

## **General**

A discussion was held on 07 Sep 2012 in the CLAWS conference room between members of Naval Postgraduate School and National Defense University, USA with CLAWS faculty. The interaction focused on issues such as stability in South Asia, emergence of China and nuclear proliferation.

### **Dr Paul Kapur: US Naval Postgraduate School**

The resurgence of ties post 2000, between India and US, has opened various opportunities for cooperation. One endeavour in this direction is the possibility of working together of US and Indian think-tanks and academic community, to find common grounds for partnership. Mutual interaction could lead to determining issues that both countries could jointly address to enhance and progress a strategic partnership in the 21st century.

There has been a serious re-orientation of US policy in the last couple of years, to focus on Asia-Pacific region. The emergence of Asia in the 21st century as an economic powerhouse will be closely linked to US prosperity and security. Europe has taken a back seat in the last decade among US policy makers because of its declining influence. President Obama has already stated that US-India Partnership will be a defining partnership of the 21st century. The seriousness on the part of US can be gauged from the fact that US is planning and is in the process of redeploying its military and diplomatic resources from world over, to the Asia Pacific region. President Obama's strategic pivot towards Asia is an indicator of how important this region is to US.

There is a clear identification on both sides to take the India-US relations to the strategic partnership level. The basis of this partnership would be economic and security arrangements, which would benefit both nations immensely. The civil nuclear deal signed between India and US is an indicator of the utmost importance that US attaches to this relationship. The current Obama administration, when it came to power, wanted to move away from its predecessor's inclination towards an overtly militaristic and aggressive nuclear weapons policy. The nuclear free world initiative of President Obama was a step in this direction and has found worldwide acceptance, including India.

Already a decade into the 21st century there are clear signs of shift in wealth creation and demographics from advanced economies of the world to the emerging economies of Asia. This, in US perception is an inevitable and irreversible trend. While Europe will remain important to US affairs, it is not critical to its national interests in the 21st century. In the last decades there has not only been a geographical, but also an intellectual shift to Asia.

President Bush's administration was aggressively competitive towards China, which has been changed to a consultative approach under the Obama administration. President Obama believes this will lead to increased stability between the two big powers of the world and also compliment regional security vis-à-vis India. It has been observed that post 2010, China has been increasingly assertive in the South China Sea and in its dealings with neighbouring countries and has been using economic coercion in its foreign diplomacy. US needs to work in partnership with India to manage China's aggressive postures in the region. The Chinese view of the world is one based on hierarchy rather than the egalitarian values upheld by US and its allies.

#### **Dr Shanks: US Naval Postgraduate School**

The primary focus of our research is the role of nuclear weapons in international relations. US will be facing a lot of critical decisions regarding its nuclear weapon arsenal and the role these weapons will play in future in US dealings with other world powers. President Obama's speech in Prague was a historical milestone in US thinking of its nuclear arsenal. The Prague speech advocated a nuclear free world which had resonance around the world and wide acceptance in India. Although nuclear free world is the envisaged goal of the Obama administration, but as long as nuclear weapons exist around the world, US will maintain a credible nuclear arsenal. The idea of ratcheting up costs for an adversary will still be the cornerstone of US policy in its dealing with rogue states and countries inimical to US interests.

In the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, China was mentioned 36 times, which is an indicator of the focus US has on China and its close monitoring of China's emergence. It is also a sign of the way US policy and thinking is headed in the future. US wants to maintain a strategic stability with China through various means including nuclear weapons. For strategic stability to work there is a need to mutually identify what is strategic and what is not; unilateralism will not work.

In future, the US nuclear arsenal would be used to deter lower level conflicts rather than nuclear attacks. In case of China, a mutually vulnerable relationship could form the basis of stability where both countries are willing to accept a specified level of vulnerability vis-à-vis each other. It is up to the US to decide how much vulnerability it is willing to risk to maintain a stable relationship with China.

#### **Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch, SM, VSM (Retd): Additional Director, CLAWS**

The immediate concern of the Indian defence community is the post 2014 scenario, after US troops withdraw from Afghanistan and end their combat operations. The impact US withdrawal will have on the region is especially relevant in the context of negative indicators which are emanating from Pakistan in terms of the both the security and economic situation prevailing in that country. The Pakistan Army is perhaps the sole

institution which is holding the country together, but with increasing attacks on its military bases and radicalisation of the Pakistan Army, negative indicators are beginning to emerge here too. Currently, it appears that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are in safe hands but the future of such a prognosis is less certain. This would remain a challenge for India as indeed for the rest of the world. The end term goals of US in Afghanistan are unclear and in a rapid state of flux. India is likely to experience an increase in Pakistan sponsored terrorism post US withdrawal but is capable of looking after its security interests.

China is becoming more and more assertive in its dealing with neighbouring countries. On its northern borders, particularly over the Tibetan Plateau, India can adequately contain China as of now. The situation may change a decade from now, considering the thrust being given by China to her defence modernisation. This has the potential to lead to conflict. Another trigger could be a worsening of the Chinese economy leading to riots all over the country. Conflict could be staged to divert attention of the masses. While there are concerns about Chinese interests in Pakistan, its interventions in Baluchistan are unlikely to be fruitful considering the state of insurgency prevailing in the province. In the Indian Ocean Region, China would remain deeply concerned about protecting its sea lanes of communication which are vital to its economic interests.

Indian and US interests have both commonalities and divergences with respect to China. This would have to be factored in any future strategic relationship between the two countries. The technology transfer regimes of US are very restrictive in nature, particularly towards India. India expects a more meaningful cooperation with US and relaxation of such restrictions. This will help India to become a self-reliant country with a strong military-industrial complex which will help to balance China in the region, and promote regional peace and security.

### **Capt (IN) Alok Bansal: Senior Fellow, CLAWS**

India-US strategic partnership is a necessity of our times. The partnership is stable and strong as it is built on timeless values of democracy and pluralism. Even during the Cold War, in spite of being in different camps, there was a great amount of communication between the two countries.

Iran is one of the issues which has acted as an impediment to our relations. US needs to understand India's critical dependency on Iran in terms of oil and access to the Central Asia Republics. India is the largest destination of Iran's crude oil, although our government is making an effort to reduce that dependency. Iran also has large influence within the Shiite population of the region and has the capability to stir tensions which India can't ignore, owing to its large Muslim minority. Remittances from Gulf countries

form a substantial part of Indian GDP to the tune of \$60 billion. Nearly 19 percent of India's exports and 25 percent of imports come from the West Asia region.

Iran's nuclear program is as much a threat to India, as to the West. India can help reduce tensions between US and Iran by acting as a mediator. The situation in the region is very volatile and if US does intend to go in for military strikes, the conflict with Iran should be swift and decisive.

There is a need to roll back the Chinese influence in Myanmar post democratic reforms. India and US can work together in this endeavour. Chinese maritime claims in South China Sea region are outrageous and can't be overlooked. The Bo Xilai case was a testament to the internal struggle within the Chinese leadership. Disarmament can also form a common ground between India and US. The majority of Indian population supports a nuclear free world.

India can act as the best partner to train and equip the Afghan National Army (ANA). Occidental societies are very different from Oriental societies. Thus, India can provide critical assistance in training the ANA. The advanced nations of the world will have to foot the bill for maintenance of the Afghan army. Historically, it was only when the Afghan state was not able to pay for its Army that it collapsed from continued onslaught of insurgents.

## **Discussion**

Iran realises that the nuclear bomb is not a surety against US. There is a tug of war in Iran between President Ahmadinejad and Iran's supreme leader Khamenei. Iran should be dealt in a dignified manner. The fig leaf offered by the supreme leader Khamenei, when he said nuclear weapons are immoral, should be pursued vigorously by the US. US should also re-orient its thinking vis-à-vis the Shiite population of the world. India and Russia can act as prospective mediators in crisis situation between US and Iran.

In case of Pakistan, there is an urgent need of a massive intervention by the Pakistani government to change and reform the educational system of the country. It would take a generation for Pakistan to move away from anti-pluralism and embrace democracy and international brotherhood. The role of religion in the affairs of the state has to be reduced. The US financing to Pakistan can be used as a leverage to force the Pakistani government to undertake much needed educational reforms.

The Pakistani Army lacks the capability and the will to pacify the insurgents in North Waziristan. The insurgents too do not have the capability to defeat the Pakistan Army. We are likely to see a stalemate on this score.