

US Policies in the Post-Cold War Era: An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

The 9/11 attacks on the US have forced the Americans to believe that the US secret service agencies are helpless against the attacks of the committed suicide squads. These attacks and the subsequent happenings in Afghanistan and Iraq have not only removed the illusion of post-Cold War peace, but also heightened uncertainty and insecurity in the world. 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' has given a clear message to the countries of the world that the US can go to any extent to protect its national interests even if the mandate of the world community is against such actions. The principles of sovereignty and the right of choosing one's own government are not significant in the new US strategy, and it would have serious repercussions for all the states. These developments have forced scholars to explore the emerging trends of US foreign policy. As the US policies affect the foreign policies of almost all the other countries, an attempt has been made in this paper to provide an Indian perspective of the US foreign policy objectives, strategies and its role in the post-Cold War era.

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US Foreign Policy Interests/Objectives

Pre-9/11: Disengagement Versus More Engagement

Prior to 9/11, there were two types of views about the role to be played by the US in world politics: (i) The US should disengage, and (ii) The US is still in danger, therefore, needs more engagement. The supporters of the disengagement theory like Patrick J. Buchanan argued that with the absence of the Soviet Union there was no great enemy, no global cause, no major stakes and no clear reason for the US to continue acting as the world policeman, and therefore, the US should disengage from the rest of the world.¹ Disengagement was also suggested in view of the lack of the US capacity for

removing internal disorder and discord.² For maintaining US' prosperity, peace and national security, the theory of restraint was also advocated by Eugene Gholz, Daryl G. Press and Harvey M. Sapolsky.³

While noting the five ends of US policy, namely, Wilsonianism, economism, realism, humanitarianism and minimalism, Richard Hass has regarded the promotion of democracy, balance of power and human issues as necessary conditions for peace, prosperity and stability in the world.⁴ But he also believes that the US is in a state of decline because of the costs of decades of international activism. James Schlesinger,⁵ Secretary of Defense under Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford suggested a selective unilateral approach for the US foreign policy. William Maynes⁶ advocated a sphere-of-influence approach and relative multilateralism for fulfilling the US objective in the post-Cold War era. The supporter of the unipolar movement, Zalmay Khalilzad, favoured heavy involvement of the US, to be practised unilaterally.⁷ He also justified the need for maintaining, strengthening and extending the zones of peace in Western Europe and East Asia and the imposition of American solutions on the world's trouble spots. He suggested that besides working for the preservation of US economic might, military pre-eminence and maintenance of domestic support for US leadership, US policy should also work towards checking the hostile hegemony over important regions, opposing the attempts of expansion by Russia, and discouraging Chinese imperialism.

To William Kristol and Robert Kagan,⁸ the adoption of a neo-Reaganite foreign policy of military supremacy and moral confidence was the only answer to meet the challenges of the new world order. They argue that the US did not acquire the present position of strength by practicing an idealistic foreign policy but by actively promoting the US principles of democracy, free markets and freedom. In their view it was the military build up of the 1980s under Reagan to deter the rise of Soviet supremacy that helped in winning the Gulf War as well as the Cold War. Samuel Huntington also believes that a world without US supremacy would be filled with more violence, poverty, disorder and less democracy and economic growth because no country or combination of countries could maintain the security in the trouble spots of the world.⁹ Harvey M. Sapolsky, Eugene Gholz and Allen Kaufman¹⁰ share the opinion that the technological and financial pressures exerted by the US on the Soviet economy through sustained military build up of approximately US\$ 13 trillion as well as effective transition from mass-

produced and mass-equipped armies of the Second World War to the high technology military force, which the Soviets failed to match, led it to victory in the Cold War. In view of the success of the US, they have argued in favour of maintaining similar structures as maintained during the Cold War. Former US Secretaries of State, Madeleine K. Albright and particularly Henry Kissinger, have also expressed these sentiments. Kissinger feels that “from weaponry to entrepreneurship, from science to technology, from higher education to popular culture, America exercises an unparalleled ascendancy around the globe”¹¹ which has made it indispensable for international stability. Michael O. Hanlon has quoted the US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice as saying, “The United States is the only power that can handle a showdown in the Persian Gulf, mount the kind of force that is needed to protect Saudi Arabia and deter crisis in the Taiwan Strait; peacekeeping detracts from our readiness for these kinds of global missions”.¹² According to Alberto Coll, the mistake of ignoring the vacuums of power could prove very costly for the US in the future as these could be filled by other powers. The US could act as a grand facilitator of the existing international order, mediate in regions critical to its security and maintain a global balance of power.¹³ Former Secretary of State Warren Christopher¹⁴ has also emphasised that America must lead because “American leadership is our first principle and a central lesson of this century. The simple fact is if we do not lead, no one else will”. In the opinion of a large group of American scholars, the US is the only power dominating the world militarily and economically, which is the result of its institutional superiority in the conduct of government, democracy, economy and military organisation.

Post 9/11

After the 9/11 attacks the US has increased its efforts for maintaining the network of its worldwide interests, preserving the balance of power and providing security to its people and its territory from further attacks. In view of this, the debate between a choice of isolationism and a more active international presence for the US has become somewhat obsolete.¹⁵ The present US policies indicate that terrorism has not only replaced anti-communism but it has also become the main catalyst for the beginning of a new world order based on US unilateralist foreign policy. As John Lewis Gaddis has opined, “The post-Cold War Era began with the collapse of one structure, the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 and ended with the collapse of another, the World Trade Center’s twin towers on September 11, 2001”.¹⁶

It is clear that in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks a new era in US foreign policy has begun.

Initially, George W. Bush had also championed an isolationist foreign policy. But in the post-9/11 period, the US seems prepared to check every activity that threatens its interests and promotes terrorism. But, the pursuance of the goal of fighting terrorism not only demands more American involvement but also the creation and unification of the alliance; presently the US has no choice except to widen its reach and deal with the planet as a single unit. The US response to the terrorist attacks in the beginning, though revived the memories of the Cold War policy when George W. Bush made it clear that, “either you are with us or you are with the terrorists”. In fact, it was a signal to the countries to reorient their foreign policy towards anti-terrorism as the US has done. The Bush Administration also made it clear that the US will act as it sees fit with or without the support of others. The US’ allies could join it on its terms or leave the US to act alone. But this stance was modified very soon because it was felt that such a stand could divide the world into two camps and the US’ aim of eliminating terrorism across the globe could not be realised without multilateral support. Such contradiction in US policy clearly suggests that in principle the Bush Administration has agreed to the policy of multilateral support but it has also kept its option of acting alone according to the circumstances and its interests, like it did in Iraq.

The US attack on Iraq has alerted the world that to protect its interests the US can ignore multilateral support as it has done despite the report of the UN weapons inspectors that Iraq did not possess biological or chemical weapons. The attack has also made it clear that the US would not hesitate to remove a regime not obliging it and creating problems for its oil-related interests, particularly in the Middle East. The destruction of Iraq and removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime portends danger for other countries also. The warning issued by the US to Syria and other countries to refuse arms and shelter to Saddam Hussein and his associates gives an idea of US strategy in the Middle East and also the methodology to deal with the non-compliant regimes. That the US would not accept any kind of opposition in its strategy to deal with the ‘axis of evil’ states also became clear from the fact that it also threatened France of dire consequences for not supporting its campaign against Iraq. In view of such a US stand it is being asked in some quarters whether France is the next rogue state.¹⁷ The initiatives of George W. Bush’s

foreign policy have forced the scholars to think whether Bush faces the same dangerous traps for his foreign policy that Clinton faced during his tenure. In view of this, some scholars have advised Bush to follow the strategy of multilateral support, consulting and involving the international community rather than adopting the unilateral path.¹⁸ They feel that while replacing communism with terrorism as the justification for the US unilateral foreign policy, Bush has to tread very carefully, particularly in deciding what form of action to take, when to take it and against whom because carelessness could prove very costly. But, before discussing the foreign policy of President Bush and its repercussions for India, a brief recapitulation of the foreign policy goals of Presidents George Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton becomes essential because the call for the new world order representing the victory of liberalism and democracy in the Cold War was given by Bush Sr. and the agenda for economic diplomacy, democracy and human rights was set by Clinton.

US Foreign Policy Under George Bush Sr.

The success of the US-led coalition forces in the 1991 Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the same year, heralded the beginning of a new world order based on a shared commitment among nations for peaceful settlement of disputes, unity against aggression, reduced and controlled armaments and for justice. It also indicated the triumph of liberalism and free markets, the rule of international law and an era of peace and prosperity. As free markets and economic success helped in promoting freedom and democracy, promotion of multilateral diplomacy, free trade, human rights and support for democratic regimes became the main goals of the foreign policy of the Bush Administration. In the beginning Bush preferred the policy of wait and watch as far as developments in the Soviet Union or the Eastern Europe were concerned. The need for a strong Western alliance and united Germany for curtailing any future threat from the Soviet Union led the Bush Administration to adopt the policy of reassuring Moscow that the course of events would not endanger its rightful interests.¹⁹ But as the task of constructing a new post-Cold War Europe had begun, Saddam Hussein, taking advantage of the uncertainty, occupied Kuwait, which once again forced the US to take action to neutralise the challenge because it had disturbed the opportunities provided by the end of the Cold War for a harmonious and cooperative international order. As a result of this, Bush's foreign policy in the later half of his second term was dominated by the American response to the occupation and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq. The new unity between

the US and Moscow allowed the US to undertake military operations on a larger scale in the Middle East without the fear of triggering a larger conflict with the Soviet Union.²⁰ NATO's basic structure as well as the role of the United Nations were considered necessary for maintaining the new world order. Actually, the collaboration and confrontation during this crisis was an important achievement for US foreign policy. This event also provided an opportunity for the Bush Administration to strengthen the role of the US, its allies and the Security Council to take decisive action in the Persian Gulf to uphold the principle of non-aggression, to expedite nuclear disarmament, to control the arms race and to push forward the Middle East peace process. The US action of seeking the support of the UN also gave the impression that the UN would play a more active role but the experience in the Gulf proved to be misleading; Bush's interventionist foreign policy and economic nationalism paved the way for a unilateral policy with multilateral connotations.²¹ Although the credit for setting the course of foreign policy in a transitional period and perceiving the importance of economic power and democracy goes to George Bush Sr., he could not assist Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in their periods of transition, to stop the civil war in Bosnia and prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

US Foreign Policy Under Clinton

The US foreign policy under President Clinton had four main planks:

- Multilateral diplomacy
- Free trade
- Protection of human rights and checking environmental degradation.
- Support for democratic regimes

Clinton's National Security Adviser Anthony Lake was the architect of these planks. In order to strengthen the major market democracies, and economies, consolidate new democracies and pursue humanitarian agenda in regions of greatest humanitarian concerns, he emphasised that the strategy of enlargement and engagement of market democracies should replace the containment of communism.²² It was also required for promoting democracy and free markets in transitional states like Russia, South Africa and China and other troubled states. Presently, terrorism has given US foreign policy a new overarching goal in the same manner as the quest for upholding human rights did for Clinton.

Clinton outlined his national security strategy of engagement and enlargement in a speech of July 1994: “Our national security strategy is based on enlarging the community of market democracies while deterring and containing a range of threats to our nation, our allies and our interests”.²³ It was also emphasised that the problems of drug trafficking, terrorism and pollution were becoming transnational and therefore needed attention and appropriate strategies. The Clinton doctrine also stressed the need to check the proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction and deal with the ‘rogue states’, capable of threatening the US’ vital interests to help the troubled and failed states, so that peace and stability of the world is not disturbed.

The strategy of enlargement rejected the traditional view that the US was duty bound to promote constitutional democracy and human rights everywhere; on the contrary, enlargement aimed at promoting the US’ strategic and economic interests in the post-Cold War era. In the post-Cold War era, the growing ascendancy of the economic power assured the Clinton Administration that the free markets and the geo-economics would replace the communist-dominated economies, protectionism and geo-politics. Hence, a good trade policy became necessary for a sound foreign policy. In view of this, Clinton’s foreign policy not only aimed towards updating and restructuring the US military and security capabilities, and promoting democracies, but also elevating the role of economics in international relations.²⁴ Consequently, the concept of enlargement aimed at spreading democracy through geo-economics. It was also believed that the rise of the consumerist middle class in the emerging democracies, eager to procure US products could lead to peace and prosperity. The successful completion of NAFTA, GATT and WTO clearly revealed that the main focus of Clinton’s foreign policy had been economic issues. Douglas Brinkley has very aptly commented about Clinton’s policies that, “If John Foster Dulles has been accused of pactomania for security, Clinton has also been practicing pactomania for free trade”²⁵

The White House in its ‘National Security Strategy for a New Century’ had also pointed out that in the post-Cold War era the US security could be threatened by the spread of dangerous technologies, weapons of mass destruction and also due to the regional, transitional, and failed states.²⁶ The primary US interests would therefore be the safety, protection of the vitality of the nation and the use of resources for advancing the interests and well

being of its people. William Perry and Ashton Carter²⁷ directly associated with US policy-making during the Clinton Administration had suggested a strategy of containment, prevention and termination to counter these threats. In the State of the Union Address 2000, Clinton specified that besides the constructive engagement of China and Russia, US foreign policy also aimed towards acting as a broker of peace, promoting human rights, peace and stability in South Asia and the Middle East, curbing terrorism, containing Iraq and North Korea's missile programme and stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.²⁸ Clinton also made it clear that the US would like to become a centre of every vital activity throughout the world.

In the post-Cold War era the concept of security has acquired a new and broader dimension because the number of threats to US security have increased manifold. Besides military and political aspects, it includes economic, social, environmental, and humanitarian threats and threats from regional, ethnic and religious conflicts, terrorist strikes, failure or reversal of democracies, nuclear proliferation, etc.²⁹ As a result of this, the main planks of Clinton's foreign policy in his second term were the promotion of stability, market democracies, economic interests and prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons. For seeking these motives different strategies were advocated like promoting the open trading system, consolidation of East and Central European democracies, advancing peace and security in the Middle East, preventing the spread of the weapons of mass destruction, building a comprehensive strategy to combat international crime, terrorism and drugs.³⁰ NATO's enlargement for promoting democracy, punishing the 'rogue states', achieving stability in Europe, integration and meeting the challenges of political and security developments in Europe was also suggested. Clinton also attempted to improve relations with India by visiting the subcontinent at the end of his tenure but emphasised the renewal of dialogue and appeared to be sympathetic and concerned for Pakistan despite its support to cross-border terrorism.

US Foreign Policy Under George W. Bush

Initially, the behaviour of the Bush Administration gave the impression that the US foreign policy objectives emphasised during the Clinton Administration have changed their direction slightly. It was also felt that the US would prefer isolation in place of activism. Bush's National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice asserted during an interview to *The New York*

Times, “American involvement for the sake of American involvement was not possible and the policy should not be considered a slap at the US or a disengaged American policy if the parties can progress on their own.”³¹ Initially it appeared that the US would settle for a low profile and possibly an isolationist role on foreign policy issues where American interests are not threatened. But, at the same time, Bush also made it clear in his inaugural address that the United States could not afford to turn its back on the world. Bush emphasised, “America remains engaged in the world by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favours freedom. We will defend our allies and our own interests. We will show purpose without arrogance. We will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength. And to all nations we will speak for the values that gave our nation birth.”³² Bush’s Secretary of State, Colin Powell, also reiterated, “There is no indication whatsoever to have our nation withdraw from the world into fortress of protectionism or an island of isolation.”³² Although stress was placed on the continuity of the policy, threat of missile attacks necessitated curbing the proliferation of the missile and nuclear weapons and development of the Missile Defense System became a priority for preventing access to the ‘rogue states’. It was also felt that in view of the increasing threat of proliferation of the WMD, the primary duty of the US military was the protection of US citizens and its key allies against missile and terrorist attacks.³² As George Perkovich has written, “The proliferation threat stems from the possession of nuclear weapons and theft-prone materials, not merely from the intentions of today’s ‘axis of evil’ but others also. Therefore, the US must retain and upgrade an enormous strategic arsenal to defeat any adversary. The Bush Administration justifies its maintenance of vast nuclear arsenals as a response to three types of threats: terrorists, rogue states and great power rivals such as Russia and China”. But while justifying the US possession of nuclear weapons, Perkovich has also expressed his apprehension about such weapons, as he has stressed, “It is hard to see how nuclear weapons could play any role whatsoever in either deterring or responding to terrorists who are determined, mobile, small in number and hard to target”.³³

On the emphasis on curbing the proliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons, observers felt that Bush would put Clinton’s policy of promoting democracy around the world aside. But the terrorist attacks of September 11 changed the whole scenario and terrorism, tyrants and technologies of mass destruction emerged as the major threats to US security. In view of these threats the promotion of democracy in the countries like Egypt, Iran, Iraq,

Syria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia became an essential foreign policy goal of the Bush Administration. The Administration also believes that democracy is the only solution to all the problems of the world including terrorism, as it is the surest strategy to weaken the appeal of terror in the world. Therefore, the US has a responsibility to promote democratic government and free enterprise in the world particularly where it is lacking and has a right to impose democracy on the other nations and cultures regardless of their circumstances and preferences.³⁴

The Bush Administration's policy of favouring democracies and acknowledging India as a rising power also made India hopeful towards developing good relations with the US. But after the 9/11 events, the US Policy of promotion of democracy and removal of dictatorships have become controversial because while on the one hand the lack of democracy in these countries is being considered responsible for breeding Islamic extremism and on the other the fight against Al Qaida has forced the US to seek closer ties with autocratic regimes in the Middle East and Asia. Actually, the lack of democracy in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan allowed the governments of these countries to cooperate with the US despite hostile public opinion. According to Thomas Carothers, this particular style of the Bush Administration shows his personality — the realist as well as friendly with tyrants.³⁵ It can be further authenticated from the current US policies towards the President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan whose terror campaign against religious Muslims has horrified the world. It is being estimated that there are 6,000 political prisoners languishing in jails; yet the US has granted aid of US\$ 500 million to the Uzbek government because of its invitation to the US to use Uzbekistan as a base for its military operation in Afghanistan.³⁶ Similarly, the coldness with which America had treated the Pakistani President, General Pervez Musharraf after he seized power in 1999, has also been totally replaced by certain warmth because of Pakistan's strategic location in fighting the war against terrorism. Bush has not only showered Musharraf with praise, concern and attention, he has waived various economic sanctions, and provided an aid package that exceeded US\$ 600 million in 2002 and also restarted US-Pakistani military cooperation.³⁷ Besides waiving a US\$ 1.2 billion loan to Pakistan and agreeing that Pakistan will pay the rest of the US\$ 23 billion in 38 years,³⁸ the US, despite evidence of Pakistan's involvement in harbouring cross-border terrorism in Kashmir, has been putting pressure on India to negotiate with Pakistan for the resolution of the Kashmir

problem. This clearly indicates that the US wants to maintain equal relations with both India and Pakistan.

Presently, the US sees the Middle East and South Asia as the principal arena of the new war on the terrorism, which is being viewed by some Muslim countries as a clash of civilisation and a conflict between Islam and the West. Since the US believes that every human being regardless of race, religion or birth has an inalienable right to live free from persecution, the US policy-makers believe that the US is duty-bound to intervene in any part of the world for protecting the freedom of the people because “if somebody tries to kill them en mass because of their race, their ethnic background or their religion, it is within our power to stop it, we will stop it”.³⁹ But as Kissinger has emphasised, the validity of such a stand could be judged only when this principle is applied universally, gets the support of the American people as well as the international community. He also believes that it should have some relationship to history, otherwise it will be considered as an exercise for worldwide American dominance. In his view, though the “foreign policy is bound by circumstances but a doctrine of intervention, universal or otherwise, can be sustained only if the public is convinced that the stakes justify the cost and a concept must find some general acceptance in the international community”.⁴⁰ But the major problem with the new US doctrine is its military and national self-overestimation and its ignoring of a system of consent, values and allies by insisting that if the US leads, others would follow because they share American values and interests.⁴¹ The flaw in this thinking became obvious in Iraq when the US did not receive the desired support from the allies in the form of troops because most of the countries believed that Iraq did not possess nuclear weapons and they were against waging war. But the US did not care about the opinion of the international community because it was not only convinced of domestic support but also believed that the benefits of American action, meant to provide a lesson to the unpopular and undemocratic regime, would force the other countries to support it. Charles Krauthammer has described the US action in Iraq with stark realism. In his view, “a dominant great power acts essentially alone and it is largely for domestic reasons that American political leaders make sure to dress unilateral action in multilateral clothing. Since the United States is a commercial, maritime, trading nation that needs an open, stable world environment, America’s involvement abroad is an essential pillar of the American economy. Foreign entanglements are indeed a burden but they are also a necessity for preserving the American interests.”⁴² As Dimitri K. Simes

has observed, whether or not the US now views itself as an Empire, in view of many foreigners the US looks, walks and talks like an imperialist power and they respond to Washington accordingly.⁴³ It is clear that the present US policies are generally being viewed as imperialist but as the people do not wish to see America as an imperialist power, attempts are also made to seek the popular consent. However, this is done only if the US interests demand such consent. Otherwise, the US prefers to act unilaterally like it did in Iraq. Bush also made it clear in his national security strategy for defeating the terrifying combination of terrorism, tyrants and technologies of mass destruction, that the US would try to enlist the support of the international community but to counter the threat it would not hesitate to act alone to exercise its right of self-defence by acting preemptively to protect itself.⁴⁴ Bush also clarified that the US could not afford to wait until it was struck again. It indicated the emergence of a new doctrine of 'preemption' which, according to Arthur Schlesinger, has signaled the replacement of a policy aimed at peace through the prevention of war by a policy aimed at peace through preventive war.⁴⁵ It also became clear that Bush's war on terror was not global but selective and mainly aimed towards homeland security. These factors clearly suggest that the US foreign policy objective in the post-Cold War era is not only to create a global, liberal economic regime but also to act as a guarantor of freedom, peace and security, and enhance its credibility in the world.

However, in view of the fact that even after the US' military victory and the capture of Saddam Hussein, the life of the common man has not become peaceful and the US forces are finding it difficult to maintain law and order — a parallel with Afghanistan, where the war is still going on even after the dethroning of the Taliban leaders, is being drawn in some quarters.⁴⁶ On the other hand, a parallel has been drawn by some others between India's move for the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and the US move for Iraq's liberation in 2003 which suggests that very soon criticism and hatred — as was the case with India — would replace the support and welcome the US received in Iraq. Observers also feel that the US action in Iraq has fractured the nation's alliances and as a result, the situation around the world has become more chaotic and the US has become less secure.⁴⁷ How long the US would manage the Iraqi people's affairs, and its repercussions for this area and also for the US, would only become clear in future, but on account of the growing casualties, the US has expressed its desire to leave Iraq by June 2004.

Bush and South Asia

The US action on Iraq also shows the dual nature of the US policies because when India's Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha stated that Pakistan was a fit case for such an attack on account of its possession of nuclear weapons and supplying technologies to other countries, India was advised against attacking Pakistan on the same grounds. America, besides believing that Kashmir and Iraq are not comparable, also considers that the Kashmir problem requires its immediate attention due to its serious nature. Since the US aspires to become a facilitator of peace between India and Pakistan, while supporting India's stand that any talk with Pakistan is possible only if India gets proof that it has stopped supporting cross-border terrorism, it has always advised and pressurised India to open dialogue with Pakistan. However, Mr. Yashwant Sinha says, "The US interest in our relationship is like the interest of a friend. They are talking to us like how a friend talks. That is where it stops. There is no other role for anyone."⁴⁸ But it is clear that the process of renewal of dialogue and restoration of the other links with Pakistan — despite knowing that Pakistan has not stopped supporting cross-border terrorism — was taken up under the US pressure. In fact, India by requesting the US to control Pakistan has indirectly accepted the US role in the Kashmir issue. On the other hand, despite the public praise heaped on Pakistan, the US also criticised Musharraf particularly after the evidence of the involvement of Pakistani citizens in terrorist activities, and for not taking action against the banned terrorist groups. The latest moves by Pakistan towards peace with India indicate that it was also under US pressure to move seriously in the direction of normalisation of relations with India. Presently, Pakistan is also under close scrutiny because of its role in transferring nuclear technology to the 'rogue' states. Therefore, all eyes are focused on America's action against Pakistan because Iraq was attacked on similar grounds. But the signals coming from the US are once again indicating a soft attitude towards Pakistan because of its support to the US war against terrorism

Although, South Asia still does not figure as an important region in the US priority list but the spread of nuclear weapons, terrorism and the unresolved Kashmir issue, particularly after the Kargil episode, has put it in the list of very volatile regions, which require immediate US attention. Presently, the war against terrorism which has moved to the top of the American policy agenda and the proliferation of nuclear weapons has provided some importance to South Asia and India in the US designs because India is

also fighting cross-border terrorism since long. In view of the similarity of the threat perception, the US intends to develop close cooperation with India for confronting the challenges to peace, security and stability. As the former US Ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill had also opined, no other countries than India and the US face the three intense challenges: advancing Asian stability based on democratic values; confronting daily threats of international terror; and slowing the further proliferation of WMD.⁴⁹ But while seeking close cooperation with India, the US is also keen to play the role of a facilitator of peace between India and Pakistan. According to Dr C. Raja Mohan, the role of a protector of peace and a mediator, which the US wants to play in the post-Cold War era, has also brought four basic changes in its foreign policy: “The reorientation of the US and its approach to the world, the restructuring of [the] power relationship, the changing of warfare and the unfolding battle for the transformation of the Middle East and the sub-continent.”⁵⁰ The foregoing discussion clearly shows that although the US shares India’s concern about terrorism and wants India’s cooperation in defeating terrorism, the convergence of interests, and the desired closeness in the Indo-US relations could not be achieved because of the US policy of ignoring cross-border terrorism being supported by Pakistan and denying India its rightful place. The present US policies also provide a strong indication that for the US the immediate priority after Iraq is Syria and Iran — countries of pressing concern to Israel. Therefore, building a strategic partnership with India to check China’s growing power in Asia seems to be a remote possibility.

Although prior to 9/11 there were signals that Pakistan had a low priority on the Bush Administration’s agenda, the events of that day have once again, changed the equation. On account of the support of General Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistan Army in its war against terrorism the US has been following a policy of not paying serious attention towards the Indian demand for action against Pakistan. In South Asia the US has preferred to promote Pakistan because of its strategic location and willingness to cooperate in all the US ventures including war on terrorism.⁵¹ In view of present US policies India has reason to believe that despite US assurances about creating an Indo-US strategic partnership, its concern and security interests are being overlooked by the US. America on account of its priorities appears to be less inclined to appreciate India’s security concerns and interests and is also not willing to shun its Pakistan bias in adopting new policies for South Asia. Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser to the former Presidents George Bush and Gerald Ford feels, “American foreign policy not only has become

passive and diminished but has also become more narrow-minded, short-sighted and increasingly go it alone. It is becoming increasingly 'unilateralist' as well as 'isolationist', as it aspires to promote its own interests with little care for others' interests."⁵² The US is keen to maintain relations with both the countries because it requires both for its global designs and interests. While the US needs the support of democratic India for its strategy against China, it cannot afford to ignore Pakistan also because of its willingness to join the war against terrorism and its clout in the Islamic world. The Bush Administration has made it clear that besides building strong bilateral relations and involving both India and Pakistan in its war against terrorism in South Asia, the US also aims to resolve the Kashmir problem peacefully and prevent a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan. The goal of confronting terrorism has given a very strong rationale for US foreign policy not only to secure the support of the different countries but also to expand its involvement in different parts of the world.

Conclusion

The basic thrust of the US policies has not changed during the post-Cold War era and after 9/11 the country has become more sensitive on its security and other interests. The objective of controlling terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons has acquired a very important place in US policy. For safeguarding its interests it can go to any extent and intervene anywhere by following the policy of multilateral support or, if necessary, act unilaterally. The policy towards Iraq stands testimony to US unilateralism, which indicates its determination to act even without the support of its allies. The US approach has led many scholars to believe that America has become an imperialist power. India also does not find the US attitude very helpful because of its overlooking Pakistan's role in cross-border terrorism, using pressure tactics on India for negotiations, and denying her its rightful place. The US warning to India not to use preemption as an excuse for aggression⁵³ for tackling cross-border terrorism exhibits the US role in determining the course of action to be taken. India has reasons to believe that the US policy of ignoring Pakistan's activities whether related to nuclear development or terrorism, has not only emboldened Pakistan but also enhanced tensions and instability in the region.

On account of the policies being pursued by the US, some scholars have called it *bully of the free world*.⁵⁴ Interestingly, majority of the American public sees no need to expend efforts and resources to achieve American

hegemony in the world. As the findings of a 1997 survey clearly indicated, only 13 per cent of the people wanted the US to take active part in world affairs, while 74 per cent of the people opined that the US should share power with other countries.⁵⁵ In a 1999 survey, 72 per cent of the people supported multilateral action in an international crisis, 24 per cent supported unilateral action and 59 per cent of the people favoured support of NATO but preferred 'guarded engagement'.⁵⁶ Ironically, the US has been pressurising other countries to adopt American values and practices regarding human rights and democracy and using economic sanctions for implementing its designs.

Nevertheless, after September 11, it has become very clear that despite appreciating its democratic institutions, free economy and wealth, people of many countries feel that America pursues its foreign policy very aggressively. For India also the US represents a major diplomatic and political threat because the US has the capacity to mobilise support for denying India its objectives in world politics. Due to this reason, the regional powers do not appreciate the US meddling in their internal matters. The suggestion of the Russian Prime Minister, Yevgeni Primakov for the promotion of a 'Strategic Triangle' of Russia, India and China to counterbalance the US can be taken as an example of the growing aversion among the states towards the US domination in the post-Cold War era. The creation of The European Union and a common European currency can be seen as the European states' desire to create a counterweight against US domination. In view of this, it is also being suggested that for achieving success in the war against terrorism and the struggle against WMD proliferation, the US should share its responsibility with the regional powers, build constructive relationships with China, Russia, Germany and France and should stop using force as a routine instrument to achieve its ends.⁵⁷

As far as the US involvement in South Asia is concerned, promotion of secular democracy, market economy and more cooperation with India would be the key for bringing stability and peace in the region. In view of India's potential, the US must pay serious attention to India's role in promoting regional balance. The US should also appreciate India's security concerns and problems, so that its apprehensions could be removed and a path of close-knit relations could be opened. By working closely with India in countering the threats of terrorism and nuclear proliferation, and in promoting regional stability and security, a real thaw in relations can take place.

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