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Convergence and Divergence of US and China's Interest in South Asia under Obama's Administration

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Abstract

Convergence and divergence: two different terms used in international relations. Normally, convergence means coming together or organized while divergence means moving apart, or differences, or disagreement. Both the United States of America and the People's Republic of China are playing a significant role in South Asia, especially in India and Pakistan. Several interests are converging between Washington and Beijing while major diverging interest is more prominent. South Asian states have good relations with both major powers but face issues owing to their divergence of interest. The primary purpose of this study is to answer the research question about the convergence and divergence of interest of both states in South Asia, particularly in India and Pakistan in the era of President Obama. To answer the research question secondary sources of data are used and the analysis is done based on collected data. This study provides a new contribution and direction for researchers and policymakers in this domain.

Keywords: South Asia, US-China's interest, regional politics, trade relations, nuclear proliferation, strategic cooperation, Belt and Road Initiative

Introduction

The United States of America (USA) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) are the two important players in international politics. Both the United States and China have good relations with South Asian states especially with Pakistan and India while their interests are fluctuating due to anarchy. After the partition of the sub-continent, Islamabad joined Washington-led capitalist bloc to achieve the balance of power status with India(Mustufa, Ali, Siddiqui, & Shah, 2020). While New Delhi remained somehow neutral and joined Nonalignment Movement (NAM) but got excessive support from the Soviet Union during the Indo-China war. PRC shared borders with both South Asian states and has a notable interest in the region while the USA is the sole superpower in the contemporary world and she has a strategic, economic, and political interest in the region. Now the PRC is the world's second-largest economy due to its rapid economic growth and the USA is the sole superpower but has major concerns about the policies of China.

The Obama administration introduced the "Pivot to Asia policy" to counter growing Chinese influence in the region but President Xi Jinping and his crew introduced the "One

Belt One Road" (OBOR) initiative to protect Chinese interests and future policies. The scope of this study is vast because of its geostrategic, geo-economics, and geopolitical significance(Das, 2017). The bilateral relations between the USA and PRC are setup on realist assumptions. According to realism China could fight against the US hegemony or both states cooperate and the third option is by making alliances China would introduce her world order (Chen, 2013). According to Mearsheimer, a smooth and peaceful rise for Beijing is not possible due to anarchy(Mearsheimer, 2014). On other hand, the USA is trying to maintain its hegemony by making alliances with the anti-Chinese bloc to balance the power status in the South Asian region. The pivot to Asia policy of President Obama was based on a realist assessment (Kay, 2013).

Theoretical framework

Beijing and Washington are struggling and fighting on the various theme to protect their national interest but due to the anarchic nature of international relations, there is a huge trust deficit. In South Asia, both states are trying to protect their interest by making alliances with the help of military, financial and social assistance programs as well as by investing in mega projects. Both Beijing and Washington are trying to create their hegemony in South Asia to prolong and secure national goals. Balance of power (BOP) and hegemonic stability theory describe that the USA and PRC are struggling to balance their power in South Asia by different means(Zhao, 2014). To acquire the BOP status they are using different ways i.e. financial aid, military assistance, social and developmental packages, heavy investment in megaprojects, and cooperation in the nuclear program as well as cooperation in science and technology(Chung, 2018).

The USA wants to maintain its hegemony in the region and her major concern is the growing influence of China in the region. While Beijing is investing in various projects like CPEC in Pakistan, the Padma river project in Bangladesh, and the tunnel deal with Nepal to maximize her influence in the region(Sharma, 2019). Both states are trying to maintain their hegemony in the region as well as they are trying to balance their power in the region with the help of two nuclear power states. Washington investing and supporting New Delhi to counter Beijing's influence on the other side Beijing is investing in Islamabad and other states of the region to counter Washington's influence. Besides all their contradiction, there are several issues where they are converging and diverging their interest in SAARC states (Odgaard, 2009).

Review of Literature

A lot of literature is available on US-China relations that provide thought-provoking statistics about bilateral relations and the converging and diverging interest too. This section of the study focuses on the literature in the area of the convergence and divergence of interest between the USA and PRC particularly in the South Asian region.

Abbasi (2020) identified that owing to the global power shifting from Europe to the Asian pacific triggered the power fluctuation among Asian states, particularly in South Asia. The quadrilateral relationship such as the US-China, China-India, China-Pakistan, and US-India relationship is day by day becoming complicated and India and Pakistan are facing security dilemmas. Akhter and Liu (2019) concluded that China played a key role in Afghan peace talks between the Taliban and US and predicted that the US never achieved its goals in South Asia without Beijing's cooperation. Khan and Khan (2019) find out that the competition between the USA and China in space security leads the South Asian regions towards a security trilemma. Tehseen (2017) says that the competition between Washington

and Beijing in the regions of South Asia is due to geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitics.

Goldstein (2015) tries to explore the bilateral relations from ancient times 1844 to 2015. According to the writer, the core conflicting matters between Beijing and Washington are Taiwan, human rights, maritime silk routes in the South China Sea, and hegemony in the Asian continent. He also appreciated the cooperation of China in the Global War on Terror and other financial issues while president Obama's turn to Asia policy and the Chinese OBOR initiative also leads the competition toward conflict of interest. Mingjiang and Kemburi (2015) concluded the Sino-US relations with the title "Neither friends nor foes". According to Ali (2015), the strategic competition between the US-China affected international security. He concluded the rivalry between US and China as a new cold war and zero-sum game. He suggested that both the USA and PRC have to cooperate in every field of life for a win-win position in Asia pacific. Zhao (2015) said that owing to Xi Jinping's big power relations policy the US policy to contain China did not become successful. Thus, neither China nor the USA can be the single dominant power in the region of Asia.

Twining (2013) said that the US-China relations in the second term of President Obama seem less focused on China as compared to the Middle East and he criticize the Obama administration that China and India will lead the economy of the World because both are a major power in Asia. According to Friedberg (2011), the competition between the USA and PRC started in the 1990s. When PRC introduced economic improvements in 1978 after ten years China's economy gained rapid growth then in the 1990s era the issue of the Most Favorite Nation (MFN) gained World attention. Another reason behind China's role in World was due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. He further says that the US-China relationship is "neither a trusted friend nor a sworn enemy". Ming-Te and Liu (2011) say that the policy of the United State faced a major shift when President Obama took power in 2008. The power struggle in Southeast and South Asia between Beijing and Washington gained world attention, the main reason behind this competition is due to its market value and strategic value. The United States never accept China's influence in this region.

Riedel and Singh (2010) say that the relationship between the USA and China is affecting due to the growing influence of the PRC in Pakistan. According to them, Pakistani peoples are in favor of China instead of the United States. The Pakistani public does not consider the USA a reliable partner of Pakistan. The Indo-America deal regarding the nuclear matter is one of the prominent reasons that disturbed the scenarios of the balance of authority and power in South Asia. Jordan, Taylor Jr, Meese, and Nielsen (2009) concluded that the foreign policy of the United States reflects three perspectives: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Deng (2008) argues that the primary concern of Chinese foreign policy is to recognize its power in global politics. The Cold War China is different from today's China so PCR wants identity, reputation, status, and legitimacy in World politics. China is also against the American thought of the World order and her hegemonic policies.

Shirk (2007) stated that the US and China's conflicting interests in several regions but both are the largest trading partner. In the book, US-China relations in the 21st Century Zhu (2006) writer argues that the rapid economic progress of China is helpful for the US as well as other major authorities of the World to settle global disputes peacefully while the US and Western world seems it as their future threat. Hagerty (2005) articulated that both the US and China including other major powers of the World much interested in the SAARC region due to strategic and economic reasons. Kissinger (1994) stated that since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, US foreign policy consists of three schools of thought. Realism indicates core

national interest and power, liberalism shows individual liberty, as well as state, is the primary actor in global politics, and constructivism refers to material and nonmaterial factors which affect the consequences. However, Chinese foreign policy is to remain peaceful coexistence and she wants hegemony only through soft powers.

There is a huge research gap between the existing literature and this study because all the previous research provides only limited information regarding their conflict of interest but this study explores the key interest in South Asia on which both major powers are converging or diverging. According to the Carnegie Middle East Center conference report, there are several areas of convergence and divergence between the US and China in the SAARC region. These areas are the stability in Pakistan, nuclear security in South Asia, avoidance of clash in Kashmir, the defense of the Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) in the Indian Ocean, and anti-terrorism and peaceful settlement of the Afghanistan crisis(Saalman, 2011). Furthermore, some diverging points are the Indo-US nuclear deal, longstanding US presence in Afghanistan, and US anti-BRI camping in the SAARC region.

Research Question

- What are the convergence and divergence of interest between the US and China in South Asia under Obama's administration?

Research Methodology

The study is explanatory. To answer the above question the secondary data are collected via different sources of secondary data like books, journal articles, reports, newspapers, websites, and other electronic sources. Both qualitative and quantitative data are used to conclude. The analyses are drawn on the bases of collected data to explain and answer the above question as well as to test the effects of the variables on the Bangladeshi government.

China-US cooperation in South Asia in the Obama era

The relations between America and China are mainly important relations of the current era. There are several issues and contradicting objectives between US and China but there are some areas of cooperation. In the areas of cooperation China-US collaboration in Asia, especially South Asia is most prominent. The 9/11 terrorist attack somehow reduced the distance of mistrust between the US and China. PRC became a strategic partner and China fully supported US-led Global War on Terror. There are many events and policies regarding South Asia both major powers cooperated (Curtis, 2016). Both Washington and Beijing cooperated in South Asia but they focused only on Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.

According to Barnet R. Rubin and Tom Gregg, China and United States agreed on many points regarding Afghanistan these points are China and US agreed to help the solidity and harmony of the Afghan Unity Government after the completion and accomplishment of President Ghani era. Both Beijing and Washington agreed that the Afghan Taliban should not get back the power of the central command of Afghanistan. China and US decided to deal Taliban through negotiation and try to disarm them. They simply prefer a settlement policy for the Taliban. US and China decided to participate Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) with important stakeholder countries, Afghanistan and as well as Pakistan. The two World powers agreed that the International community should support the current Afghan government economically and politically. They also support requests to support the ANDSF. The US demanded China more economic aid and investment in Afghanistan. Both states

agreed to counter the Narcotics trade and claimed that narcotics are generated from Afghanistan furthermore Washington and Beijing agreed on the importance of regional organizations to handle the Afghan situation(Rubin & Gregg, 2016).

There have several cooperative policies of the PRC and US for Afghanistan and other South Asian states. In South Asia, Pakistan is one of the most important key players and it has good relations with China and US. The association between Pakistan and China is counted as an all-weather tested friend and the bilateral relation is also called ideal relations(Siddharth, 2011). While Pakistan was the frontage collaborator of the US throughout the Cold War era and she was bounded by a treaty of SEATO and CENTO. Later she withdraws from treaties but in the first Afghan war in 1979 Pakistan was the key player against the Soviet Union. US-Pakistan relations faced many challenging situations since the establishment of diplomatic relations. In the response to September 11, terrorist attack Pakistan once again became the frontally of the US. Pakistan lost thousands of innocent lives in the US-led War on Terror and also faced internal security issues (Shah, 2010). The convergence of interest between Beijing and Washington regarding Pakistan has so many issues but some important convergence of views is that both states recognized that Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan has diverged from both powerful states. They agreed to encourage Pakistan separately but forced Pakistan to play a major role in the Afghan crisis. The two states shared concerns about the terrorist groupings in Pakistan. China emphasized that Pakistan requires help. China and US both want to cooperate with Pakistan to counter the evil of terrorism. China also advised Pakistan and US to solve all issues regarding bilateral relations. China and US also invite Pakistan to join the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) for a long-standing solution to the Afghan issue and the US stance on the Indian role in Afghanistan are cooperative and progressive while China has a reservation.

The majority of cooperative behavior among the US and China regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan comprises meandering coordination and general participation in multilateral attempts based on rising common objectives and examination. Both the states do not have a record of direct collaboration between them to help a third party country although; they have coordinated each other policies, for example, the North Korean nuclear issue(Rubin & Gregg, 2016). They accepted each other, the combined preparation and accomplishment of three projects in Afghanistan compact with agriculture-based training, health workers training, and training of personnel related to diplomatic matters. In these programs, students obtain tutoring in China and United States. The collaboration of PRC and US in the QCG took the cooperation is counted one more step toward bilateral cooperation. Twist in peace practice, China's firm policy on non-interference would normally be contradicted, and doing it jointly with the US in such an uncertain endeavor is unprecedented. It shows the significance of China's attachment to the effort(Rubin & Gregg, 2016).

Chinese officials have underlined what a great step such collaboration is for China which has a partial record of set management with other autonomous states in third World countries. The reason is that non-interference in other internal matters is one of the basic principles of Chinese foreign policy. While these small projects in Kabul provided minimal straight input to the upcoming stabilization of Afghanistan. These projects have worked as significant confidence-mounting dealings between the United States and Chinese officials functioning in Afghanistan and Pakistan who congregate and substitute views more often as a result.

In the run-up to the Chinese headship switch in 2012, China the policy towards Afghanistan began to be much more proactive (Khan R. M., 2015). The most important

response was the visit to Kabul by the head of security of China in 2012 September. It was the earliest advanced trip to Afghanistan of high Chinese officials in almost part a century. Afterward, President Xi Jinping's stay in Central Asia in 2013 September to analyze the entrance to energy possessions and the conversion of Afghanistan, and China's resolution to preside over the Istanbul Process in 2014, declared at the April 2013 Ministerial of the Istanbul Process in Almaty, Kazakhstan. China’s Accommodation of the 2014 ministerial gathering of the Istanbul practice and its function in the QCG everything was the result of this relatively rapid transformation of Chinese politics(Ponzio, 2015).

However, at the beginning of 2013, Chinese tact in Afghanistan accelerated, and the latest opening to collaboration with the US governments and Afghanistan. Further deciding to preside over the Istanbul practice (Khan R. M., 2015), China offered or joined in several mutual, trilateral, and multilateral gatherings paying attention to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and associated large-scale issues such as terrorism. China's 2014 judgment to actively engage itself in the exploration for the political agreement in Afghanistan led to a trilateral between the US, Afghanistan, and China and the formation of QCG(Shida, 2017). The US and China’s efforts to involve Afghanistan in regional integration have begun with the full cooperation of China. Apart from the Silk Road, the economic belt a weekly train began in Nantong, Jiangsu Province of China passing through China's entire width and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Therefore, China began to incorporate Afghanistan into the Belt and Road Initiative by passing from side to side in Central Asia.

China-US divergence of interest in South Asia in the Obama era

The US and the PRC have many contradicting views and both have disagreed on several points. According to the Carnegie Middle East Center conference report, there have many areas of divergence of interest between the US and PRC in the region of South Asia these areas are nuclear cooperation with both India and Pakistan, the Tibet issue, China’s worries over Indo-US strategic cooperation, US fears over Sino-Pak marital relations and China’s mounting authority in South Asian region(Saalman, 2011).

In the era of US President Obama, his administration introduced a new policy for Asia in the name of rebalancing Asia. This policy was highly criticized by the Chinese who claimed that the key reason for Obama's strategy is to contain China. In response to US policy China took massive steps to strengthen its economy. China invested billions of dollars in several projects in South Asia. The Chinese investment in South Asia especially Pakistan deep Seaport will become a great economic hub. The US investment in South Asia is less compared to China’s investment in South Asia. China’s primary objectives in the region are based on four points which are (1) checking India’s growth by developing the India-Pakistan relations, (2) expanding financial activity and authority in the said region, (3) entrance to the Indian Ocean and (4) opposing terror campaign and religious fanaticism (Curtis, 2016). China’s primary focus is regional integration that’s why it invested billions of dollars in several projects. China’s heavy investment in ports and roads under her OBOR initiative policy threatens US interest in the region. China gainsa special position in World due to its large FDI (Foreign Direct Investment). China’s FDI in the South Asian region rapidly increased in 2005 and now her FDI ratio is high as compared to the US(Iqbal & Bai, 2015).

The objectives of the United States in the SAARC are to counter-terrorism, and human rights, promote democracy, strategic partnership with India, peaceful Afghanistan, nuclear security and oppose Chinese mounting influence in the region(Gojree, 2015). The rapid growing progress and the growing influence of China in South Asia is a serious

challenge for US interest in the said region. Washington also wants to toughen cooperation with India to defy the Chinese increasing influence. The projects of the maritime and silk route of China in the region are a great challenge for the US(Gojree, 2015). Although, the PRC also fears the long presence of US forces in the region.

Nuclear security and nuclear proliferation

Nuclear technology restructures the military modernization of every state. It was America that first used this technology as a war weapon. The Little Boy and Fat Man gave a new direction to the warrior states as well as the rest of the World. The priority of every state is self-survival and states want to maximize their power to counter predicting threats. There is no everlasting ally and eternal opponent in international relations that's why every state wants to build up her defense with modern technology. The event of Hiroshima and Nagasaki proved a nuclear seed and the rest of the World run towards it. Until now, only nine states acquired it. Five nuclear-weapon states are legitimate nuclear states and the remaining four are illegitimate. The legitimate nuclear states are America, Britain, China, France, and Russia while India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan are illegitimate nuclear power(Charnysh, 2006). The two rival states of the South Asian region that are India and Pakistan also became a member of the nuclear club in 1974 and 1998.

Since the formation of NPT in 1967 the issue of nuclear proliferation has become a major issue globally. The international media abused Pakistan by claiming that her nuclear scientist was involved in nuclear proliferation. The United States media that he was running a proliferation network on the black market blamed well-known Pakistani nuclear expert Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan. The so-called A.Q Khan network proliferate nuclear weapons to three states Iran, North Korea, and Libya this allegation was executed by Western media(Kerr & Nikitin, 2012). Since the issue emerged, the government of Pakistan took strict policies to sabotage this network. The government of Pakistan also detained and made house prisoners of the alleged individuals.

In the era of President Obama, there has been no evidence of such involvement of Pakistan in nuclear proliferation but the main concern of the US was the security of Pakistan's nuclear program and related other projects. The fear of nuclear security occurred when US forces raid in the Osama compound and killed Osama bin Laden which create mistrust among the global population about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear program(Kristensen & Norris, 2011). Obama administration claimed that the Pakistani nuclear program has a great threat from terrorist organizations like the Haqqani network or other terrorist groups that may control the nuclear sides. However, Pakistan proved by evidence that Pakistan's nuclear programs and its related sides were safe. The PRC and US concern about nuclear security is somehow groundless because Pakistan has the most powerful army.

According to Malik Qasim Mustafa, there were several concerns about the protection of Pakistan's nuclear plan which are firstly the outsider threat; which means a group or individual outside of a nuclear program gain access to the nuclear program. Secondly insider threat; means a person affiliated with a nuclear program gets the control of the nuclear program and sells or transfers it to the outsider. The outsider may be a terrorist group or a non-nuclear state. Thirdly, insider/outsider threat means insider and outsider try to obtain a nuclear weapon or weapon-related components by cooperation. Fourthly, leakage of sensitive information; means someone related to the nuclear program shares key information regarding Pakistan's nuclear program. And fifthly, the loss of central control of storage facilities; means

Pakistan can lose its control on nuclear-related sides due to civil war or any other major unrest, and the sensitive materials or components may break or be lost(Mustafa, 2014).

There are two types of nuclear proliferation, horizontal and vertical proliferation. There was no evidence of horizontal proliferation in the era 2009-2016. Nevertheless, the vertical proliferation may be at an extreme level. The US and China's concerns about nuclear proliferation in the Obama era was a somehow serious issue. Because Pakistan and India both maximize their nuclear capability and number of weapons are increased year by year. The main culprit was India and US that which signed a nuclear contract. The Indo-US nuclear agreement reshaped the nuclear arms race in South Asia (Mustafa, 2014).

Counter-terrorism in South Asia

When President Obama took office in 2009, he said that Afghanistan and Pakistan were the crucial fronts in our continuing struggle against terrorism and extremism (Iqbal A., 2009). China and US (America) both are the victim of terrorist groups. Beijing faced many challenges and issues created by the terrorist and separatist groups in Xinjiang province. The terrorist group also targeted the US in the conspicuous terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. Since the attack of 9/11, US and China cooperate in counter-terrorism operations. Beijing and Washington also shared intelligence reports for counter-terrorism. In 2002 the Chinese government requested the United Nations to add the East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to the list of terrorist organizations (Park, 2017). China and US both are a member of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee and both ratified several protocols on terrorism.

The United States claimed that the PRC does not properly cooperate with the US. China showed slow cooperation in the counter-terrorism mission and her cooperation is not military cooperation. In 2004 US Secretary of State added the ETIM to the Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL) but later in 2009 US Court said that there was no evidence of ETIM connection with Al Qaeda and Taliban as well as ETIM was no threat to US citizens(Morin, 2017). The US report on Terrorism 2016 concluded that "counter-terrorism cooperation between PRC and US remained limited"(Park, 2017). It shows how the US is not satisfied with China's cooperation and she negates PRC economic policies in South Asia. According to Yuni Park China focused on bilateral counter-terrorism partnership, multilateral cooperation in the SCO forum, the China Arab States Cooperation Forum, and with the United Nations.

According to Dawn Murphy (An expert in Security studies), the interest and cooperation of the PRC in counter-terrorism is due to her internal issues. China wants to counter extremist and separatist movements in Xinjiang with the collaboration of the international community. The Uyghur and ETIM struggle against PLA and the Chinese government is China's internal matter but she wants to counter them with the cooperation of other states especially the United States(Murphy, 2017). He further said that the cooperation between the US and China on the issue of terrorism is limited and it will remain limited.

Indo-US strategic partnership

The relationship between the India and US are the most important affiliation of the era. There strategic partnership in the 21st Century is one of the major study areas. The region of South Asia played a vital role in World history, especially in the age of the Cold War. In the said period the whole policy of the US was to contain Communist ideology. The region of South Asia was one important area from which the US wanted to contain the penetration of Communist ideology. That's why US-supported Mujahedeen in Afghanistan through

Pakistan. Later when the Cold War was ended the US policies and interests are tilted towards India but the nuclear explosion of 1998 someway delayed their open cooperation. The history of Indo-US strategic cooperation dates back but in the 21st Century, it becomes more vital. During the visit of US President Bill Clinton to New Delhi in Mach 2000, he expressed their strategic cooperation in these words that their relationship was the natural partnership of shared endeavor (Karim, 2012).

Furthermore, India and US signed Indo-US 10-year defense pact and Indo-US Civil Nuclear deal in 2005, while India is not a signatory of both NPT and CTBT. During the stay of US President Barak Obama in 2010, he said in an Indian Parliament speech that the association between India and US will be unique of the major partnerships of the current Century (Karim, 2012). Karl F. Inderfurth and Bruce Riedel said that "India will be one Americans crucial partner in the 21st Century". In their views regarding democracy and peace, there are no other two key countries in the globe that are natural partners like India and USA(Inderfurth & Riedel, 2016).

The Indo-US strategic partnership in the current Century is one of the most important partnerships and the areas of cooperation are divided into three major fields which are security and defense cooperation, economic cooperation, and Indo-US Civil nuclear program

Security and defense cooperation

The Indo-US security or defense cooperation became the key element of partnership in 2005 when both states signed the latest agenda for defense cooperation and signed Indo-US 10-year defense pact 2005(Mishra, 2017). Since 2005 the defense cooperation between New Delhi and Washington complete extraordinary steps. Now the Indian army has conducted more annual military exercises with US forces. The US defense sales to India in 2011 were more than $ 8 billion(Iqbal & Bai, 2015). According to Munir Akram, the United States opened all her military and technological door for India and forced her other allies like Israel to do so. India purchased arms and other defense-related equipment for more than $100 billion annually and 2/3 of these weapons are deployed against Pakistan(Akram, 2016). Moreover, US support and encouragement to India played a negative role in the SAARC region.

India and US conducted more than 50 bilateral military exercises in the first decade of the 21st Century(Robert O. Blake, 2011). India and US cooperated in every field of interest and the US wanted to create an influence on India in the SAARC region. The main goal of US assistance to New Delhi is due to the speedy increasing market and military modernization of Beijing. The massive economic, maritime, and silk route initiatives of China threatened Washington's interest in the region. New Delhi and Washington also signed the US-India joint strategic vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean region in 2015. The primary purpose of this agreement was to secure the Indian Ocean. India and US Navy performed many shared exercises in the Indian Ocean annually. Washington also agreed to restore her Vessels' functioning in the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific(Mishra, 2017). Furthermore, the Obama administration and US Congress gave the position of chief defense collaborator to India. In the year 2016 Indian forces conducted several joint military exercises with at least 22 nations. These joint drills improve the performance of the Indian army.

In 2014, in the frame of the Pacific (RIMPAC) work out Indian Navy ships participated firstly(Mishra, 2017). In 2015, the Defence Framework Agreement between US and India was updated and renewed for another 10 years (Pedro, 2016). Bilateral mechanisms of dialogue between India and the US in the field of defense and cooperation are the Defence

Policy Group (DPG), Defence Joint Working Group (DJWG), Defence Procurement and Production Group (DPPG), Senior Technology Security Group (STSG), Joint Technical Group (JTG), Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), Military Cooperation Group (MCG) and Service-to-Service Executive Steering Groups (ESGs)(Pedro, 2016).

The United States and India also agreed to cooperate on internal security and counter-terrorism policies. Both states announced the Homeland Security Dialogue during President Obama's stay in New Delhi in Nov. 2010. Later several dialogues and conferences were held both in India and US. Washington also hosted the Indian police officers' training and visits to the USA To strengthen their military and defense cooperation the US offered several scholarship and training policies to India. In the era of President Obama, India was the top purchaser of US arms (Pedro, 2016)and she also purchased weapons from Russia and other states. During the Obama administration, US arms sales to India were about $15 billion (Iqbal A., 2017) and the US got a major share of the Indian defense budget.

According to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) report, the total volume of international major arms transfers in 2011-16 was 8.4% higher than the 2007-2011 periods. This level was the highest level of arms sales since 1990. The top five exporters of the era were the United States, Russia, China, France, and Germany. While, the top five biggest importers were India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, China, and Algeria. The United States was the top arms exporter during the era of 2012-16 and it exported 33% of its arms to different countries of the World(Fleurant, Wezeman, Wezeman, & Tian, 2017).

Matters of Economic cooperation

The economic cooperation between India as well as the United States is another most important pillar of strategic cooperation. The economy is the backbone of any state and economic relations are stronger than any other relations. The economic relations between both the capitals of India, (New Delhi) and America (Washington) were decades back the establishment of diplomatic ties. But the measurable progress took place in the 1990s. At the start of the 21st Century, it gained more attention and focus. When US President Barak Obama visited India in 2010 he agreed to enhance economic relations. According to India's foreign relations report in 2014, the volume of bilateral trade was $104 billion and later it reached the level of $114 billion in 2016. According to the data and report of the United States Census Bureau, the bilateral trade between India and the United States was $37697.40 million in 2009 when the Obama administration took office. Later in 2016 at the accomplishment of President Obama's second tenure, the value of the trade-in goods with India was $67684.70 million (https://www.census.gov/foreig_trade/balance/c5330.html). The year by year details of bilateral trade between the US and India are shown below table;

US Trade in goods with India in millions of dollars

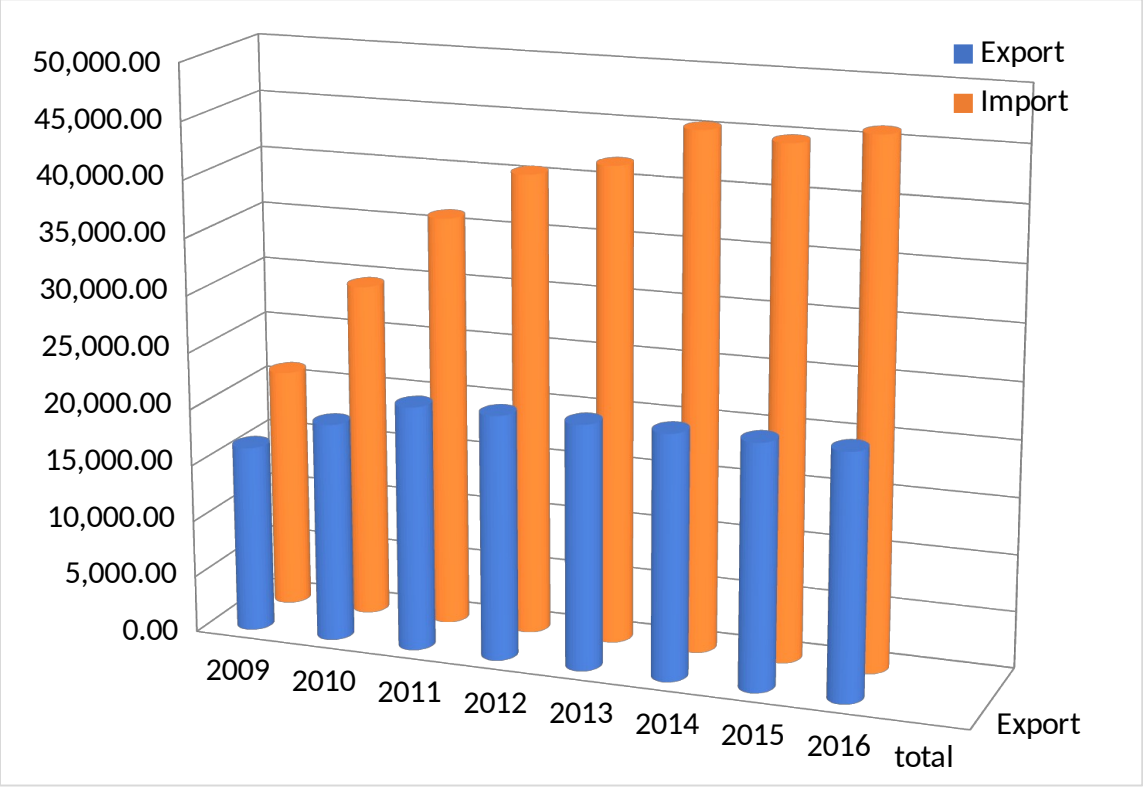
Year	Exports	Imports	Total	Balance
2009	16,441.4	21,166.0	37,607.40	-4,724.6
2010	19,248.9	29,532.9	48,781.80	-10,284.1
2011	21,542.2	36,154.5	86,389.20	-14,612.3

2012	22,105.7	40,512.6	62,618.30	-18,406.9
2013	21,810.4	41,810.0	63,620.40	-19,999.5
2014	21,499.1	45,358.0	126,238.70	-23,858.9
2015	21,453.0	44,790.0	66,243.00	-23,337.1
2016	21,652.3	46,032.4	67,684.70	-24,380.1

Source: United State Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/foreig trade/balance/c5330.html

On the bases of the above table data, the following graph is designed to understand the bilateral trade ratio, export, and import. This graph also shows the trade deficit or balance between US and India.

US Trade in goods with India in millions of dollars focus on export and import



Source: United State Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5330.html

The US was the 6th largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India(Martin, Akhtar, Kronstadt, Kumar, & Siskin, 2014). The FDI flows from the US to India from 2000 to 2014 were about 5.6%. While according to the report of the Bureau of Economic Analysis US FDI in India raised to 28.33 billion in 2015(Tripathi, 2015).

Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal

The Indo-US nuclear deal was firstly introduced by US President Bush and Indian PM Manmohan Singh in July 2005(Jangir, 2012). Later in October 2008 US Congress granted authorization to the deal and officially the deal was signed(Jangir, 2012). Then the Obama administration decided to help India's membership in 4 important mechanisms of the nonproliferation regime while India is neither signatory of NPT nor CTBT. The US agreed to support the membership of India in the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Australia Group (Karim, 2012). India has agreed to separate her civil and military programs under the civil nuclear deal. She also agreed to open 2/3rd of her existing reactor and to open 65% of her energy generating units for the inspection of IAEA (Khan Z. A., 2013). The IAEA and other inspection groups are responsible for the safeguard and peaceful uses of the nuclear programs. The deal can minimize the Indian dependency on Gulf and other energy-producing states because India needs a huge amount of energy or electricity to run her industries. The nuclear cooperation of America can fulfill the energy deficit of India. This deal is also counted as a major achievement for the Indian nuclear program because India can expand her nuclear program as well as she can trade with other states(Jangir, 2012).

The primary concern about the nuclear deal and nuclear cooperation between India and the US are due to fear of dual-use of nuclear cooperation. The so-called Civil Nuclear deal provide chances for India to increase her number of nuclear weapons as well as to modernize her nuclear capability. India may create more and more nuclear bombs with the cooperation of America and other NSG members. The Indo-US nuclear cooperation and deal damaged the balance of supremacy situation in the South Asian region. The so-called Civil Nuclear Agreement allowed India to have civil nuclear trade with other nuclear states. The deal also recognized the nuclear capability of India (Karim, 2012). The US provides assistance to India to become a key power state, especially in the said region. Furthermore, US wanted to boost India's position in the region to contain China's influence and rapid growth.

Conclusion

The role of America (US) and China in the contemporary World is vital owing to their significant role in World politics. Both are key players in global politics and there have several conflicting issues. The concept of convergence and divergence of interest is centuries back and every nation tried to create influence to gain their specific goals in terms of hard power or soft power. In the 21st century the role of China massively increased in terms of cooperation and sharing of economic and infrastructure development. Although, China had good relations with South Asian states from the ancient times but in the 21st century dramatically boost its cooperation. The South Asian region has good relations with both US and China while the two key players of the said region India and Pakistan both have contradict due to their rivalry. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Pakistan's relationship with the US was not good and the US also gave her preference to India while the People's Republic of China has a good and reliable relationship with Pakistan. The Pakistan-China relations are second to none and all-weather tested friendship. The US War on Terror in Afghanistan and her blind trusted relations with India leads the whole region towards never-ending mistrust.

The US introduced different types of policies to achieve its objectives in South Asia but it is still struggling to gain its primary objective; to counter terrorism.US policies towards

South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region is famous due to its importance in the whole World. Obama administration also introduced Pivot to Asia policy that was basically to hold China's growing authority and in response to the Pivot to Asia policy, China's Belt and Road Initiative massively enlarged the attention of the SAARC region. There are enormous convergence and divergence of interest between the US (America) and China in the said South Asia regions like terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, infrastructure building, economic integration, and many more. Obama's administration's major focus in the region was only Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan because she wants a safe exit from Afghanistan as well as wants to enhance India's authority in the area to offset Chinese influence. Washington also tries to contain China via New Delhi but Beijing's policies comprised the whole region. China invested billions of dollars in the region on several projects and assisted in every sector including defense cooperation. The main interest of the Obama administration in South Asia was to minimize its forces in Afghanistan and peace agreement with the Taliban.

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