

INDIA'S ASIAN POLICY REVISITED: A STUDY OF NARENDRA MODI ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Yogesh Kumar Gupta,

*Asst Prof, (Pol Sc),
Motilal Nehru College,
University of Delhi.*

Two of the unshakeable realities of international politics are the primacy of national self-interest and the importance of military power as a factor in international relations. No government, however pacific-minded, has ever been able to rely solely upon the political ethics of other states or upon its own diplomacy to deter direct attack or interference with its external as well as internal interests. Alliances have, therefore, been a feature of every state in recorded history. Total security has rarely been possible even for the most powerful of nations and the basic dilemma of defence policy; how to achieve maximum security with minimum expenditure on the armed forces, has never permitted a simple solution. Every contingency cannot be provided for, and strategy, like politics—to which it is closely bound—is always a choice between alternatives. A nation's quest for security can never be conducted heedless of the antagonisms which the search for security may provoke among other powers or among its own people. The relationship between commitments and power and between power and resources must be considered. There must also be a willingness to employ such forms of power when required to preserve vital interests, of which the most basic is usually considered to be the territorial integrity and political independence of the state. The essence of a sound national security policy is the way governments define nation's vital interests and to develop sufficient power, alone or in concert with others, to secure those interests. These are difficult tasks and

to achieve them different national governments in India have had different outlook.

In this connection four years of Narendra Modi led administration have gone by and so has started the analysis of government's domestic and foreign policies. India's Asian policy could be one of the parameters to judge present Indian foreign policy. As a Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has visited more countries in Asia than any other previous Prime Ministers in such a short span. A clear indication of India's attempt of repositioning itself especially under the circumstances when Non Alignment is becoming a concept of past. If we glance at India's agreements with Iran, Saudi Arab, Mongolia, Vietnam, Japan, Australia, U.A.E. Myanmar and of course with many of its South Asian neighbours then we realize that these agreements range from economic to cultural and from political to security cooperation. The prime minister has adopted a personalized style of relationship building with his counterparts in other countries, particularly with China, Japan and the U.S; this seems to have paid handsome dividends. He prioritised India's neighbouring countries in his foreign visits to leverage on India's soft power and influence. Though he has visited 45 countries approximately, his priority seems to be the Asia-Pacific region and as a corollary China, Japan and the US have been his favoured destination. He has departed from India's traditional low profile foreign policy projection by making foreign interactions well publicized. Modi's clear and assertive communication has helped him build bridges with the Indian Diaspora wherever he

visited. India's firm positioning under Modi lead administration against terrorism in Asia in general and in India from our neighbourhood in particular has also given Indian foreign policy grater recognition not just in Asia but also outside. Prime Minister Modi in last four years has also reached out aggressively to all major powers including America with out looking at countries from a narrow perspective of any particular grouping.

Taking in to account the above factors, this paper intends to study the following,

1. has India revisited its foreign policy with respect to Asia under Modi administration?
2. how much of India's growing proximity to America in terms of their defence and nuclear cooperation will have an impact on India's Asian policy and vice versa?
3. is India's Asian policy an attempt to balance China?

INDIA'S ASIAN POLICY UNDER PRIME MINISTER MODI

India's foreign policy got a renewed strength in mid-2014 with Prime Minister Narendre Modi assuming the power. India's foreign policy directions stood jump-started and assumed dynamic directions after the paralysis of a decade. Significantly and unprecedentedly, India with the assumption of political leadership by Prime Minister Narendra Modi suddenly surged in the global strategic consciousness. Within six months India would have hosted global leaders from Russia, China and the United States besides the Prime Minister's highly successful and strategically substantial visits to Japan and Australia. Such recognition of India was generated by the global leadership's assessment that India under Prime Minister Modi's personal leadership would henceforth be expected to be more dynamic and decisive in the pursuance of both its foreign policies and economic policies.

Foreign policy assessments of a country's potential by global powers essentially rest on two

factors. Political leadership of a country and its capacity for dynamic and decisive pursuance of policies is the most crucial factor. The second factor is the magnitude of domestic political support that a country vests in its political leader along with the attendant faith that a nation puts in a leader that he is capable of leading them to a bright future. On both counts above Prime Minister Narendra Modi scored high even before he assumed the office of Prime Minister. International recognition of India therefore was not long on coming and on Modi's credentials it was ready to invest in India's future. India already had Strategic Partnerships with Russia, United States, China and Japan. But their pursuance was devoid of momentum in the past decade. These countries also were therefore content to go along in a notional manner based on the prevailing reality that a policy paralysis existed in New Delhi. This combined with a marked fall in economic growth led to a somewhat disinterest amongst the major powers to pay the due attention to India, discerning that the present trajectory was not inspiring.

Reviewing Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy initiatives in the last four years, the main strands that emerge revolve around three major objectives, namely, (1) Raise India's Strategic Partnerships with major powers to a substantially higher level and thereby enlist them to facilitate India's rise to a key global player besides reinforcing India's recognition as a regional power of substance.(2) Reorder India's South Asian neighbourhood as a contributory factor to India's recognition as a regional power. (3) A two-pronged economic thrust whereby major powers are induced to bring-in increased in-flows of FDI into India and at the same time encouraging India's neighbours to plug-in into the Indian economic growth both for security and economic benefits.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first priority was a political outreach to India's immediate neighbourhood in South Asia by inviting SAARC countries leaders to his oath-taking ceremony. It was an unprecedented move by an Indian Prime Minister and the fact that all leaders in the region including Pakistan responded positively was a manifestation of

the fact that India now mattered and its stature stood counted in the region.

The momentum stood maintained by Prime Minister Modi's visits to Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal and the Foreign Minister's visit to Bangladesh. This was a good foreign policy move as it sought to dispel the misrepresentation that was gaining ground under the earlier political dispensation that India was unable to re-order her South Asian neighbourhood to qualify as a regional power. At 2016-end what is emerging is that in the SAARC region India's relationships have appreciably improved with the exception of Pakistan. If Prime Minister Modi is able to sustain this momentum then in course of time Pakistan would not be able to stand alone and fall in line with the emerging reality that nuclear weapons notwithstanding Pakistan has to recognise India as the pre-eminent power in the region and modulate its India-policy accordingly.

In terms of success of India's foreign policy the acid test would be whether India can succeed in impelling India's major military adversaries, namely China and Pakistan to change their India-strategies from one of military confrontation to that of peaceful co-existence. China's revised attitudes were slightly visible within three months of Prime Minister Modi arriving in New Delhi, China did attempt a political reach-out to Modi and India even if it is read as pre-empting Modi from political outreaches to United States and Japan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his part missed no words when he urged visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping to resolve a boundary dispute after holding talks in New Delhi 18 September 2014 that lasted much longer than the stipulated 90 minutes. Modi said "He had raised serious concerns over the issue with Chinese President Xi Jinping. He said the boundary dispute must be resolved soon. Indians communicated to their Chinese counterparts that peace on the border has to be the foundation of the trust and relationship between the two nations." Modi called for an early clarification of the "line of actual control" which presently separates the two countries. He said if this happened "we can realize the potential of our relations."¹ Xi's visit to India took

place as troops from both countries were engaged in a border standoff in the Ladakh region; one of their worst in recent years. The Chinese leader played down the tensions, "attributing such incidents to their un-demarcated border."²

India under Prime Minister Modi has also been substantially successful in enlarging its strategic imprint in the wider Indo Pacific as opposed to Asia Pacific with the Defence and Security Cooperation Agreement with Australia. Prime Minister Modi has thereby signaled to the international community that India is now ready to play a greater role in ensuring peace and stability in Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

HEART OF ASIA CONFERENCE 2016: AN EXAMPLE OF INDIA'S SUCCESSFUL ASIAN DIPLOMACY

Heart of Asia grouping is generally meant for bringing stability and peace in Afghanistan. Since 2011, Countries from Asia and outside participate in this 44 nation group. The December 2016 conference of Heart of Asia was held in Amritsar India. The conference was attended by the representatives of some 40 countries. The conference is important to be mentioned here for two reasons. [1] It reflected Sino-Pakistan's deep rooted alliance. [2] It was an example of India's successful diplomacy on the issue of exposing Pakistan for its support to terrorism.

After extensive deliberations the conference recognized that terrorism, particularly state-sponsored terrorism was identified as a key challenge and members agreed upon a concerted effort to dismantle all kinds of terrorism in the declaration. It said, "The regional meet unanimously named Terrorist groups in Pakistan and asked for action."³ The Express Tribune, a Pakistani English daily quoted Afghan president's statement "Taliban insurgency would not survive a month if it lost its sanctuary in neighboring Pakistan."⁴ The next day, Indian English daily Hindustan Times wrote an

editorial saying "Ghani's criticism of Pakistan affirms India's portrayal of Islamabad."⁵

INDO-U.S. GROWING TIES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ASIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while giving a television interview after rejection of India's bid for NSG quite clearly mentioned India's present policy towards China in general and Asia in particular. He speaks of multi-alignment, of dexterity in transacting foreign relations. As a nation, "we must internalise such an approach. This does not call for being blindly venturesome, courting risk and conflict with China, but more boldness and deftness in safeguarding the Indian interest through well-thought-out and nuanced steps to build even closer relations with like-minded democracies like the United States and Japan, while consolidating internal strength and resilience. Steps to further enhance strategic and defence cooperation with these countries, as also fulfilling the promise and potential of the India-U.S. civilian nuclear cooperation agreement in an expeditious manner, should be a part of this process. At the same time, existing dialogue mechanisms and trade and economic linkages with China should continue to be maintained at an even pace."⁶ This statement by the Indian Prime Minister clearly reflect the policy shift that is taking place in India with respect to Chinese counter or in the direction of consolidating India's internal strength.

It would be appropriate to examine Prime Minister Modi's above statement by understanding the changes that are taking place in Indo-US relations as their changing relations will have a huge impact on India's repositioning attempts in Asia. As Kanti Bajpai puts it, "India and the United States during the post Cold War period are turning From Estranged to Engaged Democracies."⁷ Their relations have been heading towards a greater engagement for many years now and the recent agreements reflect a long-term process. The greater engagement between these two democracies will have its implications for South Asian Subcontinent in general and for India China Pakistan relations in particular.

Though, their relationship is multi dimensional ranging from economic to cultural and from political to defence related. But the mandate of this study is limited. Therefore, it would be better to keep the discussion restricted to their defence and nuclear relations as it is this relationship which has the highest impact on the South Asian region. Indo-US talks on nuclear weapons related issues started when the Indian Prime Minister in 1966 sent Indian Defence Minister to America to hold talks about a nuclear umbrella in the event of a nuclear attack on India from China. US at that time however, refused to provide any such assurance.⁸ Soon after this set back to Indian diplomacy America and other nuclear nations introduced NPT to which India refused to sign, citing security concerns.⁹ India's nuclear tests of 1974 created a lot of bad blood between the two nations. This was evident from the American reactions that followed Pokhran I.¹⁰

To amend the relationship, India ones again began dialogues with the United States on nuclear issues in 1995 and "agreed to co-sponsor the resolution in the UN to start multilateral negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)."¹¹ Even though India did not eventually sign the CTBT, it continued to engage with the U.S. on nuclear issues. The next milestone in India-US relations says Kanti Bajpai, "was the Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbot talks that were held from 1999 to 2001. In the aftermath of the Indian nuclear tests of May 1998, the two governments took a decision to hold talks at a very high level to try and resolve their differences over India's nuclear programmes."¹² The talks however, according to Bajpai "ended in failure in the sense that neither side achieved its principal purpose: the US was not able to persuade India to sign up for the Clinton administration's non-proliferation agenda - most centrally, the CTBT; and India was not able to bring the US around to accepting India's nuclear weapons' programme. Both sides agreed, however, that these had been the most productive discussions on their respective strategic viewpoints."¹³

The strategic alliance with the US, which was capricious and uncertain during the NDA

regime, had in the dramatic period of one month in 2005, acquired substance and concrete form under its successor regime. The cycle was set underway with defence minister Pranab Mukherjee's visit to Washington, DC, which began with modest expectations and ended with a 'framework agreement' on defence cooperation over the next decade¹⁴. It peaked mid-July, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the US capital when he issued a joint declaration with President George Bush "that seemingly injected India into the exclusive orbit of recognised nuclear weapons states."¹⁵ Going forward, this substantial nuclear deal turned into a nuclear agreement between the two nations and the US defence secretary in 2012 "projected India to be the lynchpin of the American strategy."¹⁶ He substantiated his argument by saying that "this is because it is the biggest and most dynamic country in this region."¹⁷ In pursuance of the above objective, he committed to "upgrade the current level of defence cooperation especially in the field of arms sales and technology transfer from that of a 'buyer and seller' to a more substantial one in which the US is willing to share important cutting edge technologies, enter into substantial co-production relationship that would eventually transform into high technology joint research and development."¹⁸

The kind of significance India and US are giving to each other is clear with the fact that in the past two years, that is between 2014 to 2016 Prime Minister Narendra Modi has met Obama six times and visited the United States three times. U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter has met India's Minister of Defense four times. Secretary of State John Kerry has visited India twice and met Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj several times.¹⁹ These visits are well complimented by the Defense deals that have also continued at a steady pace. The United States has for some time been the country with which India conducts the largest number of military exercises. This engagement is growing in complexity and sophistication. Issues of co-development and co-production of military equipment have also gathered some momentum.

For instance, "India and the United States signed the bilateral Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)".²⁰ The agreement will facilitate the provision of logistical support, supplies, and services between the U.S. and Indian militaries on a reimbursable basis, providing a framework to govern them. LEMOA is expected to help the two militaries coordinate better, including in exercises, and also allow the United States to more easily sell fuel or provide spare parts to the Indians. The pact will emphasize strengthening defense ties across many areas, from strategic and regional cooperation, to deepen military-to-military exchanges, to expanded collaboration on defense technology and innovation. India and the US also inked a Rs 5,000 crore deal for 145 M777 ultra-light howitzers on November 30th 2016, which will be mostly deployed near the borders with China. "India has signed the Letter of Acceptance which formalises the contract between India and US for these guns."²¹

The US interest is clear; "it would like to see India providing littoral Asia reassurance against Chinese aggressive intentions through strategic balancing"²² Says P R Chari. Charles Tiefer, a US Defence observer commented on the need of recent Indo-US defence agreements. He says, "For India these defence agreements with US are a part of a much broader move away from its Cold War alliance with Russia, toward a new alliance with the U.S. (and Japan and Australia) to protect the Indian Ocean and the seas off Southeast Asia, especially from China."²³ He adds, "For both the U.S. and India, LEMOA and other defence agreements responds to the powerful challenge of Xi Jinping's artificial islands with air bases in the South China Sea. These may also matter against the common enemy of the U.S. and India in radical jihadists."²⁴

The significance of these agreements can be understood by the very sharp reactions received from Pakistan even before they were formally signed. Addressing a press conference on June 11 2016, in the Pakistan's Foreign Office, adviser to the Pakistan Prime Minister on foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz while referring to Indo-US defence ties Said, "US

approaches Pakistan when ever it needs it and abandons when it doesn't needs Pakistan."²⁵

The recent India-US military bonhomie also seems to have touched a raw nerve with China, which claims that New Delhi's bid to join the Washington led alliance could bring "strategic troubles"²⁶ to the region. Chinese news daily global times while criticizing the recent Indo-US defence agreement said "The new alliance has the potential of "irritating" not just China, but Pakistan and Russia as well, warning India that it may lose its strategic independence if it leans towards the U.S."²⁷ These reactions from China and Pakistan are good enough indicators that India's counter balancing strategy with respect to its troublesome neighbours is paying off.

INDIA'S CHINA POLICY UNDER MODI ADMINISTRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON ASIA

India and China are the two leading economies of Asia and the world. Both nations are part of the BRICS; an acronym used for a group of fast growing economies as described by Goldman Sachs. They share a long territorial border and are home to ancient civilizations. These two ancient nations emerged from long periods of foreign domination and established new states at about the same time; independent India in 1947, which became the Republic of India (ROI) in 1950, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The power and ambition of these states dwarfed the capabilities of the other states lying along their common flanks. For the next five decades the two powerful states struggled to reach a mutually acceptable accommodation. This was a difficult process, producing one limited but intense war, half a dozen militarized confrontations, dozens of instances of sharp political-diplomatic struggle, chronic conflict over national policy, and layered mutual suspicion.

Chinese interest and intervention in South Asian Subcontinent can be seen write from the time of its emergence as a communist country in 1950.

The motivation for Beijing's interference in the region came from many quarters. The earliest incidence of Chinese intrusion in South Asia was in 1950-51, when it claimed its sovereign rights over Tibet, P.R.C. remained involved in virtually all major political issues of the Subcontinent directly or indirectly since then. In fact, its intervention reached to an extent of nuclear technology transfer to Pakistan, which falls in South Asia. On the other hand it went to war against India and keeps threatening it by aligning itself with one or the other South Asian country. T.V. Paul writes that "Beijing's motivations in transferring nuclear/missile materials and technology to Pakistan derive largely from considerations of regional balance of power and containment in its enduring rivalry with India. Although bureaucratic politics and commercial interests may have some influence, it is unclear as to how in such a centralized political system as that of China bureaucratic actors can violate the accepted regime rules and commitments for such an extended time."²⁸ He adds, "China wants to limit India's power capabilities to South Asia and thereby constrain New Delhi's aspirations to become a major power in Asia. India's emergence as a peer-competitor in Asia would upset China's predominant position in the region. However, if the India-Pakistan acute conflict and intense arms race persist, India would continue to be bracketed with its smaller regional rival Pakistan and not with China."²⁹

China's pro active role in Asia is not limited to Pakistan. It is also intervening in this region by giving aid and assistance to India's other smaller neighbours like, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives in South Asia along with Myanmar in South East Asia. It does so by cultivating leaders who have anti India feelings and by giving these countries liberal loans and infrastructural assistance. This is done with a preconceived agenda of Beijing which thinks that the only country in Asia who can withstand the Chinese might is India. This recognition of India as a potential rival to its regional supremacy motivates Beijing to challenge this asymmetry. Therefore, Chinese attempts to assist Pakistan in its defence endeavors

including its nuclearisation, along with Beijing's attempted encirclement of India through our smaller neighbours are a part of Chinese containment policy of India.

fortunately it seems China's President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi are focusing on realising their dreams of benefiting their people through peaceful and harmonious relationship. Realising that there was no point in waiting for the resolution of their long standing disputes, both leaders have focused on building a strong economic, trade and commercial relationship by pooling their resources and geographical advantages for mutual benefit. China has reciprocated Modi's invitation to invest in infrastructure and manufacturing industries in India. India has shown its readiness to join the BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) corridor project linking India and China, though India has not made up its mind on joining China's ambitious 'Belt and Road' initiative in linking China to Central and South Asia as well as the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road to access Indian Ocean.

At the strategic level, there are both positive and negative developments. India has joined two international economic initiatives close to China's heart – the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Bank launched by the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping. India has also joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), started by China originally as an instrument of regional anti-terrorism cooperation, now evolving its own regional strategic dynamics. At the same time, India cannot afford to ignore China's mega entry in Af-Pak region practically elbowing out India from the scene. Coupled with the whittling down of American presence and China's massive aid of \$46 billion aid

to Pakistan (much more than the Marshall's Plan outlay for post-war Europe), we can expect China to play increasingly an assertive role to further its strategic interests on our Western borders. This could emerge as a major, as yet unfathomed, factor in India-China relations in the coming years.

SUMMING UP

Asia is a very complex region. India remains an important country not only in Asia but also in the World. As a core country in South Asia we have our advantages and disadvantages. China certainly remains India's Asian rival. India has to continuously re-strategise its defence options. India will have to either match with Chinese powerful weaponry by acquisition of similar weapons itself or by forming a counter strategic alliance. Glimpse of this counter balancing strategy towards China could be seen with growing proximity of India with America since 1999, beginning of India Japan nuclear cooperation by the treaty of November 2016, India's attempts to rebuild its defence ties with Russia and of course India's Look East or Act East policy. India's present Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in last Three years has visited many countries of South East Asia like Philippines, Vietnam, Mongolia etc. these are the countries who share common borders with China but do not have a good relationship with Beijing. This means that India is encircling China both regionally and globally by aligning itself with those who have anti China sentiments. This kind of aggressive Indian foreign policy was never seen in the past. Credit of this repositioning of India in international politics certainly goes to Modi administration. Having said this there are many challenges ahead.

¹ India China border dispute, Global security, [Online: Web] Accessed 25 November 2016 URL: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/india-china_conflicts.htm

² ibid

³ Heart of Asia conference declaration: Regional meet names terror groups in Pak, calls for action. December 05 2016, Indian Express, New Delhi India, [Online: Web] Accessed 12 December 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/heart-of-asia-conference-declaration-regional-meet-names-terror-groups-in-pak-calls-for-action-4410840/>

⁴ Taliban wouldn't last a month with out Pakistan's support: Ghani, December 05 2016, The Express Tribune, Pakistan, [Online: Web] Accessed 12 December 2016 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1253860/taliban-wouldnt-last-month-without-pakistan-support-ghani/>

⁵ Ghani's criticism of Pakistan affirms India's portrayal of Islamabad, December 05 2016, The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, India, [Online: Web] Accessed 12 December 2016 <http://www.hindustantimes.com/editorials/ghani-s-criticism-of-pakistan-affirms-india-s-portrayal-of-islamabad/story-PYeLzpOBF1VuozVbhXrHKL.html>

⁶ Rao, N. (2016) "India China relations, a Himalayan ballencing act", The hindu, July first 2016, New Delhi, India, [Online: Web] Accessed 15 December 2016 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/A-Himalayan-balancing-act/article14463404.ece>

⁷ Bajpai, K. (2007). The U.S. and Us. *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3/4, p. 99.

⁸ Refer to Chapter 2 for American refusal to provide India with any nuclear assistance including nuclear umbrella.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Bajpai, K. (2007). The U.S. and Us. *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3/4, pp. 99-100

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, p.100

¹⁴ Muralidharan, S. (2005). Partnership and Its Discontents, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 32, pp. 3589-3591

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Address by Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, "Partners in 21st Century", delivered at Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, June 6, 2012 [Online: Web] Accessed 18 December 2016 URL: http://www.idsa.in/idsacomment/IndiaandUSRebalancingStrategyforAsiaPacific_asahgal_090712.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Kumar, S. (2016) "How far have India US ties come after two years of Modi", The Diplomat, 17 May 2016, [Online: Web] Accessed 18 December 2016 URL: <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/how-far-have-india-us-ties-come-after-two-years-of-modi/>

²⁰ Pant, H. V. (2016). Understanding the Strategic Logic Behind the US-India Military Logistics Pact", The Diplomat, [Online: Web] Accessed 20 December 2016 URL: <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/understanding-the-strategic-logic-behind-the-us-india-military-logistics-pact/>

²¹ India inks Rs 5,000-crore deal with US for 145 ultra-light artillery guns Hindustan Times, New Delhi India, December first, 2016.

²² Chari, P. R. (2012). "Antony and Panetta: A Shakespearean Drama", [Online: Web] Accessed 18 December 2016 URL: <http://www.defpro.com/news/details/36438/>. In their bilateral discussion, the Indian defence minister appeared to have adopted a cautious approach while endorsing the broad principle of strengthening partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region and resolution of bilateral disputes.

²³ Tiefer, C. (2016). China And Pakistan Should Note- This Week, India And US Sign The LEMOA Pact”, [Online: Web] Accessed 20 December 2016 URL <http://www.forbes.com/sites/charlestiefer/2016/08/28/china-and-pakistan-beware-this-week-india-and-us-sign-major-war-pact/>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Haider, M. (2016). Pakistan concerned over growing Indo-US ties, Dawn, Pakistan, June 10 2016, [Online: Web] Accessed 20 December 2016 URL <http://www.dawn.com/news/1263766>

²⁶ China’s reaction to the Indo-US military agreement is predictable, August 30 2016, Swarajya New Delhi, [Online: Web] Accessed 20 December 2016 URL, <http://swarajyamag.com/politics/chinas-reaction-to-the-indo-us-military-agreement-is-predictable>

²⁷ Is India heading toward alliance with US?, Global Times, Beijing China, 30 August 2016, [Online: Web] Accessed 20 December 2016 URL, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1003574.shtml>

²⁸ Dittmer, L. (ed).(2005). South Asia’s nuclear security dilemma: India Pakistan and China. pentagon press, New Delhi, p.176

²⁹ Ibid. p.176