

The Army and US-India Alignment

A Monograph

by

MAJ Alexander G. Mullin
US Army



School of Advanced Military Studies
US Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS

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Name of Candidate: MAJ Alexander G. Mullin

Monograph Title: The Army and US-India Alignment

Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Philip Hultquist, PhD

_____, Seminar Leader
Michael Manner, COL

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
Kirk C. Dorr, COL

Accepted this 23rd day of May 2019 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

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Abstract

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In the last decade, alignment between the United States and India is closer and more meaningful than at any point in history. Currently described as a 'strategic partnership,' this relationship is coming to the forefront of planning for the United States' strategic vision for the long-term future. Formerly known as the US Pacific Command, the combatant command was renamed US Indo-Pacific Command on May 30, 2018. This specific shift in military naming convention foretells the dramatic importance that India and the Indo-pacific region play in shaping US foreign policy. This research focuses on this contemporary shift and specifically what role the US Army plays in the relationship. A foundation in examining what alignment is and how the field of study lacks a proper taxonomy illuminates the excess of terms used to define the US-India relationship. This research recommends a strengthened US-India alignment, from the perspective of the US Army's role, through a clear strategy utilizing vertically integrated alignment activity, a new term coined in this research, which seeks long-term commitment while converging with Indian strategic culture.

Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	vi
Acronyms	vii
Introduction	1
Alignment.....	3
Alliances.....	3
Coalitions.....	5
Security Community.....	5
Strategic Partnership.....	6
Concert	7
Entente.....	7
Non-aggression Pact.....	8
US Strategic Guidance and Doctrine on SC.....	8
<i>2017 National Security Strategy of the US</i>	9
<i>2018 National Defense Strategy</i>	10
<i>2015 National Military Strategy</i>	10
<i>2015 Presidential Policy Directive 23</i>	11
<i>2016 DoD Directive 5132.03</i>	11
Doctrine	12
US-India History	14
The Beginning.....	14
The Cold War and Beyond.....	16
Post 9/11 to Present	18
Indian Strategic Culture.....	22
Components of Indian Strategic Thought.....	22
Indian Strategic Culture Profile Traits	24
Analysis of US-India alignment	26
Risks	27
Costs	28
Benefits.....	29
The Army and US-India Alignment.....	30
US-India Alignment	32
The US Army’s Role.....	32
Recommendations for the US.....	34
Conclusion.....	38

Bibliography 40

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Acronyms

ABCA	American, British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Armies
AR	Army Regulation
COMCASA	Communications, Compatibility, and Security Agreement
DA PAM	Department of the Army Pamphlet
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DTTI	Defense Technology and Trade Initiative
JP	Joint Publication
LEMOA	Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement
NDS	<i>National Defense Strategy</i>
NMS	<i>National Military Strategy</i>
NSS	<i>National Security Strategy</i>
PPD	<i>Presidential Policy Directive</i>
SC	Security Cooperation
SCFA	Security Cooperation Focus Area
US	United States
VIAA	Vertical Integration Alignment Activity

Introduction

We will expand our defense and security cooperation with India, a Major Defense Partner of the US, and support India's growing relationships through the region.

— *National Security Strategy*, December 2017

The Obama Administration officially recognized India as a partner of strategic importance with three components of US national interest in mind: developing India as a key export market for American goods and services, developing a bilateral security and defense cooperation, and positioning India in the US strategic pivot towards Asia. Underpinning these three goals is a reliance on the military as an important component for partnership. Hallmark to US strategy is backing trade, security, and strategic positioning with the stamp of the US military. Further, the US Army, the largest American force, serves as the face of security and reliability for the United States in partnerships.

The United States' official recognition of India as a Major Strategic Partner is not enough. While India shares similar democratic values with the United States, this seemingly obvious partnership is not as strong as one might believe. A post-colonial Indian government with a rapidly growing economy is positioning as strategically open to all suitors. This includes the adversaries and competitors of the United States. India's recent imports of Iranian oil and purchase of S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems from Russia presents a unique challenge for the United States.

The *2017 National Security Strategy (NSS)* identifies the need for addressing the challenge to American power from nations like Russia and China. The *NSS* acknowledges the need for increasing trade and security with India in the Indian Ocean and broader region. This focus is especially relevant with China in mind. While the United States views India as a close defense partner, recent actions by the Modi administration doubles down on India's current view of partnership as an open market.

All of these factors combine to potentially make India the United States' most important strategic partner of this century. This paper examines the role the US Army can play in facilitating this important US-India alignment. The research, analysis, and recommendations from this monograph are for assisting army, and government leaders in the long-term planning and action for the US-India alignment.

What role should the US Army play in facilitating alignment between the United States and India? To answer this question, the monograph subdivides it into two secondary questions: (1) What type of alignment is the most beneficial for the United States and India? and (2) How does the US Army, within the construct of US-India alignment, help create a durable, long-term alignment?

This monograph argues that to create a durable, long-term US-India alignment, based on an integral military pillar, the US Army must creatively develop vertical integration alignment activities (VIAA) through convergence of US and Indian capabilities and interests while keeping Indian strategic culture in mind.

This monograph is a qualitative policy essay. The monograph develops a taxonomy of alignment to better understand the types of alignment between nations. These definitions will allow the author to analyze the history, present, and future, of the US-India alignment. The author will also define the US Army's capabilities available for use in what the military describes as security cooperation (SC). The author will gather and research relevant scholarly works available on alignment, US strategy and doctrine for SC, US-India foreign relations, modern Indian history, and Indian strategic culture. The author will then conduct an analysis of the risks, costs, and benefits of alignment within an understanding of India's strategic culture and US interests. This will result in a set of recommendations for the US Army's role in the future of the US-India alignment. These recommendations will be a product of the research and analysis conclusions against the role VIAA plays within selected Army security cooperation focus areas (SCFA).

Alignment

Research into how and why security interactions form between states is an oft undertaken task by international relations scholars. The body of work in this endeavor is well developed. However, the taxonomy for understanding the different types of relationships is quite weak. Many terms are used interchangeably without an actual definition. Thomas Wilkins' efforts in creating a working taxonomy for alignment are based on contradicting the modern conceptualization of alliances. He argues that the term alliance is often used in place of what should actually be described as alignment. In this sense, alliance becomes one of the important types of alignment rather than an overarching term.¹

This research will use Wilkins' working taxonomy and conception of alignment, as the root term, for properly describing security interactions between states. Logically, subordinate types of alignment are numerous and require definition. Exploring the different subordinate types of alignment will serve as the foundation for analysis of the US-India alignment's history, present, and future.

Alliances

There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them.

— Winston Churchill, April 1, 1945

Many scholars have studied alliances as a product of primary research in strategy. In relation to alliances, strategy is a set of hypotheses to achieve a desired interest.² As states align incentives within foreign policy, potential alliances begin to emerge as options for pursuing

¹ Thomas S. Wilkins, "'Alignment' not 'Alliance'—The Shifting Paradigm of International Security Cooperation: Toward a Conceptual Taxonomy of Alignment," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (January 2012): 57.

² Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 147, Kindle.

interests. Threats to security provide the most obvious and salient incentive to create an alliance. Considering the origins of alliances is paramount to avoiding major foreign policy mistakes.³

As the world superpower with multiple emerging competitors, the United States views alliances as a key part of foreign policy. From an external states' perspective, the decision of alliance depends on whether states will work together to maintain balance or if states should bandwagon with the most powerful state for protection.⁴ Balancing involves states patterning together to counter an emerging threat.⁵ Bandwagoning specifically refers to aligning with a state that is a threat.⁶ As seen in the *NSS*, US strategy is to preserve peace through strength. A formidable portion of this strength is the product of the largest defense budget in the world. However, the proliferation of technology with low barriers to entry is eroding the United States' defense technology superiority. Emerging powers, like China, are rapidly gaining peer defense capabilities that negate the peace through strength premise. Creative foreign policy through leveraging alliances provides an opportunity for states to counter shift in the balance of power.

The aforementioned description of alliance behavior comes from Stephen Walt's body of research in *Origins of Alliances*. Walt defines an alliance as "a formal or informal relationship of SC between two or more sovereign states."⁷ While Walt's work is instrumental to this research, especially in the understanding of alliance formation, his definition is too broad and more closely resembles alignment.⁸ Wilkin's prefers Glenn Snyder's apt definition on alliances which focuses on formal alignment of states into membership, under specific reasons, for the projection of military force to deter or enter conflict.⁹ The key characteristics here are the specificity of formal

³ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 147, Kindle.

⁴ Ibid., 156.

⁵ Ibid., 531.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 303.

⁸ Wilkins, "'Alignment' not 'Alliance'," 60.

⁹ Ibid., 59.

relationship and membership. These characteristics encompass why alliances form and are viewed as important elements of foreign policy. As we have seen in modern history, alliances can involve two or more states depending on how we conceptualize threats.

Coalitions

Coalitions are a key element of international relations throughout all recorded history.¹⁰ Wilkins points out that this is another term that is seemingly interchangeable with alliance and alignment depending on the scholar.¹¹ The most appropriate source for a clear definition comes from Andrew Pierre, noting that a cluster of states with converging interests join together to proactively address a defined issue without agreeing to a long-term commitment.¹² Thus, it is differentiated from alliances by its temporary nature and lack of formal structure.¹³ The formation of a coalition with respect to US-India alignment is not a clear choice. This type of alignment would likely require an anomaly to present itself to be in the interests of both nations.

Security Community

Security communities integrate by association for protracted peace.¹⁴ This form of alignment is interesting as it does not necessarily form with the upfront security nature that alliances or coalitions form. These communities reflect the formation of the post-World War Two institutional balance of power paradigm. Many current forms of institutions are dissected when discussing security communities. Heated debate surrounds whether security communities are truly effective and what purpose they serve.¹⁵ As an example of the complexity surrounding alignment and more specifically security communities, the case of Georgia comes to mind. As

¹⁰ Wilkins, “‘Alignment’ not ‘Alliance’,” 63.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 65.

¹⁵ Ibid., 66.

Georgia seeks membership in NATO, members are slow to grant acceptance because of the adversarial dynamic with Russia. An alignment shift of Georgia into a security community would expose the region to complex reactions and shifts in alignment that forecast significant risk.

Strategic Partnership

This form of alignment is specifically important to this research as it is the chosen subordinate type the United States has taken to describe the alignment with India. This type of alignment is also the most loosely defined. Strategic partnership in its current form seems to imply cooperation without any of the commitment. This subordinate type of alignment also includes the words “strategy” and “partnership” that convey comfort to an audience. However, some scholars have attempted to provide a more specific definition for strategic partnership. Wilkins’ describes a strategic partnership as the “structured collaboration between states or other ‘actors’ to take joint advantage of economic opportunities.”¹⁶ In a fascinating way, strategic partnerships most likely orient towards goals and not threats.¹⁷ This is fascinating because a threat may be the most important element driving formation of a strategic partnership but it is not formally addressed.¹⁸ Goals serve as elements to strengthen a partnership and deter a threat in the region without directly forming alignment towards the threat.¹⁹ This soft understanding of strategic partnerships is frustrating and gives reason for scholarly criticism. Strategic partnership does appear to be the “en vogue” form of alignment for contemporary international relations. It provides a sense of purpose and action without a real explanation of commitment. Ambiguity can be useful.

¹⁶ Wilkins, “‘Alignment’ not ‘Alliance’,” 67.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Concert

Concerts are well known throughout European history, notably as the Concert of Europe 1871 to 1914, as a form of collaboration with respect towards rational security.²⁰ Wilkins leans on Snyder's reference to concerts as a bargain to change conflict in an attempt to keep harmony and structure to a system.²¹ States work together to maintain the stability of a system, rather than because their states have similar interests, which means they work directly with their adversaries. Concerts assume a great deal of rationality amongst regional actors to act in a certain way. This loose form of trust requires similar forms of culture and perspective of reality to truly work. In addition, states considered part of the concert must all exhibit logical behavior over long periods of time for the concert to be effective.

Entente

An entente lacks a formal treaty but offers the desired agreement of security support states seek when under a threat. Joseph Mathews offered that "an entente—it is a purposely vague word—simply means an understanding which is less binding than an alliance."²² Clearly, ententes are very close in resemblance to alliance. States under significant threat requiring a form of alignment that is not overly provocative can seek an entente.²³ An agreement of security is reached and the threatening actor(s) are seemingly notified of precautions to maintain balance of power. However, the strengths that an entente provide also highlight the weakness in the lack of formality an alliance provides. Ententes closely resemble coalitions as well, in conceptualization, but they have a distinctly different purpose. Ententes differ from coalitions in that they serve to find alignment through agreement to dissuade a bad actor while a coalition forms to address a problem with immediacy.

²⁰ Wilkins, "'Alignment' not 'Alliance'," 67.

²¹ Ibid., 69.

²² Joseph Mathews, "The End of the Anglo-French Entente," *World Affairs* 103, no. 3 (1940): 149.

²³ Wilkins, "'Alignment' not 'Alliance'," 71.

Non-aggression Pact

Non-aggression pacts are a clear and easily understandable form of alignment. Wilkins notes that non-aggression pacts are likely recorded as alliances.²⁴ This is a misuse of the term because non-aggression pacts only serve to ensure states do not take action against each other for a period of time.²⁵ Non-aggression pacts serve an important role in the range of options for a state's alignment.

All of these alignment types form a taxonomy that exhibits different strengths and weaknesses. The US-India non-alignment of the past is an interesting reminder when compared to the current strategic partnership. An alliance between the United States and India seems like a logical next step in a more powerful alignment but that assumption is not necessarily true. The dynamics between nations attempting to balance power is not always best served by forming an alignment with strict formality and response measures. Some of the alignment types, like a strategic partnership or security community, with more nebulous definitions actually serve a distinct purpose in the dynamics between nations. In the case of the United States and India, a strategic partnership is a non-threatening alignment that addresses the rise of China.

US Strategic Guidance and Doctrine on SC

The United States, as a democracy, maintains a unique system of checks and balances that include executive elections every four years. Relative to other nations, this creates opportunity for varying strategic direction in short-term cycles. The military, as a tool of national power, takes direction from the civilian government in aligning strategy for ensuring a continuing advantage for the United States. The Army specifically focuses on SC as the avenue for supporting strategic alignment. To understand how Army SC doctrine is shaped, a review of the US strategic documents cascading down to Army doctrine is necessary. Specific documents and

²⁴ Wilkins, "'Alignment' not 'Alliance,'" 72.

²⁵ Ibid., 71.

manuals are selected for this research to understand the important role the Army plays in US alignment formation. This is not an exhaustive list of documents as there are many organizations within the government that publish materials related to SC.

2017 National Security Strategy of the United States

The overarching theme of the 2017 *NSS* is principled realism. However, there is recognition of the important role that institutions and responsible sovereign nations play in the United States' sustained prosperity.²⁶ The *NSS* focuses on alignment in relation to region-specific strategy. The Indo-Pacific is the first region discussed in the *NSS* strategic context, an acknowledgment of the US' shift in focus to this quickly evolving region of the world. Geographically, the *NSS* defines the region as the west coast of India all the way to the western shores of the United States. Acknowledging the threat of potential adversaries in the Indo-Pacific, the *NSS* calls for a "strong defense network" of allies.²⁷

This specific guidance contains the crucial Major Defense Partner status designated to India in 2016 under President Obama. India is singled out for a special role, "we will expand our defense and SC with India, a Major Defense Partner of the United States, and support India's growing relationships throughout the region."²⁸ This status gives India access to the same benefits as a major non-NATO ally of the United States. Previously, India operated through the bilateral Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). The Major Defense Partner status is an enhanced development of the DTTI. Further, the United States recently designated India as Department of Commerce Tier 1 Strategic Trade Authorization partner. These developments fall directly in line with the *NSS* focus in the Indo-Pacific Region.

²⁶ US President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

2018 National Defense Strategy

The *National Defense Strategy (NDS)* outlines the key components for the United States to maintain continuous advantage in a complex security environment with long-term peer competition and eroding military advantage.²⁹ The *NDS* acknowledges China’s pursuit of Indo-Pacific regional hegemony. This threat requires a “constellation” of allies and partners to maintain peace through strength.³⁰

A free and open Indo-Pacific region provides prosperity and security for all. We will strengthen our alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific to a networked security architecture capable of deterring aggression, maintaining stability, and ensuring free access to common domains. With key countries in the region, we will bring together bilateral and multilateral security relationships to preserve the free and open international system.³¹

Different than the *NSS*, the *NDS* specifically names key threats by country and acknowledges ally and partner countries in an abstract regional sense. Clearly, India plays a large role in the long-term vision for maintaining stability from the US perspective. The *NDS* focuses on strengthening alliances through deepened interoperability and a consistent defense cooperation.³²

2015 National Military Strategy

The *National Military Strategy (NMS)*, a few years older than its superior national documents, is a framework for how to employ military forces to protect and maintain advantage in national interests.³³ In similar fashion to the *NSS* and *NDS*, the *NMS* identifies key adversary threats and maintains a desire to seek deterrence while being prepared for complex combat. The

²⁹ US Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), Intro.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 9.

³² Ibid.

³³ US Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), i.

NMS mimics the *NDS* theme of strengthening a global network of allies and partners. “We will also deepen our security relationship with India . . . such efforts are essential to maintaining regional peace and building capabilities”³⁴ Tangible considerations towards SC include conducting training, exercises, and military-to-military engagement.³⁵ The *NMS* emphasizes presence of US military forces as a linchpin for international order and preparation for crises. As this document is currently four years old, a reorganization of efforts in the South China Sea has come to fruition in alignment with the *NMS*. Following the *NMS*, documents related to SC become increasingly detailed in capabilities and responsibilities.

2015 Presidential Policy Directive 23

Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 23 focuses on security sector assistance with institutions, partner governments, and international organizations. The United States uses security sector assistance to engage foreign partners to shape policies, help foreign partners build and sustain capacity, and enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges. *PPD 23* defines military access to airspace and basing rights; specified, improved interoperability and training opportunities to actively promote partner support for US interests.³⁶ Most important to *PPD 23* is a detailed policy guidance list for stewarding the goals and resources involved in security sector assistance. Maintaining a long-term vision for all activities requiring resources is an emergent theme in this list. Further, measures of effectiveness for expended resources are required for evaluation.

2016 DoD Directive 5132.03

The 2016 *DoD Directive (DoDD) 5132.03* comprises the Department of Defense (DoD) policy and responsibilities relating to SC. The policy directs the DoD to properly prioritize, plan,

³⁴ US Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy*, 9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ US President, *Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 23, US Security Sector Assistance Policy* (Washington, DC: Office of the White House Press Secretary, 2013), 2.

conduct, and align resources for SC as an integral element of the DoD mission.³⁷ The directive lays out four specific key tasks: (1) SC will develop allied and partner defense, (2) provide US forces access to host nations, (3) build defense relationships, and (4) participate in actions to support strategic objectives.³⁸

DoDD 5132, in accordance with *PPD 23*, defines SC responsibilities for Geographic Combatant Commanders to build into theater campaign plans.³⁹ Geographic Combatant Commanders provide country specific SC portfolios to articulate DoD country-level objectives.⁴⁰ Inside of each country portfolio, lines of effort for all initiatives are laid out to include how efforts nest within a whole-of-government approach. Here we find the definition for SC used throughout DoD doctrine.

SC: All DoD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and partner nation military and security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to allied and partner nations.⁴¹

As directed, SC activities pursue synergy between materiel and non-materiel solutions to create lasting capabilities. *DoDD 5132* has precise nesting guidance with *PPD 23* primarily to ensure further understanding of stewardship in SC.

Doctrine

Joint Publication (JP) 3-20 is the first doctrine manual available to US military forces for execution of SC. This joint doctrine manual serves as guidance to combatant commanders in

³⁷ US President, *PPD 23*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁹ US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5132.03, DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

developing partnerships that enable partners to align with US strategic objectives.⁴² *JP 3-20* frames a five-year timeline to accomplish mid-term objectives after the initial year of execution for SC activities. There are nine SC categories, such as military-to-military, personnel exchanges, combined exercises, train and equip, operational support, and international armaments cooperation.⁴³ Each of these activities acts in support of national strategic objectives. These categories are not all inclusive but cover the majority of actions taken by the US military in SC efforts.

Army Regulation (AR) 11-31, Army Security Cooperation Policy, outlines “how the Army develops capabilities and allocates resources in support of DoD SC.”⁴⁴ This policy pamphlet outlines the planning and resourcing process in great detail from receiving guidance in the *NSS* and *NDS* all the way down to execution of SC activities by the Army. The roles and responsibilities contained in this policy are of specific importance to this research. The Secretary of the Army is responsible for coordinating SC policy guidance and campaign goals along with resource allocation.⁴⁵ These responsibilities include developing a campaign support plan for the execution of SC programs and activities.⁴⁶

Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 11-31, Army Security Cooperation Handbook, is the US Army’s primary doctrine that describes how to conduct SC programs and activities.

This pamphlet describes how the Army—the institutional Army, Army commands (ACOMs) Army service component commands (ASCCs), direct reporting units (DRUs) and staff organizations—supports achievement of geographic combatant command (GCC) and functional combatant command (FCC) campaign plan intermediate military

⁴² US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-20, Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), v.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, A-2.

⁴⁴ US Department of the Army, *Army Regulation (AR) 11-31, Army Security Cooperation Policy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Officer, 2013), 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

objectives (IMO) and strategic end states by providing trained and ready capabilities for combatant commands' (CCMD) SC activities coordinated by, with, or through ASCCs.⁴⁷

The Army designed the execution of SC around five specific principles that focus on stewardship and utility in design. SC activities must be (1) requirements based, (2) accountable, (3) long-term, (4) coordinated, and (5) defined. These five principles ensure that all organizations and leaders are conceptualizing SC activities that are robust and viable. SCFA are the most valuable contribution from *DA PAM 11-31*. These ten focus areas define core activities where the Army can be instrumental in supporting the United States in SC. Recommendations for the Army's role in the US-India alignment are derived from these ten SCFAs. Specific to this research and India, the four key SCFAs are (1) international suasion and collaboration; (2) assurance and regional confidence building; (3) combined operations capacity, interoperability, and standardization; and (4) international armaments cooperation.⁴⁸

US-India History

History between India and the United States contains a complex narrative of mutual interests and disagreements. India's history is vast and incredibly difficult to deconstruct. In this analysis, the focus will remain on the Republic of India since 1947. Historical analysis of the US-India relationship will compound with analysis of Indian strategic culture. In combination, a framework for how the United States and more specifically, the US Army, can align with India emerges.

The Beginning

During World War Two, US service members operated out of India in what was known as the China-Burma-India Theater. Following the war, a paradigm shift occurred and colonialism was no longer a favorable stance for world powers, namely Britain, to continue. The Indian

⁴⁷ US Department of the Army, *Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 11-31, Army Security Cooperation Handbook* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

independence movement was finally in a position to achieve its aim, although as two countries instead of one. Britain declared, “As from the fifteenth day of August, nineteen hundred and forty-seven, two independent Dominions shall be set up in India, to be known respectively as India and Pakistan.”⁴⁹

Following Britain’s declaration of the Indian Independence Act of 1947, India and Pakistan were officially recognized as nations. During this time, an intensely complex series of decisions and events in the northern region of Kashmir took place. Britain declared that 562 princely states during the independence process could choose to align with Pakistan or India.⁵⁰ Although there were others who chose to remain independent, the princely states of Jammu and Kashmir (Kashmir hereafter) and Hyderabad were the largest.⁵¹ Kashmir, a majority Muslim state, aligned with India following an invasion by tribal Pakistani forces in October 1947.⁵² This decision by Maharaja Singh, the Hindu ruler of Kashmir, led to an outbreak of war for a year before United Nations intervention.⁵³ At this same time, India requested American transport planes for evacuation of 50,000 non-Muslim refugees in Pakistan to which the Truman administration denied on grounds of desiring a joint Pakistani-Indian request that would never come to fruition.⁵⁴ The United Nations-negotiated a ceasefire and effectively split the Kashmir region into one-third Pakistani and two-thirds Indian control. This brief recollection of events in Kashmir is incredibly important for understanding the contemporary US-India relationship. The

⁴⁹ India (Dominion), *Indian Independence Act, 1947* (London: Sir N.G. Scorgie, King’s Printer, 1947), c. 30; 10, & 11. *Geo.* 6.

⁵⁰ T. V. Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan Enduring Rivalry,” in *The India-Pakistan Conflict and Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T. V. Paul (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ H. W. Brands, “India and Pakistan in American Strategic Planning, 1947-54: The Commonwealth as Collaborator,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 15, no. 1 (1986): 42.

impact of these decisions in such a short period of time still has profound effects on India, Pakistan, and the United States nearly seventy years later.

The United States, under the Truman administration, sought to shape India and Pakistan towards favorable US foreign policy. US planners evaluated that India would be a much more important entity but viewed the two nations as interdependent.⁵⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister from 1947 to 1964, sought policies that did not tie India to any specific side or ideology. In his trip to the United States in 1949, Nehru gave many speeches, received an honorary PhD from Columbia, and generally received high regard from his public audiences.⁵⁶ On the contrary, the State Department and US leadership found Nehru difficult and realized that his allegiance would not be easy to gain.⁵⁷ This seemingly bold perspective from a new nation did not align with the foreign policy the United States had envisioned. Along with the rise of communism, American perspective viewed India's neutrality as a morally bankrupt stance.⁵⁸

The Cold War and Beyond

Nehru's rhetorical non-alignment policy continued from the beginning of his time as prime minister into the Cold War era.⁵⁹ In reality, India took a favorable stance towards the Soviet Union during this time because of Moscow's declaration against colonial rule and ability to supply India with arms.⁶⁰ This coincided with the US' alignment toward Pakistan.

⁵⁵ Robert J. McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery: The US, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 12.

⁵⁶ Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi the History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), 165.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

US support to Pakistan, including arms sales and apathy towards the previously mentioned Kashmir conflict, distanced the United States from India.⁶¹ Indian perception of the United States and its intentions following alignment with Pakistan remains a point of contention today. Pakistani support to the United Nations and stance against North Korea during the Korean War built a favorable position from the United States.⁶² This US-Pakistani relationship contrasted with India, who took a critical stance against the American concern with communist expansion.⁶³ The United States and Pakistan teamed up to support the Mujahadeen in their efforts against the Soviet Union.⁶⁴ This execution led to Pakistan hoping to utilize the Mujahadeen against India as an asset.⁶⁵

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 provided a paradigm shift and opportunity for a new relationship between the United States and India. During the Clinton administration, the “Agreed-minute on Defense Cooperation” framework outlined future military cooperation between the two nations.⁶⁶ The emergence of nuclear technology in India once again put the United States and India at odds. However, the sanctions the United States leveraged on India forced a fruitful dialogue.⁶⁷ Discussion of non-proliferation principles led the two nations to see eye-to-eye and establish a relationship of equality that was previously absent.⁶⁸ President Clinton’s visit to India during his last year in office established a new tone in US-India relations.

⁶¹ Sumit Ganguly and Brian Shoup, “Introduction,” in *US –Indian Strategic Cooperation into the 21st Century More than Words*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, Andrew Scobel, and Brian Shoup (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

⁶² George J. Lerski, “The Pakistani-American Alliance: A Reevaluation of the Past Decade,” *Asian Survey* 8, no. 5 (May 1968): 401.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁶⁴ Hussain Nadim, *Neither Friend Nor Foe: Pakistan, the United States and the War in Afghanistan* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2017), 7.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Ganguly and Shoup, “Introduction,” 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

During the trip, the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum was created utilizing left over funds from the 1980s PL480 “Rupee Fund” for collaboration and exchange.⁶⁹ This forum opened additional dialogue surrounding introduction of military cooperation and planning. Additionally, a US-India Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism sprung from President Clinton’s influential trip.⁷⁰

Post 9/11 to Present

The terror attacks on September 11, 2001, in the United States were immediately acknowledged by India with an open offer for assistance. This resulted in India extending basing for counterterrorism operations and cooperation with US efforts.⁷¹ President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee met two months later and discussed a wide range of topics including regional security and economic ties.⁷² The US-India Defense Policy Group convened in New Delhi at the end of 2001 to promote defense efforts. In a time of crisis, India displayed empathy towards the United States and pushed for increasing ties.

The 2002 *NSS* put past concerns about nuclear disagreements behind and focused on India’s future emergence as a great power. “The administration sees India’s potential to become one of the great democratic powers of the twenty first century and has worked hard to transform our relationship accordingly.”⁷³ The document called for a “strong partnership” as part of a strategically stable Asia.⁷⁴ This was followed up in January 2004 with the announcement of the

⁶⁹ US Department of State, *US and India Sign Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2005), accessed December 5, 2018, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/55198.htm>.

⁷⁰ K. Alan Kronstadt and Sonia Pinto, R42823, *India-US Security Relations: Current Engagement* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012), 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² White House, *President Meets with Prime Minister of India* (Washington, DC: Office of the Press Secretary, 2001), accessed December 5, 2018, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011109-2.html>.

⁷³ US President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 10.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

Next Steps in Strategic Partnership Initiative.⁷⁵ The Next Steps in Strategic Partnership Initiative highlighted cooperation in civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programs, and high-technology trade.⁷⁶ The Next Steps in Strategic Partnership Initiative is a milestone in US-India alignment as it marked the first official announcement of a strategic partnership. The United States and India signed a ten-year defense framework in June 2005 to promote SC.⁷⁷ On July 18, 2005, Prime Minister Singh and President Bush issued a joint statement concentrated on establishing a global partnership.⁷⁸ This rapid succession of agreements, statements, and visits at the beginning of the century built an optimistic foundation about the future of US-India relations. SC discussion at this time coincided with similar economic relations and optimism.

The years during the Bush administration were a whirlwind of activities to bolster the US-India relationship. President Bush enhanced his interest in the US-India relationship during his visit in 2006.

We have an ambitious agenda with India. Our agenda is practical. It builds on a relationship that has never been better. India is a global leader, as well as a good friend... My trip will remind everybody about the strengthening of an important strategic partnership. We'll work together in practical ways to promote a hopeful future for citizens in both our nations.⁷⁹

The 2006 *NSS*, in comparison with 2002, does not express the same excitement but still maintains the visions and optimism for the future. At this point, US engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan had enrolled additional focus on US-Pakistan relations. The Obama administration grasped the US-India relations mantle but were met with a historical financial meltdown felt worldwide. The

⁷⁵ Adam Ereli, *US-India Joint Statement on Next Steps in Strategic Partnership* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2004), accessed December 5, 2018, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/36290.htm>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ K. Alan Kronstadt, RL33072, *US-India Bilateral Agreements in 2005* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2005), CRS-10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Intro.

⁷⁹ George W. Bush, *President Addresses Asia Society, Discusses India and Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Office of the Press Secretary, 2006), accessed December 5, 2018, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060222-2.html>.

Indian economy also sputtered during this time and India took a more conservative approach to relations with the United States.⁸⁰

Particular to the 2010 *NSS*, under the Obama Administration, is the “21st century centers of influence” moniker assigned to China, India, and Russia. Throughout the document the strategy outlines these three countries as a group for mutual interest and respect. This is a nod to India in regard to their ascendancy to eventual parity with other world powers.

The US and India are building a strategic partnership that is underpinned by our shared interests, our shared values as the world’s two largest democracies, and close connections among our people. India’s responsible advancement serves as a positive example for developing nations, and provides an opportunity for increased economic, scientific, environment, and security partnership.⁸¹

In 2010, the United States backed a resolution to make India a permanent member of the UN Security Council alongside France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. In July 2015, the end of the initial ten-year defense framework saw a renewal for an additional ten years. This agreement featured a more robust outline for technology transfer and defense co-production.⁸² The 2015 *NSS* revealed the least emphasis on the US-India relationship since the early 1990s boom of relations. The strategy shifted from the 2010 three nation centers of influence into an acknowledgement of “India’s potential, China’s rise, and Russia’s aggression.”⁸³

Throughout the Obama administration until this point, US-India relations had seen fantastic growth in economic interactions, in defense sales and beyond. Defense sales from the United States to India exploded from 2008 to 2016 with a 1,343 percent increase.⁸⁴ These sales included \$2.1 billion in P-8A Poseidons and \$1 billion in P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft.

⁸⁰ Dhruva Jaishankar, “Looking Back: Highs, Lows, and Steady Progress,” in *India-US Relations in Transition*, ed. Brookings Institute (New Delhi: Brookings India, 2016), 9.

⁸¹ US President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 43.

⁸² Jaishankar, “Looking Back,” 11.

⁸³ US President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 4.

⁸⁴ Jaishankar, “Looking Back,” 10.

Additionally, India contracted with Boeing for a \$2.5 billion deal building twenty two Apache and fifteen Chinook helicopters.⁸⁵ In a final stroke of partnership at the end of the Obama administration, the United States announced India as a “Major Defense Partner” in December 2016.⁸⁶ This announcement came at a time shortly after the United States and India had signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the DDTI. Both LEMOA and DTTI seek increased defense cooperation and co-production of technology.

The transition into strategy under the Trump administration saw a decided increase in close relations with India while announcing a more principled realist perspective of the world. The 2017 *NSS* noted, “We will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region.”⁸⁷ In September 2018, under the umbrella of the 2+2 dialogue, the United States and India signed the Communications, Compatibility, and Security Agreement (COMCASA). COMCASA opened the opportunity for sharing sensitive US military equipment with India. In 2018, the United States conducted a tri-lateral meeting with India and Japan at the G-20 Summit and executed a quadrilateral meeting between Australia, India, and Japan.⁸⁸ These meetings are a representation of strong partnership between the United States and India. They are also an acknowledgement of India closing gaps in status as a rising world super power.

⁸⁵ Vivek Raghuvanshi, “India Awards \$1 Billion Contract to Boeing for Four P-81 Aircraft,” *Defense News*, July 27, 2016, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/air/2016/07/27/india-awards-1-billion-contract-to-boeing-for-four-p-8i-aircraft/>; Samma Digital, “India Clears \$2.5 Billion Boeing Military Chopper Deal,” Samma Digital, September 22, 2015, accessed, December 5, 2018, <https://www.samaa.tv/global/2015/09/india-clears-2-5-billion-boeing-military-chopper-deal/>.

⁸⁶ US Department of Defense, “Joint India-United States Statement on the Visit of Secretary of Defense Carter to India,” *Department of Defense News*, December 8, 2016, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/1024228/joint-india-united-states-statement-on-the-visit-of-secretary-of-defense-carter/>.

⁸⁷ US President, *The National Security Strategy* (2017), 50.

⁸⁸ Economic Times, “2018—A Landmark Year for India-US Strategic Relationship,” *The Economic Times*, December 31, 2018, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/2018-a-landmark-year-for-india-us-strategic-relationship/articleshow/67308547.cms>.

Indian Strategic Culture

India is a thoughtful nation, only seventy two years removed from colonial rule, with a strategic culture seeking uncommitted and economically efficient foreign policy. To understand the unique strategic culture of India, it is imperative to define exactly what strategic culture comprises. Jack Snyder, in his research on Soviet strategic culture, defined strategic culture as the “sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other.”⁸⁹ This short research will apply this definition of strategic culture to India and their unique set of characteristics. The rapid development of the Indian economy in the past three decades has surged India’s foreign relations and potentially shaped a new strategic culture. Desire to understand Indian strategic culture has been of particular interest since the early 1990s from both internal and external parties. Scholars disagree about the clarity of what Indian strategic culture is and if India even has a strategic culture.

Components of Indian Strategic Thought

George Tanham’s study on Indian strategic thought in 1992 offered that India is largely missing a strategic culture and was lacking any clear set of operating principles for strategy.⁹⁰ He broke down Indian strategic thought into four principal influences: (1) geography, (2) history, (3) culture, and (4) the British Raj. The geography of India, a seemingly central location of the region, stretches widely with long borders and diverse terrain to accommodate a massive population. These characteristics favor Indian leadership’s view of India as an ordained, great nation with worldwide importance.⁹¹ Each region of the country favors the geographic terrain,

⁸⁹ Jack Snyder, “Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations” (Research Report for United States Air Force, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA), 8.

⁹⁰ George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1992), Summary.

⁹¹ Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought*, 3.

mountains in the North and ocean in the South, as protective barriers.⁹² A juxtaposition is formed between the idea of safety from these protective barriers and the history of invaders using them for negative outcomes. Tanham believed that this juxtaposition created an identity that affects Indian modern culture with both confidence and insecurity.⁹³ History is ostensibly diverse across India with a multitude of dialects and sub-regional unique cultures.

Nehru was prideful in his observance of Indian identity through the lens of Hinduism continuity.⁹⁴ He noted that “the diversity of India is tremendous” but illustrated that “ancient India, like ancient China, was a world in itself, a culture and a civilization which gave shape to all things.”⁹⁵ The culture of India, over 2,500 years old, has its foundations in the caste system.⁹⁶ The caste system, originally divinely ordained, prescribes a class upon birth to Indian citizens.⁹⁷ While not as relevant today, the caste system remains an influence on Indian culture. The relevance of the caste system to strategic thinking lies in the social construction of a strongly hierarchical perspective. Tanham observed in India that culturally, Indians saw life as much more complex than in Western thought.⁹⁸ The British Raj introduced modern technology and infrastructure in India creating a framework for unity.⁹⁹ This unity established a new nationalist perspective in India through observation of a singular government, legal system, and individual rights.¹⁰⁰ The British also established the basics for defensive military posture in India.¹⁰¹ India had extensive history with understanding external threats but lacked a unified perspective as

⁹² Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought*, 3.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 61-62.

⁹⁶ Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought*, 16.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

security was primarily a sub-regional concern.¹⁰² British military influence up until 1947 created a multitude of defensive ideas for independent India's own strategic thought.

Indian Strategic Culture Profile Traits

Indian strategic culture imbues rich, diverse history with modern knowledge and power dynamics as seen in Rodney Jones' 2006 study, commissioned by the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office. Jones characterizes Indian strategic culture as omniscient patrician, adroitly characterized by the Sanskrit phrase *bharat jagat guru*—"India: the World's Teacher."¹⁰³ Understanding Tanham's components of Indian strategic thought sets a foundation for Jones' five traits of Indian strategic culture profile. First, the idea of the "sacred permeates Indian identity."¹⁰⁴ This translates into a collective consciousness of the sacred origins of Indian-ness which features an ethereal importance to Indian geography as an expression.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, "goals are timeless, not time bound."¹⁰⁶ Jones notes that Indians have a timeless strategic culture that is not bound to time or history.¹⁰⁷ Third, "India's status is a given, not earned."¹⁰⁸ This is the ultimate self-acknowledgment of India's greatness.¹⁰⁹ Fourth, "Knowledge of truth is the key to action and power."¹¹⁰ Jones writes that Indians have a deep connection to understanding a long-term vision and waiting patiently for forces to come together

¹⁰² Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought*, 20.

¹⁰³ Rodney W. Jones, *India's Strategic Culture* (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Treat Reduction Agency, 2006), 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

in honor of the nation's good.¹¹¹ Lastly, "world order is hierarchical, not egalitarian."¹¹² The world is collectively understood through material power and India's strategic culture is ingrained with an elite perspective.¹¹³

These five traits combine to create the foundation of India's strategic culture.¹¹⁴ Jones explains that while India faced wars with Pakistan and conflict with China in 1962, security concerns enhanced but did not fundamentally alter Indian strategic culture.¹¹⁵ As an explanation of inherent Indian strategic culture, the claim over Eastern Kashmir is rooted in the geography being part of the Himalayan chain.¹¹⁶ This geography is richly linked to Hindu holy pilgrimage and represents the Indian identity as a territorial expression.¹¹⁷

The Cold War highlighted India's stance of non-alignment as the primary principle for foreign affairs.¹¹⁸ India's patience opened a window of leverage between the East and West to seek internal value.¹¹⁹ In this position, India was able to absorb value but failed to establish self-sufficiency in high technology.¹²⁰ As history played out, India eventually leaned towards the Soviet Union gaining support in their Kashmir conflict in clear opposition to the US support of Pakistan.¹²¹ India's conflict with China in 1962 provides a fascinating window into a parallel strategic culture. India, following the trait of given status, engaged with China leaving no room

¹¹¹ Jones, *India's Strategic Culture*, 8.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

for negotiation and suffered an incursion from Chinese troops.¹²² In this instance, both nations, rich in given status culture, pushed each other into a stalemate of uncompromising attitude towards each other. This exchange almost aligned India with the United States for support but India ultimately refused help that included attached agreements.¹²³ This refusal highlights India's desire for self-sufficiency.¹²⁴ This desire is relevant today in India's "Make in India Initiative."

From an Indian strategic culture perspective there are parallels between the 1945 nuclear bombs and Hindu pantheon.¹²⁵ The bombs represented a merging of cosmic forces with action in the real world, a knowledge gap the Indian elite desired to harness for strategic security.¹²⁶ India's history in nuclear weapons research and preparation dates back to the 1960s and only came into the fore in the 1970s.¹²⁷ The nuclear tests in 1998 and subsequent acceptance in 2006 by the Bush administration are exemplary representations of Indian strategic culture.¹²⁸ India's rebellious multi-decade effort exudes traits of patience, ultimate desire for knowledge and self-sufficiency, and identity in supremacy when negotiating.

Analysis of US-India alignment

Understanding the risks, costs and benefits of US alignment with India is imperative to creating a coherent and complete set of recommendations. The foundational research in alignment, SC, US-India history and Indian strategic culture all combine to create a narrative relevant to contemporary time and the future. The current emergence of US-India alignment to its closest relationship in history is no mistake at a time when Russia and China are garnering worldwide attention. China's expansive efforts to rapidly build the 'Belt and Road Initiative' and

¹²² Jones, *India's Strategic Culture*, 13.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

Russian aggression in pockets of opportunity are chief concerns for the United States. In April 2017, at the Asia Pacific Economic Council Summit, the United States announced the vision for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”¹²⁹ This shared vision with “like-minded allies” leans on India and is certainly in reference to adversarial efforts from Russia and China.

Risks

The biggest risk in US-India relations is mismanagement of alignment and failure to strengthen the relationship. Strategic partnerships, regardless of entities involved, remain a largely nebulous alignment that lack commitment. Empathizing with India’s identity, as an omniscient patrician actor in the world, is critical to understanding how to grow the relationship. Contemporary media and thought pieces on US-India relations regularly refer to the similar democratic values and principles that each nation share as key factor. However, our exploration of the events during the Cold War concerning India’s alignment with the Soviet Union are contradictory to this point. Further, India’s strategic culture dictates efficiency and patience in pursuing negotiations with leverage over seeking similar shared values.

Currently, India’s sense making of Chinese activity in the region dictates a desire to align with the United States. However, Russia is a long-term sympathetic partner of India and a large arms sales provider. While the United States is adversarial with China and Russia, India is adversarial with Pakistan and wary of China. The complexity lies in the US’ positive relationship with Pakistan. India’s strategic culture dictates that they should never forget about past trust issues over US-Pakistan relations but also focus on pragmatic foreign policy. India seeks to leverage relationships to acquire knowledge for advancement of domestic production. US foreign policy mismanagement of US-Pakistan relations during periods of increased Kashmir regional

¹²⁹ Philip S. Davidson, *Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson, U.S. Navy Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Before Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2019), 1, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Davidson_02-12-19.pdf.

crises could be a risky endeavor for alignment with India. Furthermore, there will be a limit to how aligned the United States can be to India, as long as it is aligned to Pakistan. Therefore, one risk of closer alignment with India is a potential decline of the relationship with Pakistan, which risks losing access and influence in current areas of importance, such as Afghanistan.

Most importantly, long-term relationship management with India is critical to the United States strategy in the Indo-Pacific region. The strategic partnership between the United States and India appears extremely strong in 2019 but history provides numerous examples of how quickly alignment in the Indo-Pacific region can shift. Russia is a willing partner looking to reverse the current reduction in arms sales over the past five years.

Escalation of conflict with China is a major risk for the United States. China's rise has garnered the attention of every nation in the world. China's ability to push resources across the globe in an effort to build relationships and infrastructure is a deep concern for the United States. The US-India strategic partnership allows both nations to challenge China without being adversarial. There is great risk in a mismanagement of the US-India alignment in both allowing the relationship to fall apart or over strengthening and provoking action from China.

Costs

The strategic partnership with India incurs costs in limited information sharing and potential deferment in future exchanges. The recently signed COMCASA dictates that the United States will allow India to procure US cryptologic equipment to enable secure voice and data exchange for enhanced interoperability. This is absolutely a positive for military cooperation and the strategic partnership. However, there are tangible costs to technology sharing with partners. Indian strategic culture likely views this exchange as part of a long-term vision coupled with the "Make in India Initiative." Exchange of limited, technology information and building leverage for defense production in India is part of a larger strategic initiative for India. This is all part of the costs to establish a long-term strategic partnership. India is potentially the United States' most

important partner of the 21st century. As the partnership grows, Indian strategic culture dictates that there should be long-term benefits, and leveraged partner costs to maintain alignment.

There are costs associated with India's alignment with the United States. The US pressure to choose American defense sales over those from Russia strains the longstanding regional relationship. India also forgoes the ability to access the deep investment strategy China is executing across Asia. In the long term, this decision pushes India further away from their neighbor and alters the long-term strategy of both nations. India is desperate for high-quality, domestic infrastructure which is China's main negotiating point for strategic investment in potential partner nations. The US-India alignment will not however stop the Chinese foreign direct investment in India's booming economy.

Benefits

The benefits of strategic alignment with India heavily outweigh the risks and costs. The US vision for maintaining a rules-based international order and a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" region rely on India as the key partner.¹³⁰ India is exploding in growth; economic and military cooperation is excellent for the United States. The United States has overtaken Russia as the biggest defense sales partner for India. India purchases billions in defense equipment, to include the 2018 purchase of \$2.1 billion in MH-60R multi-role sea-based helicopters.¹³¹ The recently signed COMCASA and LEMOA provide an opportunity to build interoperability with Indian forces. This is extremely important to legitimize the US-India military partnership as a potential combined force. Additionally, the US-India relationship serves as the lynchpin for all other nations in the Indo-Pacific. The strength and cooperation of United States and India to provide a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" gives smaller nations the confidence to align with the partnership.

¹³⁰ Davidson, *Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson*, 34.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

This is a deterrent to nations that would otherwise feel forced to accept Chinese loans for “Belt and Road Initiative” funding inside their borders.

The Army and US-India Alignment

The benefits of increased partnership are clear, as is the strategic guidance, but what role should the Army play to contribute? This research recommends Army contribution through VIAA. VIAA, a new term coined in this paper, are a foundational form of activity for creating a durable, long-term alignment with India. Jerry Green, in his study of vertical integration for Harvard University, notes that realigning firms and their activities provides unique results when observed outside of a vacuum in equilibrium setting.¹³²

Incentives for the vertical integration of firms have frequently been mentioned in the literature. . . . Technological advantages accruing to combination can arise through increasing returns, information advantages, or decreased transaction costs, when firms place themselves in a cooperation rather than an adversarial relationship... more generally, integration opens up a wider range of strategies in the face of regulation and more flexibility in implementing them.¹³³

VIAA seek to creatively use a few of these key characteristics realigning firms seek to leverage. Technological and information advantages, expansion, lower costs, and anti-competitive strategy. Conceptualization of VIAA requires viewing the US-India strategic partnership as a single entity. In this single entity perspective, the relationship views understanding both sides’ perspectives and interests. VIAA are sticky, each activity requires commitment in resources and seek permanence in activity. Identifying key convergence points is where VIAA can execute to increase commitment and seek permanence. VIAA should not be geography constrained and must pursue creativity. The DTTI and “Make in India” initiative are two current concepts that can combine to form deliberate VIAA to strengthen US-India alignment. VIAA focuses on creating utility in the same way that a firm analyzes a chain of

¹³² Jerry R. Green, “Vertical Integration and Assurance of Markets” (Discussion Paper No. 383, Harvard Institute of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, 1974), 178.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 177.

activities and seeks to discover where integration can occur to create efficiencies and advantage. Regularly, terms like cooperation and collaboration are used amongst partners as ways to describe how activities can be aligned to create more utility. The term synergy comes to mind as an output of focusing on cooperative and collaborative opportunities. Synergy creates additional utility that would otherwise not be available if entities acted individually. However, the capture of the additional utility that synergy promises is much harder in practice than it appears in planning. Further, the shelf-life of synergy is fleeting unless constantly maintained through deliberate activity. This is where VAAA fit to create maximum utility. As VAAA are both committal and seek permanence in their form, utility from synergy is captured and cooperation and collaboration are achieved.

The United States is in a historically close strategic partnership with India in 2019.¹³⁴ As we have examined, the relationship is complex and has seen a range in distance in relation to alignment. If the United States empathizes with Indian strategic culture, the real value in the strategic partnership is discovering activity that creates long-term commitment. India historically prefers negotiations with leverage and aligns when necessary to suit their value proposition. Currently, Chinese activity makes the US-India strategic partnership logical and relatively easy to manage. The succession of signed agreements, talks, visits, and frameworks since the early 1990s has been a boon for both countries. However, strategy lies in the pursuit of continuous advantage.¹³⁵ Recent activity in the Kashmir region, and Russia looming as a potential partner, present obvious challenges. A real potential crisis for the US-India strategic partnership can arise from anomalies, unforeseen shifts in power dynamics, and creative strategy from adversarial regional powers in the Indo-Pacific.

¹³⁴ Davidson, *Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson*, 34.

¹³⁵ Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2005), 3.

US-India Alignment

The United States should pursue an alignment with India that empathizes with India's priorities while capturing formality and membership. Understanding the taxonomy for alignment, strategic partnership provides the widest range of options for states to align while remaining uncommitted. This is a particularly important form of alignment when layering on the conceptualization of India's strategic culture. Non-alignment, as a stance, is prevalent when reviewing India's post-colonial, modern history. The pursuit of strategic partnership with India is the right form of alignment for both the United States and the relationship. However, the referenced taxonomy in this paper gleans key components from each form of alignment that a malleable alignment like a strategic partnership can take on. Specifically, for the US-India alignment, this comes in the form of formality and membership from the alliance form of alignment. The US-India alignment in its current form should never be referred as an alliance. There are numerous examples in media and written works where this is a commonly used term. To use alliance for the US-India alignment betrays the current dance of power dynamics that exists between nations in the region and the world. It would imply a formal gaze upon a common threat which until this point is only a perceived "competitor" in China. As Wilkins wrote, alliances provide formality for use of military force against states outside of their own membership.¹³⁶ A strategic partnership that seeks formality and membership without the elements of "use of force against non-member states" captures elements that fit inside India's strategic culture while providing durability from commitment.

The US Army's Role

The US Army is fundamentally important to the US-India alignment both through tangible, directed activities and from an abstract relational perspective. The chain of guidance and doctrine from the executive branch down to the Army is well thought-out and detailed.

¹³⁶ Wilkins, "'Alignment' not 'Alliance,'" 63.

By definition, SC activities conducted across all phases of military operations (0-V) build defense relationships that promote overall US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations.¹³⁷

This definition of ends, provided by the Army SC Handbook, roughly encompasses the core aspects of what the Army's role in SC comprises. There is an incredible amount of nuance, agnostic to the relationship, that this definition does not illuminate. Specifically, for the US-India alignment, the Army plays a special role in the future of the strategic partnership. The US Army, a globally known military symbol, is an agent for progress in the long-term future of US-India alignment. As India, led by Modi, increasingly takes on leadership in the Indo-Pacific, they look to their partner nations for opportunities to leverage. The 2+2 dialogue, COMCASA, DTTI, LEMOA, Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement, and Major Defense Partnership all leverage the professionalism and expertise of the US military and more specifically the US Army. Foundational to all of these agreements and discussions is cooperation, coproduction, and increased partnership in security. There must be an agent that takes these frameworks off of paper and pushes them through the iteration and friction that gleans real, long-term value. The US Army is one of these primary agents.

The US Army's agency in this role for strengthening the US-India alignment is valuable from both nations' perspectives. As SC planning begins, utilizing detailed guidance and doctrine, the US Army, the trusted agent for relation interaction on the ground, acts as a unifying entity for agencies, organizations, and resources to come together. Commitment to exercises, military contact and security assistance are all great examples of this. The US Army, as an anchor point for combined exercise conceptualization, gives reason for iteration of COMCASA, DTTI, and LEMOA elements to jump from ideas to real practice. A common theme when the US Army is committed to engagement in SC activities is interoperability. This is no mistake. The utility of

¹³⁷ US Army, *DA PAM 11-31*, 2.

achieving interoperability is palpable but interoperability as a theme, derived from US Army led combined exercises, is a nod to the national, strategic level and alignment activity. This reverberates from the Soldiers on the ground exchanging together all the way to the offices of the heads of state and is without a doubt a point of discussion when they meet. The US Army's role as an agent for US-India alignment is critical as a bridge from the national strategic level down to the iterative, tangible SC activities on the ground.

Recommendations for the US

This paper establishes three specific recommendations, within the lens of VAAA and while defining the US Army's role, for re-enforcing a durable, long-term US-India alignment. A durable, long-term US-India alignment can be achieved through seeking formality and membership in the strategic partnership. Characteristics of formality and membership are commitment and permanence. VAAA by definition seek commitment and permanence. It is known that the current direction of progress and development in the strategic partnership is not guaranteed.¹³⁸ Understanding India's strategic perspective and choosing the correct efforts for future of the alignment is crucial.

The United States must pursue VAAA in persistent relational interaction. The current model for interaction between the United States and India relies on intermittent planned conferences and meetings at the national, strategic level. There is a cascading level of interaction that is growing at every echelon between the nations as the strategic partnership has grown but it is not enough. There is a gap in perception and desire for dialogue. If the "US and India do not regularly engage one another at all levels within the government, the relationship will not mature."¹³⁹ Increasing the relationship to persistent relational interaction will require a leadership emphasis and a cultural shift in the relationship. If the relationship continues to be dominated by

¹³⁸ Cara Abercrombie, "Realizing the Potential: Mature Defense Cooperation and the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership," *Asia Policy* 14, no. 1 (January 2019): 120.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

large gaps of time at the national level, the echelons below will continue to mimic that emphasis. Increase in the visibility of national discussion will start to shift the culture within the relationship.

In Cara Abercrombie’s study on US-India relations, she visualizes the multitude of defense dialogues the two countries have executed.¹⁴⁰ The current list of dialogues from the defense perspective is logical and meaningful to the relationship. However, the forty dialogues in total in the past fifteen years are more productive in discussion than output.¹⁴¹ Abercrombie notes, “there simply is not the natural, connective tissue between officials—informal as well as formal that one would expect of a relationship this broad and ambitious.”¹⁴² The key here is identifying why the United States does not have the same natural or robust interactive relationship that it does with other close nations. The formal structure of dialogues between the two nations has built a culture that restricts natural interactions. This is an inability of US and India to execute on a shared vision.¹⁴³

VIAA at the Army level focused on increasing relational interaction can shift the relationship into a more natural position. This starts with a deliberate increase in the number of officers and positions created for interaction in both nations’ organizations. A reciprocal increase in defense attache offices in both nations is a committed action to increase relationship growth.¹⁴⁴ In 2018, the United States and India participated in five major exercises and fifty military exchanges.¹⁴⁵ These are two fantastic metrics to observe the military exchange between the two nations. However, India is the United States’ “Major Defense Partner” for a reason and as such,

¹⁴⁰ Abercrombie, “Realizing the Potential,” 127.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 136.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 143.

¹⁴⁵ Davidson, *Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson*, 34.

metrics about known military exchanges should be emphasized less. A deliberate commitment to persistent exchange should become the focus. Strategically, China looms as the greatest threat to the United States' ability to preserve peace through strength. Understanding this perspective, it should be natural that US Indo-Pacific Command views interaction with India as top long-term priority. Instituting a cultural shift for the relationship to seek persistent exchange will have a VIAA effect on the Army's approach and ability to build the relationship. A portfolio of creative actions from the Army's doctrine of SCFAs in 'international suasion and collaboration' and 'assurance and regional confidence building' will be enabled by this emphasis. These VIAA with persistent exchange in mind will normalize US-India interaction and have an upward influence on US-India alignment.

The United States should seek true interoperability through dynamic VIAA. As previously noted, interoperability has a profound effect on both operations and perception of alignment. The desire for interoperability was a driving factor of creating and signing the COMCASA. Through COMCASA, India now has access to sensitive communication equipment and codes to be able to transfer information in real time with the United States. This is an exceptional development in the US-India alignment. LEMOA and COMCASA both push interoperability to the forefront of the strategic partnership. The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement, not yet signed, is the next step in progress for interoperability. This agreement will give India access to exchange of geospatial information from the United States.¹⁴⁶ Dynamic VIAA opportunity exists in setting up frameworks to iterate interoperability exercises at various echelons. More specifically, the Army can set up permanent interoperability frameworks to execute developments from the strategic, signed agreements.

¹⁴⁶ Huma Siddiqui, "BECA to be Inked Soon Between India and US? It is Topping Sitharaman's Agenda in US Next Week," *Financial Express*, November 29, 2018, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/be-ca-to-be-inked-soon-between-india-us-it-is-topping-sitharamans-agenda-in-us-next-week-inbox-x/1398097/>.

Army doctrine SCFA ‘combined operations capacity, interoperability, and standardization’ provides VIAA opportunities to codify relevant experience to match the developments of the signed agreements. Currently, the Army executes the American, British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Armies (ABCA) program. This permanently structured and funded program focuses on interoperability gaps and development of solutions by the ABCA armies.¹⁴⁷ A new program structured for interoperability with India is the kind of commitment oriented, permanence seeking VIAA that creates long-term durability. This type of program additionally emphasizes persistent exchange. Recently, discussion surrounding “The Quad” has formalized as the “US-Australia-India-Japan Consultations.”¹⁴⁸ This naming convention and the discussions from the meetings neatly reflects India’s strategic culture of non-commitment. Interoperability is a key point of discussion between the four countries. Developing a functioning Army interoperability program with India that mimics the ABCA and eventually invites the quad nations is a fantastic VIAA opportunity. This Army program would then also serve the role of helping to define more cooperation in the quadrilateral meetings and provide evidence of harmony in military operations between the nations.

The United States should create long-term synergy through VIAA in production. The DTTI is the primary driver in pushing the US-India defense relationship from transactional to a cooperative, coproduction relationship. Signed in 2012, the DTTI has been slow to actually provide utility for the strategic partnership.¹⁴⁹ There has been a “death by PowerPoint” ending to most meetings trying to utilize DTTI to grow the US-India relationship. This reflects similarly with identified shortcomings in the ability to naturally exchange communication between nations.

¹⁴⁷ US Army, *DA PAM 11-31*, 21.

¹⁴⁸ Alyssa Ayres, “The Quad and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” *Asia Unbound Blog*, November 20, 2018, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/quad-and-free-and-open-indo-pacific>.

¹⁴⁹ Aaron Mehta, “US, India Collaborating on Air-Launched Drone,” *Defense News*, March 18, 2019, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2019/03/18/us-india-collaborating-on-air-launched-drone/>.

While the billion-dollar defense deals between the United States and India have been a boon for the relationship, these transactions lack commitment and represent no permanence. Russia is just as willing a partner to make defense sales with India at any opportunity. The DTTI, by design, is excellent for use as a VAAA that can truly transform US-India alignment. The “Make in India Initiative” partners with India’s policy on strategic partnerships to allow private sector participation in the manufacture of defense platforms and equipment.¹⁵⁰ These two opportunities are leverage to capture long-term, relationship durability that India does not normally explore. It is a convergence of their desire to grow internally while exposing external investment and expertise to India.

The Army’s SCFA ‘international armaments cooperation’ is the exact VAAA opportunity to play a role in developing the US-India alignment through coproduction. Recently, the DTTI has begun to slowly produce some innovation. The Army can enable the relationship by providing research and testing opportunities as a forcing function for streamlining DTTI activity. Opportunities for two of the largest armies in the world to explore and test coproduced technology are extremely valuable. There are obvious patterns here for maritime emphasis in the Indian Ocean Region and coproduction of advanced naval technology. The more the Army and sister services can incorporate DTTI and the Make in India Initiative activities, the more the US-India alignment will flourish and become committed.

Conclusion

The US-India alignment is complex and requires a deep understanding of US-India history and the strategic culture of India. Developing a taxonomy for alignment helps to orient government leaders to understand how to view the US-India alignment. The strategic partnership form of alignment provides opportunity for both nations to find convergence of interests.

¹⁵⁰ Make in India, “Defense Manufacturing,” Make in India, accessed February 5, 2019, <http://www.makeinindia.com/sector/defence-manufacturing>.

However, the relationship is not perfect and lacks the durability needed for a long-term future. Exploring VIAA provides a window into what kind of actions are necessary to build commitment and permanence between the United States and India.

As India moves further from a specified, non-alignment strategy but remains uncommitted towards partners, the United States needs to build opportunities for maturing the alignment. The three identified areas for recommendations each comprise gaps where commitment and permanence can be achieved to capture formality and membership in the strategic partnership. They additionally specify what role the Army can play in enabling a more mature US-India alignment through VIAA. The looming threats of China and Russia produce very different perspectives between the United States and India. It is in planning for the long-term and an unknown future that allows clarity around why relationship durability is so important for the US-India alignment.

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