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# INDO - US RELATIONS FROM DIVERGENCE TO STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

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### Introduction

The concept of 'strategic relationship' (SR) in international politics, emphasizes its varied interpretations and the deeper meaning beyond its commonplace usage in the study of globalization. The chapter is structured into three sections. The first section explores traditional and modern views of strategy and strategic partnership (SP), detailing their applications in cooperative alliances, SR, and SP. The second section delves into types of alliances, historical alliances, and their roles in international politics. The third section analyzes Indo-US strategic culture. The chapter concludes by discussing applicable theories in the case of Indo-US relations. It also traces the historical roots of strategy, highlighting its military and political origins, and explores how ancient civilizations employed strategic thinking. The use of force in diplomacy, historical alliances, and the evolution of the term 'strategy' are examined, with notable figures like Clausewitz and Sun Tzu mentioned. The study concludes by discussing the shift in modern strategic thinking, emphasizing alternatives to the use of armed force, and addressing contemporary dimensions of national security, encompassing economic, social, and political aspects. The dynamics of the security environment in the present times are described as dynamic and uncertain, with a changing international structure and power relations contributing to a broader approach to strategy.

The modern concept of strategic relationships (SR) in international politics. Here is a summary and analysis of the key points:

1. Evolution of the Term “Strategy”: The concept of strategy has evolved beyond its traditional military dimensions. It now includes political, economic, and technological dimensions. The Industrial Revolution played a crucial role in expanding the scope of strategy beyond military considerations.
2. Economic Statecraft: Economic tools, such as sanctions and embargoes, are used as alternatives in modern international relations. Economic alliances and regional economic groups, like NATO, have a significant impact on political relationships.
3. Grand Strategy: The idea of grand strategy involves coordinating a nation’s resources for wider policy purposes, both in times of war and peace. The USA is cited as an example of using a combination of diplomatic, economic, technological, and military resources in pursuit of its interests.
4. Strategic Partnership (SP): The term SP gained prominence in the 1990s, signifying cooperative relationships between international political actors. Various terms like strategic alliance, cooperation, and special relations are used interchangeably. SP is characterized by shared goals, long-term cooperation, and mutual understanding.
5. Components of SP: Features of SP include partnership character, the convergence of strategic goals, authentic and long-term cooperation, the intensity of contacts, and a positive atmosphere of bilateral relations.
6. Modern Business World: Strategic approaches in trade and business draw from military strategic theories. The development of coherent strategies is seen as essential for national security in both war and peace.
7. National Security Strategies: In the 21st century, the need for national security strategies is emphasized due to various challenges faced by nation-states, including terrorism, environmental issues, health security, and territorial security.
8. Strategic Relationships and Alliances: The study explores the connection between strategic relationships and alliances, emphasizing the importance of alliances in statecraft. The formation of alliances is rooted in strategic consensus and mutual interests.
9. Analysis of SR and Bilateral Relations: The post-Cold War era has seen a shift in power dynamics, leading to a new international order. The concept of SR becomes more relevant, with an emphasis on common interests, shared values, and long-term cooperation.
10. Anglo-US Strategic Relationship: The study uses the Anglo-US strategic relationship as an example, highlighting the importance of shared cultural backgrounds, values, and historical ties in forming a strong and long-lasting SP.

11. Importance of Core Values: Common core values are identified as fundamental to a healthy strategic relationship. The political culture and mindset of the states play a crucial role in forming and sustaining strategic alliances.

### **Types of Alliance**

There are various aspects of international relations, alliances, ideologies, and strategic culture, particularly focusing on India's foreign policy. It covers topics such as historical alliances, tactical alliances, natural alliances, the influence of ideology in world politics, and the concept of strategic culture.

1. Historical Alliance:
  - Provides examples like the US-Saudi alliance and the US-Japanese relationship.
  - Highlights the longevity of these alliances despite existing issues.
2. Tactical Alliance:
  - Discusses tactical alliances formed to counter immediate threats.
  - Gives examples such as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact during World War II and the implicit relationship between Israel and some Sunni countries.
3. Natural Alliance:
  - Emphasizes commonalities in political culture and shared history as core factors.
  - Mentions the US-European partnership and the US-Australia relationship.

### **Ideologies and Strategies Partnership**

The role of ideologies in shaping SPs in world politics, particularly after the First World War. The emergence of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy led to alliances and strategies based on these ideologies. In response, democratic nations like Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union formed alliances against persecution and detentions, particularly Jewish persecution. The period between the two World Wars saw the development of fascism in Italy, Germany, and Japan, leading to the formation of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis. The Second World War was fought to defeat fascism, which opposed both democracy and communism. Notably, capitalist and communist forces formed a SP to overcome the common threat posed by the Fascist alliance. An interesting aspect is the temporary alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union, which dissolved when Hitler turned against the Soviet Union. Despite ideological differences, the capitalists and communists found a common ground in their shared national interest and the need to confront the Fascist threat, leading to their collaboration in the war effort.

### **Strategic Culture and State**

Alastair Iain Johnson (1995) delves into the concepts of strategic culture and grand strategy, emphasizing the central role of force in traditional strategic thinking.

In contrast, the grand strategy paradigm considers the coordination of a nation's military, political, diplomatic, and cultural resources for security, incorporating various instruments beyond just military force. Economic, cultural, and non-military elements are deemed crucial in shaping grand strategy. The notion of strategic culture is directly linked to political culture, defined as shared values and normative judgments within a population regarding its political system. Political culture plays a pivotal role in a country's international relations. The example of Pakistan highlights the complexity of political culture, where democracy faces constant threats, and the military wields significant influence. Myanmar, another neighbour of India, is cited as an example where a military junta rules without regard for democratic values, illustrating how political culture shapes a nation's approach to peace and security. The study notes the shift from traditional strategic theories dominated by realism or neo-realism, which focused on state-centric, rational decision-making within an anarchic international system. The modern view of strategic theory considers new dimensions, including historical and civilizational perspectives, geographical and natural resources, structural features of the polity, myths, symbols, technological changes, and transnational norms. Additionally, the importance of a nation's soft power is highlighted in the study of the modern nation-state.

### **Strategic Culture in Indian Foreign Policy**

The historical development of India's strategic thinking and foreign policy (FP), emphasises its transformation during and after British colonial rule. Before colonialism, India lacked political unity, and its defense planning was characterized by temporary alliances among states rather than a cohesive national strategy. Hinduism, though amorphous, played a role in Indian unity. British colonial administration introduced strategic ideas but excluded Indians from strategic decisions. The British focused on a land-oriented defense strategy, while India maintained a regional, land-centric approach. Post-independence, India faced security challenges, and its FP during the Cold War was marked by nonalignment and opposition to alliance politics. The end of the Cold War prompted a shift in India's FP, leading to economic liberalization and closer ties with the USA. The 2000s witnessed increased defense agreements, particularly with the US, as India emerged as a regional player. The study highlights key events, such as the 2005 Next Steps in the SP initiative and the 2008 US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. The shift in India's FP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasises improved relations with major powers. Modi's assertive diplomacy, engagement with the US, and efforts to enhance India's regional role are highlighted. Challenges, including the US-China trade war and geopolitical shifts, are considered, with India seeking a continental role and addressing security concerns, particularly regarding China. The Doklam standoff in 2017 serves as a reminder of the security threats faced by India. The evolution of India's strategic thinking from pre-colonial times to the contemporary era, highlights key shifts, challenges, and the assertive stance taken under Prime Minister Modi.

### **The Evolution of the United State's Strategic Culture**

The historical overview of human migration to North America, the development of indigenous cultures, and the arrival of Europeans. It outlines the early settlements, emphasizing the challenges faced by European immigrants in the 1600s. The United States' early alliances, particularly the Franco-American alliance during the Revolutionary War, are discussed. The study touches on territorial expansion, noting the US's imperialistic ambitions and its focus on continental issues. The narrative highlights significant moments in American FP, such as the transition from an inward-looking approach to an outward perspective around 1898. The economic and strategic interests in the Caribbean and Central America are noted, along with the gradual shift towards Asian involvement, marked by treaties with China and Japan. The study discusses the role of force in American FP, emphasizing the importance of military power for coercion and maintaining influence. Coercive diplomacy is introduced as a technique involving negotiation and forceful persuasion. The discussion extends to specific instances of coercive diplomacy during the Cold War, including confrontations with Japan, Laos, Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Libya, and the Persian Gulf crisis. The successes and failures of coercive diplomacy are acknowledged, illustrating its role in achieving political objectives and protecting national interests without resorting to full-scale warfare.

### **Indo-US Strategic Relations: Theoretical Concept**

The concept of SR in the study of foreign policy, emphasises the historical roots and theoretical foundations of the term. It draws distinctions between the conventional understanding of strategy, primarily associated with military and political aspects and the evolving concept of SR.

The conventional viewpoint of strategy, rooted in Greek conceptual design, is described as planning the destruction of enemies through effective resource utilization, a perspective more aligned with American acts and policies. The study contrasts this with the Indian approach, which is portrayed as less inclined towards force and coercive diplomacy in foreign policy.

Key theoretical perspectives on strategy are presented, such as Carl von Clausewitz's idea that war is a political instrument and Lawrence Freedman's emphasis on finding the optimum relationship between political ends and means. The study argues that Freedman's theory aligns with the current Indian foreign policy approach, emphasizing a search for an optimum relationship with the United States in the changed international system.

The dimensions of national security, particularly the emphasis on conventional military threats, are discussed, with Barry Buzan's viewpoint highlighting the importance of military threats to national security. The study suggests that India adopted a cooperative approach with the U.S. during the Cold War but did not engage in SR in the realist framework.

The non-military dimensions of SR, including political, economic, and technological aspects, are explored. Edward Mead Earle's modern understanding of SR, as the art of controlling a nation's resources to promote vital interests, is linked to American policies, emphasizing economic alliances and resource management.

The influence of policies on foreign relations is emphasized, with Bernard Brodie noting that strategic theory is policy-relevant. The study highlights the differences in the use of force between the U.S. and India, citing Sun Tzu's concept of subduing the enemy without fighting and the application of economic statecraft, where the U.S. has employed sanctions and embargoes more extensively.

Various strategic theorists' perspectives on grand strategy, including Hart's idea of coordinating resources toward political objectives, are discussed. The role of the U.S. in forming alliances like NATO and influencing regional politics, as seen in the GCC countries' embargo against Qatar, is presented as examples of coordinated resource use.

The concept of SP is introduced, with Rajesh's idea that SPs do not demand commitments to a partner's disputes and avoid entrapment. The study suggests that this concept aligns more closely with India's foreign policy approaches, emphasizing cooperative coalitions and constructive alliances.

## **Review of Literature**

The extensive overview of the literature and research on Indo-US SR. It covers a wide range of topics, including historical developments, political phases, nuclear issues, defense cooperation, economic ties, and various other aspects of the bilateral relationship. The study also references numerous scholars and their works, providing a comprehensive view of the existing literature on Indo-US SR. The significance of the study is highlighted, emphasizing the importance of understanding the Indo-US relationship due to its impact on global and regional dynamics. The study aims to assess the factors contributing to the transformation of bilateral ties into a security partnership, particularly after the events of 9/11. It recognizes the evolving global order, emphasizing the role of globalization, terrorism, and security crises in shaping the strategic cooperation between the two nations. The review underlines the potential consequences of the 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement's failure, emphasizing the importance of successful agreements for defense and strategic relations. It also points out the relevance of Indo-US SR in the study of the changing global order and its potential impact on Sino-India and Sino-US relations. Overall, the review of the literature provides a thorough survey of the existing literature on Indo-US SR and positions the study as significant in the current geopolitical landscape. It stresses the need to examine the convergence and divergence between the two nations to better understand the emerging paradigm of bilateral relations.



### Significance of the Study

The present study holds significant importance due to several key factors:

4. **Historical Ups and Downs:** The Indo-US relationship has experienced various challenges and successes throughout its history. Understanding these fluctuations is crucial for comprehending the current situation and predicting future developments.
5. **Post-Cold War Progress:** The study sheds light on the steady progress in Indo-US relations in the post-Cold War era. This period has seen a committed effort from both countries to transform bilateral ties into a SP, with a particular emphasis on key areas such as security, defense, counter-terrorism, trade, space, maritime, and science and technology.
6. **Impact on China's Security:** The changing dynamics in Indo-US relations have direct implications for China's security. This study aims to analyze how the evolving Indo-US relationship influences not only Sino-Indian relations but also the broader dynamics of Sino-U.S. relations.
7. **Focus on Strategic Cooperation in the 21st Century:** With a specific focus on the 21st century, the study aims to provide insights into the strategic cooperation between India and the US. This includes an examination of key aspects such as defense and security, reflecting the contemporary geopolitical landscape.
8. **Global Order Shift:** The study recognizes the shifting global order, marked by rapid changes due to globalization, global terrorism, and worldwide security concerns. Understanding these shifts is essential for gauging the evolving nature of Indo-US relations.
9. **Implications of the 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement:** The study considers the potential consequences of any delays or abandonment of the 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement. Recognizing the significance of this agreement is crucial for assessing its impact on defense and strategic relations between India and the US.
10. **Convergence and Divergence:** Analyzing areas of convergence and divergence between the two countries contributes to understanding the emerging paradigm of bilateral relations. This knowledge is instrumental in predicting the future trajectory of Indo-US ties.
11. **Global Impact of Strategic Cooperation:** Strategic cooperation between India and the US is expected to have a far-reaching impact, not only in the Indo-Pacific regional security architecture but also on the global stage. The study aims to explore the potential positive outcomes and contributions to global stability resulting from this cooperation.

The significance of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of the historical study, post-Cold War progress, and the contemporary strategic dynamics of Indo-US relations, providing valuable insights into the evolving geopolitical landscape and its implications for regional and global security.

### **Scope of the Study**

The analysis of the evolving Indo-US relationship in the study of the changing global order. Here are some key points highlighted in the study:

12. **Post-Bipolar Global Order:** The end of the bipolar global order, marked by the disintegration of the USSR, created an opportunity for improved relations between India and the US. The changing strategic landscape prompted the US to view India as a more reliable and profitable partner compared to Pakistan.
13. **Strategic Reasons for Indo-US Relations:** The study identifies two main reasons for the US's interest in strengthening its relationship with India. First, the US aims to counter China's rise as a superpower, both regionally and globally. Second, there is a desire to weaken India's traditional security partnership with Russia.
14. **Balancing Act in South Asia:** The US is portrayed as engaging in a balancing act in South Asia in response to China. Building stronger ties with India is seen as a strategy to counter the Pakistan-China coalition. The US provides defense technology, economic support, and assistance in modernizing India's defense equipment.
15. **Countering China's Influence:** The Indo-US relationship is framed as a strategic effort to counter China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and Asia-Pacific region. The US is depicted as pressuring China to adhere to UNCLOS guidelines on maritime security.
16. **International Forums and Dominance:** India and the US are described as increasingly dominant players in international forums such as the East Asia Summit, G-20, and ASEAN. The Indo-US strategic relationship extends beyond the bilateral level to regional and global platforms.
17. **Common Interests:** The study emphasizes that the Indo-US SP has a broader scope, encompassing not only common security concerns but also democratic values. Both countries are suggested to work together on democratic reforms in international organizations like the UNSC, IMF, and WTO.
18. **Regional Stability and Peacekeeping:** The Indo-US partnership is seen as contributing to stability in the Asia-Pacific region, acting as a security umbrella for South Asian and East Asian countries. The study suggests collaboration in addressing global challenges such as the refugee crisis, terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction.

19. **Joint Action Against Threats:** Both nations are proposed to jointly act against rival countries, including North Korea and Pakistan, which are perceived as threats to global peace and stability. The study envisions collaboration in UN peace missions, particularly in regions facing conflict, such as Afghanistan.

The Indo-US relationship is a strategic alliance with far-reaching implications for regional and global security, economic cooperation, and the promotion of democratic values.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. **To study the Indo-US relations in the historical study:** The study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the historical development of Indo-US relations, examining key events and dynamics that have shaped the relationship.
2. **To study the Indo-US relations in the post-Cold War Period:** The focus is on understanding how the Indo-US relationship evolved in the post-Cold War era, considering the changing global dynamics and geopolitical landscape.
3. **To study the political and security situation after 9/11:** The study seeks to explore the impact of the 9/11 attacks on the political and security dynamics of the Indo-US relationship, considering the shared concerns on counter-terrorism.
4. **To examine the Indo-US Nuclear Deal:** An analysis of the Indo-US Nuclear Deal is conducted, delving into the details of the agreement and its implications for both countries.
5. **To study the Indo-US relations during the Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joseph Biden Presidency:** The objective is to provide a comprehensive examination of how the Indo-US relationship has been influenced by the presidencies of Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joseph Biden.
6. **To examine the various factors responsible for the negotiations between Indo-US:** The study aims to identify and analyze the diverse factors that have played a role in shaping the negotiations and agreements between India and the United States.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

1. **Indo-US SR of both countries have been broadened and diversified in the 21st century:** The hypothesis suggests that the strategic relationship between India and the US has expanded and diversified over the 21st century.
2. **Indo-US strategic cooperation between the two countries has a deep impact on South Asian politics:** This hypothesis posits that the strategic cooperation between India and the US significantly influences the political dynamics of the South Asian region.

3. Indo-US strategic cooperation is a counterweight to China in the South Asia region: The hypothesis implies that the strategic collaboration between India and the US serves as a counterbalance to China's influence in the South Asian region.
4. The United States wants to design India's role as a balancing power in the Indo-Pacific region: This hypothesis suggests that the US aims to shape India's role as a balancing power in the broader Indo-Pacific region.

### Research Methodology

The study employs historical, comparative, and descriptive methods:

1. Historical Method: Utilized to uncover and document historical experiences in Indo-US SR since India's Independence, providing a chronological account of key events.
2. Comparative Method: Applied to evaluate the shifts in the Indo-US relationship, considering the global SP between the two nations.
3. Descriptive Method: Extensively used to describe the strategic, defense, and economic aspects of the relationship, analyzing determinants, phenomena, and events.

### Findings

1. Over the past half-century, Indo-US relations have experienced fluctuations influenced by geopolitical dynamics. India's non-alignment during the Cold War leaned toward the USSR, but events such as the Soviet disintegration, 9/11, and China's rise led to unexpected Indo-US alliances. Presently, the two nations collaborate on various fronts, including counterterrorism and energy security.
2. Despite the potential for growth in Indo-US relations, a trust deficit exists, with concerns about the US prioritizing its interests over the alliance. Questions arise about whether the US views Southern Asia strategically or intends to shift its base, potentially impacting India's regional standing.
3. The financial crisis of 1991 and the USSR's disintegration brought India and the US closer post-Cold War. India sought SP for economic growth and energy security, while the US aimed to counter China. The 9/11 aftermath further solidified their collaboration against global terrorism.
4. The Indo-US nuclear Civilian joint agreement lifted a three-decade US prohibition on nuclear trade with India. Despite India's non-signatory status to the Non-proliferation Treaty, the agreement allows participation in nuclear trade and missile technology.
5. The Indo-US relationship is viewed as tactical and opportunistic, shaped by global political changes rather than a true sp.

6. Describing the relationship as strategic is diplomatic rhetoric, with economic, defense, and worldview differences highlighting the reality of the alliance.
7. Divergences in political and security aspects, especially related to threats from China and Pakistan, constrain the Indo-US relationship. US focus on China in the Indo-Pacific adds uncertainty and a lack of trust.
8. The changed international context post-Cold War, USSR disintegration, and India's economic policies facilitated the Indo-US relationship.
9. Growing cooperation in various fields, shared liberal democratic values, and converging strategic interests strengthen Indo-US relations.
10. Constraints in the partnership include differences in world views, divergent strategic priorities, India's ambivalence toward the US-led world order, and uncertainty in countering China's influence.
11. The rise of China and the US perception of India as a balancer against China in the Indo-Pacific have positively influenced the Indo-US relationship.
12. India's partnerships with rising powers dissatisfied with the prevailing world order present a constraint in Indo-US cooperation.
13. India aspires to a leading role in the Indo-Pacific, while the US seeks to sustain its hegemonic position, leading to competitive dynamics and occasional ruptures in the partnership.

### **Suggestions**

1. Foster a common strategic view of the Indo-US relationship with PM Modi, emphasizing shared interests in China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
2. Develop early administration priorities for the India relationship, avoiding neglect during the initial year.
3. Plan a summit between leaders at the earliest opportunity for a strong start to the relationship.
4. Reassure PM Modi of the commitment to the US-India partnership and its further strengthening.
5. Make India a clear strategic and diplomatic priority.
6. If a summit is delayed, initiate cabinet-level meetings to establish substantive dialogue.
7. Plan a presidential visit to India in 2018.
8. Appoint a senior administration official to oversee Indo-US relations.
9. Ensure regular high-level exchanges with the Modi government.
10. Demonstrate commitment to India's expanding role in Asia.
11. Support India's candidacy for APEC membership.

12. Consult with India on Asian developments, especially regarding Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China.
13. Encourage allies (Japan, Korea, Australia) to strengthen cooperation with India.
14. Develop new avenues for defense and security cooperation.
15. Consult with India on the next steps in Afghanistan.
16. Resume cooperation with India on counterterrorism.
17. Engage with Indian leaders on the situation in Pakistan.
18. Expand intelligence sharing and seek ways to defuse tensions.
19. Implement the defense agreement reached in 2016.
20. Work with India to enhance the interoperability of US and Indian forces.
21. Manage economic relations positively, addressing trade and immigration issues.
22. Address India's concerns about the administration's economic policy.
23. Explore possibilities for selective trade and investment agreements.
24. Consult with India on H-1B visa program changes.
25. Monitor and respond to hate crimes against Indian immigrants.
26. Address the world's unrest with decisive leadership.
27. Recognize India's opportunities for advancing US objectives.
28. Acknowledge aligned security interests and work toward economic collaboration.

## Conclusion

The evolution of Indo-US relations reflects changing power dynamics and structural realism over the past two decades. The end of the Cold War and China's rise have shaped this partnership, driven by economic growth, nationalism, and the BJP's influence. A tripolar balance with the US, China, and India is emerging, with India balancing between the two major powers. While a SP advances, an alliance is unlikely due to historical non-alignment and ties with Iran. India's soft balancing with the US and other partners will continue, influenced by China's actions in the region. The US needs careful management to build trust and ensure commitment, while India seeks strategic autonomy in its evolving role on the global stage.

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