

Indo-US Relations: An Overview since 1947

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Abstract

It's a fact that relations between India and America were not of much attention for both the countries prior to India's Independence as India was under British rule. However post 'independence, though the India was of on a positive note to have a cordial relation with US but due to that time bipolar world scenario, India tried its level to maintain an equal distance from both the major power that is USSR and US. It resulted in US tilting towards Pakistan with a view to keep a track of USSR at that time. These relations also got jolted in between due to 1965 Indo-Pak war, 1971 Bangladesh liberation war, 1974 nuclear test, 1987 MTCR, India's stand on NPT and again 1998 nuclear test. However post collapse of USSR and opening of Indian Economy for outer world in 1991, the US policy started shifting in favour of India considering its huge market and with a view to contain next would be major power China. Since then the relation between both the countries has gone to an upper swings and both are always looking forward to bolster it. It is pertinent to mention that after 1978 it took 22 years for any US president to visit India as in 2000 the US president Mr Clinton came to India and post that each president in the office visited India and even president Mr Obama made it twice that show the interest of both the countries in better cementing of the relations which is looking bright in future too.

Keywords: Dialogue, Bipolar, Strategic, Diaspora, Bilateral, Counterterrorism

Introduction

The historical links between the US and India can be traced to the year 1492, the year when Christopher Columbus discovered America in the course of his search for a new route to India. But formal and official relations began after India gained independence. The two countries share democratic values and are concerned about the spread of terrorism in the broader Asian region. Economically India remains a large and relatively untapped market that was of greater interest to the American multinationals. Since both the countries have complementary interests, these aspects led to a potential and emerging Indo-US relation. 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. Relations between the two countries again briefly flourished after the Sino-Indian war of 1962. At the economic level, India became a major recipient of US assistance. Difficult relations with the US continued in 1971 during the Bangladesh war. It was only after the end of the Cold War and of coming to power of the Narasimha Rao government in 1991 the relations began to improve. 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. However during the 1999 Kargil crisis, India's fight back endeavour and early and right decision of Air Strike not only stunned the Pakistan but to whole world however, the role of US was too somewhere instrumental in convincing Pakistan to withdraw its troops from the Kargil to avoid a heavy loss to their side. It is must to mention that the relation between India and US reached to the peak during the Bush administration which saw India as playing an important role in future US foreign policy towards Asia. The attacks of 11 Sep 2001 compelled US to understand the agony of international terrorism that made US to make India its natural ally in fight against terrorism and there from the relation cemented further. India offered unconditional support to the US, including basing rights for carrying out an air campaign over

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Afghanistan. 123 agreements with US in 2005 bestowed a clear edge to India in world affairs as even not being a NPT signee India was given excess of nuclear related supply from Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). During the recent Indo-China standoff in 2020-21 the approach of US was much in favour of India though India decided to take up this standoff on its own. However the relation between India and US now swinging up in a positive direction satisfying the Indo-US strategic demand in the world arena and particularly in South Asia.

Political Relations

The frequency of the visits by the head of the nations to the other nations creates the foundation of relations between the countries. A strategic thinker can very well draw a graph of relationship between two countries basis on interaction between heads of two countries.

List of the Indian PMs Visit to US since 1947

SI No.	Name of Visiting PM	Year
1	JL Nehru	1949
		1956
		1960
		1961
2	Indira Gandhi	1966
		1971
3	Morarji Desai	1978
4	Indira Gandhi	1982
5	Rajiv Gandhi	1985
		1987
6	Narasimha Rao	1994
7	AB Vajpayee	2000
8	Manmohan Singh	2005
		2008
		2009
		2013
9	Narendra Modi	2014
		2017
		2019

List of the US Presidents visit to India since 1947

SI No.	Name of visiting Presidents	Year
1	Dwight D. Eisenhower	1959
2	Richard Nixon	1969
3	Jimmy Carter	1978
4	Bill Clinton	2000
5	George W. Bush	2006
6	Barack Obama	2010
7	Barack Obama	2015
8	Donald Trump	2020

From the above data its worth to mention that it took 12 years by any US president to make the maiden visit of an Independent India and only three visits in the first 30 years of independent India. The fourth visit took 22 years there from which shows a routine and just plain relationship however with a slight upward swing after the end of cold war. Between 2000 to 2020 the frequency of high-level visits and exchanges between India and the US has gone up significantly as India witnessed 5 US presidents visits which evident the growing

interest of US in keeping a close relationship with India. From 2000 all the presidents in office made a visit of India wherein Mr Obama made it twice. The Prime Minister Modi's intensive work of making a stronger presence of India in the world affairs is bearing the fruit and India sees a very cordial and deep strategic relation with USA which is of much importance for India as well US to share the bigger power in the world affairs. A hotline too was established 2015 between the Prime Minister's Office and the US White House reflecting a deepening of Indo-US ties. India is only the fourth country after Russia, Britain and China with whom US has a hotline. So if we draw a overview on Indo-US diplomatic relations then it can prudently be summarised that diplomatic relations since 1947 is purely based on the strategic and economical demand and comfort zone of both the countries rather than having a deep routed historical and cultural base.

Objective of the Study The main objective of this study is to understand the nature and the trajectory of the path drawn in respect of the relations between India and USA since 1947. It has been attempted to get into the basis of building relations between India and USA and its future.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement also known as the 123 Agreement was having a background way back in 2005 from joint statement of India and US wherein it was agreed by India to separate its civil and military nuclear facilities and to bring all civil nuclear under the observation of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). US agreed to fully cooperate in India's civil nuclear programme. This agreement paves the path of grant of an exemption for India by the cartel NSG that was created against the India's first nuclear test in 1974. India and IAEA signed safeguard agreement in 2009. This brought a paradigm shift in the Indo-US cooperation as for the civil nuclear policies of both the countries are concerned and it was also seen as headway in the nuclear non proliferation. The NSG waiver was a great achievement for India as it was the only non country NPT allowed for nuclear commerce. Post agreement approved by US, the France was the first country that inked nuclear deal with India.

This agreement brought India on the main stream and showed a clout on the world arena and also going to help India much in meeting its goal of adding 25,000 MW nuclear energy by 2020. In addition to this it will also help India to bolster its future objective like permanent seat at the UN which is now being supported by US and it will also help India in making more strategic alliance.

Defence Cooperation

Bilateral defence exchanges and military exercises have always been an important interface of deepening bilateral defence cooperation between two countries. Initially, Indo-US defence cooperation scope was limited. Since 1947 the Indo-US relations path saw many bumpy developments. The slow pace of the defence relations can be understood from the fact that, it took 45 years for both the countries to conduct their very first Military and Naval exercise in 1992. However since the dawn of the twenty-first century in general and 9/11 events in particular, military exercises and operations are increasing in numbers, intensity and complexity. The increasing number of military-to-military exercises involving all the three branches is also a result of the gaining defence cooperation between the two countries.

'New Framework for Indo-US Defense Relations 2005', renewed in 2015 intensified the defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, collaboration and exchanges between each of the three services. Many bilateral defence dialogue mechanisms like Defence Policy Group (DPG), Defence Joint Working Group (DJWG), Defence Procurement and Production Group (DPPG), Senior Technology Security Group (STSG), Joint Technical Group (JTG), Military Cooperation Group (MCG) and Service-to-Service Executive Steering Groups (ESGs) came into the existence that carried forward the defence cooperation. The agreements signed in recent years are Fuel Exchange Agreement signed in 2015, Logistics Exchange Memorandum

of Association (LEMOA) in 2016 and the Information Exchange Annexe (IEA) on Aircraft Carrier Technologies signed in June 2016. US recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner" in 2016 that commits the US to facilitate technology sharing with India to a level commensurate with that of its closest allies and partners and industry collaboration for defence co-production and co-development. Recently, the Industrial Security Agreement (ISA) was signed during the 2+2 Dialogue which facilitates close technology transfer with the Indian private industry. Its worth to mention that volume of defence trade volume has reached an all time high. Till 2013 the Russia was the largest supplier of arms to India but US replaced Russia in 2014 and it's continuing since then. Till 2008 Indo-US defence contracts was only of USD 0.5 billion but post that contracts soared to around USD 20 billion. Weapons procurement reached USD 3.4 billion in 2020. Major anticipated deals include an Integrated Air Defense Weapon System valued at nearly USD 2 billion. India is eager for more technology sharing and coproduction initiatives, while the US urges more reforms in India's defense offsets policy and higher FDI caps in its defense sector. In view of the above it can be overviewed that after 1947, the defence trade and cooperation between India and US made a great leap particularly in the wake of USSR fall down and Russia's inability to fulfill the growing aspiration of becoming not only the regional but a global power share player.

Counter-terrorism and Internal security

Counterterrorism cooperation between India and the US began at the turn of the century. Both countries have experienced terrorist attacks against their land and interests, which bound them to work together in the War on Terror. Counterterrorism cooperation between the US and India has become one of the pillars of their partnership since 9/11. It was not only after the 9/11 terrorist attack but also before that they started working together closely to counter terrorism. This dated back to 1999 when the Indo-US Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism was established. In 2000, India and US released the statement on Joint Working Group on Terrorism. In 2002 both the countries agreed for a bilateral Cyber-Security Forum with view to address the challenges of cyber terrorism and information security. India and US inked Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Initiative in 2010 to for a better cooperation to counter the terrorism, sharing the information and for creating a capacity to take on such challenges. In 2010 both India and US went for a Homeland Security Dialogue and both the countries decided in 2011 frequent the engagement among the related agencies dealing with intelligence, sharing of information, working on issues related to investigation of forensics matters. The Dialogue was to look into the infrastructure security, currency counterfeit and to thwart the illicit financing and crime related to that. An arrangement was concluded in June 2016 wherein India and US sign the agreement to exchange terrorism-screening information between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and India's Intelligence Bureau. One month after the 9/11 attacks, the two nations signed the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty to facilitate cooperation on law enforcement and counterterrorism in 2001. After the 9/11 attacks, India immediately took the decisive and unprecedented decision of offering the US its full support and cooperation and the use of its bases for counterterrorism cooperation, in clear contradiction of India's traditional neutral policy. Hence from the above facts, it is argued that both the countries have had been victim of terrorism and working closely to tackle it by many bilateral tools but still to say that there is lack of a clear policy framework between both the countries to take on the terrorism to a concluding end jointly.

Trade and Economy

The aspiration of two country of trade and economic gain from each other provides foundation for enlarging the relations. Economic relations have played a role equally to defence relations in bridging the relations between the two world's largest democracies. Economic and trade relations between the US and India have been problematic in the past but currently are considered comparatively cordial. The economic complementarities between India and US in the areas of trade and investment has been the bonding factor bringing the two countries closer than never before in the history of Indo-US relations. The Indian need for capital and the American need for market can be fulfilled by

working closely together. The implementation of the economic reforms in 1991 was the most important decision taken by India that has no doubt opened the way for easy passage of American goods, capital, services and technology. India and the US inked an Open Skies Agreement in April 2005 to boost trade, tourism and business. India and the US set up a bilateral Investment Initiative in 2014, with a special focus on facilitating FDI, portfolio investment, capital market development and financing of infrastructure. Indo-US Infrastructure Collaboration Platform has also been set up to deploy cutting edge US technologies to meet India's infrastructure needs. US have become India's largest trading partner, major collaborator in joint ventures and the largest investment partner. Today, there are very good reasons why US would like to engage in a closer economic and trade relations with India. India's economic performance speaks for itself. Since the liberalisation of its economy India has been able to maintain an annual average growth rate between five to seven per cent. Given the current growth rate, it is projected that by the end of the second decades of the twenty first century, India would become the third largest economic power behind US and China. India with the second largest population in the world, the eighth largest industrial economy, ranked second to US in terms of world's largest pool of scientist and engineers. As per the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation India has retained its position as the 3rd largest economy in the world in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in 2020. Given India's significant achievement in the last almost one and half decades, western scholars were compelled to make certain statements that are in favor of India. Their statement calls for closer cooperation between India and other powerful countries. In 1986, according to US trade statistics, the total value of bilateral trade with India was USD 4.0 billion whereas in 2019-20 the bilateral trade stood at USD 88.75 billion it means there was an approximate 22 fold jump. FDI inflows showed a consistent growth, bringing from USD 0.129 billion in 1991-92 to USD 59.64 billion during 2020-21. What is significant is the fact that throughout these periods, India enjoys a favorable balance of trade with US at an increasing pace. Hence it can be summarized that pace of Economical and trade relations between India and USA are now on upward swing even facing many ups and down in its journey from 1947.

Education

Education sector Cooperation has immerged as the integral part of the bilateral partnership between the India and US. Since decades the aspiration of Indian students to get quality education in US has been on rise with a view to garner the probability of better job opportunities and garnering the research skills. Around 2, 00,000 Indians are pursuing higher education in American universities in 2019-20. But apart from the mobility of the students towards US, the need of joint research in the field of strategic importance and other bilateral fields are required to be addressed. The US Higher Education Dialogue is working since 2012 and the same laid the foundation for institutional partnerships, research and development collaboration, vocational education partnership and faculty development. The US community college model is being learnt in India to meet the demands for skill-development. Both the countries have agreed to collaborate in the area of Technology Enabled Learning and Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) to extend the reach of education in India. India is also carry on inviting US students under the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) launched by India to teach in Indian universities at their convenience.

In September 2014 India and US committed themselves to a new mantra for the relationship, "Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go" wherein the joint declaration was made to endorse the first vision statement for the strategic partnership between the two countries in various sectors, including higher education. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) were tasked to work on this. This initiative is also about to launch MOOC for American students who are keen to learn more about Indian opportunities. The overall objective of such bilateral collaboration for India is to improve access to quality higher education for students and a greater capacity for research and teaching among faculty.

Both are needed for India to realise its promise of a demographic dividend.

It is of much expectation that both the countries should come forward to fund the bilateral research of mutual interest, encourage movement of students and researcher and create entrepreneurship for creating the job in both the countries.

Space

The Indo-US space can be traced back from 1962 when India became the one of the first partner of NASA and US cooperated in establishing the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launch (TERL) Thiruvananthapuram. The issues of 1974 nuclear test and NPT though created hurdles in the development of space relations cooperation. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) brought in 1987 also prohibited transfer of dual technologies to India. Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) launched between US and India in 2004 paced the US-India space cooperation which also involved the private sectors in this endeavors. Indo-US High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG) which was a part of the NSSP identified areas of high technology cooperation and space cooperation was a vital area of focus for the HTCG. ISRO and NASA signed a MoU in 2006, which enabled the NASA payloads to be part of the lunar mission. On 22 October 2008, India launched the Chandrayaan-1 to orbit the moon and closely examine its surface, and this marked India as an important player in space exploration.

Indo-US joint working group on civil aviation was formed in 2005 with a view to explore the potentiality and possibility of working together in satellite field, earth research through observation, research on natural disasters, bilateral training in this field and a forming a proper management by both the countries to achieve the potentiality in civil aviation. This working group has already provided a pace in strengthening the bilateral cooperation in civil aviation and is continue in building the future relations between both the countries. It can't be denied that both the countries have achieved a lot in the arena of space science and satellite science and application. NASA and ISRO are already on pathway of launching the NISAR satellite in 2022 which will be a milestone in the relation of both the countries as for as space research is concerned.

The Trump administration has discussed potential missile defence cooperation with India as part of its effort to deepen the bilateral strategic partnership, the Pentagon has said, asserting that New Delhi is a "key element" in America's Indo-Pacific strategy. It is well known that US and India are two major player as for as space exploration is concerned and have so far maintained well coordination in bilateral cooperation in this field and need to keep a close contact in regard to make the world more accessible and explorable from the space.

Science & Technology

The US and India enjoy robust bilateral science and technology cooperation. This collaboration has been vital in achieving a broad range of shared goals, including sustaining economic growth and job creation; allowing our citizens to live longer, healthier lives; developing clean sources of energy; and protecting our environment for future generations. The Indo-US Science & Technology Cooperation has been steadily growing under the framework of Indo-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in October 2005, established the Joint Committee meeting (JCM) to plan, coordinate, monitor, and facilitate bilateral cooperation in science and technology. The JCM biennially convenes leaders from both countries to provide strategic guidance for our S&T initiatives. There is an Indo-US Science & Technology Joint Commission. In 2000, both the governments endowed the Indo-US Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) to facilitate mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in science, engineering, and health. Collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration has been strengthened under after the 2008 MoU on Earth Observations and Earth Sciences. The Indo-US Science & Technology Endowment Fund, established in 2009 under the Science and Technology Endowment Board promote commercialization of jointly developed innovative

technologies with the potential for positive societal impact. As per the agreement signed between India and US in July 2011 collaborative mechanisms were to be developed for next-generation, high-intensity superconducting radio frequency proton accelerators and enhance cooperation in related physics research. To realize the potential of science and technology, India and the US maintain active engagement aimed at fostering cooperative cutting edge research and building public-private partnerships that support technology-based innovation and entrepreneurship.

In the present scenario the collaboration on Science and Technology between India and US are well in shape and both the countries are having bright prospect in this field.

People to People Relation

India and US are having a strong and tremendous source of strength in the form of around 40 lakh people-to-people ties between India and America diaspora, that accounts about 1% of the total population in the US which includes a large number of professionals, business entrepreneurs and educationalists that makes a great influence in the society. In past too many Indian Americans have had been on important post. The inestimable contributions of thousands of highly trained Indian migrants in every area of American scientific and technological achievement culminated with the information technology revolution most associated with California's Silicon Valley in the 1980s and 1990s. The two countries have been working together to facilitate travel of their respective citizens and to this end an MoU has been signed in June 2016 to facilitate India's joining of the Global Entry Programme for expedited immigration for eligible Indian citizens at US airports.

The very prominent figure among the Indian American is the Vice President of America. In Biden Administration, Indian-American scientist Swati Mohan is leading the guidance, navigation and control operations of NASA's Mars 2020 mission, Tanya Das has been appointed as the Chief of Staff, Office of Science, Department of Energy, Shuchi Talati Chief of Staff, Office of Fossil Energy, Department of Energy. In entrepreneurship field, the Indian Satya Nadella is holding the CEO post of Microsoft, Sundar Pichai is Ceo of Google and Arvind Sodhani is heading Intel.

During 2+2 dialogue between India and US in 2020 the facility of issuance of 12-month reciprocal temporary duty visas to officials from both Governments was commenced which is step to facilitate the growing partnership and also the US Parliamentary Exchange was launched and both the countries applauded the entrepreneurial spirit of Indians and Indian-Americans that has mutually benefited both nations. Both sides look forward to the next iteration of the US Consular Dialogue to further increase cooperation and discuss issues of mutual concern, including visas, and familial issues related to marriage, adoption and child custody.

From the above it is evident that though US is a place of great technology innovations then India is having the great human resources to admin them and exchanges of both in India and US is undoubtedly going to benefit the relations and prosperity of both the nations.

Cultural Cooperation

It is clearly evident that in early era that is around 1947 and little beyond that the cultural bonding between India and US were not of very exchanging and deep rooted may be due to countries being far apart or due to British rule in India working as a stumbling block between the cultural movements between both the countries. However, the twenty-first century saw the India and the US coming closure by an expanding web of cultural ties. This development was just a changed scenario against those witnessed in 20th century. The end of cold war the relation between both the countries started improving and so the cultural relations too.

As of now the Cultural cooperation between both the countries is rich and vibrant. Indian cultures and values are being taught in many US universities and many private firms too are medium of expanding cultural values not only in

US but also the US culture in India. There are many websites like 'www.indianembassy.org', 'www.mea.gov.in' and 'www.indiaculture.nic.in' etc and more. In addition to the website there are other forums too that promote and enlighten the Indo-US Cultural bonding progress and heritage like social media channels, various publications, like "India: Partner in Growth", and newsletters.

Conclusion

Relations between India and the US have been on an up-and-down trajectory since independence in 1947. It can't be ruled out that since independence India's inclination was towards socialistic economy and therefore took a tilt towards then USSR. Though with a view to keep a safe distance from both the then superpowers, India opted to be Non Aligned but there was a little inclination towards USSR and that relation with USSR continued even post Cold war and this chemistry of Indo-USSR-and then Indo-Russia relation was always a bit of hesitation in shaping the Indo-US relation in full throttle. While the seeds of distrust sown during the Cold War era and India's testing of nuclear weapons have seen bilateral ties plunge to new lows, the recent Indo-US civil nuclear deal saw relations surge to new heights. The elevation of the Indo-US relation started visible after 1991 economical liberalization in India. Since India was and still is a big market and US was and still the bigger capitalist economy and these concept of demand and supply worked as a catalyst in building the relation between India and US which is even palpable today. The people to people movement and better understanding between the leadership of both the countries since last 20 years have nicely shaped the relationship between both the nations. Going beyond the earlier perception, now US has frequently advocated the India's stance of getting a permanent seat in UNSC. Now it can be concluded that both the countries are on the path of healthier path of relationship in every walk.

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