ABSTRACT
Abstract

In this study, an attempt has been made to survey and analyze the Indo-US political relations during the period of 1982-2002. It covers the administrative period of Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s second term as Prime Minister and that of Atal Behari Vajpayee in India and from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush in the United States of America. Apart from this, a retrospect of the historical background of Indo-US relations has also been studied.

Broadly speaking the relationship between India and the United States is a unique situation which reflects an interesting story of relations between world’s two largest and oldest democracies. Their relationship has been described by many scholars, writers in very similar terms, for instance, ‘love and hate’ relationship, ‘roller-coaster’ relationship or ‘unfriendly friends’. My views as expressed in my research work is also no different to them (during the Cold War period). The relationship involves more tension and little friendship. Their relationship has fluctuated from time to time and has given an account of continued friendship and cooperation crossed by conflicts and strains due to the nature of issues involved and the manner in which the parties in power dealt with each other.

Their relationship hitherto has much been affected by the dynamics of the Cold War strategy as they have divergent perceptions, interests and foreign policy courses. Third countries have always been influenced in Indo-US relations as both the countries have differed over their relationship with some particular third countries like China, the Soviet Union and mainly Pakistan.

During the period under survey, it is seen that there were both positive and negative factors, which influenced the course of Indo-US friendship and cooperation as well as conflicts and irritants. The Positive and helping factors which have fostered Indo-US friendship and cooperation since Indian independence are the influence of American war of Independence and Declaration of independence on India, American’s role in supporting Indian independence, common faith in democracy and the goal to achieve world peace, American recognition of the importance of India and India’s need for US economic assistance.
Apart from the above factors, the end of Cold War, the collapse of Soviet Union and the US war against terrorism have also significantly contributed to the growth of Indo-US relations. It brought an opportunity for both the countries to re-establish their relationship and come closer to each other, which marked a new chapter in Indo-US relations.

Despite the above positive factors, Indo-US relations did not grow smoothly due to some negative factors such as initial lack of clear view of each other, difference in goals of national interest, initial lack of US interest in India, opposed foreign policy principles, security alliances and Non-alignment. The differences between India and America in respect of the following major issues and problems during 1947-2002 further prevented the growth of US friendship and cooperation. These differences were on the Kashmir issue, issue of recognition of Communist China, the Korean crisis, US peace treaty with Japan, extension of American security system to South Asia, India’s relations with the Soviet Union, US-Pakistan relations, differences over the liberation of Goa, differences in respect of South East Asia and West Asia, differences on Vietnam, Bangladesh crisis, American opposition to India’s nuclear policy, differences over the issue of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, US’s military and economic assistance to Pakistan, differences over Diego Garcia and Indian Ocean, US decision to enforce Super 301 and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) against India, difference over Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and New International Economic Order (NIEO).

The preceding study reveals that although during the freedom movement, President Roosevelt helped India in getting independence and it was much appreciated by Indian, but due to their national interests that were defined differently, Indo-US relations could not be friendly beyond a certain point. India held the view that its interests could be best served and achieved only by pursuing a non-aligned policy, i.e. not joining either of the power blocs. This policy was not favoured by the United States, as it was in search of allies and concluding military pacts with other countries in order to contain communist expansionism. To America, the immediate danger to its security arose from the expansionist policies of communist Russia. Therefore, it did not approve of India’s policy of non-alignment.
By giving economic aid to India, United States hoped that it could succeed in bringing the latter under its influence. However the US had failed to do so, then it influenced Pakistan to join her. India did not like this as Pakistan would become very strong and the normalization process between the two would be jeopardized. Thus ignorance and prejudice on both sides gave the relations a bad start.

The main source that caused tension in Indo-US relations from the Indian perspective was the massive American economic and military assistance to Pakistan. In 1954, Washington signed the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with Pakistan by which the latter was promised massive arms aid. This upset the balance of power in the Indian Sub-Continent and threatened the security of India. However, Indo-US relations witnessed some improvement during President Kennedy’s period. At this time, Nehru’s visit to Washington helped in developing a better understanding between the two countries. Moreover, the US moral support and military assistance to India during the Chinese aggression in 1962 strengthened the relations between the two countries.

Another significant irritant in the relations between India and the United States took place during the Bangladesh crisis in 1971, again the United States showed its tilt towards Pakistan. During this period, Indo – US relations reached to the lowest ebb. When the Nixon administration went out of its way to side with Pakistan and showed great hostility to India. It blamed India as aggressor, cut all military and economic aid to India, moved three resolutions in the UN Security Council in support of Pakistan, secretly planned the supply of US arms and spare parts, in utter disregard of public opinion in US itself, and to crown it all, even sent the US talk force (Seventh Fleet) in to the Bay of Bengal to demonstrate its support to Pakistan and exert psychological pressure on India.

During Mrs. Indira Gandhi’ period (first term in office), another important issue which plunged Indo – US relations was the nuclear issue. Sharp differences arose between India and United States over the explosion of a nuclear device by India at Pokharan in Rajasthan on 18 May 1974. Both the American official and press were outraged by the Pokharan experiment and reacted rather angrily to the so-called nuclear proliferation. The US news media, the conservatives, the liberals, the
writers, the cartoonist and commentators condemned India for over ambitious and audacious move.

With the Jimmy Carter assuming Presidentship in 1975-76 in the US and the Janata Party coming to power in India in 1977, a new phase in Indo – US relations was heralded. India regarded Carter as another Kennedy. The Janata Government declared its intention of adopting genuine non-alignment. This meant that earlier policy of a tilt towards the Soviet Union would be restructured so as to establish more cordial relations between India and America. President Carter also expressed his desire for closer relations with India. This was exemplified by his recognition of India’s regional power status. He even visited India to make the Indian Public opinion more sympathetic to the United States.

In 1980, with the coming back to power of Mrs. Gandhi in her second term as Prime Minister of India and with the President Reagan in power in the United States in January 1981, Indo – US relations once again turned for the worse. The differing perceptions of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the fall of the Shah of Iran further created more tension between the two countries, as the US worldview took on a new perspective. The Reagan Administration’s decision to supply arms to Pakistan means reinforcing India’s image of a hostile America. Knowing well that their policies in the subcontinent had driven India and the United States further apart, they were ready to pay the price because advantages of these policies appear to them to outweigh the costs of alienating India, a regional dominating power.

The United States joined hands with China in providing military aid to Pakistan during the Afghan crisis was clear. Not only the earlier suspension was revoked, some more assistance was given, to enable Pakistan to repel invasion. What worried India more was that US gave $3.2 billion worth of arms and economic aid to Pakistan for the fiscal year 1982 -1987. Washington considered this aid necessary as Pakistan not only sheltered millions of Afghan refugees, but also helped the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet Union and the Soviet – backed Afghan Government. India vehemently protested against supply of sophisticated arms to Pakistan on the ground that arms like Abraham tanks, harpoon missiles and F-16s, were not suitable for the rugged Afghan terrain, but would be used only
against India. All this, however, fell on deaf ears. The US continued arming Pakistan to the teeth which affected India’s security as well as her economy. Mrs. Gandhi had rightly pointed out that Pakistan would never fight the Soviet Union with the US arms but would use them against India.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi tried to read the Afghan situation quite differently which did not please the United States. She made three point statements that what happened in Afghanistan was an internal affair in which no outside power should have interfered. Secondly, soviet troops were there at the invitation of the government which repeated more strongly the appeal made by the previous government of Hafizullah Amin. Thirdly, those who criticized Soviet intervention did not utter a word of protest against the Chinese intervention in Vietnam in February 1979.

Another important factor that soured Indo – US relations during 1980s, under Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi’s period was the militarization of the Indian Ocean. Since the seventies, India had requested the super powers specially the US to withdraw her naval fleet from the Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean is of strategic significant for the US since it serves as a passage for their oil supplies from the Gulf, and can be used in an offensive against the Soviet Union and offer support to the US allies among the littoral states.

India viewed the military advances of the Reagan Administration in its neighbourhood with great apprehension. It regarded their presence in the area as a threat to the region’s stability and security. When Mrs. Gandhi assumed Prime Ministership of India in 1980, she exhibited her pro – Soviet “tilt” by regarding the US as the major “intrusive power” in the region. It was because that the Indian Ocean offered a greater strategic advantage to the US than to the USSR. Therefore, the US was more likely to utilize its naval base facilities in the Indian Ocean against the Soviet Union. Besides bringing the Cold War rivalry to India’s doorstep, the militarization of the Indian Ocean has threatened Indian security because it was feared that after the establishment of US presence in the region it would attempt to intervene in the regional conflict. The Lusaka Declaration of 1970 had given a call to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, to prevent great power rivalries in the
region and their interference in the affairs of the state of the region. At the time of its adoption, India had received the support of most of the littoral states on the issue. However, with the acquisition and development of bases by the US and the creation of Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) in the region, the US had not only gone against the spirit of the Declaration, but also drawn the littoral states apart.

By establishing political and military relations with most of the countries of the region, the US had reduced the support for the proposal of a peace zone. Thus, the US policy towards the Indian Ocean endangered regional stability and Indian security. This concern over the militarization of Indian Ocean resulted in tensions in the Indo-US relations.

Another international issue over which India and the US differed was South-East Asia, it concerned with the issue of Kampuchea & Vietnam. India’s support to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, its economic assistance and recognition to Heng Samrin government, supported by Vietnam and installed by it in Kampuchea was opposed to United States. The US, however, strongly opposed the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea as well as Heng Samrin government.

The US policy in West Asia was affected by the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war. The US Administration, however, maintained its neutral stand for its first two years. But after Iranian attacks against Iraq in 1982, the US had changed its policy. It adopted a policy of supporting Iraq. Though it was not publicly acknowledged since a National Security council study had concluded that a defeat of Iraq would come in the way of American interests in the region. In this matter, India was greatly concerned since the war caused economic losses. It has been realized that South-South economic relations require favorable circumstance, which promote negotiation between the parties. Thus, India opposed the continued hostilities, which unlike most other countries, the Indian government did not decide to withdraw from the region but attempted to get peace restored as a member of the Non-Aligned countries.

For the Palestinian issue, the significance of Israel and the emphasis of the superpowers rivalry led the US to oppose the activities of the PLO. This was, however, due to its strategic interests and a strong Jewish lobby and the US support
to Israel. The Indian government, on the other hand, had always advocated the cause of the Palestinians and extended its support to the PLO. Thus, India and the US differed over the Palestinian issue. While India has regarded the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians, Washington has always been critical of its activities. This difference, therefore, prevented the way of improving relations between India and the US throughout Mrs. Gandhi’s period.

The US and the USSR attempts to enhance their influence in the international sphere, had resulted in the US disregard of India’s opposition to colonialism, racialism, war and violence. However, one rare aspect over which the two superpowers agreed was the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. With respect to this objective, the US and the Soviet Union have combined their efforts, since 1970s, to pressurize India to adopt full-scale safeguards of the IAEA and sign the NPT. The US also wanted the assurance from India that it would not develop its nuclear programme with the aim of manufacturing nuclear explosives. The Reagan Administration continued this attempt with greater favour and propagated an elaborate programme of nuclear non-proliferation. Since the NPT was presented for signature, India took a consistent stand on the issue. It continued to regard the NPT as ‘discriminatory’ on the basis that it proposes the imposition of certain restrictions on the no-nuclear weapon states, which are not applicable to nuclear weapon state. Consequently, it demands the imposition of restrictions on their future nuclear programmes as well as a significant reduction in their existing nuclear arsenals. Like its predecessor, the Reagan Administration did not find any justification of India’s stand on NPT. Thus, the stalemate over the issue has been a persistent irritant in Indo-US relations.

The US, therefore, attempted to pressurize India to follow its dictates by threatening a termination of fuel supplies to Tarapur Atomic Power Reactor. By that time, Indian scientists had developed an alternative to the fuel, called mixed oxide. The Indians were confident that even if supplies were terminated by the US, its power plant would continue to function. Thus, the Indians were not alarmed over the US threat. However, the US did not want to loose the little control that it had over the Indian nuclear programme and therefore assisted in the negotiations, which
resulted in the supply of nuclear fuel by France. However, nuclear non-proliferation remained an irritant due to India's refusal to sign the NPT.

Another major issue of disagreement between India and the US was the proposal of NIEO to which India like other non-aligned countries held a different view with respect to the world economy and the economic problems of the developing countries. The Reagan Administration and some other developed nations held the view that the NIEO was not an economic programme intended to solve the existing crisis of the Third World countries. It was a weapon being used by them to attack the developed nations. The US held the developing countries responsible for their own economic problems. Their inaccurate planning and inefficiency were the cause of the economic crisis. The US found it difficult to understand the Indian advocacy of the NIEO. Secondly, while India saw the existing situation as one in which the South was dependent on the North, the US held the view that international interdependence existed in the present system and no country was treated differently. Thus, the US opposed the idea of NIEO, which stands for restructuring of international economic relations by making appropriate changes in the international economic institutions, like IMF and the World Bank. It was of the view that if any reforms were to be worked out, the discussions should be held in specialized agencies only. In this way, India's concern for the economic problems of the Third World and its advocacy of NIEO came in the way of the US national and economic interests and weakened Indo-US relations.

India's relations with the United States under Mrs. Gandhi's period also followed a downward trend due to the alleged US support to the Sikh extremists, who propagated the formation of Khalistan and the suspicion about the development of American policy in the Punjab including the US attitude towards the separatist movement of the Sikh extremists and terrorists who were active in North India and had strong organizational and financial links in UK, USA and Canada. It was known that extremists were basing themselves in USA and Canada, there was obvious disquiet about possible US sympathy for them.

Thus, Indo-US relations during Indira Gandhi's second term as Prime Minister 1980-1984 did not show much improvement. Despite several diplomatic exchanges made by the head official of both countries, it could not produce much
achievement in improving Indo-US relations. Though Mrs. Gandhi tried to create a rapport with American leadership, the latter was firm in their commitment to Pakistan which was a factor that always came in the way of the two countries in developing cordial relations between them.

After the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi and coming to power of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, a more congenial atmosphere was noticed in the Indo-US relations. The US hoped that Rajiv would be friendlier to the West than his mother was. They also hoped that by upbringing and education, Rajiv had developed pro-western orientation in his outlook and being a man of technological set of mind, he was a forward looking statesman.

Throughout his period, however, Indo-US relations had shown a mix record. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to Washington 1985 and 1987 further helped to the development of Indo-US trade and economic relations. The visit was successful exercise in image building and in enriching understanding between the two countries. However, net result was that the visit did not produce any major Indo-US agreements. On many issues the two sides did not agree with each other.

During his visit to the United States in 1985, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi openly criticized Reagan’s Administration’s Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) or Star Wars programme, its arms supply to Pakistan, waiver to the Symington Amendment and the Afghan policy. Regarding the supply of arms to Pakistan, the US had clarified that it could not alter its “special relationship with Pakistan” and that the military assistance would continue. Apart from others, Rajiv also hammered at the theme of a nuclearising Pakistan creating a qualitatively new security situation for India. He emphasized upon President Reagan the urgent need for the US to put greater pressure on Pakistan to dissuade it from going ahead with its nuclear weapons programme. Likewise, President Reagan frankly restated the US commitments towards the Indian Ocean and the Gulf.

The continued pro Pakistan tile in the United States’s foreign policy and the supply of high technology weapon to Pakistan, apprehensions about India’s relations with the USSR and India’s growing power position in South Asia, kept the course of Indo-US relations slow and uneven.
However, in March 1986, Indo-US relations had improved after the visit to India by US Attorney General, Mr. Edvin Meese III and the Head of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (USDEA), Mr. John C. Lawn. Their visit brought to the forefront a new area of Indo-US cooperation in narcotics. The visit resulted in the establishment of a joint working group, comprising of Indian and US officials, to check the flow of drugs from India to the US. Thus, the consequent of the establishment of the working group led to Indo-US cooperation in this humanitarian mission.

In October 1986, a new phase in the defence relations between India and the US was initiated by the visit of US Defence Secretary, Mr. Caspar W. Weinberger. His trip underscored US interest in expanding contacts and dialogue in security area. In general assessment, Indo-US relations during Rajiv’s period indicates that though both the countries wanted to cultivate better relations, their strategic and defence perspectives differed and their policies with respect to nuclear proliferation could not be reconciled. However both the countries were able to build-up their economic ties, especially with respect to US investment and trade in India. During his period, cooperation was also witnessed in the field of cultural exchanges, science and technology and control of the spread of narcotics.

A further sources of tensions resulted from the US decision to invoke Super 301 law against India and to brand India as an unfair trade partner. The US decision to single out India for Super 301 actions, while removing Japan and Brazil from the list, caused a strain on Indo-US relations. The Government of India expressed strong resentment against this move and refused to negotiate with the USA over this decision.

Thus, under Rajiv’s Administration, Indo-US relations had shown a mixed picture of cooperative and non-cooperative factors.

Likewise, the National Front Government after assuming the power in November 1989 also decided not to bow before the US pressures. As the US had been successful in securing Indian soft line in April 1989 at the mid term review meeting of TNC in Geneva over intellectual property rights, the US wanted to pursue this push further and listed India under Super 301 (for insurance and
investment issues and for drug patents. India reacted strongly against this move and refused to bow before US pressure by not accepting the US demand for opening the Indian insurance market to American insurers and for removing, and modifying the Indian conditions and requirement to permit direct foreign investment. After the strong Indian stand and the consideration for not making the path of National Front Government in India, the US therefore, decided to suspend action against India under Super 301 in June-July 1990. This US decision gave the much-needed oxygen to Indo-US relations.

At the end of the Cold War with the two superpowers – the United States and Soviet Union gave up the path of confrontation, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991. India, like the rest of the world, was not prepared for this change. This left the United States as the only superpower of the world. It therefore, becomes essential for most of the countries to review their foreign policies and diplomatic activities. It was natural that India’s relations with the United States must also undergo substantial change.

However, it was witnessed that India’s policy had changed just before the end of the Cold War and the relations between the two countries had began to improve. One of the significant signals was that India’ permission to the US air force transport planes for refueling in an airport of Bombay on their way from the Philippines to the Gulf after the out break of the Gulf War. This signal showed that India began to attach importance to its relations with the US, though the commitment was cancelled soon under the pressures from the domestic politics. When the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao took office, he declared clearly in his first foreign policy statement in June 1991 that India thought highly of American’s support for Indian’s economic reform and foreign relations. In December 1991, India supported the United States proposal of removing the UN resolution to identify Zionism as racialism, and established the diplomatic relations with Israel. This was a significant turning point of Indian adjustment of the policy toward America. In the meantime, the US also changed its policy towards India as the US wanted a more developed bilateral relations and dialogue with India and commensurate with its growing role. India also welcomed this change. Therefore,
both India and the US spoke for more and more cooperative contact and strategic cooperation after the Cold War.

The end of Cold War had changed some of the external elements that had limited the development of Indo-US relations. The US has gradually promoted its relations with India and ignored Pakistan, since Pakistan’s importance was reduced in America’s strategy after the disintegration of USSR. The US has paid much attention to Pakistan’s nuclear capability and its potential threats to South Asian security, and thus has somewhat relaxed its stance on the Kashmir issue, from direct interference to encouraging dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Secondly, India and the US interacted with mutual demands in pursuing their national interests when they faced new international situation in the era of the Post-Cold War. India’s role and influence in the international affairs was reduced after the Cold War. In the process of multi-polarization, India was eager to get a favorable place. So India hoped to develop closer relations with the US after it lost the support of USSR, to achieve its target of world power. India also hoped to get US support and approval in settling the dispute over Kashmir and dominating South Asia. India’s economic reform needed a lot of capital, technology and market, and the US was the main source of what India needed. India hoped to strengthen economic relations with the US to achieve its economic takeoff. Lastly, with the end of the bipolar era, India’s foreign policy driven by its own interest was tending towards confluence with the US interests.

At the same time, the US found necessity to develop relations with India when it made strategic adjustments after the Cold War as India’s strategic position could not be ignored. So the US attempted to put India on its strategic course, in order to maintain balance of power in Asia, and to promote the goal of its global strategy. Moreover, India’s economic potential could not be underestimated as India launched significant economic reform since 1991, and its economic growth rate has been keeping 6% annually from then on. The US thought that India had the potential of economic development and the prospect of major market, and hoped to get benefits from the development of India’s economy.
Although the international situation after the Cold War offered to both for a new opportunities and new challenges for the development of Indo-US relations, the further development of the bilateral relations was based upon the previous conditions and had the continuities, so there were the various containing elements as followed;

- The problem of nuclear non-proliferation. One of the main US most priority agenda. Whether they succeeded in cooperation in other fields, the development of Indo-US relations was still restricted regarding to the non-proliferation issue.

- The differences over establishing the new world order after the Cold War. The nature of American diplomacy was maintaining the single-polar world and its hegemony in the world, and not allowing any country to challenge its status as single superpower. India advocated the multi-polarization, and its strategic goal was to realize the desire of a global power, being one polar in the multi – polar world.

- Conflicts on the human rights, as the US criticized repeatedly that India violated the human rights in Kashmir and Punjab. India refused to accept these charges, and considered that it had the rights to hit terrorism there as a responsible government. The US put pressure upon India frequently for this reason and even took sanction measures to force India to compromise. All these factors made India strongly against the United States.

- The economic conflicts, as the US criticized that India did not offer enough protection to the US patents, and applied Super 301 and special 301 to put India on the observing list. India opposed resolutely the US’s coercion and thought that this problem should be settled by GATT and later on by WTO.

- Another factor was Indo-Russia relations as Russia still occupied an important position in India foreign policy even after the Cold War, it had great influence on India. As a strategic partner, Russia did not want India to be inclined to the US too much. India could not ignore Russia’s attitude when it developed the relations with the US.
• Question of Pakistan – US ties, the US’s South Asia policy was both recognizing India’s status as a power in this region and not abandoning the long-term friendship with Pakistan, weakening but not setting it aside, in order to avoid damaging the US’s total interests in South Asia. Although Pakistan was no longer a front country resisting southward invasion of the Soviet Union influence with the end of Cold War, but Pakistan was adjacent to China, Russia, Iran, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf, and its position in America’s global strategy was important.

Thus, the main tendency of the development of Indo-US relations in the era of the Post – Cold War was that they cooperated closely in some fields but some differences persisted in other fields. However these differences on some vital issues were not allowed to cloud the cooperation in other areas and the development of the bilateral relations.

At the time, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited to the United States in May 1994, he emphasized strongly that Indian government hoped to strengthen the relations with the US. His visits got achievement as India reduced political differences with the US. Rao discussed with the US President Clinton on the issues of the bilateral relations and the regional situation, etc. and both of them reached consensus on some issues. Two leaders declared in a joint statement that the two countries would establish a “new partnership”, and, India increased economic relations with the US as Rao persuaded American businessmen for higher investments in India, and invited them to invest in India.

At this time, the US also responded actively to India’s efforts to improve the bilateral relations. The US expressed Washington’s increasing interests in India, and hoped to promote the development of the US-India relations thereby. The US Congress was interested in developing the bilateral relations too.

However, Indo-US relations suffered a serious setback for sometime after India conducted 5 nuclear tests successively on May 11 and 13, 1998, and became a de facto nuclear country. After that the Clinton Administration reacted very strongly and condemned India’s nuclear tests. Moreover, it decided to impose sanctions upon India, cancelled the plan of Clinton’s visit to India in 1998, and required India to
abandon nuclear weaponization, and return to the situation before the nuclear explosion, signing the CTBT and NPT as soon as possible. India, therefore, decided to suspend nuclear tests indefinitely under the American pressure and declared the principle that “no first use” nuclear weapon.

However, since 1999, the environment of Indo-US relations has seen a remarkable turnaround as it witnessed much qualitative improvement in many areas of cooperation and diplomatic relations. A qualitative improvement during 1999 was visible not only because of the objective and firm stand taken by the US in respect of the Kargil war as President Clinton had putted pressure on Pakistan to withdraw its forces after its rash attempt to seize strategic heights near Kargil on the Indian side of the LOC in Kargil, but also because of the defeat of the Goodling Amendment in the US House of Representatives. Indo-US dialogue on Afghan crisis also provided an opportunity for improving Indo-US understanding in respect of the need to meet the growing menace of international terrorism. Apart from others, the US voiced its support for India during the crisis created by hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane to Afghanistan by the terrorists was much appreciated by India.

In March 2000, the relations between India and the United States received a big boost forward when Clinton visited India. During his visit, the US and India signed a framework document titled “The US-India Relations: 21st Century in Prospect”, and decided to establish the new partnership that would last, politically constructive, and economically effective, which included these contents; deepening the bilateral relations through systematical dialogue, regular consultation and increasing exchanges. They emphasized also that the two countries share common interests and complementary responsibility in ensuring regional and world peace in the new century. India and the US decided to establish the forum that included industries, government and academy in economy and trade, and signed the protocol contributing the dialogue in the knowledge based industries. At this time, Clinton had also changed his attitude somewhat on the Kashmir issue, and did not insist on the referendum laid out by the United Nations resolution in 1948.

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 toward South Asia and it appeared to be tilting towards India.
When President George W. Bush took office as the President of the United States, he 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 in maintaining Asia’s security. Therefore, his administration paid more attention to develop relations with India. Regarding to the problem of nuclear non-proliferation, the US has now began to relax its uncompromising stance a bit on India’s nuclear tests. The US tune was lower and lower in requiring India to sign the NPT and expressed that the sanctions upon India were no longer effective, the US should seek a new framework and a new way to relieve its worry about the nuclear problem, instead of the sanctions.

With the President Bush put forward the National Missile Defense (NMD) plan, and attempted to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). India saw the good chances to repudiate or revise the NPT, and become the sixth nuclear power legally from Bush’s proposal. This would make India completely extricate itself from a predicament on the nuclear issue, and enhance its international position. So India declared promptly its support to America, and both of them decided to jointly take strong measures against nuclear proliferation in the meetings of Indo – US Group of Defence Policy held in December 2001. Thus India and the US not only eliminated the differences on the nuclear problem, but also have the common language in nuclear non-proliferation for the first time.

With the bilateral and political relations between India and the US were growing increasingly, the military exchange and cooperation between the two countries also got an important breakthrough as it entered into a new stage. Both the countries expressed that they would bring about the mutual visits of the Chairmen of the Joint Chief of Staff as soon as possible, fix a time to publish the bilateral agreement on military cooperation, and establish an official dialogue system between the Defense Ministers. This made the US to speed up selling advanced weapon system to India, holding joint military exercises and strengthening military technology cooperation.

Recently, the event of 11 September 2001 has transformed Indo-US relations as it was latter witnessed more increasing in many areas of cooperation and bilateral relations. It was one the most important turning point of Indo-US relations. After the
incident of September 11 attacks, India responded promptly to the terror and declared that India would offer fullest support to the United States in its war against terror and in the process of the US’s retaliation on Taliban, which included supplying the related information, logistic support, and military facilities. The United States was much appreciated to this Indian moves.

Following the attacks of 11 September, the whole focus of Bush Administration shifted to combat terrorism and the world geopolitics also changed. They have transformed the dynamics of regional security in South Asia as it turned US’s South Asia policy upside down, bringing Pakistan to center stage and putting apart of the Indo-US agenda on hold.

In order to ally India pessimism the United States make it clear that it planned to create balance in its South Asia policy i.e. a partnership with Pakistan in its Afghan policy and at the same time, it would continue strategic relationship with India. Thereafter, this relationship had been created over the years as the US and India had common interests in political, economic, defence and technological field. Thus the US wanted to maintain good relations with both India and Pakistan for their support and cooperation in its war on terror.

However, Bush Administration managed to maintain relationship with both sides by gaining Pakistan’s cooperation in the war against the Taliban and Al-Quida without jeopardizing the new ties with India. In this way, the US accepted the Indian contention that Pakistan’s activities in Kashmir amounted to terrorism and should end.

As far as the Indo-US politico – strategic – military is concerned, it has increasingly been developed. High-level contacts, arms sales and military exercises have continued. Firm plans have been developed for closer engagement in the future. This indicated that Indo-US relations are developing with a long-term perspective and convergence and that US-Pakistan relations have no discernible impact.

Regarding to the defence and military cooperation in the post 11 September, there has been a big change in Indo-US military cooperation. This was probably reflecting the strategic realities of the post-Cold War era and the US’s increasing
appreciation of India. We can say that bilateral defence cooperation was considerably enhanced because of the need to deal with terrorism, including the US’s consideration of transferring weapons systems to India for the first time in decades.

The war against the Al-Quida, for instance, require a comprehensive diplomatic and international policy effort, therefore, this provided a new context for Indo-US cooperation in the war against terrorism. This resulted in a setting up of Indo-US Joint Working Group on anti-terrorism, to which both expressed their common interest in this problem and coordinated their response and implemented the direction contained in UN Security Council Resolution 1373 calling all countries in the world to join the war against terrorism. Indo-US Cyber Terrorism Initiative has also 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.

Thus, India and the USA have been continuously trying to strengthen their bilateral friendship and cooperation in a healthy and positive environment. It is now possible to conclude that Indo-US relations are improving faster in the wake of the 11 September events, which have only the potential to progress in more positive direction. It is greatly helping in deepening the convergences and mitigating the divergences in Indo-US relations. The subsequent events of the new emphasis on the war against terrorism, the coalition attack on Afghanistan, dislodgement of the Taliban regime and the Al-Quida organization, establishment of a US military base in Pakistan and its being coerced into declaring cessation of support to its jihadi organization and to cross-border terrorism, have changed the political geography of South Asia. Significantly, a new context has been created for Indo-US relations to develop in the future. Hopefully bilateral cooperation in all spheres of activities will increase by leaps and bounds.