Order Code RL31644

U.S.-India Security Relations

November 22, 2002

Amit Gupta
Consultant on South Asian Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

U.S.-India Security Relations

Summary

Since the 2000 visit by former President Clinton to India and the advent of the Bush Administration, the United States has begun to develop a security relationship with India. This paper looks at why this move is being made, the opportunities and likely constraints, and what role Congress may play to facilitate the future development of this relationship. This report discusses why the relationship has taken off, how the United States benefits from this new relationship, and potential problems that may emerge, both from India's domestic constraints as well as its perceived foreign policy objectives. This report will not be updated.

In the past two years, the United States and India have moved away from the misperceptions of the Cold War that prevented a strong relationship between the world's strongest democracy and its largest one. Instead, there has been an emphasis on common security interests that are both short term as well as those encompassing future concerns. These interests include joint operations and patrolling, transfers of weapons technologies to ensure interoperability, sharing information on and countering international terrorism, and India playing a role in multilateral peacekeeping and peace enforcement efforts. The Bush Administration also seems to view India as being a strong partner in countering China's growing military presence in Asia.

Problems remain within the relationship, however. Religious tensions in India, sparked by both Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism, tend to consume governmental resources and attention to the point that the country is diverted from more forcefully pursuing its role in the international community. Ethnic tensions and conflicts with Pakistan over Kashmir have also forced the Indian government to divert resources from international issues to the maintenance of internal security.

At the external level, doubts remain in India about the value of a full-fledged security relationship with the United States because it would mean moving away from the country's traditional policy of non-alignment. From the United States's perspective, U.S. relations with India need to be balanced by relations with Pakistan, the needs of the war on terror, and the behavior of China.

Contents

This report was prepared under the research supervision of Dick K. Nanto, Head, Asia Section; Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division.

U.S.-India Security Relations

Evolving U.S.-India Security Relations

Since the March 2000 visit by President Clinton to India and the advent of the Bush Administration there has been an effort, in both the United States and India, to strengthen ties and develop a security relationship. The emerging relationship centers around arms sales, joint training, the possibility of joint operations, and the future emergence of India as a militarily strong democracy in Asia. At the same time, there are potential problems within the relationship that come both from a continuing fundamental divergence of perceptions between the two countries regarding the rationale for closer security relations and the resolution of the India-Pakistan conflict in Kashmir. In some ways this difference in perspectives parallels a similar difference in U.S. and Pakistani goals and assumptions that underlay the longstanding U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Similarly, a continued India-Pakistan rivalry may place severe constraints on how far the emerging security relationship with India can go.

Several aspects of the emerging security relationship with India are of interest to Congress. These are summarized here and discussed in the report. An emerging arms sales relationship will require the approval of Congress especially since some sales may be viewed as having the potential to escalate tensions in the region. While the economic sanctions on India have been lifted, a restrictive interpretation of the legislation remains in place. It requires the State Department to individually review each application made by India. Further, the issue of technology controls is likely to gain prominence as more transfers to India occur.

Additional issues facing Congress include:

- The level of training of Indian customs officials and other export monitoring personnel for maintaining effective control over dual-use technologies.

- Preventing the export of sensitive technologies and materiel to states of concern.

- The compatibility of India's database on exports of sensitive technologies with American systems and software.

- The nuclear status of South Asia. (As both India and Pakistan build up their nuclear delivery capabilities, missiles, and related systems that have implications for the Missile Technology Control Regime are likely to be included).

- Creation of an appropriate border monitoring system along the Line of Control in Kashmir between India and Pakistan, to help reduce tensions between the two countries.

- Linkage of aid to Pakistan and India to talks about the safety of their nuclear weapons.

- Furthering the 1999 Lahore process that provided for dialog between India and Pakistan on issues that divide them.

U.S.-Indian Relations: Past Security Concerns

In the past, U.S.-Indian relations have been marked by divergent world views that led both countries never to develop the type of relations that the United States had with other major democracies, despite several instances of overlapping security interests. Initial suspicions about post-independence India stemmed from its unwillingness to commit to the western alliance in the emerging Cold War as well as India's adoption of a quasi-socialist economy. While the relationship briefly blossomed during and immediately after the Korean war, with India as a member of the United Nations armistice commission, it soon ran aground with the twin crises of 1956–Hungary and Suez. India condemned the Israeli-French-British invasion of Suez but was far more reluctant to condemn the Soviet Union's brutal crushing of the Hungarian revolt. Relations between the two countries again briefly flourished after the Sino-Indian war of 1962 when the United States transferred conventional weapons to India, discussed covering India under its nuclear umbrella, and for a while was inclined to set up intelligence posts in the country to monitor China. At the economic level, India became a major recipient of U.S. assistance. The United States provided significant amounts of food aid to India in the 1960s to first tide over the country during the Bihar famine and, later, to start an agricultural Green Revolution in the country.

Subsequent attempts to get India and Pakistan to negotiate a settlement on the disputed state of Kashmir, however, made the Indian government distance itself from the United States. At the same time, growing Soviet problems with China led to a strengthening of the India-Soviet Union relationship—particularly in the sphere of military cooperation. By 1971 India and the Soviet Union signed a security treaty that permitted India the freedom to militarily counter Pakistan. India-U.S relations reached their lowest point in 1971 during the Bangladesh war. Indian officials believe that the Nixon Administration sent an aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Enterprise, into the Bay of Bengal to put pressure on India to halt the military campaign against Pakistan.[1]

The relationship remained cool in the 1970s both due to American disinterest–the Vietnam war and events in the Middle East had taken priority in U.S. foreign policy–and because India, in 1974, decided to test a nuclear device. U.S.

---

[1] Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1993), p. 307.

nonproliferation measures were automatically implemented against India, and the 1974 test led to a tightening of both U.S. nonproliferation policies (with the Glenn-Symington Amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act and the 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act) as well as those of other western suppliers–through the creation of the London Club in 1975 and the decision by western nuclear suppliers to ask for "fullscope" safeguards over any future technology transfers to other countries. At the same time, the United States had decreasing interest in Pakistan because it no longer had a relevant role as a frontline state in the Cold War.

A situation of disinterest changed after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The United States, seeking to contain Soviet expansion toward the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, decided to supply arms to Pakistan and to use Pakistani territory as the conduit for supplying weapons to and training for the Afghan Mujahideen. This was done even while it became apparent that Pakistan had decided to follow India and initiate a nuclear weapons program. Although the personal relationship between President Reagan and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was cordial, and her son and successor Rajiv Gandhi was able to garner considerable goodwill in the United States, the rationale of the Cold War kept the two countries apart. It was also during the Rajiv Gandhi period (1984-1989) that the first discussions about transferring defense related technology began. India expressed an interest in purchasing American avionics and powerplants for its Light Combat Aircraft program.[2]

It was only after the end of the Cold War and the coming to power of the Narasimha Rao government in India in 1991 that relations began to improve. The new Indian government, recognizing that the economy was in a crisis, sought to carry out a series of structural and market reforms that relaxed previous obstacles to foreign investment in the country and allowed the economy to be rejuvenated. Indian and American groups began to meet to discuss defense cooperation, especially the transfer of technologies to assist in the development of India's indigenous conventional weapons production programs. At the same time, the first Bush Administration declared in 1990 that Pakistan was not complying with nonproliferation measures and cut off military and economic aid to Islamabad (the President could not certify under the Pressler Amendment of 1985 that Pakistan did not have a nuclear explosive device).

The Clinton Administration sought to improve relations further, but the May 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan led to another series of sanctions being imposed on both countries. While subsequent congressional amendments were to pull back most of the economic sanctions, key ones remained, particularly in the area of military technology transfers. India's Light Combat Aircraft program was delayed because of the inability to obtain General Electric F-404 powerplants to power the prototypes. While sanctions led to a cooling down in the relationship, the United States was proactive in keeping the peace between the two nuclear neighbors.

After the nuclear tests of 1998, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott conducted nine rounds of meetings with India's then foreign minister Jaswant Singh

---

[2] See Raju G.C. Thomas, "U.S. Transfers of "Dual-Use" Technologies to India," *Asian Survey*, Vol XXX, No. 9, September 1990, pp. 840-843.

to try and reduce the dangers emanating from both countries' going overtly nuclear. The discussions led to a shift in U.S. policy on nuclear issues in the region. The earlier position of the Clinton Administration was to "cap, reduce, and rollback" the nuclear programs of both countries. This position changed, at least in the short term, to one of urging India and Pakistan keep their nuclear forces non-deployed and at the lowest possible levels.[3]

The Clinton Administration also made a significant differentiation between India, which it treated as a nuclear democracy, and other proliferating states whom it first labeled rogue states and later states of concern. By treating India and Pakistan differently, it was able to continue developing relations with the two countries–although far more warmly with India than Pakistan–while seeking to limit the damage caused by regional proliferation. At the same time the Clinton Administration successfully practiced international crisis diplomacy in the region.

In 1999, during the Kargil crisis (which followed a Pakistani advance into a remote, high altitude part of Kashmir on the India side of the Line of Control), the United States was instrumental in getting Pakistan to withdraw its troops from the Kargil and Drass sectors of Indian Kashmir and in staving off a potential full-scale nuclear conflict between the two countries. Former White House staffer Bruce Riedel has revealed that President Clinton applied pressure on the Nawaz Sharif government in Pakistan to back down and that the Pakistan military was thought to be readying its nuclear warheads.[4] The United States, however, did proceed to develop bilateral linkages with India on issues of mutual interest–one such forum being the Joint Commission of Counterterrorism.

The relationship took a turn for the better with the advent of the second Bush Administration which saw India as playing an important role in future U.S. policy towards Asia. As Secretary of State Colin Powell put it in his confirmation hearing,

> We must deal more wisely with the world's largest democracy. Soon to be the most populous country in the world, India has the potential to help keep the peace in the vast Indian Ocean area and its periphery. We need to work harder and more consistently to assist India in this endeavor, while not neglecting our friends in Pakistan.[5]

It has been argued that this appraisal of India's position came from the Administration's stance that China was no longer just a major trading partner but had become a strategic competitor that needed to be contained in Asia. This proposed

---

[3] For a discussion of U.S. policy see Strobe Talbott, "Dealing with the bomb in South Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2, March 1999, p. 120.

[4] The U.S. role in getting Pakistan's troops to withdraw from Kargil is described in Bruce Riedel, Center for the Advanced Study of India, Policy Paper Series 2002, "American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House," available at [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/casi/reports/RiedelPaper051302.htm].

[5] *Washington File*, January 17, 2001.

strategy gained further credence after the April 2001collision and forced landing of a Navy PC-3 surveillance aircraft by the Chinese Air Force.

By the mid-2001 it seemed that India and the United States were headed toward building a new relationship that was based on military ties and an increasingly similar world view. Thus the Indian government was one of the first to endorse the Bush Administration's National Missile Defense proposal, especially welcoming the fact that missile defense would go hand in hand with deep cuts in U.S. nuclear arsenals. There was also some degree of agreement between the two countries on the limitations of the International Criminal Court, particularly on the issue of peacekeepers. The two governments also decided not to criticize each other in public—thus moving away from a policy that the Indians had followed in the Cold War days. Indian concerns about the U.S. stand on the Kyoto treaty were conveyed privately to the Bush Administration. The administration, similarly, was muted in its criticism of India's test of a 700 kilometer medium range Agni-1 missile in early 2002.[6]

The attacks of September 11, 2001, however, saw the United States, much to India's consternation, renew its security relationship with Pakistan.[7] India offered unconditional support to the United States including basing rights for carrying out an air campaign over Afghanistan, but Pakistan's proximity to Afghanistan made it necessary for the United States to renew its alliance with Islamabad. Indian concerns about terrorism were highlighted by the attack on the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001, which was viewed in New Delhi as an attack carried out reportedly by the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba group at the behest of Pakistan's InterServices Intelligence (ISI).[8] India mobilized its armed forces and placed them on the border with Pakistan but decided not to pursue a military action following a U.S. undertaking to put pressure on President Musharraf to halt cross- border infiltration. New Delhi has not been completely satisfied with these efforts because infiltration reportedly was not totally halted. There has been some talk among analysts in India that the United States's ability to intervene successfully in South Asian crises is declining and that India, in future crises, will have to rely on itself to address the problems posed by Pakistan-supported infiltration.[9]

While in India some dissatisfaction exists about U.S. policy, particularly the need in Washington D.C. to continue to develop the relationship with Pakistan, more pragmatic goals have ensured that U.S.-Indian security cooperation has continued. The three branches of the armed services of the two countries have set up executive steering groups to facilitate greater cooperation, a joint forum on terrorism continues to work, and Indian government officials attended a ballistic missile defense

---

[6] Dennis Kux, "India's Fine Balance," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2002, Vol. 81, No. 3, p. 97.

[7] ibid.

[8] Ranjit Bhushan, "Shock Therapy." *Outlook India*, December 24, 2001.

[9] K. Subrahmanyam, "Enduring Failures: US dancing to Pakistan's tune," *The Times of India*, July 26, 2002.

conference in Colorado Springs and showed interest in acquiring such a system for India.[10]

The Bush Administration has, however, made it clear that India will play a significant role in its security world view. The Administration's new national security strategy states:

> Several potential great powers are now in the midst of internal transition–most importantly Russia, India, and China. In all three cases, recent developments have encouraged our hope that a truly global consensus about basic principles is slowly taking shape." [The report continues,] "The United States has undertaken a transformation in its bilateral relationship with India based on a conviction that U.S. interests require a stronger relationship with India. We are the two largest democracies, committed to political freedom protected by representative government. India is moving toward greater economic freedom as well. We have a common interest in the free flow of commerce, including the vital sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. Finally, we share an interest in fighting terrorism and in creating a strategically stable Asia.
>
> [Further,] "Differences remain, including over the development of India's nuclear and missile programs, and the pace of Indian economic reforms. But while in the past these concerns may have dominated our thinking about India, today we start with a view of India as a growing world power with which we have common strategic interests. Through a strong partnership with India, we can best address any differences and shape a dynamic future."[11]

U.S. World View and Issues Shaping the Relationship

In the post-September 11, 2001 era, the United States now faces a challenge not only from hostile states but also from nonstate actors who are capable of globalized operations. The United States' technological superiority gives it a global reach and an overwhelming conventional superiority over its opponents, as was demonstrated in the 1991 Gulf War, in Kosovo, and more recently during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. There are, however, several problems that have become apparent in the exercise of U.S. military power.

First, the expanding global obligations of the United States have increased both the number and type of missions that the country's armed forces have to perform against both state and nonstate actors. Second, waging war on two or more fronts imposes a severe strain on the capabilities of the United States armed forces. The concerns raised about undertaking a war in Iraq even while Afghanistan remains unfinished business is a case in point, as it shows how much of a strain is put on U.S. military infrastructure, personnel, and logistics. Third, in the new threat environment, prevention including preemption, if necessary, has become of

---

[10] *Joint Statement Meeting of the India-U.S. Defense Policy Group*, Washington D.C., May 20-23, 2002.

[11] *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, September 2002, pp. 26-27. Available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov.nsc.nss.pdf].

paramount importance. Gathering adequate information about various nonstate actors requires cooperation from nations that until recently were not considered as being in the forefront of the war against terrorism or even potential allies–Syria and Pakistan being good examples.

Fourth, the United States has demonstrated conclusively that it has the ability to wage war in any part of the world and to predominate there. What is more difficult is the development of a successful exit strategy from a post-conflict nation or region. This is particularly difficult given that some of the nations in which the United States seeks to intervene are failed states that require a nation-building effort in order to achieve future stability. Indeed, two of the most successful U.S. nation building efforts–the reconstruction of post-war Germany and Japan–saw a heavy infusion of capital and the continued stationing of troops in these countries.[12] The United States has committed troops to breakaway states of the former Yugoslavia, deployed forces in Central Asia, and the debate continues about how long American troops need to remain in Afghanistan.

Fifth, because the United States desires multilateral cooperation especially in the post-conflict nation-building phase, there is a need for future allies who are willing to engage in such global efforts. The apparent unwillingness of most of the European allies to commit forces to an invasion of Iraq suggests that there may be a need for a broader pool of nations from which to seek such future commitment. Additionally, as U.S. operations increasingly take place in the nonwestern, and now Muslim, world there is a need for nonwestern allies to show that such actions are not cases of western imperialism, but instead, of genuine international concern that require intervention by the entire global community.

Finally, the Administration perceives the need to seek new alliances in Asia. Japan, the principal U.S. ally in the continent, has moved considerably in the direction of providing non-lethal logistical support to U.S. forces. Tokyo maintains its restrictive policies regarding the use of force and the deployment of its armed forces for out-of-country operations. At the same time, there exists the potential challenge posed by a China that is modernizing its military and continues to have territorial disputes with several neighbors (most notably its claim to Taiwan). As one analyst suggests, a strong India raises the price of China's military buildup and expansionist policies in Asia.[13] The growing challenge posed by terrorist groups in South and South East Asia may also require more troops for anti-terrorist operations, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement missions. In these circumstances, an additional ally that is democratic, militarily capable, and possibly willing to engage in the regional and global military operations may be valuable. As China grows as a military power, there may also be the need to have alternate centers of power in Asia that can challenge Chinese dominance of the region.

---

[12] The Administration has reportedly decided that it will have to pursue a reconstruction strategy in a post-war Iraq in much the same way as past administrations did in Germany and Japan. See, "A Postwar Plan," *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2002.

[13] Lloyd Richardson, "Now, Play the India Card," *Policy Review*, No. 115, 2002.

India's Role and Capabilities

India is a potential ally in the pursuit of American foreign policy and international security goals. Despite sectarian and ethnic challenges to its political structure and territorial integrity, India has remained a united and democratic country for more than fifty years. In this period, its scientific capability has grown to the point that the country is emerging as a software powerhouse and its space program has made impressive progress. India hopes by 2008 to emerge as an "information superpower" with sales of more than $50 billion.[14] The space program is commercially viable, produces some of the best unclassified images, and Indian scientists now claim that in five years they hope to launch a lunar probe.[15] One of the areas in which President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee agreed the two countries should cooperate was civilian space technology. The Indians have recently proposed that India and the United States cooperate in the mapping of resources in Afghanistan. This would facilitate developmental and reconstruction efforts in that country.[16]

Coupled with these advantages is the existence of a large, professional Indian military that has considerable experience in international peacekeeping operations. India has also, in the past decade, displayed a limited ability to project power both in the region and extraregionally. The Indian Navy has created an expanded role for itself in the Indian Ocean region and is now conducting joint exercises with the U.S. Navy and is escorting U.S. naval assets through the Straits of Malacca.[17] During the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the Indian government was able to airlift a large number of Indians who had been stranded in Iraq following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

For the United States, a bourgeoning security relationship could create a military counterbalance to China in Asia. This could help reassure American allies who have watched China's military buildup, the development of its missile and space capabilities, its claims to disputed maritime territories, and its bellicose language over Taiwan with concern. A small Indian nuclear deterrent and its large conventional capability could possibly add to China's threat calculus and thus help restrain its regional behavior. Joint naval patrols potentially free American ships to carry out more important tasks particularly pursuing military action in other parts of the world. The Indian military could also play a crucial part in the nationbuilding efforts that the United States may pursue after future conflicts. These possibilities for cooperation, however, would have to tempered by the military and political constraints that prevail in India.

---

[14] "Make India economic superpower: Minister," *The Hindu*, September 20, 2002.

[15] R.K. Rao and Gian Trotta, "India Sets Sights on Moon", Space.Com available at [http://www.space.com/SpaceReportersNetworkAstronomyDiscoveries/Rao_Indiamoon_022502.html].

[16] V. Sudarshan, "Nuclear Family?" *Outlook India*, October 7, 2002.

[17] Chidnand Rajghatta, "India, U.S. to hold joint naval exercises," *The Times of India*, September 26, 2002.

Military Constraints

India's military is a mix between a modern military force and a traditional military, where the army predominates and tactics are conservative. A series of highly publicized arms purchases have given the Indian military a technological edge in its region as well as the potential to project power extraregionally. India in recent years has acquired advanced Su-30 and Mirage 2000 aircraft. It has also upgraded its submarine fleet by purchasing a number of Russian Kilo class boats and is set to acquire French submarines. Its armored regiments are to receive new Russian T-90 tanks. Its long range capability has been enhanced by the acquisition of long range transport aircraft, landing ships, and the reported leasing of two nuclear submarines. India remains in discussions with Russia for the purchase of the *Admiral Gorshkov* aircraft carrier.[18] In the past decade, India has also developed a strong military relationship with Israel to the extent that Tel Aviv has become the second largest supplier of weapons to New Delhi. These systems include the Phalcon airborne early warning system, unmanned aerial vehicles, and the proposed sale of the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system.[19]

Coupled with such high-profile purchases are a set of indigenous arms production efforts that have boosted the country's military capability. These include the nuclear, space, and missile programs. The missile program has provided India with a ballistic missile capability that in the coming decade is expected to allow it to target China's eastern seaboard.[20] The Indian draft nuclear doctrine of 1999 states that the country will acquire a triad (of land, air, and sea based nuclear weapons) with space based assets to direct it thus giving India a comprehensive nuclear capability.[21] This arms buildup is complemented by the existence of a professional military that has respected India's strong tradition of civilian control over the armed forces.

At the same time, there are constraints on the development of this military force into a truly modern one. Several of India's conventional weapons programs have been marked by delays and sub-standard products that have not been acceptable to

---

[18] Col. Stanislav Lunev, "Russian Arms Sales Booming," *NewsMax.com*, September 29, 2000, available at [http://www.newsmax.com/articles/?a=2000/9/29/132221].

[19] Seema Mustafa, "Israel emerges as second biggest arms supplier to India, after Russia,"*Insas*, available at, {http://www.iansa.org/news/2001/aug_01/is_emerge.htm]. For information on Indian force levels, recent acquisitions, and arms production programs see *Bharat Rakshak:The Consortium of Indian Military Websites*, available at [http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/]

[20] Ben Sheppard, "Ballistic Missiles in South Asia: The Ramifications for Regional Stability," Paper presented to the Brookings Institution, April 5, 2001, available at [http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/fp/projects/south_asia/events/20010405.htm].

[21] While official Indian sources stress that the draft nuclear doctrine is just that and that the Indian government of the day would decide the country's current nuclear posture, the force buildup that India is carrying out suggests that India's long term goal is to develop a triad with a space based surveillance and targeting capability.

its military.[22] It, therefore, continues to remain dependent on external suppliers for a range of systems required for warfighting. The development of the nuclear force is progressing at a relatively slow pace, leading some analysts to describe India as a "reluctant nuclearizer" or pursuing "creeping weaponization."[23] Indian analysts talk of the country's nuclear capability being developed over a period of several decades–which may assume that both Pakistan's and China's responses will be fairly static to such developments.

Additionally, India's military doctrine remains one that is rooted in military tactics that favor the large scale employment of land forces. Thus the role of air power and the increasing use of precision guided munitions and unmanned air vehicles are now being integrated into Indian military doctrine. This attitude was best exemplified in the two military confrontations with Pakistan in the Kargil area of the Line of Control–the de facto border that separates the two countries in Kashmir. In the first Kargil crisis, in 1999, the Indian army insisted on trying to retake the peaks captured by Pakistani troops and mujahideen and subsequently suffered heavy casualties in the process.[24] It was only when air power was employed that the Pakistani occupying forces suffered severe casualties, and India began to turn the tide in the conflict. Similarly, in the July-August 2002 skirmish between India and Pakistan in the Kargil area, the Indian army reportedly tried once again to carry out the mission on its own and only at a later date sought the help of the air force.

Also within intellectual and policy circles in India, the remnants of Cold War suspicions of the United States still exist. These suspicions are manifest in warnings of the dangers of a unipolar international system and the need for a balancing force against the U.S. power. These analysts also argue that foregoing India's traditional policy of nonalignment and moving closer to the United States means becoming a satellite state in the American camp and losing independence in foreign policy. As K. Natwar Singh, the Indian National Congress's spokesman on foreign affairs, put it, "The broad foreign policy framework left behind by Nehru has stood us in good stead. There is no other foreign policy India can follow without becoming a satellite."[25] Indian analysts and government officials also remain concerned that the United States has not put enough pressure on Pakistan to prevent cross border infiltration in Indian Kashmir.[26]

---

[22] This was the case with the Marut fighter and for objections raised about the Arjun Main Battle Tank, see Sardar F.S. Lodi, "India's Indigenous Tank Production–A Stalled Effort," *Defense Journal*, September 2001, available at [http://www.defencejournal.com/2001/september/tank.htm].

[23] Ashley Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrence and Ready Arsenal*, (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand, 2001), p. 474.

[24] See Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 86-104.

[25] "Bad domestic policy can never produce good results," *Frontline*, Volume 19, Issue 16, August 3-16, 2002.

[26] Chidanand Rajghatta, "Testy Indo-US ties mark Powell's India, Pak visit," *The Times of India*, July 26, 2002.

Domestic Constraints

Two sets of domestic constraints are viewed as affecting the course of the U.S.-India relationship. One is the state of the Indian economy and its potential for future growth (which is discussed in the section on China). The other stems from concerns about India's ability to resolve ethno-religious tensions that could threaten the unity of the country or, at the very least, bog its leadership down in efforts to maintain domestic harmony. This could prevent India from securing a role of global leadership. It could also limit any potential cooperation between the United States and India, as U.S. concerns about human rights violations may restrict the pace of growth in the relationship. An important part of the second concern is the role of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its espoused agenda of Hindutva (the Hindu way of life).

The BJP's espousal of Hindutva is viewed with concern by both minority groups in India as well as other political parties in the Indian political system. Minority groups see Hindutva as destroying the secular fabric of India, while mainstream political parties suggest that it is undemocratic and goes against the constitutional process nurtured in India since 1947.[27]

Internationally, the 2002 Gujarat riots raised concerns about Hindu radicalism and subsequent statements by sections of the BJP's support organizations–the Sangh Parivar (BJP family)–have been seen as threatening to Muslims. The BJP's ability to achieve Hindutva, however, is severely circumscribed by India's democratic institutions as well as by coalitional politics in the country.

Democratic institutions like the judiciary and the election commission have successfully resisted efforts to push through measures on the Hindutva agenda such as building a temple at a disputed site in Ayodhya (where the Babri Masjid Mosque used to be). The election commission conducted, what was internationally accepted, as a, by and large, fair and free election in Indian Kashmir in 2002. The National Conference, a coalition partner of the BJP, lost the elections. The BJP did not seek to rig the elections and has abided by the electoral verdict. This would not have been possible had the BJP been committed to ensuring that the election results were in its favor and had used the state machinery to win. Similarly, the election commission has refused to bow to pressure from the Gujarat state chief minister, Narendra Modi, who has been calling for early assembly elections in the state.[28]

Indian coalitional politics also put a brake on the ability of the more radical elements in the BJP to fulfill the Hindutva agenda. In 1998, when the BJP first set up a coalition government, it was unable to push through any of the more provocative promises on its manifesto. These included building a temple at Ayodhya and setting up a uniform civil code in the country (India, at present, has different civil codes in some areas to take into account the religious needs of different minority groups). In

---

[27] C.P. Bhambri, "Hindutva and Multi-Culturalism," *The Hindu*, December 6, 1998.

[28] "Nothing wrong with Election commission order on Gujarat polls: SC," Rediff.Com, available at [http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/sep/02guj.htm.]

fact, the only position on the manifesto that was acceptable to India's mainstream political parties, was the decision to resume nuclear testing.[29]

The Gujarat riots of February 2002 left some 2,000 people dead, and the inept handling of the riots by the state government, which many analysts believe was prompted by sectarian considerations, led to India being severely criticized by the international community.[30] This also raised fears that India's secular form of government was being torn apart. While a serious problem for the country, the important issues are how the Indian and Gujarat state government will deal with the perpetrators of the riots and whether, as some analysts believe, the riots work to cement the position of the BJP in the forthcoming state elections.

Since the 1980s, the Indian legal system has done a fairly effective job of bringing to justice criminals who initiate sectarian violence. Several of the main culprits in the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 (that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards), including a cabinet minister, were jailed for their role in those killings. In the case of Gujarat, both Muslims and Hindus who committed murder and acts of violence are yet to be brought to justice.

The BJP has lost the last three state elections in India including the 2002 state assembly elections in Kashmir where its ally, the National Conference, lost its monopoly over state power. It has been argued that the BJP's popularity came not from its pursuit of Hindutva but from its appearance as a relatively uncorrupt political party and from the stature of its Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. Mr. Vajpayee is not only perceived as a moderate in the BJP but also seems to be widely regarded as a true statesman in Indian politics. Moreover, Hindutva has little impact in the southern states of India where regional parties have held sway.

A balanced assessment of India's political system would suggest that the country's democratic institutions remain strong even though some sections within the political process are pushing to change the Nehruvian-style democracy that has held the country together for over fifty years. Further, in a situation of coalition politics, that is likely to continue; no party can stray too far from a centrist agenda without courting electoral disaster.

India's democratic system will likely continue to face challenges from religious and ethnic groups. But the strength of democratic institutions, that are vital for any party to successfully govern the country, as well as the tremendous diversity within the nation, make it difficult for extremist ideologies to successfully entrench themselves as statist policies. This is not to say that ethnic and religious rivalries will be successfully resolved in the future. But their ability to seriously destabilize the Indian state may be questioned, and they do not seem likely to affect U.S.-Indian security cooperation in the near term.

---

[29] Amit Gupta, "South Asian Nuclear Choices," *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 1998, p. 24.

[30] "We Have No Orders To Save You"State Participation and Complicity in Communal Violence in Gujarat," *Human Rights Watch*, Vol. 14, No. 3, April 2002, p.4.

Potential for Practical Cooperation

At the last meeting of the India-U.S. Defense Policy Group in Washington D.C. (May 20-23rd, 2002), the two countries stated that they had achieved the following results in defense cooperation:

- combined naval patrols in the Straits of Malacca,
- resumption of defense trade, beginning with the Firefinder radar sale,
- combined special forces airborne exercises in Agra,
- U.S.-India Ballistic Missile Defense workshop in Colorado Springs, and
- signing of a General Security of Military Information Agreement to facilitate cooperation in defense technology.[31]

Based on these results, what are the likely areas in which security cooperation between the two countries may occur? At present, three areas have been identified: joint cooperation on counterterrorism, cooperation between the armed forces of both countries in regard to localized threats (except Pakistan), and transfers of military technology to India. The easiest of these fields in which to implement cooperation should be the transfer of military technology, particularly that of electronics and subcomponents. But it is constrained by legislative restrictions and pressure from within the executive branch to pursue nonproliferation objectives.

One of the key concerns during the Cold War period was that systems transferred to India would fall in the hands of the then Soviet Union. Now, through recent negotiations, U.S. officials have obtained a pledge from their Indian counterparts that U.S. technologies would not be transferred to other countries–the General Security of Military Information Agreement.

Indian requirements in this area appear principally to be in the form of subsystems to bring their existing weapons platforms to a higher technological level. This would include avionics for aircraft, components to enhance the space program, and to create a modern communications system that would permit the Indian armed forces to effectively communicate amongst themselves and with future coalition partners. While there are ongoing discussions about achieving interoperability between the armed forces of the United States and India, this will not be possible until Indian armed forces have the advanced communications capability that enables them to communicate fully and exchange real time data with American forces.

The United States government has also taken a positive attitude on the sale of third party systems to India. It allowed Israel to sell the Phalcon airborne early

---

[31] *Joint Statement Meeting of the India-U.S. Defense Policy Group*, Washington D.C., May 20-23, 2002.

warning system to India after not allowing Israel to sell the system to China. A key index of the new security relationship is whether the Bush Administration will permit the sale of the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system to India. At the last meeting of the Defense Policy Group the two sides decided to hold a future missile defense workshop in New Delhi and "agreed on the value of pursuing a missile defense requirements analysis for India."[32]

From the Indian perspective, the sale of the missile defense system will strengthen India's "no first use" nuclear doctrine, since it would enhance its capability to survive a first use of nuclear weapons against it. The system presumably not only would be useful against Pakistan, but also against China which currently enjoys missile superiority over India.

Opponents of the Arrow deal with Israel argue that it will destabilize the region, because it would enhance India's nuclear capability and encourage it to engage in a first use of nuclear weapons against Pakistan.[33] Even if the United States vetoed the deal it would not stop the Indians from procuring a ballistic missile defense capability from other sources–albeit less capable ones. India is reportedly looking into the purchase of the Soviet S-300 anti-missile system–a system meant to provide theater missile defense.[34] U.S. approval of the Arrow deal also has symbolic overtones. India was one of the first nations to support President Bush's call for a missile defense and, subsequently, has sent officials to the United States to be briefed on the ongoing progress in the area. India has indicated that it would like to be included in the development of a U.S. missile defense capability and hopes to have such a capability tailored to its requirements.[35] As the Bush Administration attempts to sell the idea to skeptical allies and other friendly countries, the willingness to share the technology may help create a more favorable international environment on the issue.

---

[32] *Joint Statement Meeting of the India-U.S. Defense Policy Group*, Washington D.C., May 20-23, 2002.

[33] One needs to differentiate between a first strike and a first use of nuclear weapons. A first strike would suggest that significant damage could be inflicted on an opponent's nuclear and military capability. First use, on the other hand, is the propensity to initiate the use of such weapons in a conventional conflict. At present, both India and Pakistan seem to lack the number of weapons, the accuracy, and the command and control systems to carry out a first strike. Even with the availability of the Arrow system it is difficult to make the argument that India will have a first-strike capability. The type of space and air surveillance capability required to gather information on the Pakistani nuclear force will take several more years to acquire. For details see Dinshaw Mistry, "The geostrategic implications of India's space program,"*Asian Survey*, Nov-Dec 2001 Vol. 41, No. 6, pp. 1023-1044.

[34] "Agreement on S-300 ABM System Likely," *Strategic Affairs*, September 1, 2001, available at [http://www.stratmag.com/issue2Sep-1/page02.htm].

[35] Indian observers point out that not only is missile defense in its infancy, but India will have to take several additional measures to collaborate effectively with the United States Missile Defense Agency. These would include establishing linkages between its national surveillance grid and America's worldwide surveillance system. See, "Talks on with U.S. to acquire missile shield," *The Hindu*, June 29, 2002.

Another problem with both third party and direct U.S. arms sales to India comes from their impact on peace and security in South Asia. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has called upon the United States to not sell high technology weapons to India, since it would encourage New Delhi to carry out aggression against Pakistan. Arms sales to India also lead to the demand from Pakistan for the sale of commensurate systems, so that it can maintain some form of military balance with India.[36]

The Indian government, however, views major U.S. arms sales to Pakistan as destabilizing to the region.[37] Indian officials argue that each time Pakistan has acquired weapons from the United States, it has turned them on India–as was the case in both the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan wars.[38] Replenishing the Pakistani arsenal, therefore, would lead Islamabad, Indian analysts believe, to pursue an aggressive policy towards India, particularly on the Kashmir issue.

One option the United States is pursuing is to sell both countries the technology of peace–i.e., monitoring devices, sensors, and surveillance equipment that would be useful for monitoring their borders and for reducing potential tensions in the region. Indian claims of cross-border infiltration from Pakistan and Pakistan's denial of such infiltration has been the source of current tensions between the two countries.

International efforts at reducing tensions have included proposals such as placing a United Nations force in the area, something that Pakistan might favor since it would internationalize its dispute with India over Kashmir. India's counterproposal was for joint patrolling of the border, although both countries admit that given the poisoned atmosphere between the two countries such patrolling would not be feasible in the near future.

India has agreed to purchase monitoring and surveillance equipment from the Sandia National Laboratories to track and prevent infiltration. For both India and Pakistan, such equipment would serve both political and genuine security concerns. Surveillance equipment would help in monitoring Pakistan's sensitive western border with Afghanistan. This remains a medium term concern for the United States as the presence of al Qaeda in the region has not been eradicated. Monitoring systems along the India-Pakistan border–particularly the Line of Control in Kashmir–would give credence to Pakistan's claims that it has stopped supporting cross-border infiltration. India could benefit from preventing what has become a damaging set of terrorist attacks on its home soil.[39]

---

[36] Recent reports indicate that Pakistan is seeking to acquire a tactical anti-ballistic missile system from the United States to counter Indian developments in the area, Aroosa Alam, "Pakistan to acquire anti-ballistic missile system," *The Pakistan Observer*, November 5, 2002.

[37] Chidnand Rajghatta, "Testy Indo-US ties mark Powell's India, Pak visit," The Times of India, July 26, 2002.

[38] Kux, *Estranged Democracies*, pp. 86-87, 108-109, 264,-265, and p. 294.

[39] For a discussion of the prospects for monitoring the India-Pakistan border and the (continued...)

Prospects for Joint Operations

Given U.S. needs for coalition partners, India could possibly emerge as a nation willing to participate in multilateral operations, particularly after actual hostilities have ended. India has a long history of participation in United Nations peacekeeping efforts. The Indian Army's first U.N. assignment came during the Korean War when it sent a field ambulance group to participate in the conflict. After the Korean War, India contributed an infantry brigade in the Congo (in 1961) to carry out a peace enforcement mission. Subsequent U.N. missions have included the Gaza, Cambodia, Somalia, Namibia, Lebanon, and recently sending troops to monitor the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. India has participated in more than 30 U.N. missions over a fifty-year span and contributed over 50,000 Indian soldiers to the international organization's peacekeeping efforts.[40]

India has been an important provider of troops for peacekeeping and peace enforcement efforts because its military has the experience of operating over varied terrain–from mountains and glaciers in the Himalaya, to deserts in Rajasthan, and to jungles in the North East of India. The Indian military also has, as Major General Arjun Ray points out, "continuing operational experience in the entire spectrum of conflict, from operations other than war (OOTW), to low intensity conflict, conventional warfighting, and nuclear warfare"[41] The Indian military can support fairly large formations for protracted periods in less developed areas. It was able to extricate a brigade group from Somalia, and its air force and navy provide the ability to air lift and sea lift logistics overseas.

India's reputation as a center for software development and its growing space capability also have implications for its role in peacekeeping and enforcement measures. Indian troops and personnel could be used for manning high technology equipment, while Indian space resources could be used for mapping areas of conflict (in the latter area there is a growing interest in bringing about civilian space cooperation between the United States and India). Finally, India has set up a peacekeeping training center in New Delhi to help train potential peacekeepers.

Cooperation in Afghanistan and Central Asia

In practical terms, there already is an emergence of U.S.-Indian security cooperation in naval patrols and in the attempt to stabilize Afghanistan and parts of

---

[39] (...continued)
available technologies to do so see, Major General Mahmud Ali Durrani, "Enhancing Security through a Cooperative Border Monitoring Experiment: A Proposal for India and Pakistan," *Sandia National Laboratories Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper*/21, July 2001 (Albuquerque, New Mexico).

[40] Major General Arjun Ray, *India's Experience in Peacekeeping, Capacity Building, and Training of UN Peacekeepers*, paper presented at UN International Seminar on Peacekeeping, New Delhi, March 17-19, 1999, available at [http://www.indembassy.org/policy/Peace_Keeping/UN_Seminar_ray.htm.]

[41] Ray, ibid.

Central Asia. The Indian Navy has escorted U.S. naval vessels from the Straits of Malacca to the Arabian Sea, thus freeing up U.S. naval assets for other operations.

The Indian role in Afghanistan and Central Asia, while driven by the country's own strategic interests, also complements U.S. objectives in the region. In order to counter the Taliban, which was pro-Pakistani and was reportedly helping train Kashmiri insurgents, India provided military aid to Tajikistan and the Northern Alliance.[42] It set up a 25-bed hospital at Farkhor, Tajikistan in 2001. The Northern Alliance military commander, Ahmad Shah Masood, who was assassinated in September 2001, died in the Indian-run hospital. Indian sources add that,

> Through Tajikistan, India also reportedly supplied the Northern Alliance high altitude warfare equipment worth around $8 million. A handful of Indian defence "advisers" who reportedly included an officer in the rank of Brigadier, were based in Tajikistan to advise the Northern Alliance in operations against the Taliban. Helicopter technicians from the clandestine Aviation Research Centre (ARC) operated by the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), repaired the Northern Alliance's Soviet-made Mi-17 and Mi-35 attack helicopters.[43]

In April 2002, Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes visited Dushanbe and signed an agreement to place a military base at Farkhor, near the Afghan border. Under the agreement, the Indian military will "train Tajik defence personnel, service and retrofit their Soviet and Russian military equipment and teach its army and air force personnel English."[44] India and Tajikistan are expected to collaborate in combating drug trafficking. This could be important since Afghanistan's heroin harvest is likely to be smuggled out of long-used routes through Tajikistan into the West.

India is also helping the Karzai government in Kabul to enhance its security structure and has committed itself to providing $100 million in economic assistance.[45] As mentioned earlier, India would like to cooperate with the United States to use space-based assets to map the resources of Afghanistan.[46] India's military presence in Central Asia, and Afghanistan, while modest, may help protect U.S. interests.

---

[42] India reportedly gave $10 million worth of high altitude warfare equipment to the Northern alliance and used Tajikistan as a conduit to supply the Alliance, see Shaikh Azizur Rahman, "India Strikes for Oil and Gas," *The Washington Times*, September 2, 2002.

[43] Rahul Bedi, "India and Central Asia," *Frontline*, Vol. 19, No. 19, September 14-27, 2002.

[44] Bedi, ibid.

[45] The aid package provides food, clothing, medicines, and information technology to Kabul. India also plans to train about 250 Afghan police officers. Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, Press Statement, "India's Assistance to Afghanistan," August 7, 2002, available at [http://meadev.nic.in/speeches/eam-afghan-7aug.htm]

[46] See S.M. Hali, "Indian Machinations in Afghanistan," *Pakistan Observer*, October 15, 2002.

U.S. Interests and Considerations

The United States' major interests in South Asia are to avoid another India-Pakistan conflict, reduce the nuclear threat in the region, retain support for its campaign against international terrorism–particularly among those groups located in the region, use India as a possible counterweight to China, and obtain the assistance of both India and Pakistan for peacekeeping and nation-building efforts. Some of these interests are immediate; others, especially India becoming a counterweight to China in Asia, are long term and would depend on a variety of factors. These would include some of the problems that remain in both countries about the perceived utility of such a relationship.

Such problems include:

- Reluctance of the United States to be involved in any forceful resolution by India of its problems with Pakistan.
- Divergence of world views of the Untied States and India, particularly regarding Iraq.
- The effect on U.S.-Indian relations of tensions between India and Paksitan regarding Kashmir.
- American disfavor of India's use of repressive measures to counter the autonomy movement in Kashmir.

Despite the importance of these fundamental differences between U.S. and Indian objectives, there are a number of areas in which mutally beneficial cooperation may take place. As mentioned above, U.S. military capability now permits entry into any part of the world, and American conventional military capability means that its forces usually will prevail in a battle with enemy forces. The problem remains of how to create a successful exit strategy–one that allows U.S. interests to be preserved over the long term. In practical terms this has meant ensuring domestic law and order and the restoration of a civil society. It has also required the development of the economy of the nation of interest to ensure both stability and growth. In the post-Cold War era, this has been the situation in the Balkans and more recently in Afghanistan. If military action is conducted against Iraq, a long range strategy to maintain peace and stability likely would be required.

For the United States, the dilemma is how to continue maintaining a presence in critical regions when it means committing forces for an extended period of time. This is not only financially difficult but places tremendous strain on military personnel and the planning of concurrent operations. Already analysts suggest that the Administration likely will find it difficult to wage war in Iraq while key elements of its special forces remain in Afghanistan. One area of discussions with India might center on the availability of Indian forces for future long term peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions.

Two problems exist in attempting such joint operations, one technical and the other political. Technically, Indian military communications equipment is not compatible with American hardware, and steps would have to be taken to better integrate the two. India also currently does not possess an aerial refueling capability and that limits the extent to which it can carry out joint operations or even exercises with the United States. Taking combat aircraft out of the South Asian region for joint training would require dismantling, crating, and shipping them unless U.S. or other refuelers could be used. India is in the process of acquiring air refueling tankers. That is why current joint training by the two countries has centered around naval and land exercises. In September 2002, the two navies began the Malabar IV series of exercises off the Indian west coast. The two navies worked on the cross-decking of helicopters, formation steaming, coordinated gun shoots and anti-submarine warfare training.[47]

In October 2002, about 100 Indian armed forces personnel, along with the Indian Air Force's transport workhorse IL-76, practiced inter-operability with their American counterparts in the rugged terrain near Elmendorf Air Force Base at Fort Richardson in Anchorage. The Alaska exercise, code named "Jeronimo Thrust," was followed by another round of joint exercises at Agra in October 2002.[48] Following this, Indian troops will practice in Guam. All these exercises are aimed at jointly countering terrorism.

The more difficult problem comes from doubts about the Indian government's willingness to participate in a peace enforcement or intervention mission. India's reluctance to participate in such efforts may come from several domestic and international concerns. There remains within India some disquiet about security cooperation with the United States, since it is viewed as supporting the military ambitions of the remaining superpower. There has also been some sense that India should maintain a degree of diplomatic distance from the United States given the inability of the Bush Administration to completely halt cross border infiltration from Pakistan into India, the U.S. reliance on Pakistan in the anti-terror campaign, and its unwillingness to label Pakistan a terrorist state.[49]

The reluctance by India to participate in such peacekeeping efforts also comes from the more pragmatic concerns about their impact on Indian foreign policy, security, and economic interests. Indian foreign policy efforts have sought to retain ties with a range of countries and groups that are sometimes opponents. India is one of the few countries in the world that has good relations with both Israel and the Palestine Authority. It has strong ties with Iran and continues to maintain an embassy in Baghdad. It has, through diplomatic efforts dating back to the late 1940s and 1950s, constructed diplomatic and international trade relations with countries on each continent. It also has a large diaspora community of twenty-five million people that is spread over the world. Nearly four million of these migrants live in the Persian Gulf region.

---

[47] Indo-U.S. Naval Exercises Begin, *The Hindu*, September 27, 2002.

[48] "IAF, USAF to hold exercise at Agra," *The Hindustan Times*, October 17, 2002.

[49] Sultan Shahin, "India considers radical review of US ties," *Asia Times*, June 14, 2002.

There is also the problem of reprisals. India, despite its support for the Palestinian cause, its support to the Nasser regime in Egypt during the 1956 Suez crisis, and its diplomatic support to wars of national liberation in Muslim countries like Algeria and Indonesia, has not received full-fledged assistance from these countries in its efforts to deter Pakistan. It was this lack of reciprocity that in part saw the Indian diplomatic push in the 1990s to first normalize relations with Israel and then to build a strong military and security relationship with that country.[50] For India, participating in a coalition effort in the Middle East would be dangerous since it could reap the anger of the Arab world and face unrest and public demonstrations domestically from disgruntled Muslim fundamentalist forces.

India, however, could carry out U.N. peace enforcement and economic relief missions in a post-Saddam Iraq. India's traditional ties with Iraq might give it goodwill with the Iraqi population and Indian officers have worked with the Iraqi military. In addition, there are large numbers of Indians who have experience with working in Iraq.

Possible Counterweight to China?

Upon assuming office, one of the Bush Administration's first actions was to describe China as a strategic competitor to the United States. With this in mind, India was touted as a potential partner in Asia. India's relations with China became hostile in the late 1950s when China publicly laid claim to areas along the north-western and north-eastern parts of India. India's refusal to negotiate a settlement that ceded the land to China led to the 1962 border conflict in which Indian forces were defeated. China's subsequent 1964 test of a nuclear bomb left India feeling vulnerable and reportedly requesting to be part of the United States's nuclear umbrella.

Further complicating the India-China relationship was China's strong friendship with Pakistan that resulted first in the transfers of conventional weapons and later, in the 1980s and 1990s, the reported transfer of nuclear and missile technologies. The India-China border dispute, China's support for Pakistan's WMD programs, the Chinese Navy's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean, and the belief by Indian policy analysts that China will remain a long term competitor, all combine to create problems in the India-China relationship.[51] Relations reached a nadir in 1998 when India initially argued that its nuclear tests were conducted as a result of the challenge posed by China.

On the other hand, there have been significant improvements in India's relationship with China since the late 1980s. In 1993 and 1996, the two countries signed confidence building agreements that led to a reduction of force levels along

---

[50] Ramtanu Maitra, "Why India dumped the Palestinians," *Asia Times*, September 20, 2002.

[51] See M.V. Rappai, "India-China relations and the Nuclear Realpolitik," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 23, No. 1, April 1999, pp. 15-26.

the Himalaya mountains.[52] Trade between the two countries continues to expand, and, according to Indian analysts there is three times as large a volume of illegal trade between the two countries. The fact that India is an economy of one billion people is also not lost to China.

China has in recent times claimed that it views both Pakistan and India as friendly neighbors and that it is against the internationalization of the Kashmir issue.[53] There also may be a recognition in Beijing that India is one of the countries that can help move the international system away from one that is marked by American supremacy to one that China hopes would be multipolar, despite Chinese suspicions of, and low regard for, India.[54]

Despite these positive movements in India-China relations, India's long term military programs are aimed partly at countering China and preventing Beijing from exercising nuclear blackmail against New Delhi. India's missile program is geared towards developing a missile capability to target China's eastern seaboard. Without such a capability India would lack a true deterrent against Beijing. The Indian attempt to indigenously produce a nuclear submarine and the proposed leasing of two Russian nuclear submarines is indicative of the desire to have a second strike capability against China.[55] India's continuing concerns about China stem from the unresolved border and China's reported continued supply of nuclear and missile technologies to Pakistan. There is also the belief that China will not tolerate India as a competitor, or even an equal, for great power status in Asia.[56]

The likelihood of India becoming a military counter to China or its attractiveness as an alternative market, however, is questionable and certainly not immediate. India's nuclear weapons program and its missile program have developed far more slowly than expected, and most Indian analysts believe that it will be a long time before India's stockpile of nuclear warheads crosses the three digit mark.[57] Similarly, the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile force that would be required to effectively deter China and the space capability that would help make it effective, apparently are not going to be operational in the near future.

---

[52] W.P.S. Sidhu and Jing-Dong Yuan, "Cooperative Monitoring for Confidence Building: A Case Study of the Sino-Indian Border Areas," *Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper/13*,Sandia National Laboratories, August 1999, available at [http://www.cmc.sandia.gov/Links/about/papers/SAND98-0505-13/index.html].

[53] Cheng Ruisheng, "Sino-Indian Relations After India's Nuclear Tests," available at, [http://lxmi.mi.infn.it/~landnet/NSA/cheng.pdf].

[54] Zhang Guihong, "Remembering a War: A win-win Situation?" Rediff.com, available at [http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/oct/31chin.htm].

[55] Rahul Bedi, "Russian nuclear subs high on India's shopping list," *Asia Times*, April 12, 2002.

[56] Mohan Malik, "China's Southern Discomfort," *Asia Times*, July 11, 2002.

[57] K. Subrahmanyam, "A Credible Deterrent: The Logic of the Nuclear Deterrent," *The Times of India*, October 4, 1999.

More fundamentally, India has far to go to match the pace of China's economic development. India's market reforms have also not been carried out at the pace that would make it a viable alternative trading partner to China.[58] Continued resistance from both within the government and the unions has limited Indian privatization efforts to slow incremental steps as opposed to bold moves towards liberalization.[59] The size of the Indian middle class and its purchasing power are also limited. In the early 1990s, eager market analysts suggested that the Indian middle class was about the size of the United States. That figure has been now pegged back to the more realistic assessment that the Indian middle class–it may be less that 100 million people.

Equally important is the possibility that China's future policies and indeed those of future U.S. administrations may not conform to current assumptions. China's own strategy, especially as it sees radical Islam encroaching on its own borders, may be to work towards a long term foreign policy stance that is more acceptable to the United States. Similarly, the recent revelation of North Korea's nuclear capability has led to some effort by the United States and China to coordinate their policies about getting the North Korean government to dismantle its nuclear program.

Internal changes, particularly of the Chinese regime, would also have an impact on U.S. policy. Future American administrations may similarly assume that China is becoming the type of status quo state that it is willing to accept as a strategic partner. Whatever the future course of events, helping India emerge as a strong democratic Asian power may work to secure U.S. strategic interests in the region.

The Nuclear Issue

In recent times the U.S.-India relationship has faced some of its most significant stumbling blocks from the nonproliferation issue. After the 1998 tests, the Clinton Administration initially attempted to pursue its policy of "cap, reduce, and rollback" of both India and Pakistan's nuclear programs. This included non-deployment, keeping weapons at the lowest possible numbers, and the signing of the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT). Under the Glenn-Symington amendments (1976-1977) a series of economic and technological sanctions were automatically imposed on India and Pakistan, but with mixed results. Pakistan's economy was somewhat hurt by the sanctions, but the Indian economy, after an initial setback, rebounded to achieve 6% growth rates. Subsequently, with the Brownback amendments (1998-1999), Congress repealed most of the sanctions. Those still in place were rolled back after September 11, 2001 when the Bush Administration responded favorably to the Pakistani and Indian offers of assistance in fighting the war on terror.

---

[58] See for example, Indrajit Basu, "No offense, GE tells India, but China's better," Asia Times, October 18, 2002.

[59] Arindam Mukherjee, "Disinvestment: Dawn to Dusk," *Outlook India*, September 23, 2002.

Nine rounds of meetings between then Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and then Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh also changed the Administration's perspective on nuclearization of South Asia. As Strobe Talbott wrote,

> The Clinton administration does not expect either country to alter or constrain its defense programs simply because we have asked it to. The essence of the case the administration is making to both is that they can meet their security requirements as we have heard them define them without further testing nuclear weapons, without producing more fissile material, and without deploying nuclear-capable missiles–and that, conversely, they will undermine their security unless they move quickly and boldly to bring under control the action-reaction cycle between them.[60]

Indian concerns were better understood in Washington D.C. and more recently, in 2001, the Indian government became one of the first countries to endorse President Bush's plan for a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) shield. Indian thinking on the subject reflected its traditional stand on nuclear weaponry as well as an understanding of what the implications of the new technology would be for global politics and for future international regimes.

Traditionally, India has sought global nuclear disarmament and viewed it not just as an idealistic goal but as way to make the world and the South Asian region more secure. In the general security context, BMD fits into the Indian objective of having a credible minimum nuclear deterrent since a missile shield would reduce the need for a large inventory of nuclear weapons. Such an inventory is perceived as being both expensive and destabilizing.[61] Instead, the Indians would like to have what has been termed a minimum nuclear strategy and a maximal missile defense capability.

Pursuing a BMD program also complements India's diplomatic strategy of being in the decision making process in international regimes. India has thus carried out the necessary scientific experiments to get pioneer status under the Law of the Seas Treaty and to become a member of the Antarctic Club. In contrast, as a late nuclearizer, India has faced considerable problems in maintaining its civilian nuclear industry, obtaining dual-use technology, and in attempting to legitimize its nuclear weapons arsenal. Joining the BMD process at the outset is, therefore, seen as allowing India to help shape the course BMD takes and to be an integral part of any international regime that should emerge.[62]

The Bush Administration, while not accepting the legality of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs, has sought to limit the dangers of proliferation in the

---

[60] Strobe Talbott, "Dealing with the Bomb in South Asia," p. 120.

[61] For the best analysis on what a proposed Indian force structure would resemble, see Ashley Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture, Between Recessed Deterrence and Ready Arsenal*, (Santa Monica, Ca.: Rand, 2001).

[62] Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, "Arrows and Exports: The new Indo-U.S. nuclear agenda," The Hindustan Times, October 1, 2002.

region.[63] One key issue has been the security of the nuclear weapons in both Pakistan and India. The United States remains concerned about unauthorized use, illegal transfers, or theft.[64] These concerns exist more in the case of Pakistan than India, because the latter has a robust civil-military relationship and there is a clear cut chain of authority on the use of nuclear weaponry. Doubts remain though about the security of the actual facilities where these weapons are stored. Several studies have emerged that discuss how to make these facilities more secure while not compromising the United States' commitment to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.[65]

U.S. concerns have also arisen in the area of technology transfers. Since 9/11, one of the Administration's primary concerns has been to prevent terrorists and rogue states from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. In the Indian case, the administration is not concerned about state to state transfers of weapons technology, but of commercial exports of dual use technology and precursor chemicals. India has displayed restraint in this area and has restrictive arms sales policies. In the past, India turned down offers from Iraq and Libya to invest in Indian defense programs, because India did not want to be involved in an arms production relationship with either country. India also reportedly refused to sell fighters to Zimbabwe in the 1980s because the latter was a frontline state in the fight against apartheid.[66] At the official level, these restrictive policies remain in place. India's joint weapons production efforts are taking place with two mainstream states–Israel and Russia.

The main concern for the United States comes from the size of India's scientific and technological establishment as well as the cumbersome nature of its bureaucratic structure. India has one of the largest reservoirs of scientific manpower in the world. The concern, as in the case of scientists from former Soviet countries, is that some of these personnel, enticed by lucrative contracts, may move to other countries to help develop weapons programs in areas such as nuclear weaponry, ballistic missiles, chemicals, bio-technology, and space research.[67] A similar problem exists with Indian software engineers whose work would be even more difficult to track given the decentralized ability to upload software.

Another problem comes from inadequate export control safeguards in India. A recent British release of documents shows an Indian firm sold missile related

---

[63] V. Sudarshan, "Nuclear Family," *Outlook India*, October 7, 2002.

[64] Recent revelations that Pakistan had, in the past, reportedly transferred nuclear technology to North Korea added to these concerns, David E. Sanger and James Dao, "U.S. Says Pakistan Gave Technology to North Korea," *The New York Times*, October 18, 2002.

[65] Rose Gottemuller with Rebecca Longworth, "Enhancing Nuclear Security in the Counter-Terrorism Struggle: India and Pakistan as a New Region for Cooperation," *Carnegie Endowment Working Papers*, Number 29, August 2002.

[66] K.R. Singh, "India and the Arms Bazaar," *The Hindustan Times*, March 22, 1989.

[67] Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, " Arrows and Exports: The New Indo-U.S. Nuclear Agenda," *The Hindustan Times*, September 30, 2002.

technology to Iraq.[68] While Indian laws are fairly stringent about exports and the Indian government does not support the sale of dual-use technologies to states of concern or to unstable regions, its implementation has been uneven. As one U.S. official is quoted as saying, " The best laws and most comprehensive control lists have little meaning if governments lack the basic capability to control their borders or other key transhipment points."[69] India has begun to tighten up its monitoring of exports but Indian officials admit that the country's export control system leaks like a sieve.[70]

Indian customs officials lack education on successful technology monitoring procedures as well as providing the kind of technological equipment and computer software that would facilitate such monitoring. As one expert has written,

> the most promising avenues of future US-India export control cooperation include more rigorous training of customs officials, establishment of exporter database, popularizing the need for internal compliance programs, and establishment of online procedures for processing export licenses. Regarding the last item, GOI [Government of India] has developed an *Electronic Data Interchange*, but its data bank and functioning need improvement[71]

The two countries are negotiating in this regard. Recently, the United States and India agreed to set up a High Technology Cooperation Group, comprising senior representatives of relevant departments of both countries. The group, " . . would expeditiously work towards developing a new statement of principles governing bilateral cooperation in high-technology trade that broadly advances our relationship in this area, including addressing ways to increase trade in 'dual use' goods and technologies. The delegations reaffirmed their countries' shared commitment to and common interest in preventing proliferation of strategic goods and technology. They decided to further enhance their export control cooperation."[72]

The Pakistan Factor

The India-Pakistan relationship colors the U.S.-India relationship and, in the past, was one of the principal reasons for discord between the two countries. U.S. relations with Pakistan have been a key determinant of U.S. relations with India. In the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. arms supplies to Pakistan soured the relationship with India, despite the U.S. supply of grain to India in the 1960s, because Pakistan was to use these weapons, in 1965, to try and militarily resolve the Kashmir crisis. In the 1980s, Pakistan's acquisition of F-16 fighters again created disquiet in India because of the fear that this would enhance Pakistan's offensive capability even though by

---

[68] Shishir Gupta, "The Indian Connection," *India Today*, October 14, 2002, pp. 52-55.

[69] Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, op.cit.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Anupam Srivastava, "Positive-sum Game Accruals in US-India Relations, *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, Vol. 5 (1), July-September 2002.

[72] *Washington File*, November 14, 2002.

then India had achieved conventional force superiority vis-a-vis Pakistan.[73] Such concerns continue in India, and consequently any U.S. arms sales to Pakistan are likely to be met with criticism from India–particularly the sale of later generation F-16s which India sees as upgrading Pakistan's nuclear delivery capability.

But the more difficult issue arises from the continued India-Pakistan tensions and what they do for U.S. long term policy in the region. The events of 2002, where American shuttle diplomacy has lessened but not removed tensions between the two countries, put a strain on U.S. diplomatic efforts and complicate any effort to further strengthen relations with India. If India remains locked in a conflict with Pakistan, its ability to exercise influence in other parts of the world or to successfully participate in joint operations is necessarily circumscribed. Another problem is that the United States may find itself in a situation of declining influence in the South Asian conflict. In May-June 2002, U.S. officials were able to persuade the Indian government not to go to war mainly because they prevailed on President Musharraf to halt state-sponsored infiltration into Indian Kashmir and to close down militant training camps in Pakistani Kashmir. If infiltration continues, however, India is likely to disregard future U.S. attempts at crisis diplomacy, viewing such efforts as having little influence in Pakistan.

Resolving the India-Pakistan dispute remains a difficult process which partly stems from attempts by Pakistan to portray it strictly as a dispute over Kashmir. The argument made is that once the Kashmir dispute is resolved to Pakistan's satisfaction, it can enter into an honorable peace with India. In fact, since the July 2001 Agra summit, Pakistan has attempted to portray the dispute as the core issue in India-Pakistan relations. This tends to simplify the issue and disregards the power, territorial, and demographic differentials between the two countries and related issues of conflicting national interest.

Kashmir is considered the root cause for the India-Pakistan conflict, because it is vital to the identities of both states. Pakistan views Kashmir as an integral part of the country's national identity that rests on the two-nation theory (a theory that argues that in South Asia Hindus and Muslims have to be two separate nations).[74] At a military-strategic level, fomenting a rebellion in Kashmir ties down a large number of Indian troops and thus helps alleviate the asymmetry in conventional forces between the two countries. India views Kashmir remaining within the Indian union as a reflection of the country's secular national identity. Less often articulated is the Indian fear that if Kashmir is allowed to secede from the union, other ethnic groups in the country might make similar demands–and India might go the way of the former Soviet Union or erstwhile Yugoslavia. In the past, the Indians have used a range of political and economic measures to prevent various ethnic groups from breaking away from the Indian Union. Indian officials, therefore, argue that if Pakistan-

---

[73] Kux, *Estranged Democracies*, op. cit., pp. 383-384.

[74] For what is still the best discussion of the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, and the role of competing national identities, see Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966, Reprinted by the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi 1996).

supported infiltration is stopped India can work with disaffected groups in Kashmir to hammer out a lasting political solution.[75]

But even if Kashmir is successfully resolved to Pakistan's satisfaction, which apparently would mean that the entire state with its Hindu, Buddhist, and non-Kashmiri Muslim minorities become part of Pakistan, it would most likely not bring about peace between the two countries. India would remain a large, militarily powerful state neighboring Pakistan, and Pakistan's concerns about being dominated by India would likely continue. Pakistan, with its population of 145 million, is dwarfed by its neighbors China and India, both of whom have populations in excess of one billion. In light of these size, economic, and demographic differentials, the fear in Pakistan is that India, increasingly confident about its economic performance and military capability, seeks to turn that country into a weak satellite state.[76]

Pakistan's security dilemma is further compounded by the inability to successfully establish democratic institutions in that state. The October 2002 polls, the April 30, 2002 referendum that preceded the polls, and the Pakistani parliament's election as Prime Minister of Zafarullah Khan Jamali–a moderate who has the support of the army[77]–have left the military in a position of controlling the Pakistani polity in the long term. As one Pakistani analyst put it,

> Professor Hassan Askari Rizvi has argued that so deeply entrenched are the army's commercial, administrative and other interests in the civilian structure today that it simply cannot afford to go home. That being so, he has said, there can be no real transfer of power in Pakistan. At best, the army is prepared to share power, no more. It could even be induced to go into the background as long as there were cast-iron guarantees that none of its privileges will be touched, its financial and administrative structure interfered with or its conduct questioned in parliament or in public. The kind of political arrangement that General Musharraf and his commanders wish to put in place after October is based on the same concept. More and more, as time passes, one is reminded of a remark attributed (though mistakenly) to Jawaharlal Nehru: "Every country has an army; in Pakistan, the army has a country.[78]

Thus the international community may be emphasizing the wrong issue in attempting to manage the conflict situation in South Asia. Resolving the Kashmir conflict will not necessarily reduce tensions between the two countries, especially given President Musharraf's moves to secure his and the military's political position in the country.

If the military remains central to Pakistani politics, some analysts feel the conflict situation in South Asia is likely to be perpetuated. Pakistan military has little incentive to lessen tensions with India, since that would weaken its attempts to

---

[75] Zafar Meraj, "The Burden of Expectations," *Outlook India*, November 11, 2002.

[76] Shahid Javed Burki, "What India Really Wants," *Dawn*, July 2, 2002.

[77] "Pakistan Parliament Chooses Leader," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2002.

[78] Khalid Hasan, "Pakistan Doing Okay: Generally Speaking," *The Friday Times*, October 4, 2002.

retain a national security state and to enjoy a disproportionate share of the Pakistani budget. A recent report by the International Crisis Group states,

> The military's support for the *Jihadis* [in Kashmir] is motivated by a desire to undermine the security of India, which it perceives as both threat and regional rival. As a result, military leaders have consistently derailed attempts by civilian governments to normalise relations during Pakistan's short democratic interludes. Bhutto's bid to normalise relations was disrupted in 1989. In 1999 Musharraf personally oversaw the military operation in Kargil that torpedoed Prime Minister Sharif's overtures to Vajpayee."[79] [The report warns], "Given the deep hostility to India, if Pakistan's military remains in the driver's seat they would be tempted to resume adventurism in Kashmir once international attention shifted. Moreover, should Musharraf keep power after the October polls, civilian leaders will have no choice but to accept military dictates in all spheres of policy, including Kashmir. As a result South Asia will remain precariously poised between a cold peace and a hot war.[80]

For the United States, therefore, this remains a problem in the long term relationship with both countries, especially if it is to be called repeatedly to diplomatically intervene between the two countries. The situation in late 2002 is instructive. India and Pakistan have terminated almost all official links, and the United States has become the emissary between the two countries. The United States is apparently willing to tolerate this state of affairs because of the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban. But as the war on terror's focus moves away from Afghanistan to other parts of the globe, the question emerges about the willingness and ability of the United States to pursue the kind of diplomatic crisis intervention it has in 2002.

Economic incentives may move the Indians and the Pakistanis away from a conflictual situation to one where some degree of cooperation between the two becomes necessary. Future U.S. assistance, particularly military assistance to both countries, could be tied to working on conflict management proposals in South Asia.

Dialogue regarding nuclear weapons has been slow to unfold. As part of the 1999 Lahore agreement between India and Pakistan the two countries were to take, "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."[81] The 1999 Kargil conflict put these negotiations on hold, but there were promising aspects to it that were not neglected and hold promise for future agreements between the two countries. One such agreement was, "The two sides undertake to provide each other with advance notification in respect of ballistic

---

[79] "Pakistan: Transition to Democracy," *International Crisis Group Asia Report*, No. 40, October 3, 2002, p. 19.

[80] Ibid., p. 19.

[81] The 1999 Lahore Declaration, signed by Pakistan's then Prime Minister. Nawaz Sharif and by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, is available at [http://www.usip.org/library/pa/ip/ip_lahore19990221.html].

missile flight tests, and shall conclude a bilateral agreement in this regard."[82] Despite the tensions between the two countries, they have scrupulously followed this agreement and informed each other of missile tests.[83]

Given the near war over Kashmir in 2002, it remains in both countries' interests, as well as that of the United States because of its operations against the Taliban and al Qaeda, that the two countries seek to build confidence in the realm of nuclear weaponry. Direct negotiations between India and Pakistan, should they come about, may require U.S. facilitation, that is linked to U.S. aid to the two nations.

Economic cooperation between the two countries may also work to mitigate conflict. Two potential areas of cooperation are the sharing of river waters between the two countries and Pakistan's proposal for an extension of the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline to India. Another proposal was for Iran to supply gas to India via a pipeline that ran through Pakistan. India has been reluctant to sign onto either project because it believed that Pakistan's asking price was too high. There was also the concern in India that this would lead to the country becoming energy dependent on Pakistan.[84] A counter argument could be made that there would be a mutual vulnerability because if Pakistan shut off the flow of gas, India would retaliate by shutting off the flow of water into Pakistan.

An alternative approach is voiced by some Pakistanis who argue that the key to resisting Indian domination lies not in a military conflict, which they feel Pakistan is not capable of winning, but in becoming an economically viable and strong state that can resist external pressure. To do this one writer argues the country needs to cool the obsession with changing the status quo with India, stabilize the nuclear deterrent in South Asia, and pursue a policy of economic growth. To do so the Pakistan government would have to focus more of its resources on education, infrastructures and business and create an environment favorable to domestic and foreign investment.[85]

From the U.S. perspective, such a policy has appeal. An economically flourishing Pakistan with a lower level of tensions with India is more likely to be democratic and less likely to be prone to Islamic extremism. Tying future U.S. aid to achieving such results could be in American long term interests as well as that of the Pakistani people–especially since the October 2002 Pakistani elections have shown renewed support for the Islamic fundamentalist parties in that country.

---

[82] Ibid.

[83] "India and Pakistan in tit-for-tat missile test," *The Guardian*, October 4, 2002.

[84] C. Raja Mohan, "Gazprom proposes shallow-water pipeline," *The Hindu*, August 12, 2002 and Nadeem Malik, "Pakistan offers free trade to Afghanistan," The News International, August 28, 2002.

[85] Khaled Ahmed, "What does India want from Pakistan?" *The Friday Times*, July 26, 2002.