After independence India wanted to maintain friendly relations with every country in the world. India had never thought at the time to join in any allies that have emerged after second world war. It has not shown any interest to join either in WARSAW pact countries or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries. It confirmed its position that it will support the right, in international issues. It expressed its great concern over colonialism and apartheid. India has shattered the fetters of colonialism after a long battle and it wanted to save it's Child Democracy from internal disturbances and external
pressures. It disagreed to join any of super power blocks. It declared non-alignment as a core concept in its Foreign policy.

As India wanted to be friendly with every country, it desired to develop good relations with United States. India acknowledged the efforts of United States Administration in influencing Britain to speed the grant of freedom. In the early years, after independence U.S.A. also wanted to maintain good relations with India. After the victory of communists in China, U.S.A. further wanted India to get her side, as its policy is to contain world communism. It offered a place for India to join in its power block. India refused to join with it, as it is against the norms of its Foreign policy. India opted the policy of non-alignment in dealing with the world affairs. It was the leading and strong supporter of the non-aligned movement.

The Pakistan factor in Indo-American relations in the cold war period was an element, which shaped changes in the bilateral relations. When the United States started to support Pakistan in political, Defence and economic issues, India slowly tilted towards Soviet Union to safeguard its interest in the global affairs. The arms supply of United States to Pakistan made India to purchase arms from Soviet Union and other military powers. The continuing support of the United States to Pakistan necessitated India to develop more and more strong relations with Soviet Union. The
Continuous support of the United States on Kashmir issue was pro-Pakistan. But from time to time vetoing of the Kashmir issue in the United Nations by Soviet Union saved India.

The developments in China in the Post-cold war era, have some influence on Indo-American relations. China emerged as a socialist country in early 1950's. Until 1970's America did not recognised China. As China is a Communist country American feared that it will pose a threat to its security along with other communist countries. In order to suppress the menace of China in the region, it started to support India as against China. When Sino-Indian conflict started in 1962, America supported India by supplying arms and ammunition and America declared that it will continuously support India in case of China's aggression.

But in Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 American took the cause of Pakistan and indirectly supported Pakistan. When Pakistan used American arms against India, America remained silent on the issue against its assurances, that they will not be used against India. So the developments in the neighbouring countries have their own influence on Indo-American relations.

Both United States and India seems to have well meaning in their emphasis on common ideals like preserving and strengthening the democratic process, constitutional
procedures and the rule of law. Yet one may notice the clash of the self interests of the two countries. Such a clash is noticeable in virtually all spheres of relations—be it political relations, economic cooperation, transfers of technology or military cooperation. Given the sophistication and articulation at their command they are projected into ideological differences.

United States forbidding Pakistan from aiding terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir and admonishing it to solve Kashmir tangle on the basis of Shimla agreement, may have produced some diplomatic vantages to India. But United States expressing concerns over violation of human rights in Punjab and Kashmir appears to be contradictory and heavily loaded against India as and when the latter's policy of fighting Pakistani sponsored terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir decimating the lives and property of men and women be calumniated as violation of human rights, even though the United States has asked Pakistan in public to desist from such activities.

Throughout the cold war, both India and the United States have differences over third-country issues which have affected bilateral relations in an adverse manner. One may recall the political differences between the two countries on the Japanese Peace Treaty, The Korean war the legal and diplomatic recognition of the peoples Republic of China,
liberation movements in Asia, Africa, the Suez crisis, the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Crisis, the Vietnam war, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States invasion of Grenada etc.

Over the years, qualitatively as well quantitatively, the impact of the third-country factor in Indo-American relations has been so overwhelming that though there were no bilateral problems or conflicts of direct interests, they nonetheless suffered a strain in their relationship on account of others. Both India and the United States were shot into world political prominence more or less simultaneously, and both, with particular moral fervours, brought to bear upon the power-play which has pervaded the international scene. On the one hand it saw the launching of the United States on the global political scene in a significant and irreversible manners, on the other hand it also witnessed the emergence of India as an important factor in world politics.

Personality clashes have very often been a visible feature in Indo-American relations. Perhaps during the cold war personality clashes were abetted by divergent stands on cold war issues. Personal equations have also from time-to-time helped to strengthen or weaken relations between the two countries. Thus, the American found Nehru personally difficult to deal with. Similarly one comes across a similar distrust of Mr. Krishna Menon. A similar distrust
was also noticeable between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Richard Nixon, which contributed towards further deterioration of relations. The inability on many occasions to have a proper rapport at the leadership level was fuelled by the inability of both Washington and New Delhi to share views on many cold war issues. With the cold war having receded to the background, and with the hope that our relations will now be less subject to the traditional permutations and combinations, the chances of striking upon agreeable personal equations based on trust and respect are now much brighter.

The new world order presents an opportunity as much as it is a responsibility for both India and Pakistan to resume a process of dialogue with one another in order to resolve their outstanding disputes and differences. The superpowers may now desist from getting involved in our quarrels. The time has come for an appraisal of old policies and posturings. This is a crucial time in India-Pakistan relations, the outcome can influence Indo-American relations. A shift in the traditional approach of the United States would mean a helping hand in reducing tensions in the region, though it may not altogether eliminate them. In recent times, there have been some visible changes for the better in Washington; stand on issues like Kashmir, Islamabad's nuclear programme, the decision not to impose super 301, and the clearance given to the super computer are
all healthy indicators. But more recently the dilution of Pressler's law and supply of arms to Pakistan worth $370 million under Brown amendment had its negative influence on strategic relations of the two countries. It triggered arms race in India. It made India to purchase defense arsenals to protect against Pakistan.

The Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan led America to give massive arms aid to Pakistan, remained the greatest impediment to a better relationship between the United States and India. The United States perception of its self-interest impaled her to bolster Pakistan's defense against possible Soviet aggression. On the other hand, India's self-interest necessitated friendship with the Soviet Union which, in turn, makes her a suspect in the eyes of the Americans. But neither does India have any reason to be anti-United States nor the Americans to be anti-Indian. Both have much in common. But the relations strained over third-country issues. Now with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and disintegration of Soviet Union, have made congenial atmosphere to develop relations between two countries. With the end of cold war, the strategic importance of Pakistan has declined in the eyes of Americans.

On economic front India has been able to receive loans from World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Development
Agency (IDA) owing to having its economy reformed on the lines suggested by United States. But these are not without strings and conditionalities. United States wants India to develop economically and militarily but not too strong to challenge United States. The reluctance of United States to sell or transfer some of double use of technologies urgently needed by India, will create not only, road blocks to their bilateral ties but also doubts about genuineness of United States intention to cement ties with India. There are significant discordants between them regarding patent law and intellectual property rights.

With the introduction of liberal economic policies in India, the scope for expanding business ties between two countries has been expanded. The United States appalauded the economic reforms, introduced by India. Though poor, India has an expanding middle class, offering a market for United States exports. The United States is India’s largest trading partner and its most important source of technology and investment. Its support for economic assistance to India from international financial institutions is crucial. There is clear area of mutual interest that needs to be protected and developed. Of course, the relationship is asymmetrical. India needs the United States much more than the United States needs India. This is evident from the fact that India’s share of America’s global trade is less than one percent. And only a small fraction of the global American
investment is in India. The economic relationship has improved a lot in the last few years but it has far to go. Some Indians may have reservations about the investments being made by American multinationals, but even they want to have unhindered access to American markets. There are tough problems like special and super 301 controversy and United States threat of retaliation, in the way of India’s developing closer economic ties with the United States from time to time.

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), remained contentious issue between two countries from early 1960’s to present. America using pressure tactics now and then to compel India to sign these two treaties. India is refusing to sign the treaties as they are discriminatory. America has fears that India may develops into a strong military power, if it is left with nuclear options. In retaliatory measure the United States forced Russia to scrap the cryogenic engine deal with India. It is also have fears over the development of missile technology with the same doubts. The United States asked India to stop the launching of Agni and Prithvi missiles. India refused to bow to its pressure and launched its missiles.

The issue of human rights is also one of contending issue between two countries. The United States expressing its concern to human rights in the states of
Kashmir and Punjab by military and police forces. But it is ignoring the violation of human rights by terrorist or extremists supported by Pakistan. Now with the establishments of popular Governments in both the states, the issue may be grounded back.

In defense related matters the co-operation between two countries is remarkable, especially during Indo-Sino border dispute of 1962. From time to time both countries are exchanging ideas, concerning defense. The defense officials of both countries are visiting one and the other country. The Indo-American defense co-operation is not directed to any third country. The service-to-service cooperation has started since the army-to-army. General Kichlighter’s proposals of the early 1990’s, which were later expanded to the Navy and the Air Force. These envisaged exchange of visits, training facilities, observing exercises, Joint exercises and participation in seminars. On January 12, 1996 an agreement on defense relations between India and United States has been signed. Which further developed defense cooperation between two countries. Joint production cooperation like Light Combat Aircraft Project in which the two countries have been working together successfully. The Joint Naval exercises is one of the important development in defense cooperation. The Indo-American defense cooperation is expected to make a positive contribution to the security and stability of the region and
also promote maintenance of international peace and security.

Interactions between societies as complex as those of the United States and India, do not lend themselves to succinct definition. But the most prominent feature of the Indo-American relationship is its ambiguity. We find the two governments reiterating their common goals of peace, stability, economic development and political freedom, but unable to cooperate systematically in the realization of these objectives. We also find influential opinion-makers in each country voicing the gravest mistrust of the other, but unconvincing in presenting cases for their governments to take positions of open hostility. As a consequence of this ambiguity we find concerned citizens in both countries hoping for an improvement in relations even while fearing a deterioration, while few officials expect to do more than maintain the present level of decorum and low involvement.

Today whether the world is unipolar or not, the reach of American power is till long enough to make itself felt. The United States would attain its Foreign policy goals through collective action if it can, and by lateral action if it must. And it has not renounced the option of unilateral intervention. It would never, therefore, agree to give up its military superiority while working for the goal of limitation of armaments. It believes that India has the potential of becoming a military and economic power.
irrespective of what the United States may or may not do. It, therefore, wishes to integrate India into a power structure that would be dominated by the United States.

From the zero-sum game of the cold war days, the world has now passed into a phase of mutual trust and cooperation. Over the last four decades, a number of factors have contributed to less than satisfactory relations between the United States and India, the most important of them being the absence of the cultural linkage, the third country factor, nonsynchronization of mutual security perceptions, non-alignment of ideologies and rifts in self-interests lack of diplomatic fineness and the institutional weakness in the policy making process.

The post-cold war scenario presents ample opportunities for Indo-American relations to graduate from the stereotypes. Many of the recent developments and the visible shifts in the United States approach to the region are a vindication of India's fears and anxieties expressed over the last many years.

A major responsibility lies on the shoulders of the political leadership of both the United States and India to overcome the hangovers of the past. Given the necessary diplomatic maturity, political wisdom, a sense of understanding, toleration and mutual respect for one
another, one may foresee a bright horizon. In the years to come the United States gradually bound to recognise the market potential of India. Gone are the days when the United States would deal with India only after a hard day's work with the Soviets or rather, in their spare time. The task ahead is by no means as easy one. The opportunity present itself, the time for change is appropriate, and the need for change is imperative. The prospects are bright.