmir, high technology trade etc were mitigated and both were able to develop new goodwill and understanding on broader level. Finally, both the countries agreed to give-up their old stances on this above issues and showed keenness to go further for diplomatic talks.

The significant tuning around has been after the 9/11 terrorist attack on the USA. It is because after this incident India’s long standing view on threat from terrorism got recognised by the world and particularly by the USA. The latter woke up from its slumber and launched global war on terrorism. This brought both India and the USA closer to each other in the areas of counter-terrorism and intelligence sharing. It also facilitated the process for their future defence cooperation.

Among numerous governmental initiatives in bilateral relations, the first significant diplomatic achievement of Bush administration was the formation of ‘Next Steps in Strategic Partnership’ (NSSP) with India in 2004. It was a major breakthrough in Indo-US defence relations. It provided India’s access to USA’s technology in four areas: dual-use items, civilian nuclear applications, civilian space cooperation and ballistic missile defense. In 2005, they also signed another defence agreement named ‘New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship’ for ten years. This agreement focused on joint exercises, defence trade, personnel exchanges, collaboration in maritime security and counter-piracy and exchanges of information among each of the
three services. In this series a ‘Framework for the U.S.-India Defence Relationship’ was again enacted on June 2015 between the two countries. As a result, both countries declared that they will treat each other as ‘closest partner’ on issues including trade research, defence technology, co-production and co-development of defence equipments. It was based on the previous framework that guided their bilateral defence relations.

On examining the growth trajectory, it is formed that their defence relations were working in right directions and with smooth speed. At present, military exercises, defence trade, technology transfer of military equipments and joint production of arms have become very significant areas in which both the countries are working to establish mutual understanding for future security collaborations. Through joint military exercises both are building of their confidence to counter conventional and non-conventional security threats. In this context, several significant initiatives have been taken by the two countries, which are reflected through exchange of visits of high dignitaries, individual and joint trainings, joint military exercises, equipment procurements, setting up special defence agencies, building up of joint groups and transformation of common doctrines.

As compared to other countries, India’s joint military exercises are more with the USA. Both countries have undertaken a series of military exercises like Malabar, Yudh Abhyas and the Iroquois, COPE India and Cooperative Cope Thunder. All the three wings of army, navy and air force of both the countries have conducted more than 60 such war games in the last 13 years. Particularly, Malabar has been the premier annual naval exercise which is proved a road-roller to Indo-US defence relations. It is working smoothly and regularly to enhance the scope and
nature of their military relations. These exercises proved a showcase of exposing regional and global collective security goals for both countries. Thus, these all above military exercises have proved an essential aspect of their security cooperation.

As far as arms procurement is concerned, the USA is the major supplier of defence equipments and has shown interest to improve India’s defence capacity by sharing high-end technology. Although, USA perceives India as a potential market for its arms sale, the latter on the other hand is more interested in receiving sophisticated technology from former. Probably, in the changed strategic environment, where there are increased common interests, may provide advantageous circumstances in India’s favour. Presently, India and the USA view defense sales as a mechanism to facilitate new opportunities between the two militaries and private defence sector. Apparently, the confidence and the trust have prevailed in overall bilateral relations which may facilitate their ongoing military-to-military relations.

With the beginning of second decade of twenty-first century the issue of the joint production of military equipments has taken a much higher weight in India. The latter is undertaking important military modernisation programme, with the USA to update its most arsenal through advanced technology. In this regard, present Indian government emphasis on defence modernization programme under its policy of ‘Make in India’. The USA also perceives India as a potentially huge market for sophisticated equipments such as surveillance and detection systems. Besides, there is increased scope and need of nuclear cooperation between two nations. Being an emerging power India is in need of a huge amount of energy and on the other hand, USA is both nuclear supplier and potential influencer of nuclear supplier group. Thus
the nuclear cooperation between the two countries is going to be beneficial for both the countries. This can also be supplemented by technology transfer by the USA to India and may give an impetus to the latter for development of its energy need.

Regional security environment has always played an important role in the foreign policy of every country in international relations. In this context, Asia has been divided into regions of strategically, geographical, and economical significance. In some of these regions, India-US cooperation is considered vital to uphold peace and security. Both have been working collectively in several areas like Asia-Pacific, Indo-Pacific, IOR, South China Sea and South Asia on bilateral and multilateral levels to achieve these common security goals. Besides, India and the USA have also enhanced their cooperation with strategic friends like Japan, South Korea, Australia, Singapore and ASEAN countries. The necessity of these collaborations is vital because the existing threats have become transnational in nature and are often beyond the control of any single country to effectively tackle them.

Additionally, several other reasons identify India as the USA’s strategic partner in Asia-Pacific region. At present the Indian government has started reassessing its role as a regional power in the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, both countries have a shared vision to contain China’s military aggression in this region. India is an essential partner for USA’s ‘rebalancing strategy’ since former being a regional power. Besides, India has also been following look east policy towards this region since 1991, which and Modi’s government has converted into ‘Act East Policy’. To strengthen this objective, Modi visited Japan, Vietnam and Myanmar and gave signal to play much more assertive role in this region. In this regard, common strategic vision can be developed
to enhance their cooperation in trilateral, quadrilateral and multilateral levels. It is considered that these collaborations may be a driving force for grant regional security and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the twenty-first century, the revolution in the field of information and technology has expended the scope of non-conventional security threats at global level and many of these threats are likely to become security menace for humanity. Both the countries begin to adopt a multifaceted foreign policy and are actively engaged in the construction of arrangements to deal with such threats which are emerging in the form of terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, cyber security, disaster management, climate change.

Besides, it led to the evolution of new dimensions of regional security threats for the foreign policies of both the states. Hence, a meaningful cooperation is needed for dealing with such non-traditional threats like terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, cyber threat, natural disaster, intelligence sharing, climate change and also outer space. These emerging global security challenges call for much greater cooperation among countries are likely to shape the future global world order. As a result, to deal with global terrorism, both countries need mutual collaborations in military and non-military activities. Presently, there is growing need of effective institutional mechanism between two countries that can focus to build special strategies to control Weapon of Mass Destruction, maritime threats, cyber-crime, sharing intelligence and adopt means to destroy financial network and other motivational factors of terrorists. Thus, both countries felt the need for common security measures to handle multi-fold non-traditional and non-conventional global challenges. Hence, growth of Indo-US multilateral defence cooperation is not only important but also inevitable for global
peace and prosperity. Though, both continue to disagree over the issues of nuclear non-proliferation, military and trade regulations, technology transfer, terrorism, Kashmir, human right and climate change yet huge scope is available for their bilateral, regional and global concerns of defence and security. Besides there is also increased need of status-quo on joint military exercises as region of Indo-pacific continue remain volatile.

Both countries, therefore, need to resolve also existing differences through a well managed and organised strategy. In this regard, the two countries are making efforts to have common understanding through strategic dialogue, joint working group meeting, diplomatic discussion, joint exercises, exchange of point of view and information. Probably, this may allow two nations to have increased engagements in maritime security, combating terrorism, cyber security and disaster relief. Therefore, obstacles between them need not to stop their growing defence relations. To deal with conventional issues like non-proliferation, transfer of high technology, trade barrier, joint production both need to resolve them at on bilateral level. Whereas issues related to Iran, Afghanistan, Myanmar etc may be resolved at trilateral and multilateral levels. Other non-conventional issues such as terrorism, cyber security, natural disaster, piracy, drug-trickling, hijacking, weapon of mass destruction need to be tackled at multilateral levels with global consideration because of their trans-national nature. Thus, the multifaceted cooperation has to be most visible, vibrant and proactive component for not only India-US long term bilateral relations but also for the betterment of world peace and stability.

Finally, there are numerous areas where both the countries are working in a positive manner. In this regard, India and the USA defence
cooperation must be looked at from wider strategic perspective. For future, both the countries need to identify the areas of common strategic interests which may help them to resolve not only the remaining barriers, but also facilitate them to achieve their desired goal of natural allies and strategic partner. This is a fact that during the last few years both the countries are making efforts to provides a range of strategic benefits. The two countries have also enhanced their military capabilities and built up a long term professional relationships and even put across strategic signaling to allies and likely foes. Thus, a better India-USA strategic cooperation is likely to develop in future can prove the way for big advantages to both India and the USA. Thus, post-cold war global security environment have provided favourable condition for both India and the USA to engage as natural ally and indispensable strategic partner, but it is upto them how they achieve these opportunity by handling new challenges through the building up of their defence cooperation.