

Indo-USA Relations: A Three-Level Analysis (Individual, National, and International) of the Cold War and Post-Cold War Era

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Abstract: *Indo-American ties have developed through intricate dynamics influenced by leadership, national interests, and global geopolitical changes. This article utilises a three-tiered analysis—individual, national, and international—to investigate the evolution of bilateral relations during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. Prominent figures like Jawaharlal Nehru and John F. Kennedy significantly influenced the initial Indo-US relations, characterised by India's non-alignment policy and US geopolitical considerations during the Cold War. Following the Cold War, leaders such as Bill Clinton and Narendra Modi enhanced relations via diplomatic and economic collaboration. Nationally, policy changes in India, especially the economic liberalisation of 1991, profoundly altered Indo-US relations. The ideological disparities during the Cold War, coupled with India's strong affiliations with the Soviet Union, engendered tension. In the post-Cold War era, aligning economic and security objectives resulted in enhanced collaboration in commerce, defence, and technology. At the international level, Cold War bipolarity limited Indo-US relations, since the US preferred Pakistan for strategic reasons. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and China's emergence as a global power reconfigured geopolitical alignments, resulting in enhanced Indo-US cooperation on counterterrorism, regional security, and Indo-Pacific strategy. This three-tiered research underscores the dynamic and evolving characteristics of Indo-US relations, illustrating how leadership, domestic policies, and global power frameworks have shaped bilateral connections from the Cold War to the contemporary day*

Keywords: Cold War, Post-Cold War, Three-Level Analysis, Individual Leadership, National Interests, International Geopolitics, Non-Alignment, Indo-Pacific

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between India and the United States is intricate and dynamic, influenced by historical, political, economic, and strategic elements. Indo-USA relations have evolved through several stages, shaped by both internal and external factors. This study analyses Indo-USA interactions during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods using a three-tiered framework: individual, national, and international.

Objectives:

1. To examine Indo-American interactions using individual, national, and international analytical frameworks.
2. To evaluate the influence of the Cold War on bilateral relations.
3. To analyse the evolution of Indo-American relations in the post-Cold War period.
4. To discern the principal difficulties and opportunities in current Indo-American relations.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to analyze Indo-USA relations through a three-level framework: individual, national, and international. The research approach involves historical analysis, policy examination, and geopolitical assessment to provide a comprehensive understanding of bilateral interactions between India and the United States during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, utilizing secondary data sources to examine the transformation of Indo-US relations across different historical epochs. The three-level analysis framework ensures a holistic evaluation of leadership influence, national policy shifts, and international structural changes that have shaped bilateral ties.

Data Collection

Data for this research is collected from a variety of secondary sources, including:

- Government reports and official statements from both Indian and American administrations.
- Historical records, speeches, and diplomatic correspondences.
- Scholarly articles, books, and journals focusing on Indo-US relations.
- Reports from international organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, and think tanks specializing in international relations.
- News archives and media sources that document critical events and policy changes.

III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**Cold War Period:****Individual Level:**

Leaders significantly influenced the development of Indo-USA relations. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's non-alignment policy estranged India from direct alliances, while U.S. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon adopted differing strategies regarding India. Nehru's socialist ideas and Indira Gandhi's alignment with the Soviet Union engendered American scepticism towards India. U.S. officials, notably Nixon and Kissinger, fostered a deeper rapport with Pakistan, so straining relations with India.

National Level:

At the national level, India sought economic assistance from both the United States and the United States for its economic development. Consequently, India embraced the principle of non-alignment. Following independence, the Indian economy was severely impoverished; had India aligned with the Cold War, economic development would have been unattainable. Consequently, India embraced the principle of non-alignment in pursuit of its national interests.

Another perspective on adopting non-alignment was the policy of fostering amicable relations with all. Furthermore, India sought autonomy in determining all international matters. If India joins the Cold War, the nation's sovereignty will be compromised. In this context, India embraced a policy of Non-alignment to safeguard its national interests, which also impacted its financial policy towards the USA at the national level. Additionally, there are several other concerns - India's non-alignment and self-reliance in economic development stood in stark contrast to U.S. containment tactics aimed at communism. The 1971 Indo-Pakistan War highlighted a significant rift, with the U.S. endorsing Pakistan and India receiving assistance from the Soviet Union. • India's nuclear ambitions, notably the 1974 nuclear test, encountered U.S. condemnation, exacerbating diplomatic tensions.

Global Level:

Numerous international events have influenced India's foreign policy with the United States. The following are enumerated.

There is no resemblance in economic characteristics: It is noted that India was a non-aligned nation; however, it maintained proximity to the USSR, which influenced India to adopt a socialist economy under Nehru's leadership. The Hindi suspect believed that the Indian economy was dissimilar to that of the USA. It also affects international relationships.

Kashmir issue:

Following the partition of India and Pakistan, tensions emerged between the two nations due to the Kashmir issue. During that period, Pakistan joined the USA-led SEATO alliance, resulting in the receipt of \$1 million of dollars in

military assistance from the United States. India has repeatedly informed Washington that this armament causes regional instability. Washington informed India that the USA supplied weaponry to Pakistan to mitigate the development of communism rather than for use against India.

However, Pakistan did employ those weapons throughout its conflict with India. The international relationship between India and the USA in this region was unfavourable.

War of 1971:

In 1971, during the Bangladesh Liberation War, the United States supported Pakistan. Consequently, India formed a peace and friendship treaty with the USSR to assist Bangladesh, which proved successful; this incident also influenced India's relationship with the USA.

Nuclear matters in 1974:

India conducted a nuclear bomb test in Pokhran. This test resulted in America's opposition to India. Consequently, America exerted pressure on India to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state. However, India perceives that each is inherently prejudiced. India did not sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; if India were to sign, it would be unable to conduct any nuclear weapon tests in the future. The situation is critical for India, as the Indian Army, similar to China, possesses nuclear weapons and is attempting to conduct surveillance on India. This season, India did not participate in all international competitions, impacting the India-US relationship reminiscent of the Cold War era.

The dynamics of the Cold War, especially the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, significantly impacted Indo-U.S. ties. India's geographical closeness to the USSR placed it in conflict with U.S. strategic interests in South Asia. The U.S. regarded Pakistan as a crucial ally in mitigating Soviet influence, resulting in differing security perceptions between India and the United States. The rise of China as a U.S. partner after 1971 further complicated Indo-U.S. relations.

Post-Cold War Period:**Individual Level:**

At the individual level, both leaders have engaged several individuals to foster the friendship between India and the USA. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao initially took the effort to reshape India's relations with the USA and visited Washington in 1994. The economic concerns predominated his agenda. The most consequential transformation in Indo-U.S. ties during the post-Cold War period. All these individual initiatives significantly contribute to the development of the relationship between India and the USA. Indian leaders, including P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Narendra Modi, have pursued closer economic and strategic ties with the U.S. U.S. Presidents, from Bill Clinton to Joe Biden, have acknowledged India as a pivotal partner in global geopolitics.

The personal rapport between presidents, including George W. Bush and Manmohan Singh, facilitated significant agreements such as the 2005 Civil Nuclear Deal.

National Scale:

At the national level, economic factors were among the most significant aspects in developing the Indo-US relationship. During the Cold War, the Indian economy adhered to a socialist model; nevertheless, post-Cold War, it underwent significant changes. India transitioned its economy from socialism to capitalism. Consequently, India established a strong friendship with the USA. During the Cold War, the USA consistently suspected that India was independently aligned with the USSR. However, following the Cold War, this paradigm underwent modification. Furthermore, the American administration robustly endorsed India's request for financial help from institutions such as the World Bank and the India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum (TPF) in 2005. Issues about commerce were explored. Economic liberalisation in India after 1991 resulted in heightened trade and investment between India and the USA. The execution of defence agreements, intelligence-sharing frameworks, and strategic alliances signifies an increasing convergence of national interests. India's nuclear tests in 1998 initially resulted in U.S. sanctions; nevertheless, subsequent discussions and strategic agreements facilitated an improvement in relations.

Global Level:

Various worldwide factors influence India's foreign policy towards the United States. These are as follows:

1. **End of black politics:** The collapse of the USSR and the conclusion of bloc politics were consequences of the Cold War. Consequently, the USA has emerged as the sole superpower, both militarily and economically, in the globe. Consequently, globalisation has proliferated globally; under these circumstances, India sought assistance from us to revitalise its economy.
2. **Rise of China:** During the Cold War, the USSR was the only nation capable of posing a danger to the USA. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, only one nation emerged as a potential threat to the United States: China. Furthermore, China attempted to exert influence in Asia.
3. **Transnational dangers:** Transnational dangers are those challenges that cannot be resolved by a single nation. Such are terrorism, drug issues, and global warming, etc. Among transnational dangers, a significant concern was the terrorist assault in 2001. Prior to 2001, the USA did not experience any terrorist attacks. In this regard India also assisted USA.
4. **The Indo-Pacific strategy** and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) show a shift in Indo-USA collaboration to offset China's ascent.
5. **India's expanding engagement in global institutions** like the G20, BRICS, and WTO signals a shifting world order where Indo-USA cooperation is vital.

Limitations

- Indo-USA relations are still influenced by historical distrust and policy divergences.
- Discrepancies regarding trade tariffs, climate change obligations, and regional disputes endure.
- India's autonomous foreign policy occasionally results in divergences, exemplified by its position on Russia's incursion into Ukraine.
- The United States' ongoing, albeit diminished, engagement with Pakistan continues to be a concern for India.

IV. CONCLUSION

Indo-American ties have experienced substantial changes from the Cold War to the contemporary day. The Cold War was marked by tensions stemming from ideological disparities and strategic misalignments, but the post-Cold War era has been defined by increasing collaboration in defense, trade, and global governance. Examining Indo-USA relations at the individual, national, and worldwide levels reveals that leadership decisions, economic policies, and global geopolitics significantly influence bilateral relations. Notwithstanding current problems, the trajectory of Indo-American relations indicates a strengthening alliance focused on tackling global security and economic issues in the 21st century.

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