

**MAJOR CHALLENGES AFFECTED OF INDO-US
RELATIONS DURING THE FIRST TERM OF OBAMA
ADMINISTRATION**

RamakantaMallik*

Abstract

It is true that, India and the USA plays vital role in the international scenario, both the nations cooperating each other to protect their national interest. After September 11, 2001 incident their relations reach high level both countries agreed to support for containment of counterterrorism Specially Bush Administration. After president bush it is no Doubt Obama'policy towards India may be consider as the positive manner. Despite positive activities his administration also indicated some negative policies towards India. In this article I have discussed the major obstacles which ware Affected of Indo- US relations first term of Obama Administration.

* PhD Research Scholar, UMISARC & Centre for South Asian Studies, Pondicherry University

Full Paper

January 20th 2009 Barack Hussein Obama was shown as the 44th president of United States of America. He is the first black president and greatly follower of Mahatma Gandhi one of the advocated of non violence and world peace. Because of his humanitarian achievement he got noble peace prize during the year of 2009. Obama administration stress on cooperated with India in the sphere of economy, defense, terrorism energy security climate change, educations and development, trade and agriculture, science and technology and health and innovations. Despite that Obama administration has not able to maintain healthy cooperation with India because his foreign policy was against India which was giving more tension to India. That covers number of areas of convergence, under the five pillars of strategic cooperation Energy and Climate Change, Education and Development, Economics, Trade and Agriculture and Science, Technology, Health and Innovation. The US-India relation is affected due to some differences of foreign policies between the two nations. Obama administration's, China factors, Pakistan factors and Outsourcing became a matter of contradiction between the two countries today. It is the challenges over the two countries to enhance economic and political cooperation into higher level and energize the relationship further.

China Factors in Indo-US Relations

China is undoubtedly the second most influential country in the world after the US. China plays a vital role in containing Nuclear Proliferation in the Korean Peninsula .It was expanding economic presence in the elsewhere has captured world attentions. Its role in fighting the current global recession is unquestionably critical. In his articles, Bharat Wariavwalla points out that the today's China, holding some \$800 billion in US treasury bonds and some \$2 trillion worth of

currency reserves, wield ‘financial terror’ against the US. He maintains that despite the tremendous asymmetry of power between the American and the Chinese powers there is a different relationship between the two. The central thesis of Warwalla’s articles can be challenged on the following grounds.

It highlights the Chinese strengths and American weaknesses, but fails to take into account American’s abiding might and China’s existing vulnerabilities. China is yet to emerge as a significant donor country; is yet to be capable of bearing the burden taking the risk of hegemony; and is yet to have a currency that can replace the dollar.

China can change the rules of global governance established under US leadership only at the risk of its own ruin, since its rise occurred under the same system. Interdependence has always existed, but has never been ‘equitable.’ It thus continues to be exploitative. The Chinese’s unhappiness the US, notwithstanding their comments appeared to acknowledge, that India bargained hard for a deal that was in its national interests and was entitled to what it got. Similarly, the US too had acted in its on national interests. But where the Americans and the Indians might err, is in taking that Chinese national interests have necessarily suffered as a result of the deal. On the contrary, the largely moderate Chinese response to the Indo-US opens several avenues for China to engage with the US and India. The Chinese might yet find ways of turning the situation to their advantage. Indeed some of these approaches are already evident.

In fact, the American Nuclear deal with a non-NPT signatory, allows China to press the US to expand similar ties with China. After all technology transfer is a contentious issue also in Sino-American National Security Adviser (NSA), Zbigniew Brzezinski, an interview with the ‘People’s Daily’, said “he hoped to see some expansion in the American Chinese cooperation in the Nuclear energy field

to highlight yet another sector in which we would have common stake”. In fact, one wonders of this process is something the Americans are expecting as a consequence of the Indian deal that would allow the US to effect further changes in American domestic law and really itself to take advantage of a coming expansion of the global nuclear industry. Alternatively it raised the question of just how far have the Chinese been in the know about the Indo-US Nuclear deal.

The unannounced jettisoning by Mr. Obama of the various strategic initiatives undertaken by the Bush administration in the US and the Manmohan Singh government in India for balancing China though India’s power and status in the Asian region, joint naval exercises in areas of interest to China and by associating Japan with some of these initiatives and his action during his visit to China in November 2009 in Indo-Pakistan matters. Created an impression in India that a convergence of China –related perceptions, Witches was a defining characteristic of the policies of the Bush administration towards India was no longer a motivating factor in the White House.

Then first major Chinese comment on the Indo-US Nuclear deal, appeared in the people’s daily in the late October. The piece, “who’s pursuing Nuclear proliferation” was critical of the US for ‘making an exception’ for India that would bring about a series of negative impacts particularly on the Iranian and North Korean issues. In fact, the Hindu, in February 2006, reported Chinese ambassador to India, Sun Yaxi, as saying that China, fully understood India’s push for closer ties with Washington, just as Beijing too sought better relations with them.

The -finalizations of the deal in March, nonetheless, brought a call from China for India to sign the NPT and also dismantle its Nuclear weapons, saying “As a signatory contrary, China hopes non-signatory countries will join it as soon as possible as non-Nuclear weapon states, thereby contributing to strengthening the

international non-proliferation résumé. Letter, Xinhua commented that the Bush administration's "generous gift granted [India] the status of *de facto* Nuclear power". Above all, what most prevented China from coming up with a strong counter to the Indo-US deal when it was first announced, by a Chinese general threatening the use of the Nuclear weapons if the US intervened military in a conflict over Taiwan, while the Chinese refused to back down from the trying to more than a disguise serving the US interests.

Whatever, the US continues to have a military edge over its allies and an economic edge over its potential rivals in the coming years and act as the most significant balancer in world affairs, notwithstanding the current changes in the balance of power. India will gain by having close ties with the US. US will lose by antagonizing India's autonomy in strategic decision-making in global affairs.

Obama's Pakistan policy

In his election campaigns, Barack Obama sounded a strident note on issues related to militants in Pakistan. In August 2007, he admitted that the US has to target resurgent al Qaeda outfits in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NEFP). He went to extent of saying that if elected, he would not hesitate to conduct operations in Pakistan, even if Islamabad was opposed to it. This watershed statement by Obama sought to counterbalance accusations from rival camps, which initially pronounced his approach towards foreign policy issues as naïve. "If we have actionable intelligence about high value terrorist targets and President won't act, we will," Obama asserted in this regard.

Obama strongly disfavored the mishandling of American military aid by Pakistan for supporting terrorism in Kashmir. The aid meant to fund the ongoing 'war on terror' but he stated that the aid was being misappropriated and used for

encouraging terror activities against its neighbour: India on different occasion, Obama indicated, “We are providing them military aid without having enough strings attached.” He argued that military aid to Pakistan should be conditional, obligating Islamabad to rein in breeding military on its soil. Obama reacted in a similar fashion to the Senate Bill, which considered an annual non-military aid worth US\$1.5 billion in September 2008 for social development in Pakistan. Interestingly, the bill was introduced by his then running mate and now Vice-President, Joseph Biden.

The Kerry Lugar bill was introduced amidst widespread criticism of US aid policy of Pakistan. The bill proposed to impose certain riders on US aid to Pakistan. The establishment forestalled strong decisive action against the Taliban and al-Qaeda within its own territory even while it received billions for the purpose since the ‘war and terror’ started. Therefore, the US Congress felt the need granting of additional aid to Pakistan without ‘verifiable benchmarks’ would be similar to issuing ‘blank cheque.’ The US aid programmer to an extent could govern Pakistan on taking ‘concrete, verifiable, steps’ against militant groups on its soil. The Kerry Lugar bill is noted to test the equation between the army and the civilian government in Pakistan as the former is extremely unhappy with certain provisions.

President Obama admitted that issues such as Kashmir are “constant instigator” of conflict between India and Pakistan. In this context, he acknowledged, “Historically, Pakistan has tolerated or in some cases funded the Mujahideen.” This statement was very significant one for it partially endorsed India’s long-standing complaint against Pakistan. Besides, he called for the US to take action against Pakistan’s act of funding militant groups in India and Afghanistan, thus evincing his sensitiveness on the issue. Obama feels that problems in South Asia are somewhat intertwined and need a comprehensive

approach. In this case, if restoration of peace in the region requires the US to play a role in India-Pakistan talks, it may well engage in such an exercise. Obama has time and again re-seated to shut down terrorist camps in Pakistan. “It’s just in the interest of Af-Pak and also interest of US Security that we have to those bases.” We views Pakistan’s association with the mujahideen as ‘counterproductive’.

The issue about the possibility of a US ‘role’ in resolving the Kashmir question came up when Obama noted in an interview that “working with Pakistan and India to try to resolve the Kashmir crisis in a serious way” is a ‘critical task’ for the new administration. “We should probability try to resolve the Kashmir crisis so that they can stay focused not on India, but on the situation with those militants,” he said. Besides, he also indicated Bill Clinton as the likely ‘envoy’ on Kashmir as a part of “Serious Diplomatic Resources,” if some understanding was arrived at on the issue. There are reasons which perhaps influenced this particular choice. The Clinton administration indulged in this preventive diplomacy over Kashmir in the 1990s. Also, Clinton in a positive move urged Pakistan to retreat to the Line of Control during the Indo-Pak Kargil conflict in 1999. Ironically, there is no likelihood of any third party mediation as India is firmly opposed to it and at the same time Pakistan also seems unsure of US intentions in this regard. This apprehension arise party because even while Vice-President Joe Biden advocates increased aid to Pakistan, Obama’s ‘intent’ to strike targets within Pakistan has led to a considerable degree of skepticism about the US in Pakistan. It is interesting to note that aid worth billions of dollar has failed to influence perceptions in Pakistani society questioning the loyalty of the US towards Pakistan.

Also, the US attempt to draw a link between Kashmir and peace in Afghanistan evoked concern in India, especially in the media. The contention was rejected entirely in due course. India’s stance, however, has always been clear: there has never been any relation between stability in Afghanistan and the

resolution of the Kashmir issue. The two subjects are completely diverse and share on congruent role in ensuring peace and order in South Asia. Obama, while drawing a parallel, perhaps failed to note that the Kashmir issue and Afghanistan crisis originated in totally different contexts and times.

Obama advocated a US policy that “compels Pakistani action against terrorists who threaten our common security and are using the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Northwest Terrorists Pakistan as a safe haven.” Obama ideated a road map to bring stability in the region: a road map where Pakistan has a significant role in the ongoing war against terror in Afghanistan. He noted, “The most important thing we’re going to work with the newly elected government there in a coherent way that says terrorism is not a threat to you. Extremism is a threat to you.” He further assured “and we’ve got to say to the Pakistan people, we’ve not just going to respect Democracy. But we do have expectations in terms of being a partner in its fight against terrorism.” These statements appeared in the backdrop of several air drone attacks by the US targeting militants in Pakistan’s tribal regions. Notably, such attacks involving remote-controlled predator aircraft have increased during the past one year.

Obama welcomed the election of Asif Ali Zardari as the President of Pakistan in September 2008. He was hopeful that a democratically elected Zardari would fill the void created by the prolonged phase of military rule in the country. He also expressed satisfaction at the reinstatement of the restoration of a truly Independent Judiciary” it is noteworthy that Obama was one of the initiators of a resolution Musharraf in November 2007. He also called for investigating the assassination attempts on former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto much before she was actually assassinated on December 27, 2007, during an electoral campaign.

In all likelihood, the Obama Administration will not unduly disturb the India-US relations. But the US aid to Pakistan for the containment of terrorism in the Afghanistan Pakistan is using this aid fighting against India. Therefore US aid to Pakistan is one of the major challenges of Indo-US relations.

Obama's Outsourcing Policy towards India

India is getting its 60 percent of revenue in outsourcing only from America and many companies are doing this. It is said that nearly \$ 40 billion is invested in outsourcing. Most of the youngsters are working in the IT companies and BPO'S. Now they feel that they could be in danger since Obama is elected as a new President. This is because earlier in election campaign Obama has announced that the offshore drilling from American will be reduced since even there unemployment and also his view on the H1B visa. This made to fly butterflies in the stomach of Indian BPO'S and IT companies employees.

But according to Obama the India and America relationship will be made stronger and more deals will be made between the two nations in future. So there won't be any threat to the outsourcing companies.

In fact, after the problem of economic slowdown is solved, the outsourcing will be increased and India will get more opportunities from America. This statement could be a senseless but that's the fact. There will be track in the relationship between India and US regarding outsourcing.

The US hiding behind protectionist walls, however uncreative and popular they might seem in the global economic investment. The Indian software industry, meanwhile, is also trying to diversify. Though the US is its largest market, closely followed by the UK, its sights are now on new markets in Latin America, China, Japan and Europe. The industry is expanding by 21 to 24 percent annually, and it is being suggested in some quarters that by 2020 India will be in a position to fulfill

the technical needs of the entire world. However, the differences between the US and India on outsourcing are not resolved uniquely, both lose in the long term. Not directly, instead, the administration plans to outsource the entire Indo-US relationship to the private sector, a sector, whether in India or in the United States, whose job it is profits over people outsourcing won't be far behind, in fact, that's pretty much what the business-to business relationship is all about. The temptation of India's low wages and high potentials in engineering, science and technology in clouding biotechnology and genetics engineering in pharmaceuticals and agriculture is simply too affective for cooperation's that have too much sway over both governments.

References

1. Yu Tsung-Chi, 'Obama's Pragmatic View of China', Taipei Times, December 23, 2008
2. President Obama's Remarks on Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan "The New York Times," (March 27, 2009)
3. Barrack Obama, 'US -China Relations under the Obama Administration,' the American Chamber of Commerce, (2009).
4. Bill Van Auken, 'Obama administration seeks extraordinary military powers in Pakistan', Global research, (May, 2009)
- 5 .C. Raja Mohan, 'He considers Bill Clinton as Special Envoy on Kashmir,' the Indian express (November 5, 2008)
- 6 .Horbarooke visits Pakistan's hot bed,' BBC, (February 11, 2010)