

## DEBATE

### THE ADVENT OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN THE USA: GLOBAL AND BILATERAL RAMIFICATIONS

The assumption of President Donald Trump as the 45th President of the USA has created a new phenomenon in American politics that has begun to affect domestic socio-political and economic processes as well as its engagement with the rest of the world.

The Trump Administration's policies related to industry, immigration, financial deregulation, taxation, and education are domestic in content, but have international implications as well. That President Trump's approach towards alliances, competitors, rivals, perceived security threats, proliferation, climate change, outer-space, etc. is likely to be *avant-garde* has been signalled early in his comments (mostly through his 'tweets') as well as in his executive orders.

This approach will also undoubtedly have an indisputable influence over the future trajectory of US-India relations, particularly on the recently proposed "defence partnership" between the two countries.

Many observers note that President Trump's soft line approach towards Russia and President Putin; his radical remarks on Chinese economic policies and foreign policy behaviour; his transactional attitude towards allies; his distrust of multilateral trade deals; his disdain of religious extremists; his inflexible stance on immigrants and foreign workforce; and his "America first" protectionist economic policy have the potential to alter the global economic, political, and strategic order. Indeed, the debate over the "Trump phenomenon" is intense and wide ranging in the capitals of all the major powers.

The questions that are being raised include the following

What will be the future of the time-tested Trans-Atlantic strategic bond? Will Europe seriously seek a new arrangement for continental security? Will there be credible US-Russia détente? Will the US-Russia détente enhance Russian influence in Eurasia?

Will US-China relations turn into a complex, cold confrontation in the midst of managed economic relations? Will China gain enormously from the demise of the TPP initiative? Will President Trump's opposition to TPP and the transactional bargain with Japan and South Korea lead to the reduction of US commitment to Asia Pacific region?

What will be President Trump's strategy to defeat ISIS? What will be the regional order in the critical West Asian region? Will the region return to the Cold War years when Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt were key American allies, and Iran and Saddam Hussein's Iraq faced duel-containment? Will Iran walk away from the nuclear deal in the face of the hard-line approach of President Trump and go the North Korean way? Will Trump's approach reduce or increase extremism and terrorism?

Whither US-Pakistan relations under the Trump Administration? Trump does not regard Pakistan as a "friendly" country; yet he had good conversations with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and assured him of help. The untrustworthiness of Pakistan is well established; yet many in Washington view Islamabad as a necessary evil. How would US-Pakistan ties play up during the Trump Administration?

It goes without saying that President Trump's global, regional, and economic policies would also impact India to varying degrees.

What would be the shape of Indo-US economic ties under a protectionist US administration? How would India maintain its counterterrorism cooperation with the USA, despite the Pakistan factor? Will India's deepening defence ties with the USA remain unaffected by the protectionist economic policy of the Trump Administration? Will the Trump Administration's handling of the minority issue, its new regulations on labour issues and immigration policies adversely affect the Indian American Community? Will Trump's China policy pose a challenge to the Indian approach towards China? Will Trump embrace the Indo-Pacific concept even while rejecting TPP? Above all, will India, get a high/er priority in Trump's America?

The Indian Foreign Affairs Journal invited six experts in the field to comment on the above, and offer their views. Their views are published in the following pages.

*(The views expressed by the authors are their own, and do not reflect the views of the Indian Foreign Affairs Journal, or that of the Association of Indian Diplomats)*

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## ***Gazing at the Crystal Ball of the Trump Administration***

Arun K. Singh\*

Since its inauguration on January 20, 2017, the Trump Presidency has, perhaps, been as volatile and unpredictable as the electoral campaign. This applies to economic and political issues, both domestic and international. On several foreign policy issues, the achievements and conduct so far have been contrary to the claims and promises made by the President before his election.

On Thursday 6 April 2017, President Trump authorised missile strikes on a Syrian airbase, using the Presidential prerogative under the US constitution. Earlier, he had repeatedly called upon his predecessor not to do so, and to consult the US Congress before any such action. Relations with Russia have not been improved. Attempts to do so immediately would be controversial, in view of the raging controversy about alleged Russian intervention in US elections to benefit Trump. This will now be further complicated by the missile strikes in an area where Russian forces were also present, although Russia had been given some prior notice.

Unlike the pre-election threat, China has not been declared a currency manipulator, no additional tariffs have been imposed on imports from China, and Chinese President Xi was lavishly welcomed on 6–7 April 2017 at what is now being described as the “southern White House” at Mar-a-Lago in Florida. The two agreed to come up with a 100-day plan to address the major trade imbalance. China is also being described as an important interlocutor for addressing the North Korean nuclear and missile challenge. The Administration has shared with Congress an initial set of modest suggestions for modifying NAFTA with Mexico and Canada—a far cry from the harsh criticism of the Clintons and the Agreement for taking away jobs from the American worker.

On the domestic front, the attempt to replace the health care provisions was stymied by divisions within the Republican party, the executive order to restrict immigration from some countries was held up by the courts, and the proposal to build a ‘wall’ on the Mexican border appears unlikely to receive budgetary support from the Congress.

The USA remains as divided today - perhaps even more so - than in the run up to the elections of November 8 last year, and the Inauguration in January 2017. The first 100 days of the new Presidency are being unusually

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monitored and reported on for signs of further disruption or course modification.

Washington's pundits had expected, or hoped, that the new President would use words, tone, or medium which were different from the pre-election need to rouse the base of the Republican Party. There has, however, been a continuation of aggressive responses to criticism, the calling out and denigration of individuals, and the doubling down on many of the controversial policy choices articulated during the campaign.

Despite sustained criticism for President Trump's unpredictability and volatility in his responses, the Republican base has remained loyally supportive. The independent voters, however, who had helped carry him past the post, now seem anxious. The Democratic Party and its members in Congress remain determinedly adversarial and alienated. In a manner similar to the Republican stalling tactics during the Obama administration, they have decided to come out in complete opposition to President Trump and his agenda, despite their normal support for plans for job creation and infrastructure construction. The Senate Democratic filibuster of the Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch on April 6, and the Republican response by replacing the 60 votes threshold with a simple majority, are a reflection of the intense divide and the worse to follow.

The Democratic base, shocked by the election result, has also been roused. Following large scale protests after the inauguration, galvanised further by the reaction to the initial immigration ban from seven countries, it has now taken a leaf out of the Republican Tea Party activism after the Obama victory. In town hall meetings, Congressmen and Senators are being heckled by angry constituents on healthcare and immigration.

The 'spring shoots' of the Trump order are also being defined by conflicting viewpoints within the Administration. One section has pushed for pursuing a core 'nationalist' agenda, both economic and political. On the multilateral level, this economic agenda has so far entailed shelving the TPP, and calling for changes in NAFTA, arguing that this is necessitated by the interest of the US worker. China and Germany have been criticised for maintaining large trade surpluses. The US government has been tasked to come up with specific plans and proposals for reducing deficits with ten of the countries with the largest surpluses in US trade (this includes India). Demands are being made for the reduction in tariffs on US exports. Taxes and tariffs would be oriented towards attracting investment and manufacturing in the USA, and publicly touting new investment decisions while decrying

any major US FDI abroad.

Political nationalism would involve USA stepping back further from what is seen as unnecessary international entanglements. 9/11 had generated political compulsions for President Bush to get deeply involved in Afghanistan. The flawed involvement in Iraq had prompted President Obama to look negatively at any similar involvement in Libya and Syria. Unusual for recent US Presidents, President Trump said (in his joint session address) that the USA respects the “sovereign rights of nations”, and the “right of all nations to chart their own path”. This is a far cry from US belief in its exceptionalism, and being a model for rest of the world. However, the need to show himself as better than President Obama and be strong in his responses, did prompt the show of action in Syria.

This section of the White House is believed to be a strong advocate of a nationalism not constrained by multilateral institutions and principles. It supports further augmentation of military capacity, and dealing with others on the basis of strength and transactional advantage. There is a preponderance of military personnel in new appointments to the National Security Council. Civilian posts of the Secretaries of Homeland Security and Defence are also being occupied by former military officials. Questions are being raised about the narrower focus of professional advice that could be reaching the President. Moreover, he has proposed that the military budget should be raised, despite the USA already spending more than the next nine countries combined. This has been accompanied by proposals for cutting the budget of USAID and the State Department, and diverting it to the Pentagon.

US polity also remains deeply divided on the policy towards Russia. President Trump had signalled that he would make an effort to improve the relationship, explore the easing of present sanctions and the search for agreements to reduce nuclear weapons (even though he had tweeted on 22 December 2016) that the “US must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes”. In large segments of the media, Congress, and among Democrats, there is continued strong antipathy towards Russia— also for what is described as its enabling the Al-Assad government and continued destruction in Syria, and the approach to European order and security, as reflected in Ukraine/Crimea. The nominees for Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, Defence Secretary James Mattis and Director of CIA, Mike Pompeo had reiterated concerns relating to Russia in their confirmation hearings before the Senate. On 12 January 2017, Mattis said that Putin was attempting to break NATO, and had chosen to position Russia as a strategic competitor. He argued for sanctions to be applied

internationally to ensure Russian compliance. The US Permanent Representative to the UN, Nikki Haley, has repeatedly criticised Russia at this platform, including in the Security Council. In what is being described as “three strikes” already, National Security Adviser Michael Flynn had to resign; and Attorney General Jeff Sessions had to recuse himself from Russia-related investigations because of reports of contact with Russian officials. Republican Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, David Nunes also had to recuse himself from the House investigation of the issue. The visit of Tillerson to Moscow on 12 April 2017 will be closely watched for any positive prospects.

On China, mixed signals continue. The post-election telephone call with the President of Taiwan, comments in a press interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on 13 January 2017 that the one-China policy was negotiable, and the continuing critical comments about Chinese currency and trade practices had suggested a harder line. In his confirmation hearing on 11 January 2017 Tillerson said that China’s island building in the South China Sea was illegal, and was “akin to Russia’s taking of Crimea”, and that China’s access to those islands should not be allowed. Mattis said that the US government needs to craft an integrated plan to counter Chinese aggression in international waters. At the same time, the Trump empire and family have business links with Chinese entities. The first ambassadorial nomination has been to China. Ivanka Trump attended the Chinese New Year celebrations at China’s embassy in Washington on 1 February 2017. In his conversation with the Chinese President on 9 February 2017, he reiterated the ‘One-China’ policy. In his meeting with the Chinese President 19 March 2017 in Beijing, Tillerson repeated Chinese talking points on ‘great power’ relations.

European diplomats and chanceries are continuing to tread cautiously. President Trump has now spoken of strongly supporting NATO, which he had earlier described as being obsolete. He has now referred to sharing vital security interests with allies, while continuing to complain about alliance commitments. Repeated comments about the need for allies to spend more on their defence are raising concerns, particularly in Eastern Europe. The UK made an attempt to exploit the breach, and regain the privileged relationship and special dispensation from the USA as it negotiates Brexit from Europe. The British Prime Minister criticised elements of former US Secretary of State John Kerry’s speech of 28 December 2016 on Israel and Middle East peace process, reached out to the US president-elect, and was amongst the earliest visitors to be received by the new administration. The visit of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel on 17 March 2017 was an important bridge building exercise, but was seen as having failed to bridge the gap on

European military expenditure and trade. Germany, France, UK, NATO, EU, and EC came out in support of the action taken in Syria, partly also to show convergence.

On terrorism, the President Trump and his team continue to project a strong posture. Action against ISIS is seen as priority. About 60 Ministers/ Representatives of the concerned Global Coalition met in Washington DC on 22 March 2017. The Statement issued after the meeting “reiterated ... commitment to an integrated, multidimensional and comprehensive approach to defeat ISIS and its global networks, fully recognizing this will require sustained, focused efforts”. The Department of Defence was tasked to come up with a plan to defeat ISIS; but so far, on the military level, there is no indication of any fresh approach beyond allowing the Pentagon to adjust the number of troops on the ground with some flexibility. In recent comments to the media, after the missile strikes on Syria, Tillerson reiterated that action against ISIS still remained a priority for the USA.

The Trump Administration’s approach to Afghanistan, and consequently to Pakistan, still remains to be fully articulated. There was no reference to Afghanistan in President Trump’s customary address to the joint session of US Congress on 28 February 2017. Early indications are that the military would be given some leeway in making ‘fact based’ proposals for modest troop increases, efforts would be reactivated to find a political solution at the same time projecting that the outcome would preclude Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups.

As a result, there could be an initial sharper approach to Pakistan to get them to act against terrorist groups, and to prod the Taliban towards dialogue. Earlier, while calling upon Pakistan to expel or neutralise externally focused militant groups operating within its borders, Mattis had also suggested the need for the USA to incentivise Pakistani behaviour. Aid would, therefore, continue; but some of the Congress mandated conditionality may get more attention. As with past Administrations, Pakistan would again get a window to show responsiveness to the new Administration and its demands. It has also learnt, over time, to manage the subsequent frustrations of any US Administration by giving them periodic discrete successes.

Other countries are still watching the evolution of the Trump Presidency with anxiety and a continuing sense of uncertainty. Those with key stakes in the relationship have attempted to reach out, and initiate the process of dialogue and bargaining with the new parameters. The Prime Ministers of UK, Japan, Israel, and Canada have visited, as have the Chancellor of Germany, the

Presidents of Egypt and China, the King of Jordan, and the Deputy Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.

India would also, inevitably, fine tune its approach, keeping in mind the new politics and priorities in the USA. The Indian Prime Minister has been invited to visit this year. The Indian NSA and Foreign Secretary have visited for meetings with senior officials.

The India-US political convergence and defence partnership had increased substantially over the past three Presidencies of Clinton, Bush, and Obama. Hillary Clinton had often attributed the start of the new phase to President Bill Clinton's highly successful visit to India in 2000, and even to her own visits as First Lady in 1995 and 1997. Republican President George W. Bush advanced it in a transformational manner, with the civil nuclear cooperation agreement signed in 2008. Democratic President Barack Obama was the first US President to visit India twice in his tenure, the first to visit on Republic Day, the first to articulate support for India's permanent membership of UN Security Council, and to declare India as a Major Defence Partner.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited by President Obama for an official visit in June last year, Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan hosted him for an address to a joint meeting of the US Congress. Republican and Democratic Chairs as well as Ranking Members of the House and Senate Foreign Relations committees hosted him for an unprecedented reception along with Co-Chairs of the India Caucuses in both chambers.

During the final presidential debate, Trump had referred to India with appreciation, noting its high growth rates, and his business relationships here. While attending an Indian American rally in New Jersey (October 2016), he described himself as a big fan of India, and India and the US as "best friends". He has also, on several occasions, spoken on the phone to the Indian Prime Minister.

No doubt there will be challenges to the relationship, and differences in assessments and strategies. India will seek to exercise strategic autonomy in its decision-making while deepening trade, investment, technology, counter-terrorism, and defence partnerships. However, we will also need to factor in the fact that the USA will take decisions in its own perceived interests and in keeping with US domestic and international political compulsions. Interests and policy choices will not always align.

Although President Trump has spoken positively about India, he has also talked about jobs being 'shipped out' to India and the alleged misuse of H-1B visas. India would like the easing of such visas for our technology companies

as well as the lowering of fees.

A special effort will now be needed to look at the dimensions of the economic partnership. This has been an area of recurrent problems and disagreements. India being under the Special 301 Watch list as well as the problems related to H-1B visas are among the manifestations of these disagreements. No doubt it is in India's interest to build our relations with all the major poles in the desired multi-polar international system, so as to maintain the autonomy of our decisions. However, the trade and investment dimension, nearly 3.5 million strong Indian Diaspora, and about 200,000 Indian students in US universities give a particular dimension to this relationship. As we promote "Make in India", including in defence sector, and as India seeks partnerships for Start-ups India in the US Silicon valley, an overall politico-economic narrative for the relationship will help soften the all too frequent bumps.

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## ***Making Sense of Uncertain India-US Relations***

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What does the election of Donald Trump as President of the USA mean for India? The short answer is that no one knows, not even Trump himself. India was fortunate not to feature prominently during the heated and divisive 2016 US election season. The occasional statements concerning India by President Trump and his advisors during and after the campaign sent mixed and sometimes contradictory signals. Additionally, the belated appointment of senior officials to key government positions after his inauguration (and the profiles of those currently in place) suggest that some of the bigger questions about US engagement with the rest of the world remain unsettled.

In an era of greater flux and uncertainty, it is nonetheless important for India to identify the key variables triggered by President Trump's election, and their implications. They relate, essentially, to four broad areas: bilateral relations; the Asian balance of power; terrorism; and global governance.

### **A Normal America?**

The first area of interest for India concerns a broad range of bilateral initiatives, many relating to India's development. Given India's growth profile, and vast needs when it comes to infrastructure, energy, financial services, and consumer products, the USA stands to benefit tremendously from opportunities presented by India's rise. Equally, India can leverage US assistance – market access, investment, technology, and the flow of people – to accelerate its own development. Trade figures – particularly in goods – understate the importance of the bilateral relationship, which is defined in many ways by two-way investment; the large Indian-American population; Indian familiarity with the USA through education, professional experiences, and similar governance and legal structures; and an increasingly close private sector-led technological relationship, including in key sectors such as information and communication technologies, biological sciences, space, energy, and defence.

This mutually beneficial and reinforcing partnership has been premised on two conditions. First, the factors which constitute American exceptionalism: democracy, liberal internationalism, and immigration. While often flawed, US

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democracy has inspired movements the world over. After World War II, the USA forged a consensus around liberal internationalism as a counter to Soviet-led international communism. And, by loosening restrictions on immigration during the 1960s, Washington created the conditions for high-skilled immigrants, professionals, and entrepreneurs from around the world (including India) to emigrate to the USA. These three pillars of US exceptionalism stand in contrast to a 'normal' America, which might pay little heed to its projection as a model for others to follow, focus its defence structures on immediate challenges close to home, and conceive of national identity in narrower terms. But a normal America is, in large part, what Donald Trump advocated as a US presidential candidate.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the USA, has in recent years, been guided by a certain strategic logic in its engagement with India. Despite India's nuclear tests in 1998, the Clinton Administration was quick to lift sanctions. The Bush Administration was even more explicit, stating in 2005 that the US "goal is to help India become a major world power in the 21st century... We understand fully the implications, including military implications of that statement."<sup>2</sup> The Obama administration belatedly came to share this judgment, with then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton writing that "India's greater role on the world stage will enhance peace and security."<sup>3</sup> As a result, successive US administrations did not insist on strict reciprocity in their bilateral engagements with India. The logic was, in Ashley Tellis's words, that "a strong, democratic, (even if perpetually) independent India [is] in American national interest."<sup>4</sup>

The USA has not been motivated by altruism. A prosperous, strong, and democratic India means a bigger market, a balance of values internationally, and a favourable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. But it is as yet unclear whether the administration of Donald Trump has understood this strategic logic; or even whether it appreciates the foundations of American exceptionalism. To the extent possible, India will have to convince the new administration of the benefits of American openness and the calculations that guided the past three US presidents' engagement with India. At the same time, New Delhi will have little choice but to mitigate the potentially adverse consequences. This will mean working, whenever possible, with the US Congress, US state governments, and the private sector, which have long been moderating forces in the bilateral relationship. Additionally, India will have to explore alternative partners from among other advanced and dynamic economies – Japan, Europe, Russia and, in certain matters, China, Singapore, Israel, Australia, and Canada.

### **An Imbalance of Power in Asia?**

The USA is not just important for India for its bilateral relations. Its military presence in Asia makes it a crucial actor in the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. This is particularly important in the context of China's continued economic rise, and the concurrent growth in its military capabilities and stated ambitions in the region.

The USA and India have some shared objectives when it comes to China's rise. Both harbour similar concerns about Chinese territorial revisionism. For India, this relates to its longstanding boundary dispute, whereas for the USA, the priorities are in the South and East China Seas. Both New Delhi and Washington would like to see more equitable and sustainable trade with China, and would welcome less opacity in China's governance structures. However, India and the USA do not always see eye-to-eye when it comes to regional security matters. Whereas the China-Pakistan relationship and the militarisation of the Indian Ocean are much bigger priorities for India, the USA is often preoccupied with the Korean peninsula, Sino-Japanese tensions, and cross-Taiwan Straits relations.

President Trump and his advisors have issued mixed messages when it comes to China and Asia more broadly. This raises at least five possible scenarios. One is a militarised 'pivot to Asia.' As some of President Trump's advisors have argued, China's rise presents a strategic and military threat that can best be countered by a US naval build-up rather than multilateral economic and commercial arrangements.<sup>5</sup> A second scenario, also suggested by some of his advisors, is that President Trump's approach to China will consist of calculated unpredictability, meant to keep Beijing off balance.<sup>6</sup>

While these two approaches might not conflict with India's objectives, other scenarios might be more worrisome for New Delhi. For example, a third scenario, and one that gained ground around President Trump's first summit with Xi Jinping, is that the USA might work towards some kind of grand bargain with China. Indian interests, or those of other countries in the region, might consequently suffer. Alternatively, US belligerence might not be backed up by the necessary capabilities, increasing the chances of miscommunication and region-wide conflict. Finally, the two countries could plunge into a trade and currency war, with possibly disastrous consequences for the global economy – including for India.

While evaluating the possibilities of each broad scenario, and planning accordingly, India must continue its own policy of maintaining a favourable

balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. This is largely encapsulated in its 'Act East' policy, and involves improving military preparedness and capabilities on the Sino-Indian border; enhancing Indian connectivity with Southeast Asia; developing an integrated approach to the Indian Ocean region; investing in institutional cooperation in Asia; and deepening security partnerships with countries in the region that share India's concerns. At the same time, India must continue to advocate more equitable and sustainable economic relations with China, and try to work with Beijing whenever possible. Given the degree of uncertainty in China, and in US-China relations, India will have little choice but to monitor developments carefully. Simultaneously, India must double down on Acting East by further arming north, connecting east, securing south, partnering farther afield, and deepening institutional links.

#### **Terrorism: Shared Principles, Divergent Priorities?**

Terrorism remains a third major concern for India in the aftermath of President Trump's election. After the 9/11 attacks and its intervention in Iraq, the USA adopted a tactical approach to international counterterrorism. To some degree, this was informed by the challenges of securing Iraq after 2003, and the inability to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan despite a much-vaunted troop surge.<sup>7</sup> The USA was also unable to address Pakistan-based terrorism, in part because of that country's latent nuclear deterrent. While talking tough on terrorism, President Trump has focused primarily on securing the homeland, defeating the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and countering Iran. India has its own priorities, which place a greater priority on cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan and, relatedly, on stabilising Afghanistan.

As a consequence, although India and the USA may find greater agreement at the level of first principles when it comes to terrorism, practical cooperation might be complicated. Divergences over Iran may not come to the fore – given the differences between the USA and its European partners – but New Delhi may find Washington wielding considerably less leverage with Pakistan. India will have to continue to partner with other countries in stabilising Afghanistan, and this may involve playing a bigger direct role as a security actor. Additionally, India will have to work harder – both unilaterally and in conjunction with others – to compel Pakistan to abandon its longstanding policy of supporting terrorist groups.

### **An Ungoverned World?**

Finally, President Trump's election will have consequences for global governance, although what exactly they might be is hard to discern. India was not well-positioned to claim a leading role in the international order in 1945 (not being independent), nor in 1991 (coming off concurrent political, economic, and security crises). This adversely affected Indian interests during the 1990s and 2000s, whether on India's nuclear status, trade policy, climate change, or international intervention. In the absence of large-scale multilateral reform after the Cold War, India integrated wherever possible with the preeminent international institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation and groupings built around the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It also supported new and parallel structures, including the BRICS coalition, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank. Additionally, it became a member of the G-20, which gained in relevance following the 2008 global financial crisis.

Today, India still seeks membership of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, although this is subject to the vagaries of institutional membership and India's own approach to trade. Additionally, it desires a vote and a voice on nuclear, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons proliferation through membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), and other export control regimes. NSG membership would also effectively make permanent India's 2008 waiver which enables it to conduct civilian nuclear commerce. Finally, India seeks permanent membership to an expanded UN Security Council as an apex body of global governance. While the US has supported India in all these efforts in the past, it appears a low priority for the current Trump Administration which has not yet clarified its vision for governing the world.

### **Parsing an Uncertain World**

The logic of converging India-US interests along every dimension – bilateral relations, the balance of power in Asia, counterterrorism, and multilateral affairs – remains strong, regardless of the change of administration in Washington. However, India can no longer take traditional US positions for granted. It must double-down on its own unilateral efforts in accelerating its development, in Acting East, in coercing Pakistan and stabilising Afghanistan, and in reforming the structure of global governance. It must also seek alternative partners, whenever possible. At the same time, New Delhi will

have to try to convince the Trump Administration of the central logic of its predecessors' engagement with India: that a stronger, wealthier, and more dynamic India – even if it retains its independence and does not always act in accordance with the USA - advances American interests. This is always a hard sell; but it is particularly so in today's political environment. Can 'America First' ever align with India as a 'leading power'? That remains to be seen.

**Notes :**

<sup>1</sup> Robert Kagan, "Trump Marks the End of America as World's 'Indispensable Nation,'" *Financial Times*, 19 November 2016, at <https://www.ft.com/content/782381b6-ad91-11e6-ba7d-76378e4fef24>

<sup>2</sup> "Background Briefing by Administration Officials on U.S.-India Relations," Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, 25 March 2005, at <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/pa/prs/ps/2005/43853.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, 11 October 2011, at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>

<sup>4</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, "The U.S.-India 'Global Partnership': How Significant for American Interests?" Testimony before U.S. House Committee on International Relations, 17 November 2005, at <http://carnegieendowment.org/2005/11/17/u.s.-india-global-partnership-how-significant-for-american-interests-pub-17693>

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Gray and Peter Navarro, "Donald Trump's Peace through Strength Vision for the Asia-Pacific," *Foreign Policy*, 7 November 2016, at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/07/donald-trumps-peace-through-strength-vision-for-the-asia-pacific/>

<sup>6</sup> Michael Pillsbury, "Trump Can Stand Up to China without Sparking War," *The National Interest*, 12 January 2017, at <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-can-stand-china-without-sparking-war-19038>

<sup>7</sup> Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.



## ***Trump's Foreign Policy Uncertainties and Modi's Developmental Agenda: A Way Forward***

Annpurna Nautiyal\*

US President Donald Trump's lack of interest and understanding of foreign policy priorities as well as bilateral and multilateral relationships have been causing anxiety in the countries of the Asia-Pacific. This is especially so where the Obama Administration had cultivated close ties with allies to meet the Chinese challenge. The US policy of Asian rebalance under President Obama boosted economic engagements as well as defence and security partnerships with allies like Australia, Japan, and the Philippines. The policy also considerably improved the USA's security and economic relationships with India because they were seen as being important in tackling the Chinese challenge. In stark opposition to President Obama, President Trump's overtly populist, isolationist, and protectionist policies like 'America First', borders and walls, restrictions on the H-1B visa program, the withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, opposition to the Paris climate change pact, unclear China policy, his unwillingness to assume moral leadership on humanitarian issues, etc. indicate not only a difference in urgencies but also a shift away from traditional US policies. Disavowal of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) has spurred fears that Obama's Asian rebalance initiative may also be relegated to a remote corner. Confusion has also been mounting due to faltering US policies toward China and Russia.

Actually, President Trump's undoing of President Obama's policies raises doubts over Washington's assurances and commitments made earlier. India is also feeling the heat, since the changed circumstances are forcing it to re-examine its assumptions and approaches to deal with the United States. India's label as a natural US ally in the Asian rebalance, and a strategic partner in dealing with China's continued rise, seems to have lost its potency under President Trump's confused policies. The US envoy to the UN Nikki Haley's statement that the USA would play a proactive role in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, did not go down well with India. Although, the previous US administration appeared fearful that India-Pakistan tensions could transmute into a full-fledged war, it preferred not to play a mediatory role in the bilateral issues and to respect India's sensitivities. Contrarily, Nikki Haley's statement indicates a possible change in the US policy of non-interference in

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the bilateral issues between India and Pakistan. The changes have confused India, and made it suspicious about the future course of its relationship with the USA. The Trump Administration's scheduling of meetings with leaders - like Japan's Shinzô Abe, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, Germany's Angela Merkel, and China's Xi Jinping - are indicative of their importance to the new administration. The schedule of the Modi-Trump meeting is yet to be fixed, which indicates India's significance in President Trump's worldview and approaches.

President Trump, and Prime Minister Modi have spoken a couple of times after the US President's inauguration. Top security and foreign officials of India have also met with their US counterparts. However, the India-US wavelength is yet to be matched. During India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's recent meetings with US Defense Secretary, Gen. James Mattis; Secretary of Homeland Security, Gen. John Kelly; and National Security Advisor Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, the officials emphasised the need for jointly addressing the challenge of terrorism in South Asia. The American interlocutors also acknowledged and applauded India's role in providing stability to the region; however, they did not address Pakistan sponsored terrorism or fix the time frame for the Modi-Trump meeting. President Trump's congratulatory call to Prime Minister Modi in the aftermath of BJP's landslide win in two Hindi heartland states indicates President Trump's appreciation for Prime Minister Modi's growing popularity as a strong leader. Yet, President Trump's protectionist policies - like restricting imports of a large proportion of Indian manufactured pharmaceuticals or the H-1B visa programme which has enabled thousands of Indians to work in the USA - would adversely affect India's business interests. Thus, President Trump's seemingly mixed messages have made India wary. Though these steps suit President Trump's rhetoric and policies of making America first and great again, they come at the cost of global trade, mutual trust and sustenance of strategic partnership.

Analysts have been expecting close ties between India and the USA under President Trump in view of the similarities between him and Prime Minister Modi. The latter's economic and identity politics and policy agenda consisting of Make for India, Make in India, India First, and inclusive development is being equated to President Trump's America First. President Trump hopes for stricter anti-immigration, anti-Muslim, anti-globalisation economic policies and protectionism. However, their different perceptions on geopolitical issues, divergent approaches to global affairs, diverse ways to handle economic issues might restrict the scope of India-US intimacy developed during the Obama's period.

For example, President Trump's hardliner views on Islamic issues, extremism, terrorism and critical approaches towards certain Muslim countries are witnessed in his anti-immigration policies. On the other hand, Prime Minister Modi's pragmatism and developmental diplomacy is visible in his dealings, outreach, and close relationships with the Islamic countries of West Asia for business and energy interests. Prime Minister Modi has, in fact, visited more Muslim countries than any other Indian former Prime Ministers in the recent past. Consequently, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar have become the biggest sources of foreign investment in India, which is quite important if India is to achieve its target of infrastructural development. India's open handshake with Israel - done without worrying much about the reaction of the Middle Eastern or Gulf countries - is also an example of such pragmatism. Despite US reservations, India is also developing close ties with Iran through an agreement to make available US\$ 500 million for developing the Chabahar port. The port is being projected as India's gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Europe. Hence, while Prime Minister Modi may exhibit the same concern of protecting national interests as President Trump, subtle differences in their global stances indicate Prime Minister Modi's intent to transcend India's past fixation on policies and preferences. India's energy needs have also made Iran the biggest supplier of oil to India.

There are differences between the two leaders in other global avenues as well. President Trump has not only rejected the Paris Climate Pact but also indicated his intention to expand fossil fuel production. In comparison, Prime Minister Modi has signed the Paris Climate Accord and committed India to generating 40 percent of its energy from alternative energy sources, particularly solar energy. Prime Minister Modi's policies indicate India's ambition to be a responsible global power. India's growing economy has assigned it a prime role in the global markets. On the other hand, President Trump seems to support isolationism, protectionism and withdrawal from global regimes, indicative in his abrogation of TPP and walking away from his predecessor's Asian rebalance strategy.

Despite China's assertive foreign policy approach, pro-Pakistan tilt on India-Pakistan issues, and unresolved boundary dispute with periodic incursions, India wants to maintain economic engagement with China. Conversely, President Trump's stand on China is not clear. For example, President Trump has framed China, the world's second-largest economy, as a currency manipulator. He has accused China of "raping" the USA through unfair trade practices, and even angered China by his unprecedented phone call to Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen. Furthermore, he has aggressively

questioned the rationale of the One-China policy. Such statements and gestures from the Trump administration signal the possible toughness of US policy toward China. However, the US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson's endorsement of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation in its ties with China during his recent China visit (in the wake of the North Korean crisis) presents an entirely different picture. USA's reiteration of previous policies toward China despite President Trump's election rhetoric has made China happy. A revised American stance has enabled China to propagate a new egalitarian model of relationship among major powers. Unfortunately, President Trump's recent order for a missile strike on a Syrian air base in response to chemical weapon attacks on civilians coincided with Xi Jinping's first meeting with him. Since the Syrian missile attack confirms President Trump's hard-line military action against the US enemies, this has aroused fear in China about unilateral US action against the nuclear armed North Korea. Moreover, this has not only annoyed Russia but it is also likely to affect President Trump's designs of having close relations with Russia to tackle ISIS.

Where does India stand with respect to President Trump's stance on China, and China itself? India faces increasing uncertainties with changing great power relations, regional orders, the avowal of Russian and Chinese power, and confusion about the US policies. Security anxieties from Pakistan sponsored terrorism continue to daunt India. To add insult to injury, China's mounting aggression is becoming problematic for India. Some examples include China's threatening tone of a blow by blow reply to India for Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh; maritime tensions in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean; deepening security and defence relations with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka; and the all weather friendship with, and transfer of nuclear weapons and missile technology to Pakistan. China's physical encirclement of India by strengthening its strategic presence in Tibet, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the Indian Ocean island states as well as the integration of all of India's neighbours into the Chinese economic networks is aimed to contain India. Though this strategy is directed to assure the security of energy supplies and sea lanes, China's transport connectivity, naval facilities, and military basing arrangements indicate something else. China is working to surround India's natural strategic advantages, both in the sea and over land. Over and above, it is trying to obstruct India's great power ambitions by keeping it confined to the South Asia region only. This strategy is aimed at developing diplomatic partnerships, gain support for its One-China policy and OBOR initiative, and derive geo-political and geographical benefits.

In sum, with President Trump's parochial worldview, countries like India cannot benefit from advanced US technology - it hampers their aspirations of economic development and global economic interdependence. The critical counterpoint to the American reluctance in sharing costs of global security and economic organisations is China's readiness to foot the costs, and even assume economic and global leadership. For example, consider China's involvement and preference for the expansion of several international organisations such as AIIB, CPEC, BRICS and SCO, and its economic and security strategies of 'One Belt and One Road'. China's interest in developing a mutually beneficial partnership with Russia and other countries of Central Asia is also aimed at actualising its economic and trade expansion, uninterrupted energy supplies, and the development of global partnership to undermine and challenge the USA and its allies. China is expected to cause problems for the countries of the Asia-Pacific, particularly India, which also nurtures global leadership ambitions. India has travelled a long way into the road of globalisation, and cannot afford to ignore it now. India needs foreign investment for its infrastructural development and domestic prosperity through global cooperation and global institutions. Consequently, any reversals in its relationship with the USA would adversely affect India's economic and strategic interests.

In a multi-polar Asia, India also aspires to build bilateral relationships with all major players, which is reflected in its engagement with the countries of the Indian Ocean, Northeast Asia, Central Asia, ASEAN, Pacific Islands, Africa, and the USA. Like the USA, India has never claimed that its interests in establishing a new balance of power in Asia and preserving the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea are aimed to counter the Chinese challenge. However, its Act East Policy and friendship with the countries of the Asia-Pacific does indicate such a desire quite clearly. India's efforts for developing close ties with Malaysia for tackling terrorism, and its defence ties with Bangladesh aim to confront both Pakistan promoted terrorism and reduce China's foot prints in the neighbourhood. India's relations with Vietnam and Japan, both of which have boundary disputes with China, also indicate the strategy of counter encirclement to beat China at its own game. India's overtures toward Australia and other neighbours have allowed China to believe that India is colluding with these countries to obstruct Chinese commercial and security interests. China is involved in development projects in POK; it opposes India's membership in the NSG as well as its permanent membership in the UN Security Council; and by overlooking Pakistan's terrorism connection, it uses its veto against the UN resolution to declare

Masood Azhar a global terrorist. China's offers of aid, assistance, connectivity, and commerce are so lucrative that most South Asian countries have been viewing the OBOR initiative favourably. However, in view of Chinese policies of encirclement, India is apprehensive about its real motivations, and wants more explanations and clarity about Chinese intentions before agreeing to be part of Chinese projects.

Within this dynamic milieu of the USA under President Trump and a staggeringly aggressive Chinese landscape, Prime Minister Modi has set a new target of creating a "New India" by 2022, which involves inclusive rapid economic development in India. By 2022, Prime Minister Modi also aspires to make India a great power. Therefore, the importance of a closer partnership with the USA is strategically desired. Such closeness will not only make the attainment of Prime Minister Modi's goal easy, but also provide some clout to India to deal with Chinese challenges in the Asia-Pacific. The decision to host President Obama as chief guest at the Republic Day parade or to abstain from the non-aligned summit held in Venezuela in September 2016 indicates the pragmatism in India's foreign policy.

Prime Minister Modi's political directives reflect India's timely realisation that under changed and charged conditions, a non-aligned forum cannot serve India's global ambitions. India and the USA have travelled a long distance from their Cold War era's mutual suspicion, and are now developing a different synergy. The passage from estranged democracies to engaged ones has not been easy due to their divergent perceptions. The relationships among these two powers clearly indicate that politics is a game of the possible because the closeness developed during the Obama period was clearly directed to counter the Chinese challenge in the Asia-Pacific as well as to combat terrorism. India has opened up its fast growing economy, and under this changed context, the USA has not only become its main defence equipment supplier but has also replaced Russia as India's main weapon supplier.

Meanwhile, President Trump's policies are not yet clear, and many leaders have not met him. However, his meetings with Shinzô Abe, Netanyahu, and Xi Jinping have fared well. President Trump has reassured Japan about economic cooperation, friendship, and its commitment to Japan's security. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to the USA - despite the US missile attack on Syrian air base and continuing tensions between the USA and China related to North and South Korea - has still prompted a high level dialogue and cooperation mechanism. However, the future of the relationship will also depend on President Trump's stand on China. President Trump's liking for strong leaders resonates with Prime Minister Modi's

image of a tough leader, and is likely to create a favourable atmosphere for Modi's India. In view of President Trump's transactional, bilateral, mercantilist and militarist approach toward trade, global affairs, and concerns for job loss for Americans, scholars envision emergence of good chemistry between Prime Minister Modi and President Trump. The latter's restrictions on H-1B visas could disturb India's equations with the USA. But, as the US scholar Walter Anderson has pointed out, a convergence of US policy of calculated altruism to build a strong India and Indian aspiration for a global role can fulfil USA's larger strategic goal in Asia.

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***Forecasting India-US Relations in the Trump Era:  
Mostly Sunny and Warm, No Major Disturbance in Sight***

Monish Tourangbam\*

As the Trump Presidency became real last November, shockwaves in the USA and around the world were apparent. However, amidst the tell-tale signs of uncertainty that were going to define the coming of the Trump era, many commented that India-US relations would, in all likelihood, remain stable. During President Trump's election campaign, India was hardly a matter of attention. Even as he made apparent his disdain for mainstream US foreign policy orientations, there seemed to be hardly any concern regarding the trajectory of India-US relations. The future of the India-US strategic partnership had been secured by the outgoing Obama Presidency, evident with his visit as the Chief Guest during India's Republic Day celebrations, the signing of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), and the promulgation of the Joint Strategic Vision of the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region. The prevalent view among strategic watchers in both India and the USA has been that the relationship has firm support across the major political parties in both the countries. Though the larger uncertainty surrounding the Trump Presidency seems to have brushed off on India as well, no drastic changes in Indo-US strategic convergence are being expected. India's strategic embrace of the USA in the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean region has become pronounced over the years, and it is expected that the strategic rationale inherent in the relationship will stay strong in the Trump administration.

India and the USA are seen as evolving their strategic orientations around the rising significance of the Indo-Pacific region. While India is seen as the resident custodian of security in the Indian Ocean region, the USAs' role as the principal security guarantor of the Pacific Ocean is beyond doubt. While India and the USA have developed convergences across a wide spectrum of issues, no strategic partnership can be complete without sustaining a robust defence partnership. The defence sector has been given topmost priority, whether it is in the realm of military exercises or defence trade. The increasing volume and quality of defence trade is seen in the negotiations towards defence co-development and co-production, including aircraft carrier design

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and construction, taking the relationship to new highs. India's elevation as a major defence partner of the USA will most likely continue in the new Trump Administration. Section 1292 of the National Defence Authorization Act of 2017 (NDAA 2017) of the US stresses enhancing defence and security cooperation with India. During his Senate Confirmation Hearing earlier this year, US Secretary of Defence, James Mattis, commended the role of the Defence Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI), a brainchild of his predecessor Ashton Carter, towards bringing the two countries closer. He also contended that India's Act East Policy was instrumental in contributing to security in the Asia-Pacific. The strategic community in India views the Indo-Pacific construct as a natural extension of India's foreign policy for protection of national interests in South-east Asia under the Act East Policy, while their counterparts in the USA see the region as a natural corollary of Washington's rebalancing strategy towards the Asia-Pacific—to the extent that many prefer to refer to the Indo-Pacific as Indo Asia-Pacific. India's strategic congruence with the USA in this aspect has been emphasised and reiterated often by Admiral Harry Harris, the Commander of the US Pacific Command.

India's defence purchases from the USA have touched US\$15 billion. The new priority items in India-US defence trade include India's likely cooperation with the USA in its future vertical lift (FVL) aircraft programme. The two countries are also considering the futuristic infantry combat vehicle (FICV) project, suggested to be a trilateral endeavour, which includes Israel. Of the important deals already inked between India and the USA, there is the US\$3.1 billion deal for 22 Apache attack and 15 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters; and two (mobile generators and next-gen protective ensemble worth US \$ 2 million) out of the four pathfinder projects.

Of the many military exercises that the USA and India hold together, *Yudh Abhyas* and the Malabar Exercises are the flagship ones, intended to increase interoperability between the forces of the two countries, and also with friendly countries like Japan in the case of the Malabar exercise. Proposals have occasionally been floated to turn the Malabar exercise into a quadrilateral exercise with the inclusion of Australia. Canberra has for long considered the Indo-Pacific as the appropriate geopolitical construct to chart out its national security vision and policy, and would ideally be an important component of the Malabar exercise. In any case, the Malabar exercise has unquestionably emerged as a significant template for forging cooperation among stakeholders in the entire region spanning the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific.

Thus, the emerging India-US cooperation in the maritime sector corresponds well with India's vision for the Indian Ocean region, aptly referred to as Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR). India's well qualified concerns of giving too much control to the USA in the name of interoperability inhibit consensus on agreements like the Communication Compatibility and Security Arrangement (COMCASA), earlier called Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA). Nevertheless, the two countries have been guided by a larger strategic vision to maintain and sustain a secured and stable Indo-Pacific, and such tactical differences should be seen as the new normal of a maturing partnership between two democracies.

Concerns have been raised that India's increasing defence partnership with the USA could adversely impact India's relations with its traditional defence partner, Russia. While limited in scope and implementation, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) has already antagonised both Islamabad and Beijing, where a non-existent US-India alliance is perceived as a sign of belligerence. Before and after the LEMOA was signed, influential newspapers like the *Global Times* and *Dawn* in China and Pakistan respectively, accused India of hastening to join hands with the USA. The emerging defence collaborations between New Delhi and Washington seem to have peeved countries like China, Pakistan, and even Russia. Pakistan's National Security Adviser, Nasser Janjua, recently commented that the growing cooperation between India and the USA, specifically the LEMOA, had jeopardised the idea of an Asian century. While Russia's interest in Pakistan's defence market for potential military exports should not be exaggerated as an impending threat to India, what it does signal is that New Delhi and Washington should be watching as to how other countries perceive their burgeoning defence ties.

Inter-state relations have been seeing rising economic interdependence in the globalised era. However, the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific region has simultaneously been witnessing an accentuated security dilemma; this is seen in the rise in military spending by major players in the region. While the USA remains the pre-eminent power in the region—with its force deployments reflecting its intentions to sustain its primacy in the region—the Chinese Navy has been demonstrating its intention to develop blue water capabilities, and increase its economic and military footprints across the region. The emerging geopolitics necessitates a more robust and integrative force multiplication among countries who share interest in developing a

more open, plural, and inclusive security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. Such challenges require India and the USA to more closely align their interest to prevent unilateral activities in the region. Though India and the USA are not primary parties to the disputes in the South China Sea, both have stakes in the peace and stability in this region, and have appropriately called for peaceful settlement of disputes and the preservation of freedom of navigation in the waterways.

It is quite apparent that India's growing power and influence in general, and its deepening defence and security cooperation with the USA—particularly the new emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region—has not gone down well with the Chinese government. An outright military alliance between India and the USA is not in the offing, given India's own desire to maintain strategic autonomy. However, there is no doubt that both countries desire the strategic partnership to entail greater habits of cooperation and coordination in areas of convergent interest. The perception of India as a reluctant partner, and the USA as an unreliable power, seems to be declining. In other words, mutual trust between Washington and New Delhi appears to be on the ascent.

There have been some concerns in New Delhi accruing from the uncertainty as to how the Trump Administration reassess America's trade and commerce policies while New Delhi has been busy trying to entice US companies to invest and increase businesses in India. The overriding feeling among policymakers and analysts in India has been that President Trump's protectionist tendencies should not hinder the vision of the two countries increasing their bilateral trade to US\$500 billion. Although outsourcing has been populist fodder for election campaigns in the USA for presidential candidates, President Trump's general approach to immigration to the USA has ignited fears that stricter visa regulations, specifically over H-1B and L1 categories, would hinder the mobility of skilled Indian workers going to the USA.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha on 23 March 2017, India's External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj, sought to allay fears by saying that the Trump Administration had not yet implemented a policy that would affect Indian skilled workers in the USA, and that the Indian government was making efforts, through the administration and members of the US Congress, to dissuade the USA from doing so. Efforts have been made by the Indian government to impress upon the US government the fact that the relationship between Indian IT companies and the USA was mutually beneficial. While Indian companies have made investments in the

USA and created jobs there, US companies have been doing substantial business in India. According to sources, a sizeable number of American companies in Bengaluru and Hyderabad are engaged in R&D, data mining, analytics, genome sequencing, incubators, etc. In addition, US corporations supply, in large numbers, items like sensors, drones, satellites, equipment fitted with artificial intelligence, among other things, to India as part of the country's digitisation programme.

Counterterrorism cooperation between the two countries has been on the upswing since the 26/11 attacks, and the India-US homeland security dialogue reflects the seriousness of this development. It spans across the different agencies involved in fighting terrorist activities. India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval's recent visit to the USA and his meetings with the national security team of the Trump Administration was an important step towards taking forward the counterterrorism cooperation. This, including other high level visits, such as the one made by India's Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar, could be seen as spade work towards the two administrations getting to know each other before Prime Minister Modi and President Trump eventually hold a bilateral summit meeting. The Trump team consists of people who are not the usual Beltway regulars, making it all the more important for both sides to know each other.

The American role in Afghanistan is at a crossroads wherein the USA seems to be more welcoming of India's influence. However, will this take place at the risk of alienating Pakistan, which the United States remains reliant upon to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table? The security scenario in Afghanistan certainly remains uncertain, and New Delhi still needs to keep a keen eye on what comes out of Washington. In the midst of US retrenchment, and the space created for other major players like China and Russia to come in, various permutations and combinations are emerging to reconcile with a rising Taliban. Where does all this leave India? What will be India's choices? How much will these converge with the approach that the USA has been adopting, and will adopt in the near future? How will the emerging security scenario in Afghanistan test India's approach to the Taliban, and the extent of Indo-US cooperation? Some of these questions will be foremost in India's minds as it sits down to chalk out strategies of cooperation with the USA. President Trump's willingness to do some hardball negotiations with Pakistan on the latter's counterterrorism approach and role in Afghanistan would be keenly followed in New Delhi.

India's response to the US Representative to the UN, Nikki Haley's comments on the possible US role in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan should serve as a learning curve for the Trump Administration. New Delhi made it crystal clear yet again India's refusal to entertain any third-party mediation on India-Pakistan issues. The Trump Administration will have to gradually but surely find its feet in the complexities of South Asian geopolitics. The State Department was quick to make amends by coming out with statements that the USA did not intend to interfere with India-Pakistan issues which had to be handled directly between the two countries.

In recent times, a lot has been written and said about the intangibility of the Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement that had become the big-ticket issue of the strategic partnership. Westinghouse, one of the potential suppliers of nuclear reactors to India, filing for bankruptcy has added more ammunition to the capers of the nuclear agreement. However, irrespective of whether or not businesses result from it, the civil nuclear cooperation agreement has had clear strategic dividends for both India and the USA. While the importance of the nuclear agreement in terms of providing business to American companies and increasing the nuclear component in India's energy mix cannot be discounted, there were other goals and objectives attached to the decision to take forward the difficult negotiations that led to the agreement. The agreement was meant to bridge the trust gap between the two countries through an understanding on the one of the thorniest issues in the India-US relationship—the nuclear issue. The negotiations that led to the deal, and the bargaining that had to be done to give India the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) waiver eventually built habits of cooperation between India and the USA. This helped open doors of connectivity not only between the political leaderships but also between the bureaucracies of the two democracies.

Moreover, the efforts to build support for the nuclear agreement in the US Congress unleashed the hitherto untapped lobbying prowess of the Indian-American community. Therefore, the civil nuclear cooperation agreement and the NSG waiver for India in 2008 always had—and will have—a strategic relevance beyond the nuclear dimension. Emphasising this point is imperative in terms of what got India and the USA here, and what will be required to take the relationship forward.

The elevation of the US-India Strategic Dialogue to the Strategic and Commercial Dialogue reflects a discernible shift in the strategic thinking of both India and the USA. It is reflective of an understanding that creating an enabling environment for India's global rise necessitates India's partnership

with the USA, even as America's need to secure its interest in the Indo-Pacific region necessitated the increasing willingness on its part to partner with India that is becoming prominent not only in ideational but also in material capabilities. Prime Minister Modi and President Trump should go beyond the vocabulary constraints of non-alignment and alignment, acknowledge the value of shared interests in India-US relations, and find new traction to make real what has been repeatedly termed, by both sides, in the recent past as the 'defining partnership of the 21st century'.

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## ***Trump's Grand Strategy: A New Doctrine and its Discrepancies***

Obja Borah Hazarika\*

In the two months since the advent of the Trump Presidency there has been a lot of debate with regard to his foreign policy orientation, grand strategy and worldview. There are apprehensions mainly due to the bluster of his statements and actions as well as his twitter rants with regard to a possible realignment or even a complete overhaul of the main tenets of US foreign policy which have been in place since the end of the Second World War. However, it would seem that the overall strategic interests of the US, as gleaned from the tweets, statements, executive orders and actions of the new President, continue to be protecting the territorial and economic security as well as socio-cultural ethos of the country. The manner in which President Trump seeks to tackle these challenges, however, hints at a major departure from the ways of previous administrations.

A Trump doctrine or the strategy of "America First" has been scripted to meet the various external threats perceived by the current US administration to the economy and security of the US. First, in order to deal with the economic challenge perceived to be emanating from unfair trade agreements and economic practises of China, the US has announced a doctrine of 'economic nationalism' which embraces protectionism. To tackle these challenges the US has pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); aims to renegotiate the NAFTA; threatens to impose high tariffs against China and prevent illegal immigrants from Mexico by way of a border wall; inflict dire consequences on US companies that move jobs overseas and make access to work visas extremely stringent, including the H1B visa which is used by many Indians engaged in the IT sector, so as to benefit US citizens.

In advocating and implementing protectionism of this kind, President Trump sounds less like the leader of the country which created the present liberal economic order and more like a proponent of dependency theory, whose ideologues around half a century ago, argued for the de-linking of Latin American economies from the global capitalist economic system calling the latter system predatory and beneficial only for countries like the US at the cost of the wealth of other nations.

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Additionally, President Trump's strategies to goad China into changing its economic practices may do more harm than good. President Trump has continually commented on China gaining from unequal trade with the US and the former's lackadaisical approach towards North Korea. President Trump has suggested that economic steps and a reversal of the One-China policy may be taken by the US to prod China into confronting North Korea and changing its economic practises. Such policies may, however, turn the US-China relationship extremely hostile which would dismiss any chance that the two countries may have on cooperating to counter the threat emanating from North Korea.

Furthermore, by withdrawing from the TPP, which would have created a free-trade zone among a dozen countries representing 40 percent of global GDP, President Trump is in fact helping China which has continued negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), an agreement similar to the now-discarded TPP, which would promote trade among twenty countries. Forsaking the TPP may also lead US allies to view it with apprehension in other spheres, including security matters leading to the decrease in cooperation on military matters as well as a decline in defence deals with the US which would prove disastrous for the economy of the US. In addition, such strategies of President Trump complicate relationships between China and other countries as most of them have deep economic and other links with both nations making it difficult for countries to forsake relations with either. Countries such as India may also find it difficult to toe the US' line towards China as it may have ramifications on overall relations between New-Delhi and Beijing.

Moreover, the proposal to build a wall along the US-Mexico border and threats to renegotiate the NAFTA may create a rift in US-Mexico ties which would further complicate issues related to immigration. During the Obama period, with a view to preventing immigrants fleeing abject poverty and crime in Central America, the US cooperated with countries like Mexico to address these issues through aid. An extreme policy towards Mexico, including a border wall may unravel such practices leading to spiralling poverty and violence which would in turn lead to a rise in flow of immigrants. Such stringent policies with regard to Mexico has already led to friction between the governments of the two states as was seen with the recent cancellation of the visit of the Mexican head of state to the US.

Economic protectionism by the US will also lead to consternation with countries like India. Although President Trump has commented that he is

looking forward to working with Prime Minister Narendra Modi there exist several policies mulled by President Trump which may be pernicious for Indo-US relations. For instance, President Trump's isolationist policy could raise concerns in India regarding the reliability of the US as a strategic and economic partner. India's interests will also be undermined if the US refuses to cooperate on tackling global warming given that President Trump has denied climate change on many occasions. Recently, the US administration undid most of former President Barack Obama's Clean Power Plan, which required states to decrease carbon emissions from power plants. President Trump's decree also reversed a moratorium on coal leasing on federal lands and it undid rules to curb carbon emissions as well as methane emissions. Such measures widen the difference in views on climate change held by India and the US. Although President Trump did not target India in the manner China, Japan and South Korea were blamed, for cheating the US through currency manipulation or bad trade practices, India will be adversely impacted as President Trump begins to implement protectionist policies including the reduction in granting of H1B visas which will impact India's IT sector. Countries like India which embraced the liberal international order will also be impacted if the US retreats to an isolationist policy ceding ground to powers like China with whom India shares less complementary economic and political values compared to the US.

Apart from implementing protectionist measures to serve America's economic interests, the Trump administration is keen to shore up its security apparatus to meet the security threat perceived from terrorism and radical Islam. In a bid to bolster homeland security President Trump intends to greatly enhance US military strength including enlarging US naval, air, and ground forces, bolstering cyber warfare capabilities and nuclear weapons. President Trump however does not view the security umbrella extended to its allies in Europe and Asia as necessary for the protection of the US in particular and democracy in general. President Trump has termed the NATO, which is a cornerstone of the close security cooperation between the US and its European allies, as an obsolete organisation. He instead has proclaimed that such security provided to its well-to-do allies is a drain on the economic resources of the US. Such an unforthcoming attitude towards its allies in Asia and Europe who share the US's goals of democracy and free trade may weaken ties between the US and these nations thereby hindering President Trump's other aims of normalising ties with Russia, fighting the IS, or tackling financial crises, which would prove detrimental to his overall aims to secure the US

economically and territorially. Bolstering of alliances in Europe and Asia were considered by successive US administrations important to prop up the liberal order, expand democracy and free market which have been integral to continuation of the growth and prosperity of the US. A reversal of such policy thus would mean the possible undoing of the liberal international order which could spell anathema to US economic and military success. President Trump may be placed somewhere in between the long spectrum of worldviews between isolationism and exceptionalism as he is keen to enlarge the US military arsenal and involve the US in military expeditions in combating the threats such as the Islamic State but does not want to commit to the security of its allies.

With regard to the security threat perceived to be emanating from refugees and non-refugees hailing from Islamic countries, the Trump administration plans to conduct mass deportations of such immigrants, and intends to suspend the entry of refugees and legal immigration from several Muslim countries. Their entry into the US would include a selection procedure which would sift and select only those who share American values and love the American people, which are very subjective categories. President Trump has already attempted to ban the entry into the US of people from six Muslim countries. Electronic gadgets from eight countries with predominantly Muslim population have already been banned on flights to the US. Such measures will only lead to greater rifts between the Islamic and non-Islamic communities in the US and elsewhere which will lead to greater communal tensions thereby increasing security risks instead of combating them.

The current US administration is also favourably disposed to the idea of maintaining a registry of all Muslims in the US to increase surveillance over this community. The proposed policy to profile, register and punish those belonging to the Muslim faith in the US may adversely impact the already precarious relations between Muslims in America and the US government. The policies of the US including profiling Muslims in the US and banning refugees and immigrants of certain religious identities reeks of Islamophobia which would most certainly complicate cooperation between the US and the Muslim-majority countries against threats from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. President Trump's Islamophobic treatment towards Muslims in the US and Muslim immigrants may also complicate overall relations between the US and other countries which do not have predominantly Muslim citizens but nonetheless house sizeable Muslim populations.

In a bid to promote a muscular foreign policy on security matters, President Trump also intends to withdraw from the nuclear agreement with Iran which was achieved during the Obama regime. Such an arbitrary decision to annul the hard-fought nuclear arrangement between the US and Iran will embolden the hardliners in Iran to wrest domestic political power leading to greater friction between the two countries. President Trump's harsh stand on Iran will also complicate his intention to reinvigorate ties with Russia. President Trump who is keen to ensure close cooperation with Russia has been waxing eloquent on Putin's style of governance but his intransigence on Iran, a close partner of Russia, will only further complicate US-Russia relations. Given Russia's vast economic stakes with Iran, it will be difficult for President Trump to successfully pursue his hard-line towards Iran while seeking closer ties with Russia. Such an uncompromising attitude towards Iran may lead to sabotaging of the US counter terrorism efforts in Iraq. It may also embolden Iran's support and influence in Syria, a country with which Iran has a host of converging interests, such as supporting Palestinian resistance groups, which will be detrimental to US efforts to counter the security threats emanating from that region. Additionally, President Trump may want countries such as India to adopt an inflexible approach similar to that of the current US administration towards Iran which would complicate the Chabahar deal leading India to yield hard-fought strategic ground in West Asia.

President Trump's strategies to promote the economic and territorial security of the US thus are not only inconsistent but riddled with seemingly irreconcilable and irrevocable contradictions. The US since the end of the Second World War has been instrumental in structuring the international order according to its own volition with an intention of ensuring US dominance in the security and economic realms. Reneging on the existing liberal international order and reducing support to allies and institutions will lead to uncertain socio-political and economic reverberations for the US and it will mean ceding space to actors which may not share western values, allowing them to increase their influence which will in turn undercut the US' ability to shape future global scenarios. Steps taken by the US with regard to increasing tariffs on foreign products will lead to counter tariffs on US products which will adversely impact their competitiveness and subsequently hurt American jobs. Withdrawing from a world which is structured to support neo-imperialism of the US and most of the western world, will prove adversarial for the economy of the US and also impact

its ability to maintain its military capability. In addition, and more significantly for the rest of the world, an Islamophobic approach to the challenges of immigration and terrorism will aggravate the tenuous ties between varying communities in the US and elsewhere. Thus, the strategies of withdrawing from the world and raising economic and physical barriers will only worsen instead of alleviating the challenges of terrorism, economic downturn and immigration faced by the US.

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## ***Trump's Foreign Policy: From Walking the Talk to Talking the Walk***

Netajee Abhinandan\*

It is a transitional phase in world politics. The relative decline of American power, the inability of European countries to manage their internal crises, the turbulence in West Asia, the proliferation of terrorist activities across the globe, and the phenomenal rise of India and China as 'assertive' stakeholders have led to power re-alignments entailing significant changes in the global political order. With the intensification of the tussle for 'predominance' in world affairs, there is a proliferation of conflicts - political, economic, and strategic - among the major powers. Also, globalisation has ensured that the conflicts, even if localised, do not remain confined to specific regions and become global concerns. Different geo-political conflicts in various parts of the world, instead of getting resolved at the regional level through discussion and negotiation, are dominating global agenda, and vitiating peace and order. In this context, the role of the USA, the most important player, assumes great significance as it tries to navigate through the different crises and maintain its pre-eminence as the principal 'balancer' of power in the global political system.

Whenever a new regime takes charge, there are expectations and anticipations as to what would be its approach and response to major policy issues, both domestic and foreign. However, since Donald Trump's rather unexpected win as President of the USA, there have been apprehensions and a sense of anxiety regarding the future course of American foreign policy. President Trump's pronouncements, both during the campaign and after taking charge as President, have indicated a major departure from the policy pursued by his predecessors, and the adoption of a new line that would redefine America's relations with the outside world—that is, with its long-standing allies/friends, traditional foes, strategic partners, as well as its role in various global issues. President Trump's acerbic statements have not helped in winning any support or approval either from his own Party or friendly countries/allies for his rather belligerent roadmap for American revival. In fact, there is rare unity among the senior Republicans and Democrats in denouncing the President's statements and policy moves.

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### **‘America First’: Old Wine in New Bottle?**

There is a sense of disquiet among various countries, especially neighbours and NATO allies, with President Trump’s ‘America First’ approach which entails a more radical approach towards economic and security issues. Though there is no clarity about what exactly ‘America First’ means, it signifies a conscious attempt to disengage America from different global crises, and focus primarily upon augmenting its national power and security. Based on Trump’s declarations and promises, his foreign policy is expected to harp upon restructuring the immigration policy and thereby relations with Mexico, the Arab and Muslim world; putting more restrictions on the entry of Muslims into the USA; scrapping ‘obligatory’ multilateral treaties like the Paris Climate Accord, NAFTA, the Nuclear Pact with Iran, and free trade agreements like NAFTA, TPP and TTIP; reducing troops based in places like Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Germany, which serve as forward deployments in times of crisis; minimising huge trade deficits with countries like China through hard negotiations; pressurising NATO allies to meet their military spending obligations; and intensifying the fight against terrorist organisations like the ISIS.

However, his actions during the first few months of his Presidency have not entirely matched his rhetoric. He has been rather consistently inconsistent in terms of both policies and actions, being forced to change course and adopt a more pragmatic line in consonance with the changes in international politics. The way the USA launched a missile strike against the Assad government in Syria in the wake of the use of chemical weapons on 7 March 2017 not only betrayed the ‘non-interventionist’ stance Trump has been maintaining but also denoted the ‘continuity’ of American policy towards world affairs. He almost sounded like his predecessors when, after the strikes, he announced,

I call on all civilized nations to join us in seeking to end the slaughter and bloodshed in Syria and also to end terrorism of all kinds and all types. We ask for God’s wisdom as we face the challenge of our very troubled world. We pray for the lives of the wounded and the souls of those who have passed, and we hope that as long as America stands for justice then peace and harmony will prevail.<sup>1</sup>

With Russia pitching in full support for the Assad regime, the American strike may well turn into a Cold War between erstwhile super powers, thus ending the ‘uneasy’ truce. Also, the political message behind the strike cannot be overemphasised as it came after President Trump’s meetings with traditional Sunni Arab allies in the Middle East: Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of

Saudi Arabia, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al Sissi, and finally, Crown Prince Abdullah who have been annoyed by President Obama's subtle tilt towards Tehran to achieve a nuclear deal. Thus, the Syria strike can be seen as part of Trump administration's efforts to revitalise relations with Middle East countries and caution Iran, which is still viewed as a malignant force in the region.<sup>2</sup> Some analysts believe that the timing of the strike was also very significant as the order for the strike was given moments before President Trump met his Chinese counterpart at the Mar-a-Lago resort. It could not merely be a coincidence but rather a signal to China and its friend North Korea.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the hope that President Trump would usher in a new phase of partnership with Russia was crushed by the attack on Syria. Russia's strong reaction to the American action also to some extent dispels doubts about any tacit understanding between President Trump and President Putin.

Contrary to expectations, President Trump's two-day summit meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (in April 2017), went very smoothly—without any major hiccup or diplomatic gaffe. While it was expected that President Trump would raise a range of issues starting from trade policy to North Korea, from Taiwan to the South China Sea, with Xi Jinping, considering his strident anti-China rhetoric and call to Taiwanese President before taking oath, nothing came out of the meeting by his own admission: rather, both leaders reportedly turned good friends. The Chinese state media cheered the meeting that “served as an indicator that the China-US relationship is still very much on course since the Trump administration took office in January”, and hoped that the two countries would develop a more ‘pragmatic relationship’<sup>4</sup>. In fact, President Trump is following in the footsteps of his predecessors as he is yet to implement any of the promises he made regarding relations with China: to declare China a currency manipulator, to slap 45 per cent tariffs on Chinese goods, and reaffirm ‘One China’ policy only if he got something in return from China on trade or North Korea. However, he reaffirmed the policy without getting any concessions from China.

President Trump promised he would renegotiate NAFTA. So far, no concrete plan of action has been initiated. Also, there has been no success in making Mexico pay for the border wall, one of the most hyped initiatives of his presidential campaign. On the Israel- Palestine conflict, President Trump had declared abandoning the long-standing US commitment to a two-state solution, and accepting only the Jewish state for establishing peace in the region. He has, since, backed off and reaffirmed his predecessor's policy on settlements, saying they are not very helpful. And, the US Embassy is yet to be moved to Jerusalem.

Thus, there is more continuity than change in the Trump administration's approach on key policy issues as well as in its relations with major powers. Rhetoric is replaced by realism as America braces for a new world order where it is not the only dominant player. Apart from the turnaround on the Syria issue, President Trump - much to the dismay of his supporters - is treading a cautious path on contentious issues, without attempting any radical shift. This is quite apparent as he tones down his diatribes, and tries to introduce a credible and coherent foreign policy that would bear his unique stamp and, at the same time, help in restoring American supremacy.

### **US-India Relations under Trump: a 'Cautious' Step Forward**

In recent years, a sense of bonhomie has marked the bilateral relations between India and the USA, with both sides moving forward to strengthen the strategic partnership. There has been dramatic improvement in relations in all spheres between the two countries. Regular exchanges of high level political visits coupled with wide-ranging intergovernmental dialogues in areas, such as trade, defence, education, science and technology, energy, environment, agriculture, and health have provided a fillip to the ties. Significantly, the trade volume jumped to US\$ 62.1 billion in 2016 despite differences over trade regulations.

However, Trump's Presidency has raised several questions, if not serious doubts, about the future of the ties. Will the bonhomie continue or be jeopardised during Trump's Presidency? Will the partnership be strengthened further? Or, will there be policy moves like the imposition of visa restrictions on Indian technocrats and anti-outsourcing regulations which will hurt the relations? What will be the impact of a stringent immigration policy on Indian professionals and entrepreneurs? How will President Trump deal with Pakistan? What will be his stand on Obama's Pivot to Asia policy that had provided India much leverage in Asian politics?

President Trump is yet to come out with a comprehensive foreign policy framework; he has been mostly silent on Asian affairs, except China. While he denounced countries like Pakistan and China during his election campaign, he spoke most positively about India, praising Prime Minister Modi and his policies. His call to Prime Minister Modi, though symbolic, within five days of taking office further underscored his desire to intensify engagement with India. However, India has reasons to worry if President Trump sincerely implements some of his poll promises on limiting the issuance of H-1B visas, and restricts the outsourcing of jobs. During campaign, he vowed to "end

forever the use of the H-1B as a cheap labour program, and institute an absolute requirement to hire American workers first for every visa and immigration program” on his website. He reiterated his commitment to restricting H1-Bs after his victory, claiming that the visa was subject to “widespread, rampant abuse.” The radical reform of the working visa regime, putting tough restrictions on the H-1B programme proposed by Congressmen, echoing the sentiment of ‘America First’, could seriously affect the business interests of Indian outsourcing firms such as Infosys, Wipro, and Tata Consultancy Services. On 3 March 2017, the USA announced that the processing of H-1B visa petitions would be temporarily suspended, beginning on April 3. As nearly 86 percent of the H-1B visas issued for workers in computer occupations go to Indian workers, these restrictions as well as any executive order by Trump backing the proposed legislations, would spell doom for aspiring Indian technocrats and professionals.<sup>5</sup>

Though President Trump’s tirades about illegal immigration are mostly directed against Mexicans, and people from Muslim-majority nations, the Indians in the USA are scared to face persecution by the administration as well as hostile natives. The recent incidents of hate crimes against Indians, and the targeting of Indian professionals have propelled a sense of fear and anxiety among the Indian community. The growing hatred and ill will against Indians could easily impact the hitherto very influential Indian Diaspora, forcing them to withdraw from the public arena, and thereby lose their power and influence in the foreign policy realm in general, and Indo-US relations in particular.<sup>6</sup> Again, President Trump’s resolve to bring back industrial jobs to the USA, and his relentless threats to companies that outsource manufacturing abroad might affect, even if marginally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s efforts to spur industrial growth in India through the ‘Make in India’ campaign that impels foreign companies to set up their manufacturing units in the country.

Despite these issues of contention dominating the bilateral discourse, it is highly unlikely that President Trump would abandon the path of intense engagement with India pursued by his predecessors, and toe a more aggressive line. Considering his intransigence towards China, which is viewed as a competitor, it is expected that he, just like President Obama, would rely upon democratic India to counter the growing economic and strategic influence of China in Asia. Also, in the wake of China’s growing assertions over the South China Sea and the emerging geo-political conflicts in South East Asia, America’s strategic interests would certainly be better served if it augments its strategic partnership with India.

In this context, the recent visits of National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar to the USA suggest that the politico-security relations between the two countries would rather continue with same intensity than run into troubled waters.<sup>7</sup> With regard to Indo-Pak relations, US envoy to the UN, Nikki Haley's offer of mediation notwithstanding, there is no reason to believe that the US would choose to meddle in the bilateral conflict between the two countries. In fact, following India's strong objection to this proposal, the USA quickly reverted to its previous stance of non-interference, asking India and Pakistan to resolve all issues through 'direct dialogue'. On the other hand, India can take solace from President Trump's tough stand on terror as Pakistan would be under constant watch for its cross-border activities against India.

Thus, there might be some friction between New Delhi and Washington in the economic sphere unless differences are properly handled. However, in the politico-strategic realm, the relations are unlikely to encounter any serious blockade under the Trump Presidency.

#### **Notes :**

- <sup>1</sup> "Trump launches cruise missile strike, eradicates 'America First'", *The Washington Post*, 7 April 2017 at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2017/04/07/trump-launches-cruise-missile-strike-eradicates-america-first/?utm\\_term=.ea709ac8fe6f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2017/04/07/trump-launches-cruise-missile-strike-eradicates-america-first/?utm_term=.ea709ac8fe6f), accessed 1 April 2017.
- <sup>2</sup> Bill Powell, "Donald Trump, Syria and The Death of 'America First'", *Newsweek*, 8 April 2017, at <http://www.newsweek.com/trump-syria-airstrike-assad-putin-russia-syria-america-first-bannon-kushner-580899>, accessed 3 April 2017.
- <sup>3</sup> Helen Raleigh, "Trump's Foreign Policy Act I: Kill a Chicken to Scare Monkeys", at <https://townhall.com/columnists/helenraleigh/2017/04/09/trumps-foreign-policy-act-i-kill-a-chicken-to-scare-monkeys-n2310960>, accessed 7 April 2017.
- <sup>4</sup> "Chinese state media cheer Xi-Trump meeting, say confrontation not inevitable", Reuters, 8 April 2017, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-media-idUSKBN17A06Y>, accessed 9 April 2017.
- <sup>5</sup> "H-1B visa: Trump administration's proposed changes and how they can affect Indians", *Hindustan Times*, 1 February 2017, at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/h-1b-visa-the-proposed-changes-and-how-they-will-affect-indians/story-5fVNjaf1IEmQF8315eIPFP.html>, accessed 3 April 2017.
- <sup>6</sup> Sumit Ganguly, "A New Don: India's relationship with the United States enters an era of uncertainty", *Caravan*, February 2017, at <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/perspectives/trump-india-us-relationship-uncertainty>, accessed on 5 April 2017.
- <sup>7</sup> Chintamani Mahapatra, "Forecast 2017: India-US Strategic Partnership", IPCS website, at <http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/forecast-2017-india-us-strategic-partnership-5246.html>, accessed 5 April 2017.

