Indo-US Relations during BJP (Coalition) Government
The period from 1998 – 2002 under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)’s led coalition government, by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee saw a turning point in Indo–US relations. Although the first major decision, this government made regarding in 1998 nuclear testing, brought on immediate sanctions from the United States, the warming detectible afterward has not waned. Moreover, since 1999 Indo–US relations have seen as a remarkable turnaround. After half a century of estrangement, the two countries are finally getting along with each other. The successful visit to India by President Bill Clinton in March 2000 and the new US President George W. Bush has continued the effort for friendlier and more cooperative ties. At this time, despite the revival of intimate US security links with Pakistan but since the event of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the relationship between India and the United States has much more improved and has so far held firm.

Before processing to the detail of Indo – US relations during the period under Vajpayee Administration, it is also significant here to look at the internal political development in India.

Political development; the 1998 and 1999 elections and the BJP in power

In February – March 1988, the general elections were held in India, the main groupings contested in this elections were the United Front, Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in alliance with a number of small local parties. The results gave each of the groupings some strength, but however none of them achieved an overall majority. Congress won 142 seats in the Lok Sabha which represented a mediocre but not disastrous performance. While the party’s role in bringing down the UF Government was held against it. Congress’s fortunes were helped considerably by Sonia Gandhi (Rajiv Gandhi’s wife)’s decision to campaign actively for the first time. (Later she became president of the party)
The biggest gainer overall, however, was the BJP, which increased its tally of legislative seats from 160 to 182. This was with the support of its pre-election allies, especially the AIADMK, which won 18 of the seats in the state of Tamil Nadu, the BJP could count on approximately 250 seats, the largest bloc in the legislature but considerably fewer than the 273 seats needed to form a government.¹

Although the constitutional position was not entirely clear, the president decided to ask the BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee to form a government, and the latter assumed the premiership on 19 March.

After a seemingly lackluster few weeks, the new Government startled India and the rest of the world by exploding a series of underground nuclear test devices on 11 and 13 May 1998. This provocative action was initially greeted with huge popular enthusiasm, but Pakistan’s test in response and an awareness of the negative international consequence, particularly the imposition of economic sanctions by the USA, which soon led to a more measured domestic assessment.

Internally, within his own party Vajpayee would have to face pressure for demonstrative action to fulfill the Hindu nationalist agenda of the more extremist members, while many of the Prime Minister’s allies had very specific demands which they insisted to be met. Although the partners in coalition Government produced a National Agenda for Government to guide their actions² it was clear that government matters would not always proceed smoothly.

The demand of the smaller parties in the governing coalition created problems for the BJP. The most difficult was the AIADMK, whose leader, Jayalalitha, faced ongoing investigations into corruption allegations relating to her earlier period as chief minister of Tamil Nadu. In the mean time, however, Congress which was by now firmly under the control of Sonia Gandhi and her colleagues began to explore ways of destabilizing the Government by exploiting its internal division.³

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
In April 1999, Sonia Gandhi thought that an opportune moment had arrived and with the help of the AIADMK, which withdrew from the ruling coalition was able to create a political stalemate, which the president resolved by forcing the Prime Minister to seek a vote of confidence. This was held on 17, the BJP government was then resigned following the loss of a confidence vote by the margin of only a single vote 270-269. The President then gave Sonia Gandhi the opportunity to assemble a new coalition. It was believed that her political skills were unequal to task, however, putting together a coalition for the purpose of ousting a common enemy was very different from sharing the fruits of office among many different partners, as the BJP had earlier found to its cost. Therefore, the Lok Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections were called. Vajpayee and his Government remained in power in an acting capacity pending the holding of the polls.

At this time, it was difficult to see exactly who and which party was likely to be the main beneficiary. Indeed, all political groups suffered to some extent from popular annoyance at the failure of the Vajpayee administration to survive. Sonia Gandhi had staked her reputation on being able to form a new government and her failure to do so damaged her standing both within the ranks of Congress as well as at a national level. Her foreign origins were used against her, and in May 1999 Sharad Pawar, the leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha until its dissolution and the most powerful of the old-guard party heads, was expelled from Congress for voicing public criticism on this point. The following month Pawar announced the establishment of a new party, the Nationalist Congress Party. Among the non Congress parties apart from the BJP, new alliances emerged but without the capacity to dominate national politics.

While the BJP seemed less well placed immediately after the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in April 1999, the subsequent hostilities with Pakistan had a very positive effect on the nationalist party’s standing and in particular on that of the Prime Minister. The widely held perception that Vajpayee had responded with

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5 David Taylor, p. 1, p. 161
dignity and firmness to Pakistan provocation, and that India had, in effect, won the war had a major impact on public opinion.\(^6\)

The September and October 1999, the BJP – led alliance, known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and comprising numerous minor regional parties with little shared ideology, regained power following national elections with won 300 of the 545 seats.\(^7\) As a result, on 13 October, Vajpayee was sworn in as Prime Minister for a third time, at the head of a large coalition Government.

During this term in office of Prime Minister, however, Vajpayee also faced difficulties posed by the continuing demands from Hindu communal elements, significantly represented among the members of the BJP, for the construction of the Ram Janmabhoomi, the Hindu temple, on the site at Ayodhya where the Babri Masjid (mosque) had stood before its demolition in 1992. Vajpayee needed simultaneously to keep his own party support intact and to maintain an image of a national, non-partisan leader.

At the end of 2000 he declared that the construction of the temple was an expression of national sentiment that had yet to be realized and part of the Government’s agenda. Although he later attempted to diminish his remarks, declaring that he did not support the destruction of the old mosque, the opposition demanded an immediate apology and forced the abrupt adjournment of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Opposition members also demanded the resignation of three minister, including L.K. Advani, who were charge-sheeted by the Central Bureau of Investigation in a case relating to the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Vajpayee rejected the demand; however, he confirmed that the Government would abide by the judgment of the Supreme Court.\(^8\)

In January 2001 plans for a negotiated settlement over the site suffered a set-back when the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee ruled out negotiations with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP-World Hindu Council), the VHP leaders convened a religious parliament, the Dharma Sansad, at the Maha Kumbh Mela (the largest ever Hindu gathering, centering on Allahabad, in the state of Uttar Pradesh)

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\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Peter R. Blood, n. 4, p. 1

\(^8\) David Taylor, n. 1, p. 162
in January-February. The Dharma Sansad stated that all obstacles impeding the construction of the temple should be removed by the relevant organizations by mid-March 2002.9

In February 2001, an Indian high court ruled that nearly 40 people could be brought to trial in connection with the destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya, but that, on technical grounds, senior BJP leader would not be among the defendants. In view of this verdict, in May a special Central Bureau of Investigation court hearing also discontinued criminal proceedings against the ministers.10 However, a separate criminal case was registered against the BJP and VHP leaders. In the mean time, a commission of inquiry into the events in Ayodhya took place.

When the deadline set by the Dharma Sansad to begin building the temple in mid-March 2002 approached, hundreds of Hindu activists, in an echo of events a decade before, assembled in Ayodhya to take part in the illegal construction. This led to a major outbreak of communal violence in the BJP held state of Gujarat in late February, after a train carrying Hindu activists returning from a rally at Ayodhya was attacked which the Hindus believed that a group of Muslims had done this. Some 60 Hindu activists were killed when the train caught fire. In the days and weeks that followed, up to 2,000 people, mainly Muslims, were killed in horrific circumstances in towns and cities across the state, including the commercial capital, Ahmedabad. The Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, was heavily criticized for his inaction during the riots, and it was widely reported that the local police did little to protect those under attack. Eventually, after considerable criticism from opposition parties, Modi resigned in July and the state assemble was dissolved.11

After the riot took place, it clearly appeared to the BJP that the demonstrated showed the decline in the BJP’s fortunes as resulted in its poor performance at the state elections. At this time, even, its tough stance towards Pakistan was generally popular but did not deliver a great deal of additional political support, and was counter-balanced by appearance of indecision over the Ayodhya issue. Finally, it can’t be denied that the Ayodhya issue and the communal violence in Gujrat were

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid
mainly responsible to the loss of the majority support for the BJP in March – May 14th 2004 general election in India, which brought the Congress back in power again as Dr. Manmohan Singh former Minister of Finance, became the new Prime Minister of India.

**Clinton administration and the BJP led coalition government**

After the BJP led coalition came to power in India, the Clinton administration sent a high level delegation to India led by the then US permanent representative to the UN, Bill Richardson, as the first senior American official to have visited India in April 1998 after Vajpayee assume office.

The purpose of Richardson’s visit was to prepare the ground for Clinton’s visit to India. He brought a personal message from the president which stressed the Administration’s desire to build a partnership with India in 21st century. The visit also provided an opportunity to the delegation to have a first hand knowledge of new Indian government desiring to exercise the nuclear option, which if carried to its logical conclusion, would be against the goal of globalization so dear to Washington in the post Cold War era.

The visit of Richardson was also cleared that it was checked the resolve of the new Indian Government’s nuclear and missile option. However, the Indian government did well to deflect Richardson’s attention that from the Vajpayee government was not going to conduct nuclear test prior to an exercise towards a Strategic Defense Review.\(^\text{12}\)

On the visit Richardson was told by the Indian authorities, including the Prime Minister that his government would like to take the Indo – US relations to a new height by not making it to a hostage of the known differences on nuclear issues, human right and Pakistan. Vajpayee also suggested that there should be closer cooperation between New Delhi and Washington in the field of trade, investment and science and technology.\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.

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Prior to the visit of Richardson, Pakistan's testing of Ghauri missile may signal the beginning of a new missile race in the region. From the point of view of the Indian side Pakistan was referred in the broad context of the growth of trans-border terrorism and Asia-Pacific region as a whole.

The US also acknowledged India broader security perception, including the China factor. However, Washington denied India the access to advanced technologies available in the US. For the question of a permanent seat to New Delhi in UN Security Council, the US also did not make any commitment.

Though no area of Indo-US relations was free from pricking sensation, India's nuclear programme remained the most important issue. During the second term of the Clinton presidency showed America's willingness to work beyond prickly issues with India. However, the plan to visit India by the president Clinton, which had to be postponed first because of unexpected general elections in India in early 1998 and then by the abnormal situation created by Pokhran II and US sanction.

US Non-Proliferation Agenda; Pokhran II and its implication on Indo-US Relations.

On 11 May 1998, India conducted an underground test of three nuclear explosive devices at Pokhran (the site of the 1974 nuclear explosion) and followed it with claims of two more on 13 May. Immediately after the test took place on 11, there was a strong reaction from the United States which on 12 May President Bill Clinton intended to implement fully sanctions against India. However, in the same day Newt Gingrich, US Speaker of the House of Representatives came out to supports the Indian tests and argued that "In stark contrast to the Clinton policy of accommodation towards communist China, the Administration roared with outrage when a democratic Indian Government chose to test its nuclear capability. India is a country a facing potential threat from China"\(^\text{14}\)

After, India conducted three nuclear test on 11 May, the same day Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee came out and gave a brief statement that “Today at 1545 hours, India conducted three underground nuclear tests in the Pokhran range. The tests conducted were with a fission device, a low yield device and a thermonuclear device. The measured yields are in line with expected values. Measurements have also confirmed that there was no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere. These were contained explosions like the experiment conducted in May 1974. I warmly congratulate the scientists and engineers who have carried out these successful tests.”

The code – named “Shakti” (power), the planned programs of underground nuclear tests resumed on 13 May at the same site. This time two more sub-kiloton nuclear tests were carried out. At the same day the government release said “the test have been carried out to generate additional data for improved computer simulation of designs and for attaining the capability to carry out sub critical experiments, if considered necessary.” After “Shakti – 98”, the subsequent announcement made by India declared that it has became a nuclear weapon state and clearly indicated that, at long last, India has exercised its nuclear option.

The decision to conduct the tests evoked mixed reaction in and outside the country. However, according to the various opinion polls, the overwhelming majority of Indians approved of the tests. This generally created an euphoria in the country except those few who believe that it was a serious mistake from the strategic, financial and diplomatic points of view.

The opposition parties, particularly the Congress, the communists and the former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, and a section of intelligentsia were severely critical. They argued that Vajpayee’s decision to conduct the test was politically motivated to ensure the survival of the fragile Vajpayee government, that it broke the political consensus prevailing in the country on maintaining the nuclear ambiguity; that it aggravated the regional security environment in the country by turning friends into foes and making the prospect of a war in South Asia more and

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15 M.L. Sondhi, Prakash Nanda, p.12, p. 26
16 Ibid., p. 27
17 Ibid.
ruined the country’s economy because of the economic sanctions imposed by developed countries like the United States and Japan.

For the external reaction, in the beginning the world community reacted with surprise and denounced the nuclear test series. Some believed it as an attempt to seek hegemony in South Asia and some demanded that India should be penalized for having disturbed the delicate balance of world peace. But, however, some believed that to condemn India without looking at the circumstance that compelled India to exercise its nuclear weapon option was unfair.

The United Nations Security Council strongly deplored the India’s nuclear test and appealed to India to sign the NPT and CTBT without delay and without conditions.18

The Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Brajesh Mishra, in a statement, *inter alia*, said “India would be prepared to consider being an adherent to some of the undertaking in the CTBT. But this can not obviously be done in a vacuum. It would necessarily be an evolutionary process from concept to commitment and would depend on a number of reciprocal activities”.19

The US reaction was strongly critical and this was made up of several elements including what the US saw as a challenge to the non proliferation regime which the US and other nuclear weapon states have put in place to preserve their monopoly of nuclear weapons. The US government, therefore, imposed economic & military sanction on India on 13 May 1998,. This mandated by Section 102 of the Arms Export Control Act, known as the Glenn amendment. (This sanction was also applied to Pakistan on May 30). This involved;20

- Termination of assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act f 1961, except for humanitarian assistance for food or other agricultural commodities.

18 Daniel Joseph Juba and G.V. Vaidyanatha, n.14 , p. 194
• Termination of sale of defense articles, defense services, or design and construction services under the Arms Export Control Act, and termination of license for the export of any item on the US munitions list;

• Termination of all foreign military financing under the Arms Export Control Act

• Denial of any credit, credit guarantees, or other financial assistance by any department agency, or instrumentality of the US government.

• The US opposition to the extension of any loan for financial to technical assistance by any international financial institution;

• Prohibition of US banks from making any loan or providing any credit to the Government of India, except for the purposes of purchasing food or other agricultural commodities and

• Prohibition of export of specific goods and technology subject to export licensing by the Commerce Department.

Some effects of the sanctions on India by the US included; termination of $21 million in FY 1998 economic development assistance; postponement of $1.7 billion in lending by the International Financial Institution (IFI), as supported by the Group of Eight (G-8) leading Industrial nation;\(^\text{21}\)

The US was the country that took the initiative in meetings of the P-5 and G-8 countries to orchestrate condemnation of the nuclear test and influenced the P-5 and G-8 countries to impose sanction on India.

However, many of these countries – Russia and France, for instance – did not go along with attempts to multilateralise the imposition of the unilateral punitive measures against India;\(^\text{22}\) Apart from the sanction, the US also threatened to push Kashmir issue on the global agenda.

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\(^{21}\) Peter R. Blood, n. 4, p. 7

\(^{22}\) M.L. Sondhi, Prakash Nanda, n. 12, p. 81
In response to the US reaction, Vajpayee tried to explain why India conducted the nuclear tests in his letter to President Clinton, which he wrote “We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962”. Though Indo-China relations have improved, he added, “an atmosphere of distrust persists many due to the unsolved border problem”.

This was because India considered China as its biggest threat, even before India’s nuclear test. China won not only increasing its nuclear arsenal but also cooperated with Pakistan in its nuclear and missile programmes.

If we looked back, on 6 April, 1998, Pakistan test fired its 1,500 km range ballistic missile Ghauri which covers the major Industrial cities of India. It was believed that Pakistan could not build such a missile without the help of China.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) documented nearly two dozen transfers of missile technology and materials by China to Iran and Pakistan. Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House, says that “these transfers were clearly in violation of US law and international treaties. These dangerous, illegal and destabilizing transfers have gone almost completely unacknowledged and not responded to by the Clinton Administration”. The US was playing some game with by not adopting any hard and effective policy in restraining Pakistan armed by China with weapons and missiles, which could target India cities.

Apart from strategic reason, commercial gain from the sales of its technologies can not be overlooked as it needs currency for its socio-economic development. This warned India of the new dangers. Two days after the Ghauri test fire operation Shakti was authorized. Thus Pokhran II was the result of the emerging danger along India’s northern and Western borders.

The test which were conducted on 13 May were low yield and sub – critical, that involved devices what the US calls “mini nukes” and “micro-nukes”, which are

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24 Ludwin A. Joseph, “It’s a Cleft stick”, Outlook, 6 July 1998, p. 30
not prohibited by the CTBT. The big nukes were increasingly losing utility in actual warfare, while micro-nukes have a greater potential to change the world’s strategic balance. The scientific sophistication displayed by the Indian test and the data generated could be used for computer simulations that can further refine India’s nuclear capabilities without actual tests. Dr. P.K. Iyangar, former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman who was amongst the key scientists of the 1974 Pokhran nuclear explosion said; “by these test, we have demonstrated in an unambiguous fashion that we can make any kind of nuclear weapons”.26

In short, the nation’s acute security dilemma, US apathy towards India’s security concerns, and the need for an effective nuclear deterrent, compelled India to undertake the series of nuclear test.

The US Government felt that the process of non-proliferation set up under the leadership of the US in the post Cold War era had been disrupted by the Indian nuclear tests.

Donald Devine, a Washington based policy consultant and a columnist, wrote that the Indian explosion had burst the massive liberal fantasy of assuming that, if there were no test, nation would be nice and forget nasty nuclear power. Putting faith in paper treaties rather than military will in a tough world has always been the liberal delusion.27

The US felt much disturbed by the Indian nuclear tests as Clinton said “India had committed a terrible mistake”, he further added that “this action by India not only threatens the stability of the region, it directly challenges the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”.28

In response, India, however, took a conciliatory posture and announced a voluntary moratorium on further test and proposed “no first use of nuclear weapon”. It also declared that the test were not directed against any country, were conducted as a defensive measure for protection of national security. Speaking before a gathering of intellectuals in New York in September 1998 Vajpayee explained what

27 The Sunday Times, 29 May 1998
made India to cross the nuclear Rubicon after observing restraints for twenty four years. He stated “We were forced to exercise the nuclear option both for the reasons of national security and as a powerful challenge to the practitioners of nuclear apartheid”

The US feared that others would follow India’s action and go for nuclear test. In this way, the US persuaded Pakistan not go nuclear and offered it full military protection as an incentive. However, the US failed to persuade Pakistan as on 28 May 1998, Pakistan announced that it has conducted its nuclear tests on the Chagai Hills and in additional test on 30 May. After its tests, Pakistan accused India of forcing test upon it.

Though, Pakistan test aimed at India, it was also sent shock waves in West Asia as it might embolden Iran to undertake nuclearisation. The emergence of nuclear capable Israel from its closet may provoke its adversarial neighbours to respond in the same manner.

The reaction from other countries like Germany, Japan and Italy which had already added riders was that while singing the NPT but “if the list of nuclear states ever grew beyond the original five, they would reconsider their accession”.

For the US reaction to Pakistan nuclear test, it applied the same sanction as it did to India. Apart from sanctions which the US imposed on India and Pakistan, in July 1998 seven Indian scientists were expelled from the United States and a blacklist of 63 Indian and 5 Pakistani institutions was announced. The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and Bhabha Atomic Research Center were on that list and also on 6 November 1998, the US announced an “entities list of nearly 200 Indian Government and private companies to be embargoed by the American Business.

US policy analysts considered the continuing arms race between India and Pakistan as posing perhaps the most likely prospect for the future use of nuclear

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31 Rajendran Raja, n. 20, p. 185
weapons. According to report by the Council on Foreign Relations for the US, both India and Pakistani tests were “as much a long-term policy failure as a near-term intelligence failure”.  

As Washington has many items on its non-proliferation agenda, at this time, after the nuclear test by both India and Pakistan, the major items on its non-proliferation agenda were as

- Get India and Pakistan to sign the CTBT without conditions
- India and Pakistan to refrain from weaponizing or deploying ballistic missiles.
- Halt production of fissile materials with immediate effect.
- Make a pledge not to share nuclear technology with third countries.
- Get India and Pakistan to agree on a solid framework to resolve bilateral issues including Kashmir.

It was clear that the primary goal of the US has been on non weaponization and non deployment. Washington's strategy was also clearly centered on pressurizing Indian to roll back its nuclear programme to pre-Pokhran II situation. Both sides were driving the hardest bargains. The US stills categorically rejected the Indian desire to possess a “minimum nuclear deterrence”. New Delhi says that “the issue is not negotiable and will go ahead with plans to weaponize”. However, the test by themselves did not give India a nuclear deterrent. A credible deterrence would require India to define its nuclear strategy, set up a command, control, and intelligence system.

Finally, since India and Pakistan had become ‘de facto’ nuclear states, the US had to change the focus of its non-proliferation policy from one of one-size-fits-all to one of nuclear risk reduction and non deployment. The US began to turn

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35 Ibid., pp. 289-290
its focus from functional non-proliferation goals to broad regional interests which included preventing possible all out or nuclear war, promoting democracy and internal stability, expanding economic growth, trade and investment and developing political and military cooperation on a host of regional and global challenges posed by terrorism.

However, after the test, the US recognized India’s security demand and regarded it as the leading state in South Asia. Although, the discussion between India and the United States on the issue of non-proliferation and CTBT was failed to achieved any concrete results, but the twelve rounds of strategic/security dialogue between former US Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and the then Indian External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh helped the two countries to clear the air and provide “a framework to reconcile the conflicting imperatives of India’s nuclear security interest and the US led global non proliferation regime”.

The issues of the discussion between Mr. Talbott and Jaswant Singh were; adherence to the CTBT; moratorium on further production of missile material till a treaty was concluded at the talks in Geneva; unilateral strategic restraint by forgoing development and deployment of missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons; strict control over nuclear and missile technology in keeping with international norms; and direct dialogue between India and Pakistan on all disputes which were the main cause of tension in the region. The discussions were satisfied by both over progress of talks.

Another factor, which made the progress for the talks, was that the Clinton Administration began to isolate China, which was improving relations with India. The US viewed it as a big threat to the US, as China was expanding its military power rapidly. Without India nuclearization, there was no challenge to the growing power of China in Asia. It was, thus, felt necessary to develop India as a balancing power in Asia which would help in establishing a peaceful, stable and orderly international system.

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Now, the other strategy was to compel India to sign the CTBT, so that the Clinton Administration could achieve its goal of non-proliferation. But, however, no concerted evidence was available for this.

Thus, we can conclude that, although India’s nuclear test had disrupted the US top priority agenda of nuclear non-proliferation in post Cold War era and the US rejected India’s claim to be treated as de jure nuclear power, as it broke on improvement of Indo-US relations and subsequent lead to the imposition of sanction by the United States, relegated to the future opportunity to develop a cordial relationship. But the growing power of China and the realization of both countries (India and the US) that by distancing themselves from each other will not gain them any thing and this is the reason why they tried to repair the damage and continue the engagement process. However, due to India nuclear test, President Clinton postponed his plan to visit South Asia.

**US’s role in reducing tensions between India and Pakistan during the Kargil war and the Kashmir issue.**

Since beginning in 1990, with increasing friction between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, the United States strongly encouraged both governments to institute confidence-building measures in order to reduce tensions. Moreover after the Indian and Pakistan nuclear tests of 1998, both countries faced significant pressure from the United States to reduce tensions through direct dialogue. Measures agreed so far include; agreement on advance notice of military movements; establishment of a military commander “hotline”; an exchange of lists of nuclear installation and facilities; agreement not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities; a joint ban on use and production of chemical weapons and measures to prevent air space violations.37

After the nuclear test by both countries, in expanding the idea of ensuring peace through nuclear deterrence, Vajpayee said “now both India and Pakistan are in possession of nuclear weapons. There is no alternative but to live in mutual harmony. The nuclear weapon is not an offensive weapon. It is a weapon of self–

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37 Peter R. Blood, n. 4, p. 8
defence. It is the kind of weapon that help in preserving peace. If in the days of Cold War there was no use of force, it was because of the balance of terror"\textsuperscript{38}

In February 1999, in an effort to restore normalcy between India and Pakistan, Prime Minister Vajpayee took a historic bus to Pakistan, from Waugha to Lahore (20 February). It was well known ‘bus diplomacy’ of February 1999. Then Mr. Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif hold talk in Lahore and signed the Lahore Declaration which stipulated that their respective governments “shall talk immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict”. The so called ‘Lahore Spirit’ was widely perceived as a workable regime to break through the deadlock of tension between them.

The US also hailed the Lahore process and hoped that this would begin a new era of understanding between Indian and Pakistan.

However, the prospect for normalizing India – Pakistan relations suffered a setback in April – July 1999, when the two countries almost plunged into their fourth war, once again in Kashmir along the Line of Control (LOC). In the worst fighting since 1971, Indian soldiers sought to dislodge some 700 Pakistan – supported infiltrators who were occupying fortified position along mountain ridges overlooking a supply route on the Indian side of the LOC, near Kargil.\textsuperscript{39}

During the serious military conflict along the 150 km front in the mountains above Kargil, the Indian Air Force flew as many as 550 sorties. Indeed, not since the 1971 war had air power been used in support of military operation in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{40} On the other side, Pakistani military forces were reported deploying nuclear missiles near the border with India.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} L.R. Reddy, n.29, p.320
\textsuperscript{39} Peter R. Blood, n. 4, p. 9
\textsuperscript{41} Sipress, Alan and Thomas E. Ricks, “Report: India, Pakistan Were Near Nuclear War” The Washington Post, 15 May 2002
By making a war with India at this time, Pakistan had several geo-strategic and political motivations. It was quite clear that Pakistan intended to present Kashmir as nuclear flashpoint and invaded Kargil in a desperate attempt to bring the issue to the forefront of International relations. Also Pakistan was of the view that neither interim government India would be able to act with decisive firmness nor the world community would come forward to support India as it was just condemned for breaching nuclear non proliferation regime. Pakistan’s motive was to neutralize India’s strategic position on the Siachin heights and to control Leh – Srinagar road for further infiltration. Most important purpose of Pakistan was to shift the LOC.

Tensions between India and Pakistan remained extremely high in the wake of the Kargil conflict, which cost more than 1,100 lives.42

Aware of the danger of escalation, the US strongly urged Pakistan to withdraw behind the LOC immediately, completely and unconditionally. At this time, surprisingly the US favoured Indian stand on Kargil. Under great pressure, including a critical talk with President Clinton at Blair House in Washington, D.C. on 4 July 1999, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Shariff agreed to “take concrete and immediate steps for the restoration of the LOC”.43

The US and G-8 countries’ interest was to prevent the escalation of a border skirmish into a full-fledged warfare. The US Congress warned Pakistan of the consequence for violating global peace and security and praised India for “restraint”.

India was carefully prevented the expansion of the conflict, for instance, by not crossing the LOC or by not escalating nuclear threat.44 India had only undertaken an effective diplomatic and information campaign to neutralize Pakistan’s political and strategic intentions. India also needs to exploit international support and explore the possibilities of developing better understanding on mutuality of interest with the United States.

42 Peter R. Blood, p. 4, p. 9
43 Riedel, Bruce, “American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House” Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI), Policy Paper Series, 2002, p.10
After the incident took place, Pakistan, however, found itself isolated internationally. Neither the US or G-8 nor world public opinion could have supported Pakistan. Though Nawaz Sharif’s claim that freedom fighters were occupying the heights in Kargil and elsewhere, it seems that no body believed him. Also contrary to his statement, Army Chief Parvez Musharaf told that his men have crossed the LOC.45

Regarding to the US role, according to a senior South Asia in the United States, the Clinton Administration was unwilling to mediate an end to this conflict (as Pakistan wanted) because of two factors. First, South Asia remained a fairly low priority for Clinton as it had been for most American administration; second the US did not believe that it had any vital interests in the region.46

However, other believe the US wanted to use its support to deal with India on issues of nuclear non proliferation viz, CTBT, FMCT etc, as the US major aim was that India and Pakistan should not get involved in a nuclear war. They want both to join non proliferation regime.

In fact, the US role and its tilting towards India during the Kargil conflict were quite different. First, the US believed that it was the Pakistani army and its militant allies that crossed the LOC first and were on the wrong side of the LOC,47 as a result, it had to withdraw first. Second, there was evidence which showed that the Pakistani military was preparing to deploy nuclear missiles. So the US had to put pressure on Nawaz to avoid the dangerous consequences resulting from any resort to a nuclear option. Third, the situation in Kargil developed in a direction favourable to the Indian side because of its conventional advantage. The US, therefore, merely asked India to restrain itself as it was difficult to force India to withdraw first. Fourth, the US wanted to do India a favour. According to a senior US official, “once the withdrawal from Kargil was done, the US would have more credibility with India.”48

45 Ramesh Menon “Blood, Guts and Glory”, Rashtriya Sahara, August 1999, p. 43  
46 Ganguly, Sumit, n.40, p.119  
47 Riedel, Bruce, n. 43, p.10  
48 Ibid., p.14
Finally, the Kargil conflict had made the US publicly declare its new policy towards South Asia which involved; recognizing the Simla Agreement; urging respect of the LOC; advocating resolution of the Kashmir issue through direct dialogue between India and Pakistan; and encouraging both sides to return to the Lahore process. At the same time, in Pakistan, Nawaz Shariff’s decision to withdraw aroused strong dissatisfaction in the Pakistani military and gave momentum to a bloodless military coup in which General Musharraf took office as President and dethroning Nawaz Shariff. The result of coup was that the US imposed sanctions on Pakistan as it violated US democratic interests and goals in South Asia. However, the US reaction following the coup in Pakistan was generally become muted because while calling for an early return of democracy, the US still doing business with Musharraf and assured a policy of constructive engagement; partly because Pakistan was important and could not be ignored, and also because to US viewed Musharraf as a man who generally held moderate political views. It was not in the interest of the US to see Pakistan collapse.49

Throughout 2000, cross-border firing and shelling continued at high levels. India accused Pakistan of sending a flood of militants into Kashmir and increasingly targeting isolated police posts and civilians. Pakistan also accused India of human rights violations in Kashmir. According to Indian government sources, more than 5,000 militants, security forces and civilians were killed in Jammu and Kashmir in 1999-2000. The US strongly urged India and Pakistan to create the proper climate for peace, respect the LOC, reject violence, and return to the Lahore peace process.50

Thus, we can say that the tension between India and Pakistan, regarding to the nuclear flash point and Kashmir issue, particularly the Kargil war, had reduced largely due to the role played by the US and this was appreciated in India as it was in favour of India. No matter what was behind the US’s motivation. It helped to improve Indo-US relations and paved the way and created a good atmosphere for the upcoming of the visit to India by President Clinton in March 2000.

50 Peter R. Blood, p. 4, p. 9
General environment of Indo-US relations (1999) before starting the 21st century

Apart from the US stand during Kargil conflict, the development and the environment of Indo-US relations during 1999, the year before starting the 21st century was very helpful and positive push forward cooperation in various areas of mutual interests.

In March 1999, a US Congressional delegation visited India and held important talks with the Indian leaders and officials. The talks reflected a new optimism for the reconstructing of Indo-US cooperative relations for post Pokhran era. Also, as mentioned earlier, in 1999, the US Government came forward to lessen the intensity and scope of economic sanctions which it had imposed after Pokhar II. At this time, it was expected that India and the USA would be able to overcome the differences and hurdles resulting from India’s new nuclear status and the US hesitation to accept this reality.

On 25 July, 1999, the meeting between India’s foreign minister Mr. Jaswant Singh and US Secretary of State Madelein Albright in Singapore during the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting, was fruitful and further gave a good shift to Indo-US relation. The two foreign ministers shared their views on Pakistan’s commitment to withdraw the remaining portions of forces from the Kargil sector as well as on the need to resume Lahore process in relations with Pakistan. Both the countries recognized the need to secure better understanding and cooperation among the democratic countries all over the world, particularly between India and the USA as world two largest democracies. At this time, despite continued differences over the issues of CTBT and non-proliferation, the US foreign minister showed a better understanding in respect of the Kashmir issue. The meeting was very purposeful, friendly and productive and it helped to enhance the Indo – US understanding.

In July 1999, Indo – US Extradition Treaty, which signed in 1997, came into force and it constituted an important step in the direction of promoting cooperation.

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52 The Tribune, 26 July 1999
between the two countries for fighting the menace of international terrorism and narcotics trafficking.\(^{53}\)

During July-August 1999, the environment of the Indo – US relations witnessed much improvement not only because of firm stand taken by the United States in respect of the Kargil war but also because of the defeat of the Goodling Amendment, which seeking to deny military assistance to India for its failure to support the US in the UN General Assembly, in the US House of Representative on 21 July 1999.\(^{54}\)

Again in August, the anti-India Burton Amendment was withdrawn by US Congress. The proposed amendment had called for providing any development assistance to India, a 25 cut ($11.2 million) from US President fiscal year 2000 requested level of $447 million, and to allow development assistance to India, but only through Non-Government Organizations (NGO). Its withdrawal under pressure signified the growing recognition of the importance of India by the US Congressmen. Therefore, such development definitely improved Indo – US relations.

In September 1999, India and the United States hold talks on Afghan crisis and the occasion provided another good opportunity for improving their understanding in regarding to the need to meet the growing menace of international terrorism which they agree to jointly combat terrorism\(^ {55}\).

However in the same month, in its first “Annual Global Survey on Religious Freedom”, the United States State Department blamed the BJP, Rashtriya Swayamsevaka Sangha (RSS) and other Hindu organization for their attitude towards religious conversion and non-Hindus.\(^ {56}\)

Lastly in December 1999, the US voiced its support for India during the crisis created by the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane to Kandhar (Afghanistan) by the Islamic terrorists. The US strongly condemns the hijack and demands the

\(^{53}\) Peter R. Blood, p. 4, p. 10, See also Daniel Joseph Juba and G.V. Vaidyanatha, p. 14, p.192

\(^{54}\) Daniel Joseph Juba and G.V. Vaidyanatha, p. 14, p.199

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 200

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
immediate safe release of hostages. As increasing threat to India by terrorist, in January 2000, US – India Joint Working Group on Counter – Terrorism was established.

Apart from the above development, which could be named as another turning point of Indo – US relations, the decision of the US President Bill Clinton to Pay a state visit to India in March 2000 as well as the decision of Prime Minister Vajpayee to pay a return visit to the United States in September 2000 created a very helpful for a big push forward to Indo – US relations and cooperation in various areas of mutual interest in the 21st century.

President Clinton visits to India (March 2000): Diplomatic victory and a new phase of Indo – US relations

In March 2000, Indo – US relations registered a big boost forward, when President Clinton paid a historic visit to India during 19 – 25 March. It was after a gap of 22 years that a US President came to India.

In New Delhi, Clinton’s arrival caused an outbreak of ‘Clintonmania’ which led national newspapers to publish even the most trivial details of his visit on front pages and generated high expectations among Indian. It has been observed by some that President Clinton’s visits to India was meant of the recognition of India’s new – found status after its nuclear tests, that was also meant that India was now a major power because of its nuclear capability.

During this visit, the occasion was used by both the countries to review their relations, to have a future vision and to initiate in a way the process of strengthening of Indo-US cooperation in various spheres of activities in the 21st century.

Subsequently, during his visit to India, President Clinton and India’s Prime Minister Vajpayee on 21 March resolved to create a closer and qualitatively new relationship between the United States and India. In his Joint Statement on bilateral relations signed by both the leaders entitled “US – India Relations: A Vision for the

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57 Ibid., p.201
58 Ibid.
21st century”, which stated inter alia “the United States believes India should forego nuclear weapons. India believes that it needs to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent in keeping with its own assessment of its security needs. Nonetheless, India and the US are prepared to work together to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. To this end, we will persist with and build up the productive bilateral dialogue already underway”.  

The agreed principles on institutional dialogue included;

- Regular India – US summit meeting

- An annual foreign policy dialogue between the Secretary of State and the Minister for External Affairs

- The continuation of the on going dialogue on Security and Non-proliferation between the Deputy Secretary of State and the External Affairs Minister.

- The Joint Working Group on Counter – Terrorism would continue to meet regularly

- The institutionalization of a bilateral economic dialogue

- The creation of a Joint Consultative Group on Clean Energy and Environment and the setting up of the US-India Science and Technology Forum to promote research and development and transfer of technology

In statement also, both the leaders stressed, that “ India and the United States will be partners of peace with a common interest in an complementary responsibility for ensuring regional and international security, to engage in regular consultations on, and work together for, strategic stability in Asia and beyond, bolster joint efforts to counter terrorism and meet other challenges to regional peace, and strengthen the international security system, including the UN and support to its peace keeping efforts”.

60 Washington File, 21 May 2000
In this way, India and the United States was now deemed to have entered a new stage-continuous, constructive in the political area and beneficial in the economic arena. It was to form the basis for mutual strategic, economic, political and social benefit.\footnote{Kanti Bajpai, “India – US Foreign Policy Concerns: Cooperation and Conflict” in Bertsch, Gary K., Seema Gahlau, and Anupam Srivastava, ( eds), Engaging India: US Strategic Relations with the World’s Largest Democracy, ( New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 194}

In his address to the joint sitting of the Indian parliament on 22 March, President Clinton spoke of the commitment by both countries to forego nuclear testing and said that India could pursue defence policies in keeping with its commitment not to pursue a nuclear or missile arms race which the Prime Minister has forcefully reaffirmed just in these test couple of days.\footnote{Washington File, 22 March 2000} He asked both India and Pakistan to sign the CTBT, to stop production of fissile material and join the Fissile Material Control Treaty (FMCT) negotiation and to institute tight export controls on goods and equipment related to their nuclear programmes. Clinton also expressed strong US opposition to terrorism throughout the region and pressed Pakistan to use its influence with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to curb terrorist training camps and to put an end to their continued hosting of Osama bin Laden, a Saudi millionaire who the US was supposed to be the main financier of Pan-Islamic terrorism.

Also, while Clinton applauded India’s democracy, diver sit and liberalization of the market, talked of four challenges that should define India – US partnership in the year ahead. There were; to get their economic relationship right, to sustain global economic growth, to protect the environment and reversing climate change, and to protect the gains of democracy and development from forces undermining them, e.g. organized crime and drugs, the evil of trafficking in human beings and more so, the threat of terrorism.\footnote{Washington File, 22 March 2000}

On the question of India – Pakistan relations, he praised the Prime Minister for his courageous journey to Lahore. He made it clear that he had not come to South Asia to mediate the dispute over Kashmir, and that this was a matter for resolution between them.\footnote{Span, May – June 2000, pp. 8-9, 14-15.}
This was reflected in an interview with the American ABC on 21 March, President Clinton enunciated US policy on the Kashmir dispute; respect for the LOC, resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan and renunciation of violence as a means of solving the dispute (the three Rs). He also added that he believed that there were elements within the Pakistani government that have supported those who engaged in violence in Kashmir. However, he also maintained that there was no military solution to Kashmir’s problem by India either, and that they deserve to have their own concerns addressed on the merits.66

Nonetheless, his remarks were significant from the Indian perspective. At a joint press conference earlier that day, Prime Minister Vajpayee had said that if Pakistan reaffirmed the principles of the Lahore Declaration, respect of the LOC (the Simla Agreement of 1972 renamed the 1948 ceasefire line as LOC) and did not promote or support violence across it, he thought a dialogue could be resumed.67

Regarding to the Kashmir issue, and the visit of the President Clinton, it appeared that Clinton had changed his attitude somewhat in the Kashmir issue, and did not insist on the referendum laid out by the United Nations.68 On the other hand, in his remarks during his five-hour stopover in Pakistan, Clinton reportedly urged General Musharraf to develop a timetable and a roadmap for restoring democracy at the top as well as the local level.69 Moreover, a senior US official pointed out what Pakistan needed; “it needs better governance. It needs to end its dangerous associations with extremist groups in the region. It needs to demonstrate restraint, practically on the ground in Kashmir. It needs to find way to renew, broaden, and deepen dialogue with India. It needs to stay away from adventures like Kargil. It needs to use its influence with the Taliban in Afghanistan to end that war, to shut down terrorism camps and to bring terrorists to justice. It needs to sign the CTBT and demonstrate restraint in developing weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them”.70

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 21 March 2000
69 Washington File, 22 March 2000
70 Riedel, Bruce, “New Opportunities in US-South Asia Relations: An assessment of President Clinton’s Visit to India” CASI Occasional Paper, No.12, 9 May 2000

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Besides other things, the trade part of the visit by Clinton to India went off successfully with some US $2 billion worth of commercial agreement and US $1 billion in US export financing being finalized. Most of the agreements related to the information technology sector in which India’s exports were growing at a rate of 50 percent a year, with about two thirds of them going to the US.

In all, this was probably the most extensive and successful visit to India by a US President, which made both sides to avoid the proliferation roadblock and concentrate on the expansion of the broader relationship. In the words of Secretary Albright said "it was the beginning of a new chapter" and as a senior administration official said "what we ‘ve heard this week is the sound of ice melting…a relationship that for 50 years was frozen in the contours of the Cold War"\footnote{Washington File, 24 March 2000}

Throughout his stay in India, Clinton repeatedly called India a great nation and welcomed its leadership in the region.\footnote{Ibid., 22 March 2000} The Indian government regarded Clinton’s visit as its significant diplomatic victory, which was “to have brought about a sea – change in the US policy towards South Asia” and “it spears to be tilting towards India”. Hence, a new phase was now deemed to have begun in Indo-US relations since the visit of President Clinton.\footnote{Rajiv Nayan, n. 68, p.1709}

Thus, all reflected the fact that a new and real beginning of Indo – US relations was in deeded being made towards the development in the 21st century. The US President Clinton visit to India also reflected the new desire to make the bilateral relations closer and better and better.

**Prime Minister Vajpayee visits to the United States (September 2000)**

After a historic visit to India by president Clinton, a further big boost came in September, when PM Vajpayee paid a return visit to the United States in September 2000, for 4 days ( from 13-16 September). During this visit Vajpayee conducted highest level talks with the US government.
In this visit, it appealed that India and the US being “natural allies”. President Clinton said to Vajpayee “we have established the firmest and most mature partnership. India’s achievements are our common achievements. India and America can change the world.”

In his address to joint meeting of US Congress, Vajpayee pointed out, referring to Pakistan, that, “there are force outside country that believe that they can use terror to unravel the territorial integrity of India”, that has made “religious war” an instrument of state policy.” Vajpayee in that speech proposed to host a comprehensive dialogue on development, spoke of India’s process of liberalization of economy, the information technology revolution and talked of a shared commitment to ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons. The meeting of 15th September 2000 between Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Clinton and the joint statement while acknowledging the differences over issues like nuclear non-proliferation, agreed to narrow the differences on this matter, to hold counter terrorism consultations and work on a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and stressed cooperation in areas like power, IT and agriculture. At a White House briefing on 15th September US National Security Advisor, Bruce Riedel, and Assistant Secretary of State Karl F. Inderfurth, also backed India on UN Security Council seat without linking it with the settlement of Kashmir issue.

Another key meeting held by Vajpayee on Capital Hill on 14th September 2000 was with the Congressional Caucus on India, which was committed to promote bilateral cooperation. In his address to the US- India Business Summit, Vajpayee made a strong pitch for US investment in ranges from infrastructure to manufacturing, from financial services to knowledge bases enterprises. Finally, on 16 September he met a group of Indian American Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who were heavy weights in the information technology and thanked them for helping change the image of India in the American mind. Besides, during the Vajpayee visit, five commercial deals worth $6 billion for project in power, e-commerce and banking sectors were also signed. A $ 900 million loan agreement was also signed

74 Ibid., p.1711
76 Times of India, 16 September 2000.
77 Ibid., 18 September 2000.
for the purchase of US good and services. Three agreements for establishing energy centre in India were also signed.\textsuperscript{78}

This visit also reflected increasing Indo-US consensus on economic and regional issues. The visit, therefore, provided further strength to increase Indo-US cooperation in almost all spheres.

After the successful visit, throughout the year 2000, India and the United States continued engaged with each other in a positive environment. In September 2000, India and USA signed an agreement for controlling narcotics trade and drug trafficking. For this purpose, the US agreed to give a sum of $ 200000 to the Indian agencies engaged in checking drug trafficking.\textsuperscript{79}

In November 2000, a meeting of Indo-US Joint Working Group relating to the issue of peace-keeping operations under the US agencies was held. The group, after analyzing the difficulties being experienced in this area, agreed to put in essential efforts and to cooperate and coordinate at bilateral level.\textsuperscript{80}

**New US Administration; George W. Bush replaces Bill Clinton**

In January 2001, George W. Bush from Republican Party, took office of Presidency over from Bill Clinton. Bush Administration continued the Clinton policy of engagement in South Asia, with a special emphasis on US-India relations. Bush also laid much stress on the importance of strategic dialogue with India and considered that India was “a rising country with global status”, and the key factor of maintaining Asia’s security. He expressed his desire to extend Indo-US friendship and cooperation.

Under the new Bush administration, Indo-US relations witnessed much developed. In hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the then Secretary of State Colin Powell stated “…India has the potential to help keep the peace in the vast Indian Ocean area and its periphery. We need to work harder and

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\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 17 September 2000

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.


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more consistently to help them in this endeavor. He added that “India was a country America’s foreign policy should focus increasingly”

He observed the US foreign policy should give an important place to India because India was having nuclear weapons as well as Indian economy was stably and steadily getting stronger. This is why the US paid great attention to developing relations with India.

In February 2001, the US administration ended the blockage of the sale of British Sea –King naval helicopters to India and hinted that post- Pokhran II sanctions would also be softened.

In early April 2001, as invited by Secretary of State Colin Powell, Indian Minister for External Affairs and Defence Minister Jaswant Singh visited the United States. This was the first meeting between India and US senior officials since the Bush Administration was in office. President Bush appeared unexpectedly when Mr. Singh met with National Security Advisor to President Condoleezza Rice in the white House, and invited Mr. Singh to talk in the Oval Office for nearly 40 minutes. President Bush told Mr. Singh the US’s Nuclear Missile Defence (NMD) plan in advance which India was among the few countries that were informed.

India’s swift albeit carefully ambiguous response to the proposals was followed by a visit of the US Deputy of State Richard Armitage to New Delhi on 11 May 2001. This appeared to have been successful, with the Indian Government appreciating his presentation and looking forward to further exchanges. Mr. Singh in his talks with Richard Armitage for more than one hour, declared the following press conference, that Indian government welcome and continually welcome President Bush’s speech on developing the NMD plan and establishing a new nuclear security system for the world, and India would design a new and creative security system for the world with the US together. In the mean time, Prime Minister Vajpayee showed India’s attitude officially in the third anniversary meeting for India’s nuclear test, and said India welcomed President Bush’s talks. In this visit,

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81 Washington File, 17 January 2001
82 The Hindu, 15 April 2001
83 Ibid., 13 May 2001
Armitage also carried a letter from President Bush in which he accepted an invitation to visit India.

These moves were part of evolving Indo – US relations. In a wide – ranging interview in May 2001, the Indian Ambassador to Washington, Lalit Mansingh, made the following points. Firstly, the nuclear genie could not be put back in the bottle, the two countries has to ho beyond and look at common strategic interest. Secondly, contrary to the perception that the missile plan would impel China to expand its nuclear missile stockpiles, India did not fear such an outcome, but he refused to say whether growing cooperation was aimed at deterring China.\textsuperscript{84}

Another indicator of the importance that Bush administration has placed on its relations with India was the appointment of Dr. Robert Blackwill, a confidante of the President and his National Security Adviser Dr. Condoleezza Rice,\textsuperscript{85} as US Ambassador to India in July-August 2001.

Thus, under the Bush Administration, it appeared that Indo – US relations and cooperation in several areas would grow and become mature. While the Indo – US engagement had been proceeding at a fairly fast pace right from the beginning of the Bush Administration, it gained a new sense of immediacy after terrorist attacked in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. The terrorist attacks changed US agenda in South Asia as the US found itself in a new position of maintaining and having good relations with both India and Pakistan (for cooperation on war against terrorist), in which India gave its full support for US counter terrorist efforts and that Pakistan decided to align itself with United States. Therefore, the event of 11 September provided an opportunity for the US to build a partnership with Pakistan and at the same time building strategic relationship with India on different bases.

**The event of 11 September 2001: The transformation of Indo-US relations.**

On 11 September 2001, the United States was attacked by a series of well – organized and coordinated terrorist attacks. A number of thousand innocent people were killed after terrorists hijacked four planes (civilian airliners) slammed into the twin towers – the symbols of American economic and financial power of the World

\textsuperscript{84} Washington Times, 3 May 2001
\textsuperscript{85} Washington File, 18 July 2001
Trade Centre in New York and the West sections of the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

The US's prime suspect behind these terrorist attacks was Osama Bin Laden and his organization “Al Quida”. President Bush came out very strongly against international terrorism and makes it clear that his nation's resolve put an end to this menace. The fundamentalist Taliban regime in Afghanistan which was believed to be functioned under the patronage of Bin Laden and was the sanctuary for Al-Quida and its activities, refused to hand over Laden to the US authority and consequently the United States decided to liquidate it. For achieving its objective of securing an end to the Taliban regime and terrorist group of Osama Bin Laden, the US found that it needed Pakistan support, territory and logistics and Pakistan was, at that time, had no option except to support the US policies, and action against a regime which had been its ISI’s handiwork. Pakistan had to end its pro-Taliban policy due to US pressure and to adopt US perspective of the Afghanistan crisis and its solution of ending Taliban government and hunting for Bin Laden through the use of American forces.

Therefore, Pakistan had once again emerged as US frontline state. President Musharraf extracted a deep price and laid down the conditions – a promise to intervene in the Kashmir dispute, keeping India and Israel out of the coalition, waiver of external debt, and a bail out financial package. US went along, there was also rumored that US went along with not interfering with the terrorist camp in Pakistan occupied Kashmir which believed as from where they launch attacks on India.

In addressing the joint session of Congress on 20 September, President Bush announced the start of 'war on terror'. He said “our war on terror begins with Al-Quida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated”. In this way “Operation Noble Engle” was designed by the USA to flight global terrorism. Bush said “we will direct every resource at our command- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence,

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87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence and every necessary weapon of war to the disruption and defeat of the global terror network”. 89 He added “it’s a new kind of war...this Government will adjust and this Government will call other Government to join us”. 90

Thus, the whole focus of Bush Presidency shifted and the world geopolitics also changed. They have also transformed the dynamics of regional security in South Asia as it turned US’s South Asia policy temporarily upside down, bringing Pakistan to center stage and putting parts of the US – India agenda on hold. 91 As South Asia scholar Stephen P. Cohen has said, “no part of the world was more affected by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 than South Asia”. 92

Following the attacks of 11 September, it appeared that the US has three main goals in South Asia in three terms i.e. short medium and long terms

- In short term, it was trying to prevent on all-out war between India and Pakistan while concurrently maintaining Indian and Pakistan cooperation in the anti-terror campaign and keeping bilateral relations with the two nations on a positive course.

- In medium term, the US was interested in preventing the Indo-Pakistan conflict from erupting into a nuclear exchange and ensuring that nuclear weapon – related material in South Asia was not obtained by terrorists to other organizations that would confound non-proliferation efforts.

- In long term, the US seeks a permanent solution to the Kashmir problem while at the same time attempting to avoid creating a sanctuary for extremist Islamic militants in this region.

The above three main goals of US policy towards South Asia was more cleared when a year after the attack of 11 September, the US issued a paper “National Security Strategy of the United States of America”. Apart from others, it

89 K. Subrahmanyam “Superpower Retreat” Times of India, 5 June 2002.
90 L.R. Reddy, n.29, p.361
indicated the US policy in South Asia. The paper said that “it would invest time and resources into building strong bilateral relations with India and Pakistan”. The paper emphasized that “India’s potential to become one of the great democratic powers of the 21st century” and that the US had “worked hard to transform our relationship”.

In order to ally India’s pessimism the United States indicated that it planned to create balance in its South Asia policy; a partnership with Pakistan if its Afghan policy. With India, it wanted to continue developing strategic relationship. After all, this relationship had been created over the years as the US and India had common interests in political, economic, defence and technological field.

All these, in return, the US wanted to maintain good relations with both India and Pakistan for their support and cooperation in the US war on terror.

**Combating and Anti – Global terrorism: Dimensions of Indo – US Cooperation.**

After the attacks of September 2001, the mutual commitment to the war against terrorism provides a new depth to Indo – US relations in the light of the uncompromising position taken by the United States that nation which do not support its war against terrorism would be target and that those who harbour terrorists will share their fate.

India, as suffer from the menace of terrorism for the last many years came forward strongly condemn the terrorist attacks in the United States. Vajpayee committed India to “waging peace” along with the United States in its announced war against terrorism. Much was made in the Indian media of the fact that comparable acts of terrorism were familiar to Indians. “This moment of charred truth”, India Today editorialized, “is not America alone. We have been there before”.

India offered its full support and cooperation including intelligence sharing and military support in combating terrorism. India also voiced full support to the US

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94 Ibid.
anti-terrorist policies and extended full cooperation to the US in fighting against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Al-Quida network.

All information regarding terrorist activities in the region was supplied by the Indian government to the United States. This made Indo-US cooperation started progressing.

By doing this, India hoped that now the US would be able to understand its plight and would include it as a proactive ally in international coalition against terrorism. In short, after September attacks, as the US has launched a determined, sustained and decisive war against terrorists and state that harbour them, India hoped that Kashmir would be included in world wide fighting against terrorism.

India’s desire was that the United States and other should see the fight against Bin Laden and Al-Quida and the fight against Pakistan – backed terrorism in Kashmir as India saw it or as one and the same.96

Pakistani General Musharraf also assured fullest cooperation to President Bush in fighting terrorism. As Taliban hosted Bin Laden which was hiding somewhere in Afghanistan, President Bush, therefore, lost not time in engaging Pakistan as a major player in war against terrorism. It was because Pakistan was in a position to provide logistical, intelligence and other support to the US and was the only logical choice for bases to mount operating in Afghanistan.

The US, though aware of Pakistan’s links with Taliban and Al-Quida, nevertheless needs its cooperation in the campaign against them. While seeking its cooperation, the Bush administration indirectly warned it for harbouring and supporting terrorists.

The campaign, in the name of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, made Pakistan a frontline state in the US – led counter – terror campaign. This time, two important factors contributed to Pakistan’s renewed significance in US policy. First, Pakistan shared a border with Afghanistan and was among the few countries that had a formal diplomatic relationship with the Taliban regime. Second, Pakistan

96 Richard Crockatt, n. 95, p.66.
itself combine the two major security threats to the Unites States; weapons of Mass Destruction and perceived link with terrorism.97

On the Pakistan side, perhaps Musharraf was of the view that if Pakistan did not cooperate with the United States, his nation, would be marginalized and isolated by the US and international community; at worst, Pakistan itself could be targeted because of its support of close relationship with the Taliban.

In response to India’s full support and Pakistan’s indispensable help in the global war on terrorism, President Bush rapidly waived sanctions and provided assistance to both. On 22 September 2001, Bush waived all remaining nuclear test-related economic sanctions against Pakistan and India. This included those under the Glenn Amendment which bars licenses for items on the US munitions list and prohibits defence sales under Foreign Military Sales and Foreign Military Financing.98

On 27 October 2001, the President Bush signed S.146 (P.L. 107-57) into law, officially waiving sanctions on Pakistan related to democracy and debt arrearage through 2003. In addition, the removal of sanctions allowed the US to extent $ 600million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) to Pakistan. In 2002 Pakistan received an estimated $ 624.5 million in development assistance and ESF, while India received $ 164.3 million in development aid, ESF and food aid grants.99

On 17 October 2001, the Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and the US Secretary of State, General Colin Powell, asserted during a joint press conference in New Delhi that “India and the USA are natural allies, that they stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight against terrorism and, they have the responsibility, as the world’s largest, multi – ethnic democracies to work in close partnership with

98 Washington File. 9 November 2001
each other”. They also asserted that the prospects for cooperation between India and the USA “have never been brighter”\(^{100}\)

In November 2001, during the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Washington, a Joint Statement issued as the two sides were;\(^{101}\)

- Reaffirmed the ending ties between the two countries and the importance of further transforming the relationship

- Noted that both countries were targets of terrorism as seen in the barbaric attacks on 11 September in the US and on 1 October in Kashmir. (this point was significant in that it equated the events in the US to the attack in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly building in Srinagar, allegedly by Pakistan-based terrorists)

- Expressed satisfaction with the progress made in India-US cooperation on counter terrorism

- Announced the establishment of a Joint Cyber-Terrorism Initiative.

- Agreed to begin a dialogue between the two governments with a view toward evaluating the process by which the transfer dual-use and military items, with a view towards greater transparency and efficiency.

- Agreed to initiate discussion on civil space cooperation

Through, US appreciated India stand of supporting its war against terror and there was growing convergence between India and American perception on terrorism but However, there was little hope that the US would declare Pakistan—a state sponsoring terrorism or putting hard pressure on Pakistan to stop insurgency and violence in Kashmir. Till 13\(^{th}\) December, when the terrorists launched an attack against Indian parliament, the USA strongly condemned it and termed it as attack on freedom and democracy. It supported the Indian policy and efforts against terrorism. It imposed a ban on such terrorist outfits as Lashkar e Taiba and Jaish e Mohammed.

\(^{100}\) Text of this press conference has been released by the American Information Resource Center, Kolkata.

\(^{101}\) Washington File, 9 November 2001
It also called upon Pakistan to take steps for eliminating the activities of terrorist outfits.\textsuperscript{102} All these terrorists groups were patronized by Pakistan’ ISI. The USA has freezeed accounts of these organizations because of their association with the Al - Quida, the Musharraf regime had avoided banning them in Pakistan.

However, the intensity of Indo- US engagement was from the fact that in the month of January 2002 alone Secretary of State Colin Powell, Environmental Protection Agency Director Governor ChristineTodd Whitman, FBT Director Robert Mueller, Defence Intelligence Agency head Admiral Thomas Wilson, and the State Department’s Counter Terrorism Chief Francis Taylor visited New Delhi. In turn, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes and Home Minister Lal Krisha Advani traveled to Washington.\textsuperscript{103}

Following the visits, India and the US reached a full understanding for extending and strengthening their socio – economic – politico – strategic – defence cooperation. A bilateral agreement was signed for sharing military information as well as for extending their cooperation in the sphere of technology.

General Richard B. Myer, while visiting India in the middle of February 2002, spoke of the “unprecedented level of military cooperation between India and America and held that “only a solid military partnership could defeat terrorism” and at the same time, he has contended that defence cooperation between the two states “would lead the way in continuing transformation of bilateral relationship”\textsuperscript{104}

In addition, in late April the Assistant Secretary of State for political Military Affairs Lincoln Bloomfield Jr. visited India for the first Indo – US Political Military Dialogue to set the stage for a closer and even more production bilateral security relationship and also in May the Indo-US Cyber Security Forum was also launched to discuss Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP).\textsuperscript{105}

At this time, the US came forward to accept some of India’s security need and announced the willingness to sell high technology radars to India. Chief of staff


\textsuperscript{103} Washington File, 29 November 2002

\textsuperscript{104} Sekhar Ghosh, p. 102, p. 67

\textsuperscript{105} Washington File, 2 May 2002}
of the Indian Army also visited the United States and conducted high level talks with the US defence officials.

Here we see that after the terrorist attacks of 11 September in the US and 13 December in India, both India and the United States were come closer to each other and agreed to work together in fighting global terrorism. By the US decision to involve Pakistan in the fight against Al- Quida sponsored terrorism; India hoped that this would also mean to end Pakistan support to terrorist outfits operating in this region. It would also mean that US – Pakistan relations will now not come into the way of developing cooperation between India and the United States.

Indo – US relations throughout the year 2002 remained cordial, but due to some factors such as US – Pakistan relations, US decision to maintain balance Indo – Pakistan relations, US increasing concern with Iraq etc. had kept the growth of bilateral cooperation quiet slow. High level diplomacy initially remained confined to the US desire to reduce Indo – Pakistan border tensions. Indian decision to deploy its army in full battle readiness for forcing Pakistan to abandon its support and help to the terrorist outfits operating in Jammu & Kashmir, was viewed by the US as a dangerous confrontation between two countries, which both having nuclear weapons, while the US wanted Pakistan to take effective steps for neutralizing Pakistan based terrorist outfits, it wanted India to take steps to de – escalate border tension.

All the higher officials, who repeatedly visited India such as Deputy Secretary Mr. Rumfield and the US Asst. Secretary of State for South Asia Mr. Christhner B. Rocca, came for reducing Indo – Pakistan tensions. India felt quite disappointed with the US viewpoint as it was not accepting the continued Pakistan’s support to terrorists, even after they had struck at Army camp of Kaluchak on May 14 2002, while the US strongly condemned the Kaluchak attack, it also felt that Musharraf was trying his best in face of difficulties being faced in the process of controlling terrorism.

The terrorist assault at Kaluchack has crossed the limit of the patience of Indian Government and people, and demanded retaliatory action was coming from every corner. A consensus was growing in favour of a big strike to break the
backbone of Pakistan sponsored terrorist network. Defence Minister George Fernandes taking tough stand announced, “We cannot have this kind of terror go unpunished, particularly, when there is a global coalition to fight terrorism and we are part of that coalition”.  

Despite disappointment over the US unwillingness to take a major actions against Pakistan as it had been taking against other states, which were regarded by it as pro-terrorist states, India continued to Develop bilateral cooperation with the United States particularly in areas such as defence, strategic, economic relations.

As such in August 2002, Brijesh Mishra, the Principal Secretary to India’s Prime Minister and the foreign Secretary Mr. Kanwal Sibbal discussed with Armitage about the possibility of working out a strategic framework for their bilateral relations.

In June 2002, while some US NGO’s criticized the Government of India for its failure to prevent and contain communal violence in Gujarat, which upto 2000 people mainly Muslim were killed. The US administration preferred to maintain a silence, as around this time India and the United States signed some agreement for preventing environmental pollution and for forging cooperation health and medicine sectors. Thus, by keeping silence of the US administration at this incident showed that the US did not want to risk its relations with India and that it wanted to enhance cooperation with India.

In September, Prime Minister Vajpayee met US President Bush in New York on the sideline of the UN General Assembly annual session on September 2002. In this meeting, they discussed the issue of Indo – US cooperation in five key sectors namely, high technology, space research, civilian nuclear technology, economic and defence cooperation and regional – global issues. At this time, it was widely believed that the US would now consider the importance of India from a wider perspective, not in limited context of South Asia regional perspective

Again President Bush emphasized the importance bilateral relations particularly cooperation in the areas of anti – terrorism and defence security and

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107 Times of India, 14 – 17 September 2000.
strongly condemned terrorism and rejected violence even in the name of freedom struggle. Mr. Vajpayee also reiterated the need for global and comprehensive action against terrorism and the necessity of reining in states sponsoring terrorism, in which he means Pakistan. The US also assured Government of India that it would do everything to persuade Pakistan to check and end border infiltrations. This was considered as an achievement of India in extracting an assurance from the United States. After that Pakistan under strong pressure by the United States, promised that it would not allow its territory including the so called Azad Kashmir (PoK) to be use for exporting terrorism to any other country. It also promised to bring an end to the infiltration of terrorists across the border permanently.108 This commitment brought a thaw in the rising tension between the two countries.

In December 2002, India – US signed the Non - Extradition Pact regarding surrender of persons to international tribunals. This agreement imposed two kinds of obligations on the two. It restrained either side from making available or subjecting to the jurisdiction of international tribunals, nationals of the other party, without the consent of other side. It also prohibited extradition or other wise surrender of Indian nationals by the US and American nationals by India to a third country for the purpose of subjecting them to the jurisdiction of any international tribunal. Such an agreement had become essential after the establishment of International Criminal Court (ICC). The US had signed such a treaty with 16 countries. India was of the view that this agreement was necessity of giving protection to Indian soldiers engaged in UN peace keeping operation.

108 The Hindu, 8 June 2002.
Post 11 September: Focus on US Nuclear Priority in South Asia, Indo-US defence cooperation, and cooperation on counter-terrorism:

US Nuclear Priority in South Asia after 11 September: enhancing security and control over nuclear weapons and materials.

The attacks of 11 September have put the policy debates on what to do about proliferation in South Asia with a heavy dose of frightening reality. US policy toward the region now could be addressed in three main concerns:

- Preventing weapons of mass destruction from falling into the wrong hand
- Preventing a nuclear confrontation in South Asia
- Mitigating negative side effects on countries outside South Asia that have flirted with developing ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons

The issue initially garnering the most attention was whether Pakistan nuclear weapons, either through theft or an overthrow of the government by militants, might fall in to the hands of Al-Quida or other forces sympathetic to its radical goals. The US may also be afraid that India nuclear weapons or materials might also be vulnerable to theft or diversion as India is a multiethnic society with the world’s second largest Muslim population, and Arab fighters could blend into Indian Society. This speculation, however, seems to be impossible.

However, the consensus was growing on the kind of assistance that the US could and ought to offer India and Pakistan to provide better security of their nuclear weapons. Most of this assistance could be given quickly and in response to short-term needs. These would include

- Organizational “best practices”, including personal reliability programmes, site security and rapid response teams.

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110 Ibid., p.9
111 Ibid.
• Table top exercise to assist in identifying potential vulnerabilities and requirements

• The promulgation of “US lessons learned” during the last 50 years to identify likely issues that Pakistan and India should address more comprehensively

• Provision of non-sensitive equipment, including monitoring equipment for vaults; tracking equipment for nuclear weapons; and communications equipment

Regarding to the broader non-proliferation picture, the US was now at a critical juncture in the effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and developments on the subcontinent would give significant affect to other key issues perceptions and decisions. In this way, the concern was to avoid a “cascading effect” where second-tier states feel increasingly exposed by their earlier decision to give up the nuclear option.

For this reason, the US non-proliferation policy toward South Asia would be watched closely. In this regard, the US had to maintain “red lines” in its cooperation with both countries.

However, the post 11 September security environment has clearly made the issue of Indian and Pakistani control of nuclear infrastructure, materials, and weapons more salient than ever. As compared to pre-11 September debates focus almost exclusively on how Pakistan and India would handle their small nuclear arsenals during a crisis that mandated full or partial nuclear deployments. In contrast, the new debate encompasses the need for tight security over fissile material stocks as well as assembled and unassembled weapons in both countries. Nuclear weapons and stockpiles of fissile materials in both Pakistan and India could compromise an enticing target for Al Quida.

By setting aside for the moment its acceptability to the US, Pakistan or India, at least in principle, could offer a variety of assistance officially, semi-officially, or unofficially to help enhance security and control over the new nuclear arsenals in both countries. Such assistance might range across a spectrum from “software” to
“hardware”, from greater to less sensitively in terms of direct entanglement in either country’s nuclear weapons posture.\textsuperscript{112}

Thus, in the aftermath of 11 September attacks, India and Pakistan found themselves as declared members of the same side in the fighting against terrorism and in the meanwhile, the US also found itself in the unaccustomed position of having good relations with both countries at the time. This realignment presents new opportunities for India, Pakistan and the United States to address longstanding regional and non-proliferation concerns. Therefore, in this context, the US should combine the goal of non-proliferation with its goal of regional stability.

**Defence and military cooperation in the post 11 September**

After the event of 11 September attacks, there has been a big change in Indo-US military cooperation. This was probably reflecting the strategic realities of the post Cold War world and the US’s increasing appreciation on India as it must play in the regional balance. At a meeting of the Indo-US Defence Policy Group (DPG) in December 2001, the two sides committed themselves to substantially increase the pace of high level policy dialogue, military to military exchanges and other joint activities including combined special operating training, combined training exercises between US Marines and corresponding Indian forces as well as small unit ground/air exercise. It was also agreed to\textsuperscript{113}

- Establish a separate Security Cooperation Group to manager the defence supply relationship between the US and India.

- The Joint Technical Group under the DPG would meet at the same time to discuss the promotion of bilateral ties in the field of defence production and research

- US Joint Staff and the Indian Chief of Integrated Defence Staff would meet in the spring of 2002 and regularly thereafter to discuss tri-service institution, military planning and tri service doctrine.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p.24
\textsuperscript{113} *Asian Defence Journal*. April 2002, p.73
As part of the growing Indo–US military links, the Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes visited Washington in January 2002 and held substantial talks with Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. Issues covered included terrorism as well as sharing of military intelligence.\textsuperscript{114} The two sides also signed a General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) which essentially guarantees that they would protect any classified technology shared between them. It also paves the way for the future sale of US weapons to India.\textsuperscript{115}

On 17-18 February 2002, General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff visited India as part of the ongoing process to enhance Indo–US military cooperation. His visit had been preceded by a series of talks held by the Army and Navy Steering Group (ESG) which resulted in the expansion of military–military cooperation to level unprecedented in the history of the bilateral relationship.\textsuperscript{116} The details was that

- **Navy to Navy cooperation**: a three–year programmes of substantive exercises, combined operations, port visits and conferences. These activities would include search and rescue operations, anti–submarine warfare, maritime surveillance as well as the continuation of the Malabar series of naval exercise. Detailed discussions regarding joint usage of training sites, logistics supports, airspace control, personal exchanges and plans to combat terrorism and piracy plans to combat terrorism and piracy were also held.

- **Army to army cooperation**: a specific security cooperation program for 2002 and a framework for activities for 2003 and 2004. These include high altitude and other joint training, disaster management, expert and military school exchanges

- **Air Force to Air Force cooperation**: this would cover topics such as search and rescue and support requirements for airlift forces.

\textsuperscript{114} The Hindu. 11 January 2002
\textsuperscript{115} Washington Post. 18 January 2002
\textsuperscript{116} United States Information Service. “US-India Military Cooperation Fact Sheet, US Embassy, New Delhi, 18 February 2002
• **Defence Sales and Military Training:** International Military Education and Training (IMET) for India would double in 2002 to $1 million and India would also receive funding to enhance its peacekeeping training facilities. India would also be purchase AN/TPQ-37 Weapon Locating Radars, the first major Government to Government purchase from the United States. Purchases of other types of military equipment were expected to follow.

In March 2002, the Indo–US Joint Technical Group (JTG) was revived and several areas of cooperation begun before the 1998 sanctions were renewed and it was decided to explore opportunities for joint research, development and production of military systems. Later that month the Security Cooperation Group met in Washington to address future military sales and address export licensing procedures as well as an Acquisition and Cross – Servicing Agreement to enhance Indo – US military interoperability.

The AN/TPQ – 37 deal worth $146 million was finally signed on 18 April 2002. This was the largest single purchase of military equipment from the US ever. The sale was supported on the grounds that it would help to improve the security of a country which has been and continued to be an important force for political stability and economic progress in South Asia.\(^\text{117}\) It has also been reported that India was exploring the possibility of acquiring Sikorsky anti – ship missiles.\(^\text{118}\)

On 15 April 2002, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca on a visit to New Delhi praised India’s cooperation in the war on terrorism, specially its agreement in principle to monitor the Malacca strait in cooperation with the United States. It was also implied that the US was having discussions with Indonesia and Malaysia on the issue.\(^\text{119}\)

On 20-23 May 2002 and agreed to further cooperation agenda and was scheduled to meet again in New Delhi in February 2003. It should be pointed out that the May DPG meeting took place at a time when tensions between India and Pakistan were very high.\(^\text{120}\)

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\(^{118}\) Jane's Defence Weekly, 13 February 2002

\(^{119}\) Washington File, 17 April 2002

\(^{120}\) Asian Defence Journal, 23 May 2002
Thus, it was clear that the events of September changed the dynamics of US – India defence relations. This was also seen in an interview with the Hindu newspaper on 3 May by the US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage who once again emphasized the growing defence relationship saying that “India had been very helpful in assisting with logistics and flights’ and what was significant was this relationship was now ‘astronomically different’ from what it had been a year ago. “We love the idea of being able to call on occasion on Indian ports, naval ships...we hope it will be good for US – India relations”. On the other hand, allaying apprehensions from some section of Indian politician, Ambassador Blackwill has made it clear that the US has no intention of stationing US troops permanently in India. Regarding Indian military acquisitions from Russia, the US attitude was that India was a free country and as such it was free to acquire defence systems from any country. Further, given the changed international situation, good relations between India and Russia were now in the interests of the US. This statement indeed was a measure of the changed quality of US – India relations.

Finally, we can say that bilateral defence cooperation was considerably enhanced because of the need to deal with terrorism, including Washington’s consideration of transferring weapons systems to India for the first time in decades.

**War against terror and Indo – US Cooperation on Counter –Terrorism**

In the post 11 September, preceding further, the war against terrorism would necessitate that the unequivocal support of the international community was ensured. Further, a multi-pronged effort was required to address much security issues linked to international terrorism. The advent of suicide bombers, moreover, draws attention to a new and dangerous phenomenon.

Thus, the US felt that the need for international cooperation to coordinate the counter measures required to protect the world from the ravages of international terrorism was necessary. In this way, dealing with its hazards in one part of South Asia (Afghanistan), but ignoring its danger in Kashmir was impossible or illogical.

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121 Washington Times, 6 May 2002.
122 Times of India, 6 February 2002.
India hoped that international community will turn more attention to the Kashmir issue and the militant in the region.

The war against the Al Quida, for instance will require a comprehensive diplomatic and international policies effort, for which the cooperation of some 50-60 countries, where they were believed to be operating was required. Therefore, this provides a new context for India – US cooperation in the war against terrorism. Incidentally, an Indo – US treaty was signed in 1997 for the extradition of fugitive offenders. A bilateral treaty was signed in October 2001 for this purpose, which was the most importance for waging this war.

After 11 September 2001, it was clear that greater sensitivity has indubitably developed in the United States towards the problem of cross – border terrorism in India. This was demonstrated following the dramatic suicide attack upon the J&k Legislature Assembly on 1 October and the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001. A convergence, therefore, obtained between India and the United States to ensure that President Musharraf stays on course to deal with jihadis and the extremists in Pakistan society who constitute the major regional threat of terrorism. The US has a genuine interest in dealing with the global aspects of terrorism, but its focus on South Asia was also motivated by its strategic interest in Central Asia and the fact that the Pakistan- Afghanistan nexus has become the epicenter of international terrorism. Moreover, the question remained whether a permanent solution can ever be found to the problem of terrorism since the situation has been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent, that it may be beyond the capability of the West to arrest it.123 This menace provides the United States and India an opportunity to coordinate their policies to defeat the Taliban and Al-Quida organization. There was also a speculation that it was possible that these terrorists would operate against India from new bases in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) because large numbers of Al- Quida leaderships unscathed were believed to be escaped to Pakistan.

Indo –US Joint Working Group on anti – terrorism expressed their common interest in this problem, and coordinates their responses and implements the directions contained in UN Security Council Resolution 1373 which urged all countries in the world to join the war against terrorism. The third meeting of this

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Working Group, held in June 2001, focused on Taliban – fostered terrorism. After 11 September 2001, India has been sharing its information on guerrilla training camps inside Afghanistan with the United States. At its fourth meeting in January 2002 the Group identified the following areas for future cooperation, joint investigations and intelligence sharing that includes radio intercepts; improving border management that would involved the Sandia National Laboratory and the use of different types of sensors to detect infiltration; a joint India – US Initiative to counter the growing danger of cyber terrorism that would also deal with threats to internal security, and ways to disrupt the funding of terrorist activities.\footnote{Atul Aneja, “Focus on four key areas to fight terrorism” The Hindu, 20 January 2002.}

As especial area of Indo – US bilateral cooperation could focus upon the emerging threat of cyber terrorism, which should be a matter of concern to both countries, but which they were uniquely qualified to contain. Indo – US Cyber Terrorism Initiative has been launched envisaging the exchange of information of the cyber threat environment, and also discussion on legal cooperation, joint training, regularized cyber attack and assessment notification, the adoption of common international software security standards, and bilateral E- security workshops.\footnote{Ibid.}

In brief, Indo – US cooperation on counter – terrorism has a spatial dimension, but was also linked to its individual security components. Apart from bilateral cooperation in promoting these endeavours, the United States and India could work together to ensure that the global war against terrorism acquired a wider membership for its pursuit, suggesting a greater role for them in the United Nations.