

USA Foreign Policy towards India and Afghanistan under Bush Administration: An Analysis

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Abstract

USA relations with South Asian states experienced many ups and down. At one stage USA seems closer to one state while on the other with some other. In recent history India and Afghanistan have become states of strategic as well as economic importance for USA. It is evident that foreign policy priorities remained under constant change. These changes were depending on the dynamical national interests. Expansion of economic liberalization made Indian markets more attractive for business communities of USA. Other factors that played role in developing close ties between India and USA included: growth of Indian defense capabilities: strong Indian lobby in USA and shared democratic norms. At the same time the USA foreign policy towards Afghanistan under Bush administration was proved the most focused in terms of priorities to secure political and strategic national interests. The objective of this study is to demonstrate and analyze the main steps that have been taken by Bush administration towards India and Afghanistan. Moreover, the objectives of USA policies towards these two states have remained in focus of the study. Bush Administration succeeded to achieve its interests in India and Afghanistan. In case of India USA established strong economic and strategic ties. Whereas, in Afghanistan case it also succeeded to eliminate terrorists in the region. This study suggests that USA need continuity in its policies to secure its interest in the long run. The research is based on qualitative method of reasoning.

Key Words: Administration, Foreign Policy, Interests, States, Relations, Strategic

Introduction

USA history reveals that foreign policy priorities remained under constant change. These changes were depending on the dynamical national interests. Moreover, personalities of different presidents have also influenced foreign policy of USA. During Cold War Indo-USA relation were estranged despite different common interests and shared values (Kux, 1994). As it is mentioned by Harold and Ganguli (1992), “throughout the Cold War Indo-USA relations were marked by missed opportunities”. Dismemberment of Soviet Union caused changes in different alliances. Now India started to think to reshape and develop close relations with USA and its allies in West. Critical economic condition in India in 1990s, required to establish ties with new partners. Expansion of economic liberalization made Indian markets more attractive for business communities of USA. Similarly Gupta (2005) depicted that Indian market remained untapped and became attractive for USA multinationals. Other factors that played role in developing close ties between India and USA included: growth of Indian defense capabilities: strong Indian lobby in USA and shared democratic norms. Indian leaders endeavored to promote democracy at regional as well as international level (Cartwright, 2009). After Cold War India was dreaming high place in South Asian Politics. After uncertainties of few decades India is expecting significant place in South Asian region (Cohan, 2002) (Muzaffar, et. al. 2021). Afghanistan was one of the states that remained in very close focus of USA foreign policy makers during Bush administration. President Bush left no stone unturned to defeat terrorist in Afghanistan during his both terms.

Foreign Policy towards India

Bush and his administration were much aware about Indian economic, political and strategic significance in the region of South Asia. Bush gave weight age to India in its foreign policy even greater than that of Clinton era. He called India as a significant global actor and key state in South Asia (Alam, 2009) & (Nawab, et. al., 2021). Before 9/11 Bush was criticizing Clinton for his too much focus on India in his foreign policy. The situation was changed and Bush started to say that there is need to do more, Clinton did little towards India. Mr. Colin stated that “we need to work harder and more consistently to assist India” (Rajagopalan, 2001). India itself was waiting for more attention from USA policy makers. India is considered significant for USA for the following reasons;

- i) Having a huge market to invest and sale products
- ii) Important to maintain peace, security and stability in the region
- iii) Securing strategic and political interests of USA
- iv) Providing goods and services in the field of information technology
- v) A Significant player to counter terrorism in the region
- vi) For Managing nuclear proliferation
- vii) To Containment of China

Bush in his first term remained focused on WOT. All of his foreign policy seemed to be dominated by single agenda. Stephen and Lewis (2009), describe that war on terror remained the top priority agenda of Bush administration as USA security policy. It was 2004 when bilateral relations between India and USA started to improve on huge scale (Jabeen, 2014). Bush brought major shift in Indo-USA bilateral ties. It is claimed that USA knew the role of India in balancing power in the region. So, second term of Bush brought a revolution in bilateral relation of these two partners. The fields in which cooperation is extended as enlisted below.

- i) Economic cooperation
- ii) Increased high-technology trade
- iii) Ten-year defense framework agreement
- iv) Open sky agreement
- v) Civilian nuclear cooperation
- vi) Civilian peace cooperation
- vii) Increase in High technology trade
- viii) Arms sale
- ix) Missile defense

Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership

Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership (NSSP) was a practical step taken by Bush administration to strengthen ties with India. Strategic partnership was one of the main features of Indo-USA relations since beginning of 21st century. NSSP contained field of civilian space program, civilian nuclear program and high technological trade. Guihong (2005) claims NSSP as a new height of in bilateral Indo-USA relations

NSSP proved very effective initiative especially in respect of its economic and strategic significance. At one side India was hopeful to achieve its export targets, one the other hand it was also expecting to have access towards the USA technologies. USA was feeling much comfortable in developing bilateral relations to achieve its political and strategic goals in the region. Fani (2005), termed this initiative for India to sustain a leading place in South Asian region. It was a fundamental transformation in bilateral ties of these two states. Now both states got required position and value in the foreign policy of each other. This approach was entirely different from that of Cold War where there were several ups and downs in Indo-USA relations (Singh, 2018). This agreement promised to provide energy security to India, which in turn will assist India to give new boost to its economy. The completion of first phase of NSSP made both partners satisfy and they showed better hope to work on the future agenda of this initiative. Both parties also showed their readiness to continue security and strategic cooperation. In July 2005, USA officials declared that USA is working successfully with India on NSSP and this cooperation proved itself a milestone in strategic partnership of both states. This partnership can have the capacity for power transaction in favor of India (Bukhari, 2015).

New Framework for USA India Defense Relationship

Purnab Mukerji the than defense minister of India Signed a ten-years defense agreement with USA defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, on his nine-day visit of USA. This agreement is known as New Framework for the USA India Defense Relationship (NFDR). This agreement was an initiative to fulfill promise made by Bush administration to work for raising India as a great regional power. So, in 2005 relations between India and USA got a new boost (Jaspal, 2007). The focus of this agreement was strong bilateral military relations between India and USA. It was also aimed to create better understanding between defense sectors of both sides. Ahuja (2021) describes that India and USA has now become comprehensive strategic partners. Four main objectives of this agreement are as mentioned below.

- i) Maintenance of peace and security
- ii) Countering terrorist and extremist activities
- iii) Efforts for non-proliferation
- iv) Protection of sea trade routes

It was one of the most ambitious plans between India and USA. It was comprehensive both in scope and size. This agreement provided a broad forum for securing and multi-dimensional interests of both states. It was an unprecedented agreement between the two states. As it was agreed in the agreement, top leadership and military personals started to meet at the joint forum for accomplishment of their promises. Terrorism, fundamentalism and rise of Chine were the real reasons that compelled Bush administration to develop such close ties with India. Actually USA intends to maintain its global military superiority (Khan Z. , 2016). A critical view of these bilateral ties reveals that both partners found equal opportunities to secure their regional and somehow international interests. USA succeeded to protect its long term security strategic interests, while India got it as golden opportunity to play its regional as well as global role.

Increased high-technology trade

Cooperation in the field of high technology was a fantastic move in Indo-USA bilateral ties. As Foran (1998) stated that Indian political leaders started to strengthen bilateral trade in the field of high technology. In a joint statement of 2001, USA president and Indian prime minister declared that they are going to transform their relations into partnership. Both states intended to architect their relationship on some mature level (Ambercrombie, 2019). Cooperation in the field of science and technology was considered the focal point of this partnership. Both parties were asked to find some new avenues to boost the partnership. Keeping in view the sensitivity of the mater, it was decided that they will continue

bilateral dialogue to analyze progress and make this process more transparent. India-USA High Technology Cooperation Group, (HTCG) was one of many initiatives that have been taken under this cooperation. HTCG was established when Kenneth I. Juster, the then secretary of USA Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), visited New Delhi in 2002. During his stay, work for promotion of trade in technology was discussed in detail. Further progress was done in 2003 when 14 guiding point were elaborated to make smooth working of HTCG. These guiding principle are known as ‘Statement of Principles for USA-India High Technology Commerce’. The officials from both sides discussed several issue concerning the expansion of high technology trade in the inauguration ceremony. So, the barriers in the way of such sensitive trade have been removed. The strategic partnership that started in 2005 provided sound road map for high technology trade between India and USA (al, 2020). The four areas of priority for such trade were recognized by the partners. These were;

- i) Defense and strategic trade
- ii) Biotechnology
- iii) Information technology
- iv) Nanotechnology.

A meeting was held in 2005 between Kapil Sibal, the then Indian minister for Science & Technology and Condoleezza Rice of USA to enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology. This meeting covered the areas from health to space technology. In 2005, Establishment of High Technology Defense Working Group was another step taken in this regard. Since the establishment of HTCG, officials from the both sides are arranging annual meetings regularly. In this way India was accepted as Valid End User in 2007. In the same year, a joint meeting was held in Washington. In this meeting parties from both states showed their satisfaction over the progress and success over agreed agenda. Other important development of this agreement is as mentioned below.

- i) Establishment of Intellectual Property Rights protocols
- ii) Creation of bi-national and Joint Science and Technology Commission.
- iii) Creation of Joint Science and Technology Endowment Fund
- iv) Cooperation in civilian space that will cover, satellite navigation and earth science and space exploration.
- v) Removal of several Indian organizations from the Entity List.

This bilateral cooperation revolutionized Indian Information technological sector. It also gave boost to life sciences, bio-technology and neon-technology in India. Moreover, it resulted provided a huge support to Indian economy. There was a dramatic increase noticed in trade of high technology items between the two partners.

Expanding Defense Cooperation

Defense ties occupy pivotal place in bilateral relation between different states. It is a specific tool to obtain or achieve security and strategic interests of any state. Defense based diplomacy is considered effective for improving confidence between the involved states. Defense cooperation can serve better in securing foreign policy and security interests of a state (Bishoyi, 2011). Changing security environment at the eve of 21st century provided basis for close Indo-USA defense ties. Bush administration offered defense agreements and opened new avenues to enhance bilateral ties with India. Leadership of both USA and India consider their relationship significant for promotion of peace and security at both regional and international levels (Kakar, 2020). Indian position as emerging regional

power and security concerns were mainly kept in view while establishing such close and entrusted bilateral relation. USA and India need each other in realm of security, economy, energy, urban and social policies (Teja, 2014). Indo-USA defense cooperation includes;

- i) International military education and training
- ii) Exchange of Special forces training
- iii) Military sales
- iv) Enhancement of ability to cooperate in peace keeping mission
- v) Programs to train and transfer weapons, providing training to more states to handle situation in case of any emergency and dispose off surplus weapons
- vi) Foreign military interactions
- vii) Civil military relations
- viii) Non-technical and non- combat training in field of defense management
- ix) Foreign military financing

Military Exercises

Joint military exercises are activities where different segments of defense sector of two or more states do exercises. Such activities have become significant part of modern diplomacy that is called military diplomacy. In this way the involved states intend to develop close military relationship with each other. On the other hand, it is also considered as a message to some states about military strength of a state. Exercises where there are only two states involved are called bilateral joint military exercises. Exercises where there are more than two states involved are called multilateral joint military exercises. A new era of military diplomacy between USA and India started during Bush administration. It was the time when USA engaged in joint military exercises with India. These exercises were not enhanced in number and sizes of military only but also in sophistication of weapons. All the military segments were engaged during these military exercises. There were around sixty (60) military exercises in total that were conducted by USA and India during eight years of Bush administration. Joint military exercises between India and USA have deepened (Shida, 2019). Special forces from militaries of both states were also involved in joint exercises. These special forces took part in different warfare like, guerilla warfare, jungle warfare, clandestine warfare and close quarter combat. This time the air forces of USA and India participated in the joint military exercises and experienced combat training. Naval forces of both states also remained the part of joint exercises. Annual Malabar exercises were considered emblematic in Indo-USA defense ties. Keeping in view the significant role of naval forces both states paid special attention on joint naval exercises. India remained engaged with USA in joint military exercises than any other state. India is considered a security partner of USA not only in Indian Ocean but even beyond. Robert Gate the then defense secretary stated that in the coming year India will be net provider of security in Indian Ocean and beyond. USA policy makers think India as major security guard in Indian Ocean (Rani, 2013).

Arms / Defense Sale

Defense sale is major component of defense relationship between two or more states. USA and India emerged as major defense trade partners since last two decades. USA proved itself a reliable defense supplier for India. During Bush administration defense trade between USA and India was enhanced to the unprecedented level. In a less than one decade the defense trade between these two states crossed \$ 6 billion. Military supplies and sales of weapons from USA to India remained

continuously expanded since the advent of this century (Shida, 2019). Such defense trade provided several opportunities to Indian defense sector to reach a new level by interactions with USA military forces. This partnership enabled India to develop its defense capacity and capabilities. USA defense articles and services that have been sold and provided to India includes, pilot test training, provision of tactical equipment, sensor fused weapons, Harpoon Missiles, self-protection suits for VVIP aircrafts, C-130J and C-17 aircrafts, TPQ-37 radars, maritime patrol aircrafts. GE-F 404 engines for light combat India crafts. Bush administration advanced its defense relation with India, as USA considered India a strategic partner in the region of South Asia. By engaging India, USA intends to maintain peace and security in India-Pacific region (Latif, 2012).

Civil Space Cooperation and Missile Defense

Since the inception of 21st century, USA and India have started to focus and intensify cooperation in the domain of space. Indo-USA cooperation has a long history that spreads more than a half century, but Bush administration started to emphasize this particular sector in bilateral relations with India. Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) that has been signed in the year of 2004, paved the way for strategic cooperation at high levels. Since then, both these states started to cooperate in the field of space at an accelerated pace. Space and technological cooperation between USA and India got a new enthusiasm under India-USA High Technology Cooperation Group that was actually the part of NSSP. Such cooperation provided India with opportunities for developing its scientific fields as India has experts and skilled professionals in technology. Joint Group for Civil Space Cooperation was established to materialize the commitment for cooperation in the field of space. Condoleezza Rice, the USA secretary of State, and K. Natrwar Singh from India arranged the inaugurated meeting of this initiative in the Indian city of Bangalore at the end of June 2005.

Foreign Policy towards Afghanistan

The USA foreign policy towards Afghanistan under Bush administration was proved the most focused in terms of priorities to secure political and strategic national interests. Bush approach towards Afghanistan was tagged as unilateral, nationalistic, conservative and power oriented by several foreign policy analysts. The terrorism and terrorist activities that USA experienced in September 2001 and after words had different face from that of old terrorism. In past, the terrorist groups were targeting to spread fear among the public even without causing casualties at large level. In the new form of terrorism, the terrorist intends to target and cause as much casualties as they can. Such destructive nature of terrorist activities spread a wave of severe threat among the public. It was for second time that USA mainland was attacked by external forces/elements by Japanese forces and terrorist respectively. The attack of 9/11 was quite different from that of Pearl Harbor. In Pearl Harbor the attack was an assault on combat targets. While now the targets in New York and Washington were the civilian. So the Bush administration had two main tasks ahead to deal with. First was not only to handle but to defeat terrorist in different regions. Second was to maintain and promote USA supremacy in future. This policy of Bush administration was not denied or opposed by any of USA policy makers. The new threat of terrorism was analyzed as challenge to USA supremacy in world structure that USA attained after fifty years long Cold War. So the desirability of privileged position in world power structure won support for Bush to fight terrorist around the globe. Domestic environment was conducive to provide support for such hegemonic policies by Bush administration (Menon, 2005). Bush came with his following 4D strategy to counter terrorism.

- *Defeating* terrorists by targeting their leadership, sanctuaries, material support, control, command, finances and communications.
- *Defense* of USA and its allied states by protecting their home lands and strengthening their defense to avoid any terrorist activity.
- *Denying* terrorist organizations sanctuaries, support and sponsorship and to make it sure that the states are playing responsible role by taking actions within their boundaries.

- *Diminishing* the primary conditions that terrorists try to exploit by enlisting world community to focus its resources and efforts on the areas under threat.

The Bush administration applied the 4Ds strategy in South Asian region with full vigor.

Bush on WOT in Afghanistan

Bush did not waste much time to peruse terrorist in Afghanistan. After denial of Afghans to hand over Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omer, Bush administration decided to attack Afghanistan. This campaign started in September 2001. American Special Forces were given the responsibility to locate the terrorists, their sanctuaries and facilities with the help of anti-Taliban segment in Afghanistan, known as Northern Alliance. The Bush was targeting not only to defeat Taliban but to eliminate them. USA succeeded to kill some of Al-Qaeda second command leaders but failed to kill or capture the two most wanted Laden and Omer. At initial stage of the war USA was reluctant to send American forces in difficult terrain of Tora Bora for following reasons;

- USA did not want repeat the mistake done by Soviet forces.
- To avoid American forces casualties at large scale.
- It was quite difficult to fight with Taliban in mountainous areas in winter.

Therefore, USA military establishment was not ready to deploy some large number of American forces in Afghanistan. The neoconservative in Bush administration advised the president that large conventional troops were not in favor of USA interests. Rather Taliban could be defeated through local fighter with ease. USA forces were relying on the war lords of Afghanistan and support provided by Pakistan security forces. Several warlords were paid huge money to fight American war in Afghanistan. Though USA got successes in defeat and capture Taliban but could not stop top leadership to flee from battlefield. Bush left office after his second term in 2009. The number of security forces continued to increase during his presidency. American forces reached to thirty-six thousand (36000) along with thirty-two (32000) coalition troops from few hundreds of CIA forces. During Bush era one thousand six hundred and seventy-nine (1679) soldiers died in total. Among them six hundred and thirty were American and one thousand forty-nine (1049) were coalition troops (Lutz, 2013) & (Muzaffar, et.al. 2020)

State-Building

Nation building in Afghanistan was not new idea in USA foreign policy. Fukuyama (2006) elaborated that after Cold War an increase and intensity has been shown in the efforts of USA in nation building. In defining nation building different scholars explained that this term is coined by USA to construct new world order in its own favor especially in new settlements irrespective of local traditions and culture. Moreover, nation- building is composed of two activities, reconstruction and development. Although the distinction between two activities are blurred and confused but these remained the part of early years of nation building campaign where the builders used to deal with post conflict situation. The official name of World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) demonstrates the same idea. So, World Bank experienced and focused reconstruction in the war savaged countries after World War II. While the second action 'development' of nation building covers the efforts to initiate or introduce new institutions, transformation of society into more progressive one and to work for sustainable economic development. Therefore, both actions also differ in conceptual paradigms. Reconstruction is directly related to the efforts that external forces try to perform in targeted state. Development is comparatively difficult, problematic and complex conceptually and in the issues of pragmatic policy. In the early years of WOT, Bush and his administration was not interested in nation building in Afghanistan. The defense department showed zero interests in reconstruction and betterment of Afghans. Hassan and Hammond (2011) explained that Bush was showing reluctance for nation

building in Afghanistan till the early 2003. Bush after September attack commented that we are not into nation building (Chesterman, 2004).

Ultimately Bush administration has to plan for nation building in Afghanistan. The increase in terrorist activities by Taliban after presidential election of 2004 captured the attention of USA policy makers to focus reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. So, Bush during his second term worked for nation building in war torn state of Afghanistan. From very first year of his second and last presidential term, nation building and counterinsurgency went hand in hand in foreign policy towards Afghanistan. Bush could not give attention for nation building in Afghanistan for two reasons. First, the local culture and historical background was not conducive for such move. Second, USA got itself involved in Iraq that caused to redirect the USA policies. At first this nation building was targeting economic development as well as political stability along with establishing American style democracy in the state. Change in military bureaucracy when Robert Gates replaced Rumsfeld as defense secretary, brought a change in the mindset to think about nation building in Afghanistan. The new secretary drew the attention of policy makers towards building infrastructure, reviving economic activities, public services and good governance in the state. Although there was change in mindset but warfare remained in main focus of the USA military establishment. It can be explained as another more effective method of warfare (Diesen, 2015).

Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Bush administration took a step for nation building in Afghanistan by establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in 2002. Later on these PRTs continued to work under the umbrella of NATO. PRTs were established and assigned with the following tasks:

- To support Afghan government to extend its authority
- To make security situation better in provinces
- To assist in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts

To define these PRTs, these are small but integrated civil-military units that were established as stabilizing force to work in turbulent provinces of Afghanistan. PRTs were the combination of military personals, civilians from development cooperation and members with diplomatic expertise. So PRTs with such combined elements of military, diplomacy and economic development have the capabilities to work for stability and security of targeted areas. Initially Afghan government was demanding extension in the role of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), but later on it agreed and supported the initiative of PRTs as these were limited in their military role. It was not only the willingness of USA policy makers to establish PRTs. There were different reasons and situation under which this idea was implemented as mentioned below (Perito, 2005).

- USA allies were not in favor of increasing soldiers in Afghanistan, thus PRTs were second effective option to work for security outside Kabul.
- USA was facing severe pressure of international community to focus and adopt a coherent approach for reconstruction in post war Afghanistan.
- It was dire need of the time to win the heart and sympathies of Afghans who were war stricken and filled with anti- American sentiments.

Generally, a PRT is composed of 50 to 300 military and civil officials. Proportionally the civil members in PRTs remained low (almost 5 to 10 percent). The members of every PRT were given the responsibility to support security and reconstruction projects. These tasks of PRTs included intelligence, reconstruction projects, supervision and training of security forces, disarming and demobilization, patrolling and mediation.

Conclusion

President Bush followed unilateralism during making foreign policy towards South Asia. Every state in South Asia was given significance according to the new geopolitical realities. Indo-USA bilateral ties during the Bush presidency reached at its height. The two states became much closer to each other and started to work on wider scope of cooperation. India with sustained democracy and huge market attracted the attention of USA policy maker under Bush administration. Indo-USA Nuclear Deal was initiated in 2005. This deal was a clear signal that USA is going to give India more importance than any other state in the region. Diplomatic ties between the two partners were also strengthened during Bush era. USA intended to enhance its role in India Ocean Region making alliance with India. Afghanistan was the only state that kept Bush administration engaged in its first few years. Terrorist attack of 9/11 diverted the whole attention of USA policy makers towards Afghanistan as well as the South Asian region (Leffler, 2017). President Bush had no second opinion but to eliminate terrorists from all the regions of the world. USA started its WOT under Bush administration at the end of 2001. The world was given the message that USA will not spare any state or organization that was fond involved in terrorist activities or in supporting terrorist organization. USA succeeded to overthrow the government of Taliban in few days. Whether it was planned or not but USA remained engaged in war of Afghanistan under two terms of President Bush.

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