CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

1. The first and foremost thing that this comparative study on role of Parliament of India and Congress of the United States of the United States of America on India-US relations during the 1990s proves that both the legislatures played a crucial role in deciding the course of ties between the two countries. Either they set or derailed the agenda of relations between the two biggest democracies in the world.

Perhaps one may be tempted to say that the democratic institutions themselves hindered the process of strengthening India-US ties. But that would not be a wholly correct observation. Though one cannot overlook politicization of differences and divergent views between the two countries, one must bear in mind a basic fact that the two countries except having democratic system of governance, have very little in common. The relationship between a super power US and a developing country India is an asymmetrical one.

And as it happens in democracies, political parties in order to have access to power, tend to capitalize on a host of issues. There is no universally accepted standard definition of national interest. Nor can there be unanimity on any one
policy as a panacea. Thanks to a combination of these factors, domestic politics, as reflected in democratically elected institutions, namely Parliament and Congress, shaped the course of ties between India and the US in the 1990s. And the trend may be seen in the foreseeable future as well.

2. The second conclusion that this study makes one reach is that the discipline of Foreign Policy Analysis and especially International Relations (IR) theory need to focus more on internal or domestic sources of foreign policy. The traditional notion of foreign policy having all its sources outside the state only, no longer holds water. Foreign policy of a country has its origins from within as well as without.

The realist perception of state as a rational unitary structure realizing all its objectives through just one or two decision-makers at the top in government has been deeply questioned. As this thesis shows, counties, farmers, ranchers, labourers, media, think-tanks, academic community, business interests actively participated in influencing foreign policy decision-making process, both in the United States and India.

All the concerned individuals and groups formed coalitions, approached decision-makers in legislatures through lobbyists, pressure groups, interest groups. They explained their views to the decision makers of their respective
countries. They convinced their public representatives or lawmakers successfully. They got approved changes in legislation or changed the legislation itself favourable to them.

Religious groups, human rights campaigners, charitable trusts, professionalised non-governmental groups, humanitarian groups, and everybody concerned with this or that issue of country's foreign policy mobilized public support in favour of their cause.

So it is not merely a head of state or government or somebody sitting in foreign affairs department who took final decision. Rather it was a bottom to top approach. And the most powerful and influential intermediaries in this regard were legislators, or law-makers in both India and the United States.

As a result of massive lobbying, Parliament and Congress responded in favour of public opinion. At times their members either individually or party-wise manipulated public opinion. Citizens, rather a section of them involved in lobbying, got foreign policy decisions for what they wanted.

3. Third point that emerges out of this comparative study is that more and more comparative studies of this sort need to be undertaken. Special feature of this comparative study is that it compares role of legislature in a highly advanced,
prosperous, and experienced democracy like the US and one developing democracy like India.

*Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis* as a field of study can be further developed by focusing on those areas of the world which have been neglected so far. Since the disciplines of IR, Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis, Decision-Making, Political Science, Public Administration in recent times originated in the West, most of the studies done so far are by scholars from those countries. And they focus mainly on industrialized Western countries. There is a serious lack of concern to understand and explain foreign policy decision-making processes in poor, developing countries. It is also important to compare legislatures in developing countries with those in the developed ones.

4. As this comparative study demonstrates that there are several major and minor differences between the powers, functions and even structures of legislature in India and the US. While India follows parliamentary system of democracy, the US follows presidential system.

The US constitution gives more powers to Congress than the powers enjoyed by Indian Parliament in Indian Constitution. Besides, committee system of Congress is far better developed than the one in Indian Parliament. In the US,
Congressional committees have their source of authority in the US Constitution itself.

In the US Congress, committees are more important in deciding the fate of legislation than either the House or the Senate. And executive branch in the US cannot ignore the views, demands, recommendations or queries of Congressional committees. But in the case of parliamentary system adopted by India, executive very often dominates the Parliament. Almost all the legislation comes from the government. Parliamentary committees are either in a primitive or in a formative stage. None of the Standing Committee Reports are binding on the government of India. Government does not even care to explain why does it accept or reject certain recommendations in a parliamentary committee report.

Since the executive in India originates from the legislature itself and survives in office as long as it enjoys confidence of the Lok Sabha, half the Parliament, that is members of ruling party in both Houses side with the government on crucial issues. Otherwise the government can collapse and their party itself may lose power. So Indian lawmakers vote on the basis of their party loyalties and party lines. This constrains the role of Parliament in making government accountable.
5. Foreign policy decision-making system in the US is more transparent, people-oriented or rather interest group-oriented. Power structure in the US is highly fragmented and dispersed a lot. It provides a lot of scope for input from civil society. And since there exists a robust civil society in the US, almost everybody being affected by some foreign policy decision of the government forms or joins coalitions meant to achieve common goals.

In India foreign policy decision-making is yet to become that transparent and citizen-oriented. Decision-making system in India is relatively more centralized. Most of the civil servants are generalists. There is a need to employ services of more and more specialists. India needs to reorient its foreign policy decision-making system.

Centralization of power in India makes it difficult for common people to have access to decision-makers. As there is no robust civil society in India like the one in the US, it very often allows the government to decide in its own way. But a handful of powerful and influential people in society can change the government decisions.

6. Lobbying is constitutionally permitted in the US. It has led to emergence of highly professional lobbying firms. Lobbyists are registered under the law. It has become a
commercial activity in the US. Not only American citizens and firms but even foreign governments lobby the US Congress to influence foreign policy decision making in the US.

On the other hand, lobbying in India is not as prominent, widespread, and professional as it is there in the US. Those who do lobby they are very few, but powerful. Number of lobbyists, interests groups in India is much less as compared to the once in the United States.

Suggestions

1. Indian foreign policy decision-making system needs to be made more people-oriented. There should be greater scope for experts and academics in concerned subjects.

2. Standing Committee system of Parliament deserves to be further strengthened through constitutional and legal means. There should be subcommittees of every committee to enable members to better focus on their work.

3. Legislative research assistance staff in Indian Parliament should be qualitatively as well as quantitatively enhanced. There also, experts in relevant subjects should be recruited or allowed to have a greater say.

4. Members of Parliament, from time to time should be informed by impartial research institutes about
relevance of bills presented by government in Parliament.

5. There should be more institutional exchanges between the US Congress and the Indian Parliament. Law-makers from both the countries need to be better informed about similarities and differences between the two legislatures and decision-making processes in them, and also the overall pattern of legislature-executive relations in the two countries.