

AI – AMERICA INDIA RELATIONS: NEW CHALLENGES AND NEW DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Recently Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his State visit to United States gave a symbolic remark that is an indication of the new dimensions in Indo-U.S. relationship. He said that just as AI – Artificial intelligence is growing as a new tool in technology having far reaching prospects, similarly, America – India relationship will also have a far-reaching implication not only for the two countries but for the world as a whole. Whenever there has been an occasion to highlight the importance of the relationship between the two countries it has always been repeated that they are the world's largest and greatest democracies in the world. It is true that both the countries have emphasized freedom – both within and from outside. Both the countries have had struggle for Independence and both share the values of diversity. Recently the Indian people have immensely contributed for the Information Technology revolution in the United States. India is the biggest source of technical manpower required for IT. Leaders like Mahatama Gandhi and Martin Luther King have influenced the thinking in the whole world. Such rhetoric notwithstanding, the mutual relationship has not been a linear progress. There have been major ups and downs. The national interest and power politics have resulted in divergence in many issues.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI Relations, Information Technology, Power Politics, democracy.

Introduction

The Americans have loudly proclaimed that they are the protectors of the democracy and freedom holding high the torch of liberty and throwing beacon light throughout the globe. Critics have looked at them as a nation guided by self interest and at the same time wavering in its commitment to defend its allies. It has oscillated between isolationism and playing a global role. Inconsistency has been its weakness. Indian Foreign Policy has also passed through continuity and change in the last seven decades since Independence. Both the countries are aware of this. Both realize that their interrelationship could never be static. Although they have shared values and common interests, the changing nature of global politics and economics has been a critical variable and therefore expediency and pragmatism will have to be the guiding principle for both.

It is well known that power and national interest are far more stronger considerations for the foreign policy of a nation compared to ideology, cultural affinity, common concern etc. It has been rightly said that peace has been the dream of the visionaries, but war has been the history of mankind. In spite of sincere efforts, the specter of war and exploitation continue to be widely seen in the world even today. Inequalities persists and the hiatus between the affluent and the poor countries is getting

The Joint Statement 2023

The joint statement issued during the official visit says that the comprehensive global and strategic partnership is going to be anchored in a new level of trust and mutual understanding. The subjects in this statement include the affirmation that technology will play the defining role in deepening the partnership. Space cooperation, technology sharing, Semi-Conductor Supply Chain and innovation, secure and trusted telecommunications, quantum information science and technology, innovative research, Artificial Intelligence, Atomic energy. Major Defense Partnership, Defense Industrial Cooperation Road Map, manufacture of Jet Engine through MOU between General Electric and HAL, Indus-X, clean energy transition have also been included. Deepening strategic convergence, propelling global growth, health for the people have also found prominent place in the declaration. The joint

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statements made by leaders of both the countries highlighted the need to cooperate both for their common good and for the stability of the area of mutual interest. Conceptually, this has again brought to focus the subject of influence of ideology, national interest and power in international relationship.

Democratic Ideology and Realist Power Politics

Hans J. Morgenthau had said that it is the characteristic aspect of all politics, domestic as well as international, that frequently its basic manifestations do not appear as what they actually are—manifestations of a struggle for power. Rather, the element of power as the immediate goal of the policy pursued is explained and justified in ethical, legal or biological terms.⁽¹⁾

This theory was given at a time in which the nation states play a crucial role in International Politics. The background of World War I and II brought to the focus the fact that the nations pursue foreign policy for their security, yet justified the same in ideological terms. Us, Western Europe and Soviet Union were on one side against Germany, Italy and Japan in the World War II for their security. However, after World War II this unity collapsed and the Soviet Union created its own block including many nations in the name of communism. Hence, the concept of ideology as a concept of foreign policy vis-à-vis power became an imprecise subject. The political analyst gave importance to the theory of realism. The dominant view emerged that there are no rules or principles that determine international relations. It is unpredictable and unstable. The nation states have their own assessment and calculations to protect their security and enhance their capability. Foreign policy is dictated by the changing perception of the international environment by the States. In this context power and capability of a nation relationship with other nations joining or severing ties from a group of nations, attacking a country etc. are guided by national interest.

However, it has always been a difficult task for analyst in international politics to unmask the boundary between national interest and ideology. The concept of national interest is not easy to understand. It is practically vague both as a tool for analysis as well as a determinant for action. It is often difficult to distinguish between the short term and long-term concerns, between what a nation professes and what it actually practices. In general terms national interest broadly means the continuing purpose, set of objective and goals is the nation aims to achieve. However, the common interest and overriding concern of all the nations undoubtedly is security and survival. For this, power is of utmost importance for either resisting an attack or deterring a potential threat to security. This is not simple. When a nation increases its power to guarantee its own security is often seen by others as threat to their security. This is a peculiar security dilemma.

The foreign policy of both India and United States are testimony to the complicated relationship between power, national interest and ideology. Since Independence the relationship between India and U.S. have gone through ups and downs that is well known to everyone. India did not accept the suggestion by U.S. to join its anti-communist policy. Nevertheless, the U.S. liberally gave aid and support to ensure that Indian democratic state does not face serious hardship that would put a question mark on the viability of a democratic state. However, later on the United States found Pakistan a more obedient ally and supported it giving military equipment and other aid. In the 1971 war openly sided with Pakistan. India entered into long term packed with USSR for security and other purposes. However, when Pakistan was seen as a pro-terrorist state subsequently and it developed close relationship with China. The Chinese emerged at the new super power threatening the stability of the Asia Pacific region. That has brought the relationship between the India and US to complete the full circle and come close again. Clearly this is nothing do with ideology along. Rather the “new level of trust and mutual understanding is based on the emerging strategic situation”.

In a 2018 “Foreign Policy” article, Harvard international relations Professor Stephen Walt said that despite government official claims of actions on the basis of realism, both Democrats and Republicans have shown a tendency to view foreign policy through the lens of liberal idealism, framing the political climate as a rigid divide between virtuous allies (usually democracies) and evil adversaries (usually dictatorships).⁽²⁾

Foundations of Indo-US Relations

In an article titled Democracy and the US-India relationship by Tanvi Madan in January 2021, she has identified five key pillars of the U.S. - India partnership.

- values pillar
- strategic pillar
- economic pillar
- global cooperation pillar and
- shared values pillar

These have created a wide and diverse set of constituencies for the relationship, including in different sectors and parts of the two democracies. It has also ensured cross-partisan support for U.S.-India ties in both countries. And all this has made the relationship more resilient and sustainable.⁽³⁾

At a time when both the countries are kind of reinventing their political affinity as a context for reaffirming their friendship. Democracy has no doubt the potential to be “values” pillar or ideological pillar. Ideology has been seen as a self-contained and self-justifying belief system based on a world view. Democracy is the bedrock of the political system of both the countries. It has evolved over a long period of time. The people of both the countries value liberty, equality and accountability of the government. This is something on which there could be no compromise. It has been argued that the Chinese system has more efficient and more progressive and that authoritarian rule has made unrepresented progress of China in the last few decades possible. On the contrary, in democracies there is no discipline or unity of command. The Chinese and Russian governments is headed by leaders who continue for a long time giving stability and predictability in governance. On the contrary, the leadership in democratic system suffers from uncertainty and discontinuity owing to periodical elections. United States is keen to project India as a country that represents the fact that stability and progress is possible in a democratic system and that freedom is not an impediment to efficient governance.

Secondly, the emergence of China as a formidable power is the most significant change in the global power balance. Soviet Unions is no more a super power. China has the capability of disrupting the stability international relations that has been seen World War II. Its threat is most evident in the Asia Pacific region. It also has aggressive posture towards India that has forced India to augment its military capability to match the Chinese, whereas previously India’s military preparedness was based mainly on the threat of Pakistan. In such a situation there is a natural conversion between strategic need of both the nation and there is an element of urgency in this.

From the economic point of view, China has emerged as the biggest competitor to United States. Chinese economy has grown at a much faster pace than US. As per the World Bank estimates, as in 2000 the nominal GDP of United States was 1025 to billion dollars compared to 1211 billion dollars of China i.e., 9 times higher. As on 2020, the corresponding figures stand at 20936 and 14722. At the beginning of 2023 US’s real GDP stood at around \$20 trillion and China’s at around \$16 trillion, leaving a gap of \$4 trillion only.⁽⁴⁾ In this context India is a growing economy with sound fundamentals and a great promise. There is a need to augment trade, investment, energy, technology that would be in the interest of US to project India as a robust economy with a democratic state. As far as people-to-people tie is concerned, the Indian enjoy a very positive image in the US compared, for example to the Mexicans or the Chinese. India has been the principal supply of the man power to IT industry and other fields of knowledge production. This could be a foundation for future growth in collaboration and technology transfer.

In international fora, India has always been seen a champion of the afro Asian developing countries. India was one of the pioneers in the Non-Aligned movement after the World War II. Asian and African countries are at present worried and suspicious about the hidden Chinese agenda behind the One Belt One Road policy of China. Some of them have already fallen into debt trap. There is no comparison with the large scale Chinese investment, particularly in Africa. India with the support of US could be the balancing force to the policy of China to have hegemony and domination in the developing countries of Asia and Africa.

Asia Pacific

Asia Pacific has certainly been focused upon as a common key concern between the two countries, given the aggressive Chinese presence in the area.

“The end of the most ubiquitous bipolar security order, the rise of new power centres, the new experimentation in multilateralism, the lack of a classic balance of power, and the growing perception that the dominant hegemon is increasingly less assertive are some of the issues that need closer attention even as India develops greater security stakes in the Asia Pacific.”⁽⁵⁾

Asia Pacific region consist of more than 40 countries that are dominated by the presence of China. The only country that could match the size and strength of China is India. China is already openly demonstrating its aggressive posture towards Taiwan even though US openly supports Taiwan. China is virtually challenging US presence in the Asia Pacific region. Strategic calculations dictate that bot the countries should come together and demonstrate their combine power to win the confidence of the countries in this region. The comparative military’s strength makes it further more imperative.

Comparative Military Strength⁽⁶⁾

Sr. no.	Items	India	Pakistan	China	USA
1	Active Personnel	14.50 lac	6.54 lac	20.00 lac	13.90 lac
2	Total Aircraft	2210	1413	3166	13,300
3	Fighter Aircraft	577	363	1199	1914
4	Helicopters	807	322	913	5584
5	Attack Helicopters	36	58	281	983
6	Tank strength	4614	3742	4950	5500
7	Fleet strength	295	114	730	484
8	Aircraft Carriers	2	0	2	11
9	Submarines	18	9	78	68

The above table shows that given the present alignment in South Asia, the combination of China and Pakistan would have far greater military strength than India alone. India needs the support of some strong partner for its own national security. Russia is unlikely to play any role in this power equation. Hence, India's foreign policy shift is quite wise and appropriate. United States also sees India as the only possible geo political counter balance, an economic alternative and a demonstration of the capability of democratic nation for development and strength.

It is necessary to go beyond the history between them has seen ups and downs.

Of course, India has had a long-term friendship with Russia and received military equipment and technology. USSR supported India in the 1971 war when USA took the side of Pakistan. Recently, it did not openly disapprove Russian invasion in Ukraine and continue to receive import petroleum products. India cannot afford to surrender the strategic option of Soviet Union and the U.S. should realize that The Prime Minister Modi has rightly emphasized that the relationship between the India and U.S. would be of cooperation and not domination.

Another aspect of the unfolding proximity between the two countries is that the reports in the Western media on religious intolerance, control of the media by the Indian Government have raised concerns in U.S. These factors are quite likely to create problems for U.S. administration to assure its Congress as well as the American public that India is trust worthy as a long-term partner as a democratic country. Both the countries have to address these issues in domestic politics carefully. On the part of India, the internal politics has to be more open and inclusive to remove the doubts and apprehensions regarding its commitment to democratic values. United States on its part have to show steadiness on various issues including immigration, restriction, technology transfer for sophisticated arms production etc. The world is already on the brink of a new chapter of Cold War. The situation of hostility short of war is clearly emerging. Chinese influence is on the rise and is a formidable threat to democracy, stability on the global international relations and particularly to the leading role of U.S. in world politics. Kautilya's Mandal theory has clearly suggested that one's neighbor is one's natural enemy and neighbor's neighbor is a friend. This theory certainly does not apply universally. However, in the present scenario, China is certainly a potential enemy and therefore strategic proximity to U.S. is justified.

The joint statement has created many possibilities. Whether the partnership anchored in the new level of trust and mutual understanding would go a long way to serve the interests of both the countries and the global good is the challenge before their leadership and diplomacy.

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