of the Indian Police in a systematic and scientific manner keeping in mind the altered charter of duties of the police in a democratic polity. For that a new modernisation initiative on a massive scale and directed specifically at training needs to be undertaken to identify priority areas in each State and provision of special funds for the identified areas and purposes. The book brings out in a convincing manner that police reform is critical now more than ever before. It also provides a useful reading for understanding of problems of insurgency, terrorism, separatism and decaying political process both from the structural and procedural perspectives. The book thus is a welcome addition not only as a study on police but also in public administration in general as well as political sociology.

**Indo-US Relations: The Road Ahead**

L. VENKATESHWARAN

Many significant agreements have been signed in the areas of defence, legal, science-technology and nuclear energy issues between India and the United States over the past one year. There is a feeling of deja vu, especially in the bureaucratic circles, that this special relationship would catapult India’s entry into the league of growing major powers. Yet a couple of key areas need clarifications. What has made India gamble by shifting from a non-aligned, pro-‘Islamic world’ policy followed for the last 50 years to a pro-American and hence a slightly antagonistic ‘Islamic world’ policy? What are the benefits of an entry into such a partnership with the US? murderer."

India stands to benefit immensely by actively engaging with a country that has the best infrastructure and technology in the world. First, the US military is five-six times stronger than its next best competitors. It spends eight to ten times as much on the military as does its nearest competitor. Furthermore, it has a defence budget higher than the entire gross national products of countries like Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Libya. This allows the US to provide logistical support for large forces around the world to carry out large, complicated, joint-force operations that no one else can even think of matching. Other US advantages, over its nearest competitors, in technology, training, strategic and operational thought, and alliance support flow from advantages in money and organisational capability. In spite of its flawed policies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US military has no near competitors.

Second, the US also has the largest and most technologically powerful economy in the world, with a per capita GDP of $ 42,000. The GDP-real growth rate of 3.5 per cent is high for a developed economy. It has a low unemployment rate of 5.1 per cent and a poverty rate of only 12 per cent. US firms are at or near the forefront in technological advances, especially in computers and in medical, aerospace, and military equipment. Significantly, the response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 showed the remarkable resilience of its economy. The war in March-April 2003 between a US-led coalition and Iraq, and the subsequent occupation of Iraq, required major shifts in national resources to the military. The economy suffered from a sharp increase in energy prices in mid-2005, but by late in the year those prices dropped back to earlier levels. Further, Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage in the Gulf Coast region in August 2005, but had a small impact on the overall GDP growth for the year. Again, in spite of showing signs of regression of late, the American economy is ahead of its nearest competitors including Japan and China.

Third, India with its burgeoning economy, cheap labour, huge markets and a budding infrastructure is rapidly moving towards becoming a major power in the world. Today it is a major power in South Asia. Thus the necessity and opportunity to forge a proactive relationship with the United States have grown over the last few years. It is evident that the United States is the sole superpower with unparalleled economic and

The author is a Research Assistant at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi; he is also a Research Scholar, American Studies Programme, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
political power—in this situation it makes little sense for countries to establish a group in opposition to the United States. In fact, most countries which advocate a multipolar world place high value on positive relations with the United States. As such, rather than confronting the United States, they hope to foster an ethic of plurality and consensus to ensure collective decision-making. This provides India the ideal platform to forge a partnership with the United States. The partnership will be viewed as one among equals compelled by each other’s necessities rather than an unequal one between a superpower and a developing power.

Fourth, India not only stands to benefit from the predominantly global outlook of the United States, but also improve its strategic influence vis-à-vis regional manoeuvrability. Actively engaging the United States will help India break the shackles of a Pakistan-centric foreign policy. It will also help in having an important influence on Pakistan’s relations with the US. Further, China will be compelled to back off from the policy of restricting India regionally. The American influence will help India in initiating a military relationship with Israel which will be primarily useful for buying defence equipments to protect India’s security in Jammu and Kashmir.

Fifth, the Special Partnership will help India get a seat on the UNSC Council and the G-8 in the long term. The US would prefer a country which has a solid record for democratic stability as an ally in the group than countries like China (different system of governance), Russia (its old Cold War foe) or France (anti-American over the Iraq war). The United States and India have also demonstrated a pragmatic understanding of each other’s concerns and constraints. If India manages to play its cards smartly to maximise its benefits in this partnership, and at the same time bring up vital issues affecting the majority of the Third World countries on a global platform, then it would have truly and significantly arrived in the big league.

There are also four broad obstacles in the way of a smooth, uncluttered relationship. The first and biggest one is continued US support for Pakistan, a critical ally in the war against terrorism. India is still bristling at the $3 billion aid the Bush Administration is providing to Pakistan (over four years) and its recent decision to sell advanced F-16 fighters to a country with a questionable track record both in fighting terrorism and in protecting its nuclear weapons technology.

Second, if India is to become a global leader, it needs also to address issues that have the potential of derailing India’s economic and political successes. These issues include resolving the India-Pakistan conflict, addressing the rise of fundamentalism and communalism that has threatened India’s secular fabric, and dealing with the spread in India of HIV/AIDS which could have severe political, and economic consequences if left unchecked. Finally, an inefficient bureaucracy and obstacles to economic reform can reduce the prospects for openness and foreign investment in the Indian economy.

Third, India’s distrust of the US includes the fact that Uncle Sam is not a reliable partner or supplier. It sees the United States as quick to entice and then dismiss strategic partners when US strategic interests change. This fundamental view arises from the values espoused by the American society, where personal relationships have little importance, and is in direct contrast to the values of loyalty, commitment and long term family relationships that the Indian society stands for.

Fourth, Indian intellectuals view close relations with the US as ‘colonialism through the back door’, and so a stronger Indo-US military relationship could set off strong political dissent within India. The Left parties, which are a part of the coalition government in India, have vociferously criticised engaging the United States while a section of American bureaucracy has also been strongly critical of the burgeoning Indo-US relations. The influence of these two constituencies in the decision-making processes of both the countries will be a key factor in the strengthening of bilateral relations.

To Our Readers...

*Does your copy of Mainstream reach late or sometimes not at all?*

The Postal Service is not in our hands but we would like to see Mainstream reach your hands. You can help us by:

1. Typing your name and address clearly so that there are no errors in addressing your copy.
2. Quoting your Subscription Number in your letter; perhaps your subscription has expired.
3. Writing for a replacement copy within six weeks of the date of issue which has been misplaced.

30

June 2-8, 2006 ■ MAINSTREAM