Indo-US Relations in the Coming Decades

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I deem it a great privilege to be invited to inaugurate the Field Marshal Manekshaw annual lecture series. I have known the Field Marshal since 1968 and had interacted with him at the moment of his glory and that of the country -the victory in the Bangladesh war - the first significant military victory this country won in the last three centuries. Sam, as he was popularly known, proved himself an intrepid soldier in the battlefield -he won the Military Cross in the Campaign in Burma - and a masterful general and Chief of Army Staff by the way he managed the Bangladesh Liberation War. In April 1971, when he was consulted by the political leadership about military intervention during the genocide and ethnic cleansing in Bangladesh, he took a firm stand against committing the Army without adequate preparations. The unpreparedness fault was not that of the Army. It was that of the political leadership which did not keep the Army informed in time about the likely crisis in East Pakistan and the need for the Army to have contingent plans ready for intervention. He was initially criticised by some – I was not one of them, though he first mistook me as one of them. My criticism was directed against the Government and not the Army. He withstood all that criticism and came out triumphant in the end. To his credit, it must be acknowledged that he did not try to micromanage the campaign but left it to his Army Commanders, unlike some of his predecessors. Sam was the first Indian Commissioned Officer to reach the post of the Chief of the Army Staff. He proved that the Indian Commissioned Officers were better than their predecessor, King's Commissioned Officers trained in Sandhurst. Let me wish Sam many more years and a fast recovery from his present ill health.

The 1971 war was a turning point in Indian history. Upto that point of time, India was considered a weak country, likely to fragment and end up as a failed state. The indifference of the US towards India and its support to Pakistan were rooted in the belief that India could not feed itself (it heavily depended on PL-480

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imports), defend Itself - 1962 was deemed proof of it -and could not stay united for long (the anti-Hindi riots in the South were considered indicative of fissiparous tendencies). The Americans came to conclude in 1965, as a result of the war-game they played, that Pakistan would win the war against India. There was an American book in 1965, titled, *Famine 1975*, which predicted that there would be widespread famine in India in 1975 and India was not worth saving.

Americans, brainwashed by the British, subscribed to the thesis that while Islam would bind Pakistan firmly, India, with its multifarious languages, cultures and religions would not be able to keep itself united. The 1971 victory in Bangladesh was the turning point in the international image about India.

Thereafter, India conducted its nuclear test in 1974, survived the emergency and a democratic change of regime, reached settlements with Sheikh Abdullah, Nagas and Mizos, had its successful green revolution and launched its satellite. It was Islamic Pakistan which broke up. Consequently, the world came to develop a new respect for India. When President George Bush exclaims about India "a democracy of a billion people! Isn't that something!", he is expressing appreciation for what this country went through from 1947 to 1990. Since in this country, we do not believe in writing our history, most of the younger generation are not aware of what it took to arrive at India of today. Sam had the good fortune to be one of those who helped to engineer the make-over in India's image.

India, it must be admitted has the highest number of poor and illiterates in the world. However, it must also be acknowledged that there is no parallel in the world for a decolonised country building itself into a modern industrial state with over 600 million of its population above poverty-line, as a democracy, a multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual one. In China, 38 million people are estimated to have perished under the Communist rule. We are the only nation which has moved from the status of a colony to that of one of six major players in world politics, along with the US, European Union, China, Japan and Russia. The United States has announced its intention to help India to build itself as a world class power in the 21st Century. With that announcement came the recognition by the Chinese Premier, never done upto that point of time, that India has a global role to play, followed by a similar

statement from the Japanese Prime Minister. India is today a candidate for the permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Along with China it is invited to G-8 meeting of leading industrial nations of the world. In the next few days, hopefully, our Prime Minister and the US President are likely to conclude agreements which will launch a strategic partnership between the world's oldest democracy and largest one. Never before in the history of the last two centuries have there been such partnerships between two major nations except in circumstances which were perceived to threaten their security.

This proposed partnership is for international peace and stability and to promote the rule of law in a globalised international community. This will be a major turning point in the ongoing history of the world. I propose to deal with this path-breaking event in my lecture since there are a lot of misapprehensions and misunderstandings about this development, in this country.

As early as 1991 Dr Henry Kissinger, wrote in his book *Diplomacy* about the likely emergence of a new global balance of power in the international system after the end of the cold war, comprising the US, European Union, China, Japan, Russia and possibly India. The caveat about India was presumably because it had just started growing at a rate of five to six per cent. The following developments were yet to take place. The nineties saw an average of 6 per cent growth rate, following economic liberalisation. India also became in 1998 a nuclear weapon state and missile power. It could launch geo-synchronous satellites into space. Its poverty level came down. The Indian scientific community started making a significant impact on the Information Technology revolution. The contribution of the Indian scientific community in the US research and development (R&D) came to be recognized. It started accumulating a sizeable foreign exchange reserve. After 11 September 2001 incident, India was acknowledged as one of the nations with very large Islamic population which was free of Al-Qaeda and Jehadi influence though this country had been subjected to externally inspired jehadi terrorism from 1990. India also underwent the experience of coalition governments which demonstrated the basic democratic political stability of the Indian system. It also fought a limited war with Pakistan in 1999 with remarkable restraint that earned the respect of the international community.

In 1990, the cold war ended with the Paris agreement. Historically, it was a unique event. Never before in human memory, two adversary blocs, armed to the teeth with missiles and nuclear warheads at the disposal of both, enough to destroy the human civilization many times over, militarily confronting each other eyeball to eyeball over four decades, signed a treaty to disarm without having fought a war. This happened because it was realised as Bernard Brodie said at the dawn of the nuclear era, the role of the military in the nuclear age was not to fight wars but to prevent wars from breaking out. The experience of Vietnam and Afghan wars and the various anti-colonial wars also demonstrated that in today's world it is easier to invade a country than to keep it occupied. The cost of occupation both in material terms and casualties made it cost-ineffective for major powers. While wars of interest – as for oil – and wars of conscience – as in Kosovo are still possible, especially between a major power and a medium or small one, wars among major powers - especially those armed with nuclear weapons and missiles -are no longer considered likely. War, therefore, is no longer the kind of instrument of politics as was considered hitherto. Nor are nuclear war-heads and missiles, the kind of currency of power as they were regarded in the 20th Century. That does not, however, mean that we have reached a stage to dissolve the armed forces. We still have people like Pervez Musharraf, Taliban leader Mullah Omar and Saddam Hussein who have not reached the conclusion that war is no longer a viable instrument of politics and, therefore, one needs armed forces to ensure that such people do not have the benefit of their mistaken thinking.

Today's world is a globalised one. Though it has its serious deficiencies, as our Prime Minister often points but, it is an inevitable and irreversible development. Its functioning is based on two principles -market economy and democracy. The world is economically so integrated that value of the Chinese currency has its impact on the US economy. The East Asian currency crisis reverberated throughout the world. Subsidies paid to the US and European farmers affect poverty levels in Africa.

Outsourcing both in manufacture and services is becoming the order of the day. The world of today is fundamentally different from the one that obtained during cold war bipolarity. The currency

of power in today's world is knowledge. The status of a major player in the international community depends on, besides the wealth it produces, the knowledge it generates and innovative skills of its scientists, managers and technicians. Recently the National Intelligence Council of the United States produced its forecast for the year 2020. It assessed that the US, China and India would be among the first three markets of the world. Since wars are no longer feasible among the major powers the rivalry between the US and China for their respective pre-eminence in international hierarchy is not likely to be solved the way it has been done down history -through a war. However, there can be no doubt that the US would like to continue to be the pre-eminent nation in the world. Given the population of China and inevitable rise in the per-capita income of the Chinese, there is no way the US can prevent China overtaking the US in the overall gross domestic product to become the richest nation of the world. However, since the future currency of power will be knowledge, the US does not want to forego its option of having the lead in knowledge over China. Therefore, the US efforts are concentrated on ensuring that it stays ahead of China in terms of knowledge generation and inventiveness. In a world where war is no longer a feasible policy option among major nations, it is unrealistic to talk of a unipolar world. This was clearly demonstrated when the US failed to get its attack on Iraq - endorsed by the UN Security Council.

A globalised world has to be ruled by internationally accepted norms. If the nations are to compete without war, then there must be rules for competition. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is presently the most important regulatory body to monitor trade competition. Today most important disputes before the WTO are between the US and its erstwhile allies of the cold war era - the European Union. Once the sense of security threat of the cold war confrontation disappeared, Europe became more of a rival for the US than a pliant ally. To think of the US as an all powerful sole superpower able to impose its will on the rest of the world on every issue is a continuation of the cold war mindset and does not represent the reality of today. Whether the rest of the world understands it or not – in India many don't – the US leadership appears to do so. Therefore, it is focused on its main rival of the future – China.

For the US, the Soviet Union was a military adversary and the cold war was a military power struggle. The strategy adopted in that cold war was containment – advocated originally by George Kennan. It meant the Soviet Union had to be contained ideologically, militarily, politically, economically and technologically. Winning over China, an ally of the Soviet Union, was part of that containment strategy. Since India would not allow itself to be part of the Soviet containment through a ring of military pacts around it, the US tilted towards Pakistan against India. After 45 years of containment policy the US won the cold war with the internal collapse of the Soviet Union and Communism as an ideology. The US strategy to deal with China, which is not an adversary but a rival is radically different from that adopted towards the Soviet Union. The strategy is not containment but its exact opposite, engagement.

While the US avoided trade and economic links with Moscow, the US is the largest trading partner of China. It has invested heavily in Chinese economy. It has succeeded in persuading the Chinese leadership to abandon communism in economic terms. Today's Chinese communism is only a cover for the authoritarian rule of the Communist party. The problem for the US with China is that it is the only major world player which does not subscribe to democracy. The US worry is that China may not play the international game according to rules. Its effort is how to bring about change in China to make it accept democracy and abide by the rules of international game. The US Secretary of State, Dr Condeleezza Rice has made it clear that the US will attempt to bring China around through its own relationships with Japan, South Korea and India. Towards this end Asia must have a balance of power. Though it has not been articulated specifically the US initiative to help India to develop itself as a world class power is related to creation of this balance of power in Asia in which all major economies will be intensively engaging and not containing China. Those who see the US strategy in terms of containment of China, especially military containment of that country have not understood the nature of the post-cold war world or the US strategy vis- a-vis China. Those people have an unduly exaggerated view of the US capabilities and role of war in today's world.

Unfortunately, in spite of a National Security Council having been set up in 1998, this country has no tradition of developing long range assessments on international security developments

and making them the basis for both a national consensus as well as our tong term policies. The result of this failure is that our response to the US policy announcement of its intention to help India to build itself as a major world class power in the 21st century, is very confused and adhocist. Even as the US makes a total U-turn in its policy towards India, our response is mostly derived from our past experience. There has been no attempt at assessing why the US has undertaken this U-turn and what its interests and expectations are. Many of our official and nonofficial reactions betray a total lack of understanding of history.

A more powerful nation helping a less powerful one to build itself to play a more important role is not new in history. Usually this happened when the more powerful nation calculated that the end result would be to its advantage, though it might not always prove to be the right calculation. The US made a complete U-turn in its policy of containment towards China in 1971 after having fought a war with China in Korea during 1950-53 in which tens of thousands of Americans perished. It was done on the calculation that weaning China away from the Soviet Union was to the US advantage. The Chinese responded enthusiastically and gave up their thesis that there was a permanent antagonistic contradiction between the Capitalist US and Communist China. They did not mind when the British Chief of Defence Staff characterized them as Eastern NATO and did not crib that they had come under the US hegemony and lost their sovereignty. They embraced the US investments on a massive scale, had modest defence collaboration and began sending their students annually in thousands to the US universities. They never used their UN Security Council Veto against the US. They tacitly cooperated with the US against the Soviet Union and allowed them monitoring stations in Sinkiang when the US missile-test-monitoring stations vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in Iran had to be shut down after the Khomeini revolution. Obtaining the US technology and investments, they expanded their trade with the US to become its number one trading partner. Today the US worries about China becoming its rival. Did China lose its sovereignty or give in on its vital interests because of its collaboration with the US?

Similarly, after the end of the second world war and the massive destruction in it, both Japan and Germany were recipients of the US aid. They were and still are also security partners of the

US formally linked in military pacts. Today, Japan and Germany are rivals of the US in commercial terms. Germany refused to go along with the US on the issue of Iraq. All East Asian tigers became tigers consequent on massive US support. This kind of support to help build up another nation is not just a US monopoly. In the fifties the Chinese received massive aid for their industrialisation from the Soviet Union. After the first world war when the Versailles Treaty forbade Germany from developing aircraft and tanks, the Germans and Russians concluded the Rapallo Treaty which led to German technicians helping to build the Soviet defence industry. Artem Mikoyan, the famous designer of MIG aircraft learnt aircraft-designing from the Germans. In the process the Germans kept alive their research and development (R and D) skills to use them when Germany discarded the provisions of the Versailles Treaty'. At the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of 20th Century the British transferred technology to Japan and invested heavily there to build Japan as a counter balance to Czarist Russia. The only difference in the new proposed US-Indian cooperation is – there is no calculation of the possibility of war and militarily balancing a potential military adversary.

The Indian record of accepting both military and development help from other countries and yet maintaining its independence speaks for itself. There was opposition to our receiving the US and Western aid for our development from the same quarters which are opposing the present Indo-US cooperation. There were those who denounced the Indo-Soviet Treaty in 1971 as having made India a Soviet satellite. Then there were others who argued that the Soviet help was going to trap India to join Brezhnev's anti-China Asian security arrangement. Such criticism denotes a certain lack of self-confidence among sections of our elite and a sense-of-inferiority complex that we as a nation cannot stand up to external pressure. Underlying all this timidity is an exaggerated fear of the United States as an all-powerful sole superpower. Today the US finds it difficult to manage the situation in Iraq. Its European allies have adopted an ambivalent attitude towards it. Only certain sections of the Indian elite appear to have such an extraordinary fear of the US military capabilities. India weathered successfully not only the US sanctions but also those of other industrial countries following 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests. Therefore, instead of displaying such baseless fears our attempt should be to have an

objective assessment of the US offer and to carry out a cold calculated cost-benefit analysis on it. We need not buy the US rhetoric of our being two democracies. As pointed out earlier, while there have been instances of one country being helped by another, it has never been for altruistic reasons. Those who argue about hidden costs have a valid point. But they should not stop at just raising fears about hidden costs and walking away like the jesting pilot but should try to spell them out. Just talking about hidden costs without specifying them is the surest way to paralyse ourselves into inaction.

In her interview to Bloomberg News on 26 May 2005 the US Secretary of State Dr Condeleezza Rice was asked what was the benefit to the United States from improving US-India relations. She clarified "When this issue came up several months ago, I think that the answer that rings truest is that in order for the United States to be competitive and to make certain that jobs are here, you have to have an environment in which this is the very best place to do business. And that is what I think the President and his economic advisers spend a lot of time doing. And the President has talked about dealing not just with our near-term problems, but with our long term liabilities, like Social Security which depressed the capacity of the United States to be, over the long term, the very best place to do business. But India is a rising economic influence of power in the international system. It is a great multi-ethnic democracy. I think it is a natural friend for the United States. I think it is emerging as a potentially very stabilising and positive force in international politics, which is why we are spending a lot of time in that relationship."

The Americans have done their homework and have assessed India's economic potential. They are of the view that if the US is to stay competitive in business over the long term, the relationship with India is important. In India this issue has not been understood. To stay competitive in business the Americans need three things –first, increasing amount of brain power that would sustain the American inventiveness. 'Secondly, ability to cut costs through outsourcing and thirdly, a large market. India will ideally fulfill all the three criteria. India is an English speaking, multicultural democratic county and the Indian brainpower has already demonstrated its potential utility to the US economy. More and

more American companies are establishing their R and D facilities in India to cut costs on R and D. An expanding trade with India will provide a second source for consumer products for the US other than China and will do good for the US economy. Dealing with China's economic challenge rather than military challenge is the driving force behind the US interest in helping India to build itself as a world class power.

Look around the world. There is no second English speaking multi-cultural democratic country which is likely to become the world's most populous county, third market in the globe and with whom the US has no direct clash of national interests. Therefore, the US Secretary of State has called India a natural friend of the United States. When the US made a U-turn on its policy vis-a-vis China it was not called a natural friend. If the US has done so much to help build China as a world-class power when it was never a natural friend there can be reasonable expectation that its stake in India is likely to be higher. Dr Rice further added, in the same interview "...And then, in India, which is democratic, multi-ethnic, reforming in terms of the economy, entering the world economy in a major way, and that the United States can retain good relations with all those and deepening relations with all of those, it is very good strategic position for the United States in terms of security, in the fight against terrorism as well as when you look to the West what it means for the Middle East and when you look to the East what it means for East Asia more broadly. When I went out there, we talked about a stronger economic relationship, stronger energy cooperation, stronger defence cooperation and becoming a reliable partner for India as it makes its move as a global power. And we used the words that we are fully willing and ready to assist in that growth of India's global power and the implication of that which we see as largely positive."

When the US decided to change its policy vis-a-vis China in 1971 there was no similar clearly articulated commitment. And yet China was able to exploit fully its relationship with the US to become a world power. Let us dq an elementary assessment of the global balance of power some three decades from now. While China may have overtaken the US in terms of aggregate GDP, it will be facing a problem of ageing population. Because of one child policy practiced in the past, the ratio of nonworking to working population will become increasingly unfavourable with its consequent impact

on its growth rate. Unless China becomes democratic in the near future it will also be facing uncertainties and instability on that account. India will have become the most populous country and will be comparatively younger than China in age profile. Its ratio of nonworking to working population will be relatively better than China. In terms of skilled manpower generation too India will have an advantage. It is also likely that the Indian population in the US will be many times what it is today and in all probability will have commensurate political clout. To a significant extent as the US and China compete for the preeminent position in the international hierarchy, India as the third market power and the largest reservoir of scientific talent will be in a position to influence the result. This factor appears to figure in the US calculation. The other three major powers EU, Russia and Japan do not have populations of sizes to compete with the US, China and India. Their populations are also ageing. The US is the only country which has a tradition of importing brain power through immigration.

When it comes to skilled population moving, there is no need to guess what is likely to happen. More Indians are likely to move to the US. In the US, Indians are likely to be preferred to the Chinese and more Indians of comparatively younger age are also likely to be available. The US, too, will in all probability prefer India as the second pre-eminent power in the international system compared to China. It would appear as though some of these factors have already figured in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's calculations. He has not so far uttered a word to contradict Dr Condoleezza Rice's assertions. On the other hand he has pointed out that never before had the international situation been as favourable as it is today for India's development. According to him the world financial flows are available for India to be tapped for its development. He has also made it clear that India's place would be with the liberal democracies.

Some people may raise the question whether the US is really a liberal democracy and whether it has not been a hegemonic power for the last 60 years. While there is no denying that the US has been a hegemonic power for the last six decades the arguments advanced here are meant to demonstrate that the international system is changing fast and the US will have to accept in future the discipline of a global balance of power and more norm-bound

international system. Iraq is as much a new beginning for the US as it is for the authoritarian Islamic States. Except for the European Union today, the US is more of a liberal democracy in its domestic politics than the other major powers including India. This is so in spite of various abridgements in civil liberties that have come about as a result of events of 11 September 2001.

As Jawaharlal Nehru said long ago, national interests and not ideology determine a nation's foreign policy and international relations. If ideology had been the sole determinant, India should have quit the Commonwealth, especially in the light of the British creation of Pakistan, India could not have had anything to do with the totalitarian Soviet Union. Nor will it be logical to improve relations with China which India is doing wisely. Therefore, the US proposals for strengthening cooperation in the fields of economy, energy and defence will have to be evaluated on a case by case basis with reference to our national interest and not from the point of view of any ideology. In Mahabharata after the Kurushetra battle the Pandavas sought instructions on State craft from the Patriarch Bhishma who was awaiting his death lying on a bed of arrows, pending the arrival of Uttarayan. Bhishma told them that for a king (read modern state), there was no friend or enemy as such but circumstances made friends and enemies. Today India needs Bhishma's wisdom. Therefore, India should be assessing carefully what are the circumstances which have brought about this change of attitude in the US policy instead of rejecting the US initiative outright or accepting it uncritically.

In any balance of power system (as the one developing among the six power centres of the world), it is natural for powers to have different alignments with others from time to time, to ensure that the balance is to their advantage. In any stable balance of power this will be a dynamic process. Given the preeminence of the US as a power, the natural expectation will be that the US would attempt to have better relations with each of the other five powers than they have with each other. But in the last three months the US is making highly publicised efforts about improving its relations with India. The world's foremost power does not normally stake its credibility by such publicity about its diplomatic venture. What are the changes in circumstances that could have led to this development? This should have been the focus of Indian

assessment. Unfortunately, India does not have an assessment machinery to carry out such exercise.

Even before the Bush administration took office in January 2001, Dr Condoleezza Rice in an article in the *Foreign Affairs* had taken note of problems the US would face vis-a-vis China and referred to India as a potential power to which the US had not upto then paid adequate attention. The US attack on Iraq proved that the US could not take for granted European Union as a docile ally. The recent period saw significant commercial rivalries between the two and signs are they are not likely to decrease in future. The US feels Europe is attempting to develop as a rival and a countervailer and in that attempt they are counting on Chinese cooperation to a large extent. That explains violent US disapproval of proposed arms sales to China. The US expectations in regard to Russia have not been fulfilled. Given that war among major powers is unthinkable and the main challenges to the US are terrorism and long term economic challenge from the rest of the world and particularly from China, the US had to look for new friends. This change of circumstances has no ethical or ideological underpinnings. The US. after careful assessment appears to have concluded that India fits the bill as a potential and natural friend which could, through its technological, economic and demographic interaction will help the US to sustain its preeminence. The emphasis is on India as a rising economic power, the potential third market of the world and a reservoir of brain power available to be tapped.

War among major powers, particularly between the US and China as already highlighted, is ruled out. The US is having such a lot of trouble with Iraq. Containment of China is also out of question, given the magnitude of China-US trade. The US would not have allowed China as a partner in the thermonuclear energy research if it is treating China as an adversary, nor would be helping more nuclear reactors to be built in that country. Instead of analysing what changed circumstances led to this turn in the US policy some people are recycling old cold war memories and entrenched prejudices arising out of them.

India is the country which invented the chess game. An expert chess player should look across the board, anticipate the next possible four moves of the opponent and prepare his own moves.

International politics is like a chess game. But Indians are preoccupied so much with themselves they hardly look at the other side of the chess board and very rarely anticipate the possible moves of the partner. The present day Indian politicians and bureaucracy, with very rare exceptions have not inherited the wisdom of Bhishma or the chess playing talent of our forefathers.

The US policy, as Americans themselves indicate is not one, as yet based on national consensus. Both in the briefing of 25 March 2005 and in Dr Rice's interview there are indications that this is a top down policy, initiated by the President and some of his close advisers. Large segments of the US bureaucracy are also suffering from the cold war hangover as has been happening with the Indian bureaucracy.

What is likely to lead to the success of the US initiative is its sheer logic and force of circumstances alluded to earlier. The US policy has two components. The first is to tap the Indian brain power and mobilize Indian skills to ensure the US competitiveness and inventiveness. For this, the US does not have to deal with the Indian government and can directly deal with Indian companies. Second is cooperation in the fields of energy, defence and state-level technology transfer. The degree of success in these areas will depend upon the understanding reached between the two leaderships. The US has taken the initiative and therefore India has to respond. If India does not respond positively and adequately the US will still benefit in respect of the first component. In the bargain India will be the net loser. This aspect has not occurred to sections of our political establishment and bureaucracy who are at present playing hard to get.

Will this initiative survive the Bush Administration? In the next three years the Administration will flesh out its ideas and expound its underlying logic from the US point of view. There is likely to be a political battle between those who look at outsourcing from the short term populistic point of view and those who look at it from the point of view of long term benefits to the US economy, its competitiveness and inventiveness. Pro-China lobbies both in the US and India may raise objections and campaign against the policy. Ultimately it will depend upon the two political leaderships and business communities. The probability of it being sustained is somewhat higher if the Republicans win in 2008, but a Democratic

Administration being persuaded to continue the policy need not be ruled out.

The only way the US had been applying pressure on India during the cold war years was through its support to Pakistan. There is clear understanding in the US today that while the pro-Pakistan policy of the US may have benefited it from the cold war point of view it led also to 11 September 2001. The 11 September 2001 Commission report had a whole section on how to lead Pakistan towards the moderate Islamic state status. For this purpose, General Musharraf is considered a necessary instrumentality. In the present situation the US needs Musharraf for its war on terrorism just as our Central Governments need tainted politicians to sustain their majorities in the Parliament. The US is offering a measure of defence cooperation to India which will, in a few years, leave Pakistan far behind. Though General Musharraf has not dismantled his terroristic infrastructure and the US itself has admitted it, there is no doubt the long term impact of the US policy vis-a-vis Pakistan has contributed to reduction in cross border terrorism. Kashmir secessionists are not looking for the US support any longer. While because of the vast changes in the international balance of power the US has developed a stake in India, the same changes have reduced Pakistan's utility for the US global strategy. Besides Pakistan is closely allied to its potential rival, China. It should not be overlooked that China armed Pakistan with nuclear weapons and missiles and continues to do so.

There are those who talk about hidden costs involved in accepting this US initiative. Such people forget our history. India was able to resist the entire international pressure when the US was the all powerful sole super-power between 1990 and 1998. India has since then become stronger economically and politically and has developed new leverages. There is no way India can be made to accept discriminatory controls over its nuclear and missile programmes. The US offer of civil nuclear energy to India is related to President Bush's conviction that energy requirements of the US, China and India cannot be met in future on the basis of hydrocarbon solutions. It is ridiculous to argue that the US is soft on China in respect of nuclear energy and thermonuclear research but wants to entrap India as an instrumentality in its containment programme vis-a-vis China. No doubt President Bush has to

overcome a lot of resistance from his own bureaucracy as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too has to in respect of civil nuclear cooperation. That is going to be the test of the leaderships of both countries.

Never before has a summit meeting between the two leaderships been preceded by such detailed preparatory work as the one to take place on Monday, 18th July 2005. It has been preceded by the visit first of Foreign Minister Natwar Singh, then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwallia, followed by the National Security Adviser, M K Narayanan and finally of the Defence Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherji to Washington. The last signed a framework agreement on defence cooperation. The significance of the agreement is not in terms of the hardware India is to get but in respect of technologies that India is likely to acquire and the participation of Indian companies in international defence ventures. Without induction of highly sophisticated technologies, Indian defence production and DRDO will not be able to meet the challenges of defence modernisation in the coming decades. Propaganda against the Defence Framework agreement and improving relations with the US at this stage when India is negotiating with China to settle the border issue will weaken India's bargaining strength and improve China's. Some ideologically oriented people may prefer such an outcome just as they argued that Chinese attack of 1962 on India was justified. They have not so far come out against Chinese nuclear and missile proliferation to Pakistan, even while opposing Indian nuclear and missile arsenals. Already the US initiative has enhanced the Indian leverage in international arena. It has not passed unnoticed that Dr Condoleezza Rice was the first US Secretary of State who made India her first destination in her programme of visits after taking over office. The US has invested too much to allow this summit to fail to produce results. This is only a beginning.

In my analysis I have followed rigorously the logic of realpolitik and have refrained from attributing virtues and shortcomings to different international actors. The analysis is based on likely changes in capabilities and normal aspirations of the relevant actors. One cannot rule out the possibility of China moving towards democracy. Even if that were to happen the US will nevertheless

try to maintain its pre-eminence and mobilise Indian help for that purpose. In all probability India may prefer a pre-eminent US to a pre-eminent China. People have raised the issue whether the much-vaunted millenia-old civilisational friendship between China and India would not persuade India to lean towards China on the basis of Asian solidarity. By that time perhaps there will be a few million Indians in the US and it is hardly likely there would be even a few tens of thousands Indians in China. That factor will decisively tilt India in favour of the US.

In 1970 before Dr Kissinger undertook his journey to Beijing I did an analysis and forecast the possibility of the US and China getting together which would compel India and USSR to move closer to each other. I was denounced by many in India and the US as pro-Soviet. Thirty five years later I am compelled to conclude that the time has come for the US and India to get closer and assert their natural friendship. That validates what Bhishma said on his death bed that circumstances determine friends and enemies. In the international system things never stand still. I was neither pro-Soviet then nor have turned pro-US now advocate what is good for India on the basis of changing realities, without loyalty to any ideological fundamentalisms, religious or secular.

Let me end up with a caveat. Despite all my above arguments the two bureaucracies and phalanxes of cold war-warriors in Delhi and Washington may still succeed in blocking the two leaderships from arriving at an appropriate agreement satisfactory to both sides, especially to India. If that were to happen there will be a major setback in the relationship between the two countries. It may even plunge back to the level of seventies and eighties. The US will lose its credibility not only in Indian eyes but in the rest of the world as well. However, I would still venture to predict that the setback, if there is unfortunately one, will only be temporary and the US for all the compelling reasons set out will have to come back to improve its relations with India. Let us hope that on coming Monday President George Bush will rise to the occasion and prevail over the bureaucracies and cold war-warriors on both sides.