

CHAPTER V

ANALYZING THE MODES OF INTERACTIONS

The last chapter highlighted how engagement strategy differs when applied by superpower or regional powers. For superpower engagement is a strategy that is applied to specific states to modify or influence their behavior through developing an interdependent relationship by providing aids and incentives and most importantly prestige that less powerful states will always seek. But for regional powers that have limited resources but desires to achieve great power status utilizes the engagement not as a state specific approach but a broader integration strategy aimed at developing relations with the superpower and at the same time deepening their relations with other great powers and like- minded smaller powers. Thus, despite the difference in their view of engagement the superpower and regional powers engage with each other which indicate that they use certain means of interaction to tide over the difference and helps to further their relation. This chapter will try to outline such modes of engagement which are utilized by United States and India to maintain their partnership.

For United States engagement strategy is a means to increase interdependency by offering aid and incentives with the objective to ensure conformity with U.S established norms and thereby ensuring the stability of the U.S led world order (Resnick, 2001). India seeks engagement to attain resources and status but it also promotes changes to the established status quo thus, it also exercises engagements to further its interests. In their attempt to cooperate on common interests and at the same time to satisfy their individual specific interests they will adopt diverse engagement strategies. Most strategies or policies from balancing or bandwagoning are developed as responses of secondary states to power preponderance in the system, so in my attempt to identify the engagement strategies adopted in Indo- U.S relations, a dominant portion will deal with India's responses in managing its relations with the superpower. But again it is oversimplification to assume that preponderant power being the most powerful has a smooth ride in ensuring engagements and its strategy can be either providing incentives or exhibiting threat and we will try to address how dominant powers also apply strategies when confronted with divergences or non-

conformity to its established norms.

The chapter will try to understand the below stated aspects

- a) What kind of understanding informs the choices of engagement strategies of U.S and India?
- b) Analyzing various modes of interaction or engagement strategies and how they are applied to forward common or specific interests.
- c) Special emphasis will be given on how as an emerging power what kind of engagement strategies can be adopted by India to balance its relation with the preponderant power and to forward its indigenous interests.
- d) Identifying whether engagement strategies can go beyond responding to pre-eminent power and enable in altering the structures of the system as desired by emerging powers.
- e) Identifying if any dominant strategy or a specific combination of strategies emerges as suitable to further Indo-U.S relations.

The understanding that informs the choice of engagement strategies

As discussed in the last chapter that engagement strategies are adopted by superpowers and regional powers to forward specific interests and these are sensitive to power positions, immediate concerns, greater strategic objectives and also the larger international system. The study will try to compare United States and India in terms of power asymmetry, specific demands or interests, strategic objectives to identify how these factors influence the aims of engagement and what they need while choosing engagement strategies. A table is constructed by exhibiting U.S and India side by side to depict their difference in power that influences their objectives and demands, individual strategic interests and also interdependence.

Table 2 represents how power asymmetry, difference in strategic priorities influence the framework of engagement between U.S as a superpower and India as a regional power. Despite divergences as mentioned in the previous chapters, engagements are necessary and they apply different engagement strategies to achieve or maintain their interests. They identify common interests to engage but as seen in the last chapter they differ in their final objectives. Thus to cater to specific common interests and to

balance those with the differing interests they choose strategies to engage which will be referred to as 'engagement strategies' or 'modes of interaction' interchangeably. The aim will be to identify such modes of engagement and to underline under what conditions or in what means they are being utilized. From the United States' perspective India is an economically growing democratic country that shares U.S interest in maintaining the security and stability in South Asia and surrounding areas including the vital sea lanes of Indian Ocean region thus, engaging India is definitely in the U.S interests (Tellis, 2015). But India is opposed to the American alliance based partnership and some of its objectives contradict with U.S policies. Then again India is an emerging country that seeks higher status in an international system dominated by the U.S and it also seeks resources and technology to upgrade its capabilities which U.S can provide. Thus, the strategy of U.S will increasing contacts across multiple issue areas like enhancement of diplomatic contacts in the form of extension of diplomatic recognition, promotion of the target state's membership in international institutions or regimes or by enhancing military contacts by arms transfer, military aid or cooperation, exchange and training programs, security building measures or through economic means (Resnick, 2001:560).

For India it needs to enhance its capabilities; support and promotion from the superpower will help it to accrue the resources and also will help it strengthen its position in the international system (Paranjpe, 2013). But as dealt in previous chapters India wants to promote niche regional security order, wants to maintain its strategic autonomy in decision making, espouses a flexible, accommodative international order with diverse centers of power. Thus however beneficial it is to have a close relationship with the superpower be, India cannot limit its engagement by completely aligning with U.S though it understands that it has to work within an international system maintained by U.S. As observed in the last chapter, India will utilize its engagement strategy to build relations with other great powers and smaller powers to promote its interests through bilateral or multilateral cooperation at regional institutional level and that can be extended to forward common interests of developing countries within larger global structures. Thus, engagement for India is crucial to attain the recognition and capabilities but at the same time should help it to bond with other powers to forward the changes it seeks in the existing system and also to promote inclusive, flexible alternative structures.

Table 2 Comparison of U.S and India as Superpower and Regional power

UNITED STATES (Superpower)	INDIA (Regional power)
It has dominance over all forms of capabilities and resources including material and ideational.	It has limited resources in terms of both material and influence. Hence, will pursue engagement to attain resources.
It has global influence and highest status in the international order.	It has regional dominance with limited global presence and seeks greater status and influence
It has constructed the international system with values and norms to suit its own ideas and interests	It survives and works within an international system dictated by the superpower.
Distributes public goods, provides aids and incentives to strengthen its primacy	Requires aids and support from the superpower to enhance its capabilities.
Its policies are primarily motivated to retain its dominance and thereby views rise of new powers which possess the ability to counter U.S power as threats.	Wants a higher status and espouses the desire to promote alterations in the existing system
Believes in an alliance based policy to secure allegiance.	Never been in alliance and firmly believes in maintaining strategic autonomy.
Invests and engages with regional powers to maintain stability and its strategic interests in the specific regions with higher goal retaining its dominance.	Has its own interests in maintaining stability in its region and neighbourhood hence, can cooperate with superpower but its higher goal is to construct a niche regional security structure with a leading role for itself in it.

Engagement Strategies

In international relations there exists substantial discussion regarding what strategies should states undertake in managing their relations with more powerful states? The two most prominent and highlighted strategies or options are balancing and its counterpart bandwagoning. States to preserve and promote their interests will either individually or in unison try to balance the dominant powers or at the other end of the spectrum they would align with the dominant power (Waltz, 1979; Walt, 1987). The end of the cold war and the subsequent rise of United States as the superpower led to new debates about what strategies states should follow in a new international system with the biggest power asymmetry. It was but naturally considered that states would together against U.S (Mearsheimer, 1990). The most crucial debate arose around why states are not balancing against the United States? To answer this phenomenon a new debate was initiated between two competing concepts of bandwagoning and soft balancing. Proponents of bandwagoning proposed that that the overwhelming superiority of U.S over all important dimensions of power together with it being not broadly threatful and the provider of security and public goods has restrained states to indulge in balancing and made bandwagoning a prudent choice (Brooks, Wohlforth,

2008; Lieber & Alexander,2004). Countering the claims of bandwagoning many argued that instead of hard balancing states are indulging in soft balancing against the United States (Pape 2004; Layne, 2006). With the advent of analysis over regional power, regional orders in international relations and a host of strategies were put forward as options for secondary states in their relations with the superpower. These strategies include Omni-enmeshment, hedging, binding, bonding (Goh, 2013, Koga, 2018). Despite the difference in strategic understanding and objectives between India and U.S they need to engage to forward specific interests they will apply or choose certain strategies to pursue desirable outcomes. This chapter will try to identify what engagement strategies can be utilized by India or United States to further their partnership and to satisfy particular interests.

The engagement strategies will be analyzed with certain underlying propositions. Firstly, most of the strategies as mentioned above are developed as responses to threats arising from a dominant power in the system.²³ The study would like to go beyond the logic of threat perception and assert that states will choose engagement strategies not only to respond to manage its relation with the superpower but also to attain strategic interests, indigenous objectives and desired outcomes in the system. Thus, these strategies are to be viewed as means to secure interests and not singularly motivated to respond to perceived threat.²⁴

Secondly, emerging powers will utilize engagement strategies differently than other smaller or secondary states. Emerging powers have considerable capacity, strong enough to assert some degree of autonomy and espouses greater status by establishing indigenous ideas and structures thus; they can adopt multiple strategies to achieve specific objectives.

Thirdly, the strategies need not be bracketed as in complete contradiction or

²³ Kenneth Waltz considers the presence of great powers in a system will automatically make the smaller states indulge in balancing while Walt asserts that it is threat perception and not great capabilities that leads to balancing. See Stephen M. Walt, *The Origin of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1959)

²⁴ Chong Ja Ian adds two dimensions to states adopting strategies in relation to system leader based on relative power position to pre-eminent state and integration in the world system. See Chong Ja Ian, *Revisiting Responses To Power Preponderance: Going Beyond The Balancing-Bandwagoning Dichotomy*

compliance in response to managing relations with great powers and a better understanding can be attained if we consider on outlining combinations of strategies adopted by states to specific interests at the same time.

International relations is often dominated by great power politics and it is not very unusual that most engagement strategies are developed to decipher the responses of smaller states to power preponderance based on threat perception. Broadening the scope of engagement strategies will help us to understand the behavior of non-leading states beyond just managing threat perception from the dominant power. It is pertinent to mention here that the works on identifying diverse engagement refers to the standard term of secondary power without acknowledging the different category of powers that falls within the ambit of secondary powers. Such generalizations are inefficient in recognizing that secondary powers ranges from middle powers, regional powers to small powers who vary from each other in terms of power capabilities, strategic objectives and they will respond to power preponderance in accordance to particular needs and positions. A regional power with considerable resources has the ability to respond differently than a small power with very limited resources. The inclination of focusing on one strategy and applying it to the general concept of secondary powers leads to a flawed and partial conceptualization of engagement strategies adopted by non-leading states. Thus, the study will attempt to analyze these strategies beyond the threat perception prism, understand how regional powers or emerging powers with certain advantages choose the strategies and whether these strategies can be adopted in combinations.

Soft Balancing

In presence of a predominant power in the international system the smaller states will try to balance the greater power by either building up their own hard power resources or by forming countervailing alliances with other weaker powers. Thus, balancing is a form of confrontational strategy that weaker states may adopt in terms of threat arising from a greater power. After the end of cold war it was predicted by balance of power theory that states will balance against the United States (Mearsheimer, 2001) but the absence of any such evidence of balancing gave rise two new contending theories of bandwagoning and soft balancing. The study will deal with soft balancing first then will be analyzing bandwagoning.

The idea of soft balancing argues that the absence of evidence in regard to hard balancing in the form of massive military buildup or countervailing alliances doesn't refer to absence of balancing but it signifies that secondary states are 'soft balancing' by utilizing tacit informal means. Soft balancing may occur through diplomatic means of international institutions, economic statecraft and ad hoc diplomatic arrangements (Pape, 2005). In the case of an international system with an overwhelming superpower that leads the international order and also delivers public goods, regional powers which are considerably less powerful from the superpower and even great powers will find the direct confrontation strategy of hard balancing difficult. Adding to these regional powers benefits from the technology or resources and the status and integration it gets being in a relationship with the superpower thus tacit means will be more suitable for them. The overwhelming power asymmetry dissuades any emerging power to internally balance the superpower and it will seek to act collectively with other secondary powers (Pape, 2005). Pape (2005:17) considers this initiative towards collective cooperation as a scope for hard balancing measures in future. But this cooperation can also be seen as an opportunity for emerging powers to assert their influence and ability which will add to their status attribution. Paul states that soft balancing flourishes on broad participation of states especially when they are economically interdependent which increases their leverage (Paul, 2018). Thus, emerging powers that enter into diplomatic entanglements with other secondary states within larger international institutions or cooperating to build niche regional economic forums have the opportunity to further its integration within others, assert its capabilities and convince others of its ability and commitment to bring about desired changes in the international system. The means of soft balancing can therefore be utilized beyond addressing threats.

India has never been a part of any American alliance, a very definite feature that remained ingrained in American foreign policy and the U.S led global order. India has on the other hand espoused ideas contrary to those professed by the U.S led world order most prominently noticed in its Non-aligned movement during cold war and the ongoing protests against norms and conditions of the international order and its institutions and has voiced for more equitability. Added to this lies its potent desire to achieve major power status which it believes to be more plausible in an international system with diffused power centers. However, India maintains a

strategic partnership with U.S and even benefits from engaging with the superpower. The benefits it accrues from the superpower and the exceptional power asymmetry dissuades India to undertake direct balancing measures against the United States. Despite the fact that India wants to bring about changes to the existing structure and seeks a multipolar international order to achieve its desired status it also identifies common interests with U.S which benefits some of its strategic interests thus, tacit means are more suitable than direct opposition. Then soft balancing the predominant power suits the purpose. “A core purpose of soft balancing is not to coerce or even to impede the superior state’s current actions, but to demonstrate resolve in a manner that signals a commitment to resist the superpower’s future actions (if it becomes threatening)” (Pape, 2005: 37)

Can we notice soft balancing tendencies in India’s foreign policy?

Soft balancing occurs through four dominant means like territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, economic strengthening and signals of resolve to balance. By utilizing entangling diplomacy states may use international institutions or ad hoc diplomatic maneuvers to delay or frustrate a superior state’s plan (Pape, 2005). The rise of new powers like China or India have brought to the forefront new ideas, values that are often not in consonance with the established visions of global order espoused by the existing powers. India has participated in the international order based on its deep rooted commitment to multilateralism. India’s involvement in the international institutions has never been solely based on recognition rather it has ardently advocated these institutions to be more attentive to the unique values and concerns of the developing countries of the world. India participated and even led the Non-aligned movement and the call for the new international economic order during the cold war bipolar politics. In the Post-Cold war situation India continued to level its protests against the domination of western values and ideas in the international institutions which it saw as being more inclined to serve American interests. Since the formation of WTO India can be seen voicing its resistance to the expansion of trade rules in new issue areas such as labour standards, government procurement to the Doha development agenda. It has individually or at times with other developing countries in the form of G33 or the QUAD resisted the Doha development Agenda based on the insularity in the extent of special and differential treatment provided to developing

countries on issues related to agricultural export subsidies, access to patented medicines²⁵. India has specifically resisted the U.S insistence on developing countries to agree to more substantial reductions in tariffs and to limit the number of import sensitive and ‘special products’ that would be exempted from cuts. India with further cooperation with other developing countries managed to modify the ‘Agreement on Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) by allowing compulsory licensing in certain circumstances which is severely contested by U.S as it wants a liberal IPR regime which allows ever greening of patents.

Despite its rise India has continued to view international agendas being biased towards serving the interests of the established powers. Rather than associating itself with the ideas projected by the developed countries its standing in international forums is highly motivated to push for greater emancipation and benefits of the developing or underdeveloped countries. In climate change negotiations India has identified itself as a part of the developing world. Since the initiation of the international regime on climate change negotiations India has played an important role in building coalitions with developing countries on emission reduction, finance and technology transfers. India strongly advocated for significant reductions in levels of per capita emissions of developed countries and assured access to technology on preferential terms (Sengupta, 2019).

It has successfully resisted many agendas promoted by developed countries on the ground that those affect the developing countries negatively. India in coalition with G77 countries during the Kyoto Protocol resisted the attempt of developed countries to introduce ‘voluntary commitments’ on the grounds that it can further deprive the entitlement of developing countries to grow.²⁶. India while being considered a rising

²⁵ India has time and again resisted many international norms proposed by WTO ranging from trade facilitation to agricultural subsidies. For further details see <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/india-protests-against-wto-plan/articleshow/23679527.cms>, <https://thewire.in/economy/india-wto-trips-waiver>, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/farmers-seek-indias-exit-from-wto-stage-protest/article65520395.ece>

For India’s protest against labour standards see https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/bey5_e.htm, for government procurement and India’s stance see <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/India-and-the-WTO-procurement-deal/article20582179.ece>

²⁶ India’s climate change negotiations have been firmly rooted in its belief for the concern yet addressing the biases it renders towards developing countries. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/indias-role-in-the-international-climate-negotiations/>, For

power continued to align itself with the cause of developing countries. During the Copenhagen Summit in 2009, India vehemently negotiated against the idea of ‘quantitative targets’ to be levied for fast growing developing countries (Times of India, 2009)

The then Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh asserted that India’s emissions will never exceed that of developed countries even while it pursues policies of development and economic growth but will not agree to quantitative targets as these will be counterproductive to its development process. India has closely coordinated with large developing countries like China, Brazil, South Africa through BASIC group or through group of Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) to resist the U.S led developed countries agenda to do away with differentiation clause in the agreements. Indian negotiators working together with the BASIC and LMDC groups have continued to seek ways to incorporate more traditional understandings on differentiation and conditionality of action within these emerging rules.⁹As a rising nation that aspires a global role India stood in firm opposition to major powers like U.S, E.U countries to maintain the differentiation clause. With time India has modified its own climate change policy and supported the adoption of the Paris Agreement while remaining dedicated to free itself from any sector specific obligation and to ensure additional implementation benefits from developed countries (Kalra, 2016).

Apart from resisting bias in norms and rules within international institutions in conjunction with other like-minded powers or individually, India also promotes and participates in niche regional institutions. Two prominent means of practicing soft balancing is strengthening regional economic blocs and building ad-hoc diplomatic arrangements. India is an active member of various regional institutions and regional blocs within larger international institutions. India has been hugely enthusiastic in forming and participating in regional institutions ranging from cooperating with its South Asian states in SAARC, integrating with Southeast Asian neighbours through ASEAN and BIMSTEC, with other potential regional powers like China, Brazil, South Africa in BRICS and IBSA, with extended neighbourhood of Indian Ocean and Mekong Sub region. India promotes regional trade and transaction through various

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1795071>,

regional economic blocs, especially BRICS. BRICS is committed to bringing changes and reform in the West dominated financial system and the misappropriations in the international economic governance. It has invested in infrastructural development, creation of currency reserve agreement for use in any financial crisis and the members have proposed introduction of special drawing rights which can be swapped with dollar at a prefixed rate thereby providing an alternative of dollar as a global currency. It has expanded its cooperation to address pressing global issues highlighting its potential to develop into an alternative institutional framework.²⁷

India seems to undertake the tacit diplomatic means as per soft balancing to respond to the dominant power. However, it must be stressed that India duly shares a strategic partnership and multifaceted cooperation with the same dominant power. The objective of soft balancing lies in the intent and resolve of the emerging powers that are utilizing the informal tacit means to upgrade into hard balancing if the dominant power becomes threatful. India involves in ad-hoc coalitions, regional economic strengthening as means of soft balancing but does it indicate a resolve to balance U.S dominated international order? India's participation in these various diplomatic and economic arrangements signifies its willingness to pursue the common interests in a collective manner with other emerging and developing countries to portray their collective dissatisfaction against the established norms of the international order to put conjoined pressure to modify or bring about changes. India as an emerging power seeks to present its indigenous ideas and values to build its recognition that it feels are not adequately represented in the present international system. It seeks to revise or challenge the system less from power equations or threat perception but more from the desire to project its own ideas or norms that often runs contrary to the prevalent ones which renders aspects of the present order unacceptable. Thus, India can be said to practice soft balancing to resist or challenge for further claims of redistribution and recognition but it is far less rooted in the assumption of future threat from the dominant power.

²⁷ BRICS ushers a way towards alternative structure, for details see <https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/brics-nations-offer-a-new-world-order-as-alternative-to-the-west/article66667657.ece>, vom Hau, M., Scott, J. & Hulme, D. Beyond the BRICs: Alternative Strategies of Influence in the Global Politics of Development. *Eur J Dev Res* **24**, 187–204 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2012>.

Bandwagoning

Bandwagoning is a strategy employed by secondary states to align with the dominant power to secure its survival, minimize threats and also gain from being in proximity of the powerful. Bandwagoning is generally understood to be the decision by a state to align itself with the threatening power in order to either neutralize the threat or benefit from the spoils of victory (Kang, 2009). In an international system with United States as the superpower bandwagoning seems to be the most profitable strategy for non-leading states as the cost of balancing such unprecedented power is huge and most importantly this power provides incentives and benefits which makes aligning with it more lucrative. A regional power that aspires a major power role that seeks changes in the present system bandwagoning with the dominant power though lucrative might not assist in its aim to project its distinct ideas.

India as a regional power with global power ambitions necessitates its close relation with the dominant power. Maintaining a partnership with U.S provides many benefits from acquiring material and technological resources to recognition and status in the international system. The presence of a new rising power in the neighbourhood further incentivize India's motive to align with the U.S. Bandwagoning can thereby be a lucrative option but given India's stress on maintaining its strategic autonomy and its desire to be recognized based on its niche ideas makes it difficult. However, India has supported and sided with U.S on specific issue areas and has deepened its cooperation at lengths so can they be cited as bandwagoning tendencies on India's part?

Since India signed the Civil Nuclear Deal with United States there has been much propagation regarding India's bandwagoning tendency. India has further deepened its cooperation with the U.S on many core issues like defense and security. The defense framework agreement coupled with India's signature to the logistics agreements which are considered to be fundamental agreements that U.S signs with its allies give further impression of bandwagoning. India certainly benefits from these agreements like U.S support for India's membership to the four important instruments of non-proliferation regime namely the Nuclear Supplier's Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, the Wassaner Agreement and the Australia Group. The logistics agreements also provide India with topographical and aeronautical data and

products, encrypted communication equipment and systems and U.S recognition of India as a potential global power. But a closer look into such cooperative arrangements would point to the fact that each of them has a common clause of being modified to suit certain aspects of India specific demands. There are modifications and amendments made to agreement frameworks and even laws to realize such cooperation. India differs from the U.S strategic views on many issues like nuclear non- proliferation, interoperability of military and intelligence agreements and this joined by India's reservations in getting into binding clauses that are fundamental to important agreements or cooperative mechanisms that U.S has with its close allies. India continues to oppose many U.S led agendas or ideas in international institutions independently or in coalition with others. The underlying idea of bandwagoning is that states with limited power capabilities will align with the dominant power to avoid confrontation and to accrue the benefits by being compliant to it. Thus, a secondary state that chooses to bandwagon accepts that its interests are best served by being in alignment with the dominant power and limits aspects of opposition or resistance. India's cooperation with the U.S should be termed as flexible alignments whereby India is seen to cooperate avoiding binding clauses or inducing modified clauses and retains its right to oppose or resist U.S policies or agendas when they do not match with Indian strategic views.

The rise of China as a potential global power has further excavated the question whether India should bandwagon with the U.S to balance a common strategic concern? Many discussions clouted around the opinion that India should definitely align with U.S to effectively manage China's dominion over the region. India's limited power capabilities will be sufficiently complimented by U.S power preponderance and it furthers efficient balancing to forward the common cause of preventing a Chinese dominated Asia- Pacific. Rajesh Rajagopalan writes for *Carnegie India*'s report on 'India's Strategic Choices, "The most important benefit of deepening such a partnership is that this would help India balance China. This is a unique benefit that by itself should suffice as the basis of a partnership, because no other country aside from the United States, or even a combination of countries, can provide India this benefit. The United States is an attractive partner because of four factors: its power, its self-interest, its external balancing strategy, and its willingness to partner with India" (Rajagopalan, 2017). On similar lines Daniel Twining asserts

that India needs the United States to help balance Chinese power in Asia so that it can get on with the central goal of developing its economy. It stands to lose from any U.S. retreat from Asia that leaves India alone to manage the threat posed by its northern neighbor, which would require an enormous infusion of resources into national defense and away from the drivers of domestic development (Twining, 2020)

Despite such enthusiasm for bandwagoning as the effective strategic choice for India to balance the Chinese dominance we see India being cautious in entering into binding military or defense agreements with the U.S, it conducts joint naval exercises in the South China sea but have not indulged in Joint Patrolling and most importantly India cooperates with China on international forums to resist against ideas projected by U.S and other developed countries. Such behaviour on India's part points to the fact that even in face of potential threat from a rising power India prefers not to bandwagon completely with U.S. That should not just be understood as India being prudent or fence sitting; rather it must be understood that as an emerging power India has definite strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific that it wants to pursue on its own terms and might be in contrast with those followed by the U.S.

While stressing on India's Indo Pacific strategy Lian Bo writes that India actively responds to America's Indo-Pacific initiative and deepens its strategic coordination and collaboration with the US and its Asia-Pacific allies. However, India has reservations about border, connotation and objectives of the Indo-Pacific. India has shaped its strategic behavior with "cautious positivity" as its characteristic. This kind of strategic behavior partly responds to America's strategic intention-pre-alignment and also hopes to redefine its strategic relations with the US, the hegemon, the rising countries, America's Asia-Pacific allies, ASEAN and Russia in order to achieve an advantageous position in this relationship network (Bo, 2021). The concern and uncertainty around China's rise in Asia can be seen as a possibility for India to strengthen its position and undertake strategic involvement to consolidate its position. "New Delhi seized the opportunities offered by the changing regional and global landscape to fashion a new and more assertive role for itself in the Indo-Pacific ..." (Mukherjee, 2021).

Omni- Enmeshment

Secondary states adopt strategies in consideration of their relative power position to the preponderant power and their level of integration in the international system. Apart from these emerging powers also adopt strategies that help in projecting their own status. Such complexity exhibited by secondary states in their choice of engagement strategies have opened up discussion about new strategies that goes beyond the dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning.

The strategy aims at enmeshing a preponderant power through sustained engagements and exchanges to ensure its deep involvement in the region. This strategy works through certain means like making efforts to include various major powers in the region's strategic affairs through regional institutions and bilateral arrangements, (b) to attract the major powers to deeper political and defense relationship to increase their stakes in the region's stability, (c) to turn the geopolitical reality of great power penetration into the secondary state's benefit by involvement in building strategic cooperation, trade agreements, joint military and naval exercises (Goh, 2008)

Though this strategy have been predominantly based on the response of South East Asian to major power presence in the region but this can also be considered as a strategy of an emerging power like India that needs to balance the presence of a superpower and a rising major power in the region. As an emerging power India's ambition for a major power status should be considered transcending its immediate neighbourhood and aiming for a greater presence where Indo-Pacific features significantly. The Indo-Pacific has a substantial U.S presence that is aimed at retaining its influence in the region and also it has witnessed a growing Chinese influence as the rising global power. Thus, India seeks its major power status within an international system dominated by the U.S which has a significant presence in the region and along with it India has to consider the rise of China as a global power within the same sphere of influence. India has prominent power asymmetry with U.S and is considerably less powerful than China. It has strategic cooperation with U.S which entails deeper strategic and defense cooperation that helps India to balance the growing Chinese influence in the region. Simultaneously it maintains a close bilateral relation with China and even cooperates with it on international forums to protest against U.S led global norms. It tries to enmesh both U.S and China through sustained

engagements in bilateral relations as well as in regional and global aspects. To tackle the balance of power challenges India chooses to enmesh both the superpower and the rising major power in deeper diplomatic and strategic cooperation rather than confronting one and siding with the other. A larger aim of such enmeshment is to retain the stability in the region which is necessary for realizing India's own desire for a major power status.

The means through which omni-enmeshment works can be identified with India's strategies while engaging with U.S and China. Firstly, India tries to include both the powers in the regional strategic affairs to maintain stability. The growing concern about the security environment in Asia and the need to integrate a robust security partnership between U.S and India can be traced in their Joint statements and the Strategic Dialogues. With the Obama administration's rebalance to Asia Policy further strengthened the security cooperation with India aiming to create an open and inclusive regional architecture in Asia- Pacific region. India also engages on regional security issues. India and China have established more than thirty dialogue mechanisms ranging from political, economic to international and regional issues. India has a high level Dialogue Mechanism on counter terrorism and security with China (Ministry of External Affairs, 2017).

Secondly, it forges closer economic and political relationships with these powers to increase their stake in the region's stability. It substantially gains from the strategic, economic and defense engagements that it builds with dominant powers.

India has multifaceted cooperation with U.S that entails a robust economic relationship, security agreements, joint military exercises, high technology and civil nuclear cooperation and a growing defense partnership. India thus benefits from such cooperation with U.S and also rather than being sidelined by the greater U.S presence in the region it has carved out its own important position within larger U.S policy and involvement in the region.

It can be noticed that despite India's strategic partnership with U.S it engages profoundly with China on many aspects. India and China have a strong trade and economic partnership with bilateral trade reaching a zenith of US\$ 73.9 billion in

2011²⁸. India has a restructured Strategic dialogue with China where they exhibit their commitment to work together to shape global and regional order.

Most importantly, India sides with China on issues like climate change, trade policies on international forums to counter agendas supported by U.S and other western powers. It also cooperates with China within indigenous organizations like BRICS, SCO that are motivated to put forward alternative measures to the already existing international norms.

On India's part a complex strategic response can be noticed. It seems to utilize the great power involvement in the region to its own aim of maintaining regional stability. Regional stability is essential to continue the flow of trade and economy and working of various agreements that helps India build its capacity and also provides India the time to slowly integrate in the region either through regional arrangements or bilateral relations to enhance its influence. India's close strategic and security partnership with U.S on Indo-Pacific is aimed at ensuring stable, balanced regional architecture. Though not formally noted, such initiatives are motivated to deter the overt Chinese presence over the region. The close cooperation helps India to enhance its technological and military capabilities; it furthers India's integration in regional and international forums and consolidates India's influence over larger Asia Pacific. Despite such partnership India remains reluctant to directly confront or balance China through strategic construction of the QUAD grouping of U.S, Japan, Australia and India. What must be highlighted here is that India has a distinct vision for the regional order. It has deferred to pursue an overt, collective strategy of Chinese containment and has propounded distinctive visions of regional security provisions (Estrada, 2023).

India wants to establish a liberal and inclusive regional architecture based on common interests which negates the very need of having a direct containment strategy. India certainly envisions security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific as an instrument to manage China's growing influence, but is actively contesting and, in some ways reconfiguring, the legitimating narratives of a liberal Indo-Pacific (Estrada, 2023). India's strategy rests on enmeshing the great powers at play, U.S and China and

²⁸ For India China bilateral trade data refer to https://www.eoibeijing.gov.in/eoibeijing_pages/MjQ,

building closer relationship with others like Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

Thus, for an emerging power that has comparatively lesser power resources may utilize the strategy of omni-enmeshment to engage the great powers not only to increase their stake in maintaining regional order rather through this engagements it builds its own resources, integrates with other smaller powers and incrementally increases its influence and position in the regional order. As an emerging power, India has its distinct vision for the regional order whereby it will prefer to shape the order in ways that reflects its own identity and interests.

India has indulged in strategic and security cooperation with U.S to ensure a security bulwark against the assertive efforts of China that it cannot deter on its own in the present. It is part of the QUAD for capacity building, openness and stability in the region. While the other members of the QUAD, U.S. Australia and Japan have supported through their discourse the idea of a security community whose purpose is to defend the aspects of the existing liberal order, India has reserved its concern over deeper institutionalization along hard security lines (Estrada, 2023:394). Such cautious attitude on India's part may be less accrued to time buying or its concern over strategic autonomy but more as a way to project its distinct vision of the regional order as an emerging power that might not align with the one projected by U.S and its allies.

India harps on retaining the indigenous elements and diversity among states in the region rather than defining it through an overarching structure of the existing international order. Thus, India's idea of inclusiveness is about binding together the niche aspects of the region through common interests and steadily increasing its strategic influence. As India's Foreign Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar argued, "the Quad was never envisioned as four countries having identical positions on all issues." (Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs, 2022)

In India's efforts to draw the contours of Indo-Pacific and the regional architecture it stresses on the diversity and inclusiveness, centrality of the ASEAN and most importantly a central role for itself within the order. In negotiating the Indo-Pacific as a new kind of liberal space, India is currently shaping order towards greater pluralism and diversity at the inter-state level (Estrada, 2023:398).

It is to be mentioned that omni-enmeshment is conceived as a strategy utilized by small and medium sized states of Southeast Asia (Goh, 2008;2013) in their response to great power penetration in the region where these states bilaterally or through regional initiatives seek to shape a regional order. These small and medium states are motivated to retain a stable regional order and prevent it from being a ground of great power rivalry or being dominated by a single power but none of them exhibits the individual aim to attain a leadership role or aspires to become a major power through these efforts. Here, the strategy is applied to an emerging power that wants to enhance its strategic influence over the region and have a definite role in shaping the order.

Omni-enmeshment can be an enabling strategy for emerging powers as it provides it with the option of engaging all the great powers and not to choose definite sides; it can benefit from such deeper cooperation in terms of capacity building and can shape the contours of the regional order. An emerging regional power with the ambition of acquiring a major power status requires its status attribution over the region and the extended regional neighbourhood. A strategy that helps it to engage with all the great powers and avoid direct confrontation with any is effective Omni-enmeshment can be a viable strategy for an emerging power like India. This strategy provides India with the scope to engage with both U.S and China, without excluding or picking one. The engagements with the superpower and the rising global power in a way help India to enhance its own hard power capabilities and resources. Such enmeshments help to increase their involvement in the region and prevent outbreak of great power conflict. This strategy further enables India to integrate and enhance its influence in regional structures and organizations like ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), QUAD, AUKUS etc. India's membership in these helps it to build positive relations with other powers like Thailand, Singapore, Japan, and Australia which further contributes to India's efforts of increasing its influence amongst other regional states to enhance its status attribution. Establishing a space among the important actors of the region beyond the great powers provides India with the opportunity to forward its own ideas and play a major role in shaping of the regional order. India's stress on maintaining an open, inclusive and indigenous regional architecture often resonates with the small and medium states that are motivated to protect the order against being dominated by the norms of a dominant power. India has been successful at socializing into regional norms of interaction and regional confidence-building mechanisms where a

latent suspicion remains about China's role in the regional architecture (Thayer, 2011:328). India has presented itself as a responsible power committed to maintaining an inclusive regional architecture accompanied by the shared interest in preserving the freedom of navigation in maritime trade and transport. At the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018, Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi noted the need for 'a common rules-based order for the region 'that' must equally apply to all individually as well as to the global commons' and 'believe in sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as equality of all nations, irrespective of size and strength'²⁹. India can strengthen its role as an emerging power that is motivated to positively contribute to structure a regional order around stability, inclusiveness while stressing on maintaining the diversity of the region.

Omni-enmeshment is also an advantageous strategy for India as it precludes the condition of building security community and stresses on cultivating ways to work together to maintain stability. "It does not go as far as security community building as the emphasis here lies more in securing a workable modus vivendi amongst key actors" (Goh, 2008). India engages with U.S in conducting joint military exercises but avoids joint patrolling of the South China Sea or it does not align with the other members of the QUAD who have an inclination of building a security community.

Evelyn Goh (2008) states that in the process of omni-enmeshment the actor's interest are redefined, and its identity probably altered, so as to take into greater account to accommodate multiple objects or targets to maintain order of the system. This aspect of identity alteration or redefinition of interest is something that can be different when applied to small or medium powers and that of an emerging power. For the small and medium powers of Southeast Asia the main aim is to preserve the stability of the order so their interests are defined in terms of taking into account various targets or objects that can maintain it. Their identity is often built around the structure of the regional order. Hence, for the Southeast Asian states redefining their interests or altering their identity for regional order maintenance can be a probability. However, for an emerging power like India its identity is a reflection of its commitment to its larger aim of attaining a major power status. Hence, its interests are duly defined in

²⁹ For details on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at Shangri-La Dialogue refer to <https://www.iiss.org/events/shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2018/>

terms of goal attainment. Shaping and maintaining the regional order is important but it is not the ultimate objective that can make India completely redefine its interests. Its influence over the immediate and extended region informs its endeavour to strengthen its identity as a responsible and important power. This is further manifested in its desired identity of being acknowledged as a major power. Thus, omni-enmeshment as strategy can help India to manage relations with dominant powers and enhance its influence in shaping the regional order but identity alteration in response to regional order maintenance seems a difficult task for an emerging power.

Hedging

Hedging is often referred to as a mix strategy. Hedging normally refers to a national security or alignment strategy, undertaken by one state towards another, featuring a mix of cooperative and confrontational elements (Ciorciari & Haacke, 2019). Smaller or weaker states undertake hedging as a strategy when confronted with uncertain strategic conditions. Hedging can be defined as insurance seeking behavior under situations of high uncertainty and high stakes (Kuik, 2021).

Thus, under uncertain strategic conditions smaller states can avoid taking clear sides or bandwagon with great powers and take measures to mitigate or offset risks. The intended purposes for hedging are: developing robust relationships with both competing great powers (working toward the best outcomes), cultivating maximum protection to offset multiple risks under uncertainty (preparing for the worst scenarios), and, ultimately, keeping all options open for as long as possible (Kuik, 2021:301).

Systemic anarchy specially induced by presence of more than one competing great power increases the chances of hedging among small powers. According to Kuik (2021) hedging strategy can have three attributes (a) an insistence on not taking sides or being locked into a rigid alignment; (b) attempts to pursue opposite or contradicting measures to offset multiple risks across domains (security, political, and economic); and (c) an inclination to diversify and cultivate a fallback position. Hedging has 'just in case' modus operandi i.e it is a flexible arrangement based on specific issues or areas of cooperation. Hedging is predominantly developed as a strategy for small states with limited power capabilities and limited specific interests

who have the choice of undertaking a risk averse strategy in uncertain situations. Can an emerging power with specific strategic aims and significant resources hedge under power uncertainties?

Hedging is not considered an admired strategy and is mostly associated with indecisiveness and lack of specific strategic aim. Small powers often avoid associating themselves with the term for being taken as having a fence sitting attitude. For an emerging power that strives for a major power role and seeks to promote niche ideas in the international system, a strategy that entails choosing a middle ground seems to indicate passivity and indecisiveness in face of crisis or uncertainty. India's foreign policy has often been cited as prudent or hesitant, a trait it has carried since its non-alignment days. The idea of non-alignment has been justified by India's aim of protecting its strategic autonomy. India's rise within a highly interdependent international system has exposed it to the dilemma of choosing between polarized positions and entanglements. The complex interdependence¹³ of the international system along with India's strive to achieve its major power status within this system evidently shrinks the scope or rationale for playing the middle ground. However, India's reluctance to choose sides or taking neutral stances on some international issues has often been identified as hedging. India's close strategic partnership with U.S and its simultaneous cocktail of China furthers the claim of hedging behavior. "India displays its hedging more intermittently. In 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and institutionalized an informal summit with Beijing, just before attending the Western-backed Shangri-La Dialogue to deliver a keynote speech on New Delhi's vision of the Indo-Pacific as a "free, open, and inclusive" region" (Kuik, 2021). While some have argued in favour of adopting strategic hedging as an appropriate strategy for India, "The way forward from here for Indian foreign policy should be strategic hedging; a combination of bolstering domestic as well as external strategic capabilities and creating economic dependencies abroad through enhanced manufacturing and exports. Furthermore, a balance between capabilities and reach is what India needs to master strategic hedging with other countries" (Mishra, 2018).

India has been building up its defense partnership with U.S it has crystallized its relation with other countries like Japan, Australia through QUAD. However it refuses

to stand by the security purpose behind QUAD, it remains apprehensive of acknowledging the reliability of U.S as a partner (Miller, 2021). Simultaneously, it tries to reassure China and cooperate on common interests specially trade to demonstrate that it has no intention of containment. But given the considerable power asymmetry and difference in strategic outlook with both the powers, can India's prudence in not aligning with a particular power be termed as hedging?

India's economic growth, rising military and defense capabilities and its growing influence is directed towards attaining its larger goal of achieving a major power status, which it has to attain within the prevailing power uncertainties of the international system. The present power uncertainty at the structural level is not going to be mitigated very soon, and then an emerging power like India has to undertake strategies that can forward its interests even within such uncertainty. A strategy like hedging that stresses on choosing flexible options to tide over the period of uncertainty can only be a short term strategy not meant for attaining long term objectives.

In the present system the strategic and economic stakes are highly enmeshed, India needs to vociferously forward its strategic aim or else being flexible in most circumstances will come at the cost of its interest. Not aligning with one particular power and engaging with multiple powers to reap benefits at diverse end can be a strategy for an emerging power aiming to maximize its resources and enhance its influence. But such a strategy is not always undertaken to limit or offset risks as hedging stresses. This kind of strategy can be aimed at securing higher interests by diversifying its engagements and avoiding a confrontational attitude as omnimeshment refers to order maintenance. Specifically, emerging powers like India have different outlook, divergent values and interest than those being projected by the present great powers. Thus, elements of deference will occur and they might choose not to side with any one as that might serve their interests better, this should not be generalized as being indecisive or hedging. As on India's position on the Russian Ukrainian conflict, External Affairs Minister, Dr. Jaishnagar commented that, "I don't think we are sitting on a fence just because I don't agree with you. It means I am sitting on my ground," clearly stressing on the fact that even an emerging power like India is entitled to put its national interest front and center (Hindustan Times, 2022).

But the national interest thought to be served by not taking sides must be well defined or else the ambivalence will signal to its unreliability and indecisiveness. Thus, Hedging is best suited to be a short term strategy; it cannot be termed as an enabling strategy as it is too concerned with risk avoidance than interest realization.

A comparative chart of the above mentioned strategies is prepared on the basis of type, the means through which these strategies can be utilized by India, the advantages that can be accrued and the costs incurred. Bandwagoning remains the most lucrative option for the close alignment with the superpower that provides resources, technology and enhances India's integration in regional and international forums. However, India as an emerging power wants to attain higher status on its own terms and forwarding its own ideas that often does not resonate with the prevailing norms. India's stress on maintaining strategic autonomy and its protests against the norms and structures of the present international systems renders bandwagoning with U.S difficult. The costs incurred affect India's foundational strategic thinking of maintaining autonomy and projecting its distinct ideas. Soft balancing and omnimeshment enables India to maintain its flexible yet strategic partnership with U.S, nurture multiple engagements with others and most importantly to project its distinct ideas and interests.

Table 3 Comparative Chart of Engagement Strategies for India

STRATEGY	TYPE	MEANS	ADVANTAGES	COSTS
SOFT BALANCING	SEMI-CONFRONTATIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India implores entangling diplomacy with other like-minded developing countries to protest against prevailing norms of international order. In international institutions India voices its niche ideas in contrast to those promoted by U.S and the West. India promotes and participates in indigenous regional institutions for economic strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tacit means help India accrue benefits from U.S without direct confrontation. Enhances opportunities for collective cooperation Further integration into the system to build status attribution Can oppose or resist prevailing international norms and project its own ideas. Helps to elevate India's role as an emerging power with definite and distinct views of international system 	<p>India receives negative judgment from U.S and others as a 'no saying' country interrupting greater global initiatives.</p> <p>It affects the bilateral strategic partnership with U.S, sees India as unreliable India's niche efforts often fall prey to pressures from other developing countries</p> <p>Dependency on too much cooperative efforts at times limits its individual strategic initiatives</p>
BANDWAGONING	COOPERATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment with U.S policies or strategies Close Defense and security partnership with U.S Seeking U.S support for entering international nuclear nonproliferation regime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits in terms of resources and technology U.S recognition of India as an emerging power helps with recognition at many levels Strategic engagement with U.S enhances India's position in larger regional order Alliance network benefits 	<p>Compromise its strategic autonomy Greater dependency on U.S technology & weaponry</p> <p>Restricts India's scope to project its rise in its distinct terms</p> <p>Negatively affects India's relation with China</p>
HEDGING	RISK AVERSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India refuses to choose any side between U.S & China Avoids rigid alignments to offset risks Issue based cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India can maintain strategic partnership with U.S while managing close relation with China Can align with QUAD yet refuse to accept its security dimensions Can pursue greater strategic independence by risk aversion 	<p>Hesitant and indecisive</p> <p>Unreliability as partner</p> <p>It a short term strategy not suited to attain long term objectives</p> <p>Concerned with risk avoidance than interest realization</p>
OMNI-ENMESHMENT	MIDDLE GROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enmeshing both U.S and China to enhance its own capabilities Forges closer economic and political relationships with these powers to increase their stake in the regions stability enables India to integrate and enhance its influence in regional structures and organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gains from the strategic, economic and defense engagements by enmeshing all dominant powers. utilize the great power involvement in the region to its own aim of maintaining regional stability India's integration with smaller powers and regional institutions helps India to have a role in shaping the regional order 	<p>Effects India's credibility as partner to U.S Getting too entangled in diplomacy with smaller powers of Indo-Pacific</p>

Sources: The chart is prepared based on the works of Pape (2004), Goh (2008), Kuik (2021)

Enabling Strategies

Strategies that help to manage relations with dominant power and forwards indigenous interests and objectives of secondary powers are termed as enabling strategies. The power uncertainties of an interdependent international system necessitate the use of engagement strategies. Response to the preponderant power might be essential but engagement strategies can go beyond managing threat perception. For an emerging power like India which has considerable influence and capabilities; engagement strategies can be utilized to manage its relation with dominant powers and enhance its own resources and position within the international system. Referring to the above analysis of engagement strategies we notice that soft balancing and omni enmeshment have traits that can qualify as enabling strategies. Soft balancing refers to informal tacit means that allows the emerging power to maintain its relation with the superpower and accrue benefits and at the same time through the means of diplomatic entanglements it integrates with others, build niche regional forums and can resolve to bring about desired changes in the system. India can voice its opinions and ideas and expand its cooperation with other developing countries to address pressing global issues indicating its desire to promote alternative structures. India's efforts to cooperate with other developing countries to resist against prevailing international norms or to promote indigenous regional structures are motivated to forward India's position and strategic interests than addressing threats arising from U.S preponderance. Thus, as a strategy it enables India to enhance its integration into the system and promote its ideas and contribute in constituting alternative structures. Omni-enmeshment as a strategy entails India to engage with all dominant powers and benefit in terms of enhancing resources and capabilities and prevent against great power conflict in the region. Moreover, omni-enmeshment can be an enabling strategy for an emerging power like India as it provides the scope to construct deeper engagements with all great powers without choosing one, furthers its integration with regional structures and other states, these in turn helps India to undertake a positive role in maintaining stability and shaping of the regional architecture. This strategy does not advance to building of a formal security community which gives India strategic flexibility to enmesh without formal security commitments. These strategies have the scope to enable emerging powers to manage their relations with dominant powers on their terms and subsequently provide them

with the opportunity to further integrate into the system, build corollary engagements with other secondary powers and forward niche interests and influence.

Engagement Strategies of Superpower

Since the end of the cold war, U.S as the dominant power has defined its interests in terms of maintaining an interdependent, liberal, rule based world order. The present scenario of redistribution of power and rise of new centers of power with indigenous ideas in the international system has brought about new challenges to U.S preponderance. These emerging powers are motivated to promote niche ideas and opinions which often contrast with the values and norms underpinning the prevailing system. Despite its preponderance over every conceivable element of power, U.S needs to maintain its influence over various regions and ensure the stability of the preferred international order. While strategies like balancing, bandwagoning, hedging are developed as responses of secondary states to power preponderance, similarly, the rise of new powers with distinct ideas possess a challenge to U.S which then requires certain strategies to cope with these challenges and preserve its power preponderance.

Accommodation & Engagement

Engagement is considered a strategy in U.S foreign policy. Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O' Sullivan define engagement as a foreign policy strategy which depends to a significant degree on positive incentives to achieve its objectives.(Haass, Sullivan; 2000:1-2). Engagement strategy utilizes non- coercive means or incentives to modify or change a rising power's non-status quo behavior. U.S can provide economic and material assistance and supporting a rising power's aim to enhance recognition and prestige.

Maintenance of the international order and its structures are essential to American preeminence and currently none of the rising powers poses grave threat to U.S supremacy and are limited to challenges in specific spheres. U.S needs a strategy that avoids a direct conflictual condition yet provides the means to entwine the rising challengers within the prevailing structure in a way to tide over the differences. The concepts of accommodation and satellization are taken from George Liska's (1973) typology of policy options for great powers towards middle powers. By

accommodation, Liska refers to “devolution of regional responsibility to apparently disposed middle powers” (Liska, 1973).

Accommodation as a strategy has been discussed as a means through which U.S can peacefully integrate the rising powers into the prevailing system and avoid the structural conflict. According to T.V Paul, accommodation stands for status adjustment and leadership role sharing between established and rising powers through membership and due roles in international institutions and acceptance of spheres of influence (Paul, 2016:5). Accommodation then is about providing perks and incentives that make the rising powers believe that they are given similar status to that of great powers. The rising or emerging powers are keen on achieving the status and prestige associated with a major power rank hence accommodating them with recognition in spheres of influence helps to dilute their claims to alter the system to achieve their desired position. However, this can only last if the emerging powers are content with this recognition and give up their revisionist tendencies. Accommodation is only peaceful when the rising powers are willing to play by the mutual norms and rules (Paul, 2016:5). Intentions of rising powers are important to understand when they are to be accommodated or contained by the dominant power. In accordance to their intentions rising powers may be revisionist where they seek to alter the established order for the purpose of increasing their power and prestige or they may be status quoist where they are satisfied with their status and accept the existing norms and principles of the international order (Chan, 2004). Emerging or rising powers that are not satisfied in the way they are represented in the prevailing system and have distinct visions will be motivated to change or undermine the system. These powers believe they are discriminated against and despite respectable positions in the international system, the international order does not reflect their norms and values which renders them difficult to be accommodated. Status quoist or states that want to make slight changes to the existing order, the prospects of accommodation are better (Chandra, 2018:16)

Do U.S policies towards India signify accommodation?

Accommodation as a strategy works when the emerging powers are not extremely threatful, at least in the short term or they do not challenge the core interests of the dominant power and there is some sort of compatibility of social orders and cultural

commonality (Kupchan, 2016). India has many similarities with U.S ranging from being a democracy, open market economy and strong supporter of the United Nations and multilateral rule based international order.

Emerging India is not considered threatening by U.S rather it supports the rise of India as a global power. India strongly aspires for major power status in the international order and U.S accommodates this by enhancing India's recognition in the international order, assisting its entry into important international regimes and structures and formally declaring to assist its rise. What marks the difference is India's stress on maintaining strategic autonomy, its vehement protest and resistance to important norms and principles promoted by the U.S, its thrust on seeking change in the existing order and supporting alternative structures. India exhibits a dichotomous behavior as it seeks a seat at the higher table within the existing international order and at the same time wants to promote its distinct ideas and approaches which it thinks are not adequately reflected in the prevailing international system. India does not violently challenge the order but significantly resists many of the core interests of U.S like nuclear non-proliferation regime, climate change. Thus, policy of accommodation through status recognition is not enough for an emerging India as it continues to exhibit non-confirmative elements.

A mixed strategy of accommodation and engagement seems to suit the purpose whereby through accommodation the U.S tries to recognize and enhance India's status in the international order and by strategic engagement it provides resources and incentives to influence India in modifying its non- status quoist traits. Subsequent U.S administrations since Bush are seen to promote India's rise as a responsible global power, assisting its entry to international regimes like the Nuclear Supplier's Group or in various multilateral institutions like the QUAD. The U.S also utilizes engagement strategy to further integrate India by sufficing the prestige and material resources through transfer of technology, building robust defense partnership and enhancing trade and economic relationship. By providing aid and incentives it tries to influence or modify specific elements of Indian foreign policy that seem to challenge the existing norms or structures.

In the case of India, the strategy of accommodation goes beyond status recognition or devolution of regional responsibility. Accommodation will refer to the policy of the

U.S of binding the rising power within its desired perimeters by being accommodative and entwining it in various initiatives or agreements with minor tweaking to suit the rising power's interest but largely designed by the superpower itself. Thus, more than devolution it is about absorption. Thus, we see India specific versions of foundational U.S agreements like LEMOA, BECA, COMCASA or the exemplary Indo-U.S Nuclear Deal. Emerging India is not a direct threat to U.S supremacy but there are concrete disagreements on core issues which might lead to conflict or crisis in future. Along with status recognition or devolution of responsibilities it is beneficial if it can be bound within certain parameters preferred by U.S even if that requires certain modifications to satisfy some of India's claims. The element of absorption must be added to the already existing understanding of accommodation.

Satellization

The concept of satellization talks about building dependence by assuming interventionist capabilities to subordinate the foreign policy of the rising power but here the U.S can be seen offering aid, incentives and even capacity building resources and its strategy is influenced by modification rather than interventionist. But if India's rise becomes more concerning or it continues to challenge core interests of U.S it might develop into interventionist capabilities. Given India's stress on maintaining strategic autonomy and its opposition to alliances, direct intervention from U.S might aggravate into concrete disagreements jeopardizing the carefully built strategic partnership. Thus, satellization as a policy is not suited to an emerging power like India that is motivated to promote distinct ideas and independence in foreign policy decision making.

Regional Containment

Nayar and Paul (2003) talk about regional containment as a strategy that can be utilized by major powers to limit the rising powers. Regional containment refers to set of constraining policies pursued by major powers in relation to emerging powers such as alignment with and arms supplies to India's smaller regional adversary to neutralize to balance the emerging power. They have used regional containment as a strategy of the United States to arrest India's rise by aligning with a smaller neighbor like Pakistan and continued economic and technological sanctions coupled with the

creation and maintenance of international regimes to limit India's development of capabilities like military or nuclear technologies that are important for obtaining major power status (Nayar & Paul, 2016: 2). Regional containment is a flexible strategy whereby U.S can pursue containment on security related areas and simultaneously pursue engagement and economic support to India in non-security areas. The steadfast non- proliferation regime followed by the sanctions levied on India after nuclear tests are cited as instances of regional containment to arrest India from acquiring nuclear capabilities.

However, with the advent of the Bush administration policies towards India changed significantly from de-hyphenating India and Pakistan to assisting India become a global power regional containment gave way to accommodation. Further it can be highlighted here that the rise of China as a formidable contender has brought about changes in U.S strategic thought. Regional containment can be traced to be applied to China where India acts as the lesser regional adversary which is aligned, supported to build its capabilities to act as a counterweight to China in the region. The intent with which U.S sought to regionally contain India's rise found a greater threat in China which needs to be balanced. India as the lesser challenger is then strategically engaged and supported materially and with status recognition to balance the Chinese influence.

India has not been in any alliance with U.S or a foundational ally. It protests and resists many norms, principles and core interests of US and there have been instances of sanctions and constraints against India. An emerging India is not a substantial threat to U.S primacy and the non-confirmative elements or ideas are best addressed through concrete engagements rather than constraining measures. Hence, accommodation coupled with engagement strategy can be effective to entwine an emerging power that is not preeminently threatful or assertive yet projects ideas contrary to the prevailing system but lacks the capabilities to alter the system. But it must be duly considered that India's strategic worldview harps on the development of a multilateral emancipatory international order that it believes will be appropriate to realize its major power role in global affairs. India stands as a distinct emerging power that espouses regional and international order transformation in the long run. With time if India's rise becomes threatening and it pursues its system altering traits

then strategies like satellization or containment might get higher prominence. For India, the U.S is a useful partner for achieving economic development, defense and other capabilities, regional stability and international status. While deepening its ties with U.S, India shows the determination to invest in alternative international structures. Thus, a combination of soft balancing and omni-enmeshment will enable India to protest against certain existing norms in coalition with other developing nations, engage with major and secondary powers, participate in alternative forums and have a role in shaping new contours of regional and international order. For the United States engaging India extrudes certain significant difficulties as it is vehemently protective of its strategic autonomy, avoids any kind of formal alliance, remains averse to intense defense or military agreements according to U.S template and continues to resist on various international norms. While regional containment may have been utilized during the Clinton administration, soon it gave way to engagement and accommodation as emerging India stood out as a stable partner in maintaining regional stability. The strategies of engagement and accommodation ensure providing specific measures beyond the alliance structure to entwine India by insulating shared initiatives from areas of disagreements. India is not a threatening contender to U.S primacy as it has a long way to acquire such a large amount of material and ideational resources but its thrust on challenging prevailing norms, projecting new ideas and supporting alternative structures makes it a unique emerging power that believes in transforming the existing order in the long run. Thus, emerging India is better engaged and accommodated within certain parameters even with modifications that are conducive to U.S interests.

Table 4 Comparative Chart of Engagement Strategies for United States

Strategy	Means	India specific	Advantages	Costs incurred
Accommodation	Status Recognition Leadership role sharing Acceptance of spheres of influence	a. Supporting the rise of India as a global power b. Enhancing India's recognition in international order c. Facilitating its membership to international regimes.	a. Recognition & acknowledgement helps to dilute claims to system alteration. b. Modify specific non-confirmative elements of IFP that challenges the existing order c. Absorb India within U.S preferred agreements with minor changes d. Avoid structural conflict	a. Larger investment & resource sharing b. Divulging some power and authority in regional order c. Making changes to foundational agreements & norms d. Efforts to integrate an emerging power
Engagement	Non-coercive measures Provision of incentives or aids Economic or material benefits	d. Engaging India in various bilateral agreements on diverse issues. e. Enhancing India's capabilities through high technology transfer, Defense equipment etc.	e. Open spaces for negotiation f. Builds confidence & trust over time g. Entwines the other power through agreements h. Increases dependency on materials & technology provided by U.S	e. Devolution of certain degree of power f. Incentive & aids taxes the U.S economy g. Unilateral actions or decisions are difficult to make h. It is a continued process
Regional Containment	Constraining policies Arms & technological support to adversary regional power Limit the emerging power's integration in international order Restraining approaches like sanctions	f. Constraining India's rise by deeper alignments with Pakistan g. Arms and technology supply to Pakistan h. Economic and technological sanctions levied on India i. Maintenance of international regimes to limit India's capacity development	i. Ability to contain rise of new powers that challenges established U.S norms. j. Isolate and limit recognition to such powers. k. Restraining capacity building measures.	i. Can lead to substantial animosity. j. Can affect the regional stability of particular region k. Limits space for negotiation l. Needs approval & support from others to continue containment.
Satellization	Building dependency Interventionist in nature	j. Offering capabilities or services that increase India's dependency on U.S. k. To influence India's interest in consonance with U.S l. Can assume interventionist stance if India becomes threatening	l. Can restrict any rising power from becoming too challenging m. Dependency increases the stakes for states & limits their urge to protest against U.S norms. n. Satellization render states politically & economically influenced by U.S	m. Time consuming n. Building dependency requires investing U.S resources o. Interventionist tendency restricts efforts of genuine engagement. p. Smaller states may resolve to prioritize autonomy & may try to avoid dependency

Sources: The chart is prepared based on the works of Paul (2016), Liska (1973), Nayar & Paul (2003)

Assessing Indo –U.S engagements

Given the kind of engagement strategies chosen by an emerging India to manage its relation with U.S and project its influence and ideas on its own terms and that of United States trying to accommodate the rising power without undermining its supremacy and preferred international order an engagement pattern can be assessed.

At the systematic level India and U.S are placed very differently in respect of power position and influence over the international order. While one is at the top of the power hierarchy and has built the existing order, the other is an emerging power trying to climb the hierarchy and wants transformation in the existing order that suits its goal of attaining higher status. The systematic difference should set them on a conflictual course but rather one can notice curated efforts of strategic engagement. The strategic engagements should be understood as a common understanding between two vastly asymmetric powers that want to avoid the inevitable structural conflict as none of them are existential threat to the other at present, preserve certain amount of stability in the order and indulge in utilizing engagement strategies to tide over differences and fulfill their objectives. As they strategically engage each other utilizing niche engagement strategies further informs the contours of Indo-U.S relations.

Indo-U.S relations have been overshadowed by disgruntlements and have incrementally moved towards addressing each other as partners only in the 21st century. The end of the Cold war remains crucial to the change of perceptions and strategic considerations on both sides which eventually led to the strategic engagement. Thereafter, Strategic ramifications and new security challenges have solidified the bilateral relations between U.S and India into a global strategic partnership. The terms ‘partnership’ or ‘global partnership’ became visible through various joint statements since the Clinton administration. A content analysis of the joint statements from 2000 to 2016 will point out how the usages of such terms have evolved. The Indo-U.S joint statement of the year 2000 does not use the terms partnership or strategic partnership, it only uses the term partner once and in 2001 the term long term partnership was used. It was only in 2005 that the terms strategic partnership or global partnership was mentioned. During President Obama’s visit to India in 2010 the term global strategic partnership was first used along with strategic partnership. This new term of global strategic partnership continued to be used throughout the next five years with long term partnership recurring once again in the joint statement in 2016. This shows how their strategic engagement has evolved over the years to percolate through various spheres strengthening the relation and instilling the confidence to refer to each other as global strategic partners while acknowledging the differences they have over multiple issues.

Table 5 Content Analysis of Indo U.S Joint Statements for terms Partnership and Strategic partnership

YEAR	Strategic Partnership	Partnership/ Partners	Related / New Term identified
2000	No mention	Partners (n=1)	Allies for cause of democracy.
2001	No mention	Partnership (n=1)	Long term partnership
2005	Mentioned (n= 1)	Partnership (n=2)	Global partnership
2006	Mentioned (n=1)	Partnership (n=3)	Global partnership
2010	Mentioned (n=2)	Partnership (n=5)	Global Strategic Partnership (n= 2)
2013	Mentioned (n=3)	Partnership (n=2)	Global Strategic Partnership
2014	Mentioned (n=2)	Partnership (n=5)	Strategic and Global Partnership
2015	Mentioned (n=1)	Partnership (n=2)	-
2016	Mentioned (n=1)	Partnership (n=3)	Long term partnership

The four probabilities mentioned in chapter one that Indo-U.S relations might be assessed are alliance, ad-hoc coalitions, ententes and alignments.

The improbability of an Alliance

Alliances have been an integral component of international politics since ages. Alliance can be described as a formal agreement between two or more states for mutual support mainly to deter a common adversary (Hugland, 2019). As Arnold Wolfers puts it ‘wherever in recorded history a system of multiple sovereignty has existed, some of the sovereign units when uninvolved in conflicts with others have entered into alliances’(Wolfers, 1968:269). Alliances lack a single definition and scholars have added different aspects to give semblance to the term. In simpler meaning alliance can be understood as is a form of coalition between states with a formal military commitment. The element of military assistance is the binding factor in any alliance. It is pertinent to mention here that such alliances between a major power and minor powers are referred as asymmetric alliances. Morrow (1991) posits that asymmetric alliances provide different benefits to the parties involved— autonomy to the great power and security to the minor power (Morrow,1991:903) The difference in power capabilities often creates a difference in their perception of threat but side payments or trade -offs act as positive incentives for both sides to continue with the alliance (Kabir,2019:165). Thus, alliances of any form are compact formal agreement between parties where military and security commitments should be the prime components.

U.S supremacy and expansion of its preferred international order has predominantly been based on security pacts and alliances with partners across regions. Its power preponderance, massive resources and global influence have made it easier to project itself as the provider of security and various incentives. India has never been a part of any U.S alliance and has vociferously advocated its desire to maintain autonomy in foreign policy decision making. The growing bonhomie between U.S and India and strategic engagement over core issues like civil nuclear deal, defense agreements and regional order maintenance have often raised questions regarding the probability of an alliance. Despite such commendable improvements India and United States cannot be termed as alliance partners. Hagerty (2006) points out that Indo- U.S partnership cannot be seen as an alliance as they do not fulfill the basic criteria of having a formal agreement on military cooperation ‘under which they will or will not employ military force’. Despite a bolstering defense relationship India and U.S still do not have formal military agreement.

In spite of sharing the common interest of maintaining stability and peace in Asia Pacific their engagements are loosely defined and lacks definite military commitments. Secondly, as Wolfers (1968) points out that identification of a common enemy is necessary in alliances, India and United States have not zeroed down or publicly identified a single common enemy which needs to be deterred. However, Hagerty argues that emergence of more compelling mutual security threats like emergence of fundamentalist Islamic regime in Pakistan or Chinese regional aggression might lead India and the United States to upgrade their partnership in to an alliance (Hagerty, 2006:16).

The current international scenario is plagued with emergent compelling threats in the form of resurgence of Taliban in Afghanistan, Chinese assertiveness and Russian attacks on Ukraine which have definite effects on United States’ and India’s strategic policies. The resurgence of Taliban in Afghanistan after two decades of serious commitment to democratize and restructure the Afghan state not only presents a major setback to U.S policy of maintaining stability and a bigger threat arising for India in view of the new opportunities for rise of Islamic fundamentalism easily percolated from Afghanistan to Pakistan. The Chinese border incursions and increased regional assertiveness jeopardizes Indo-U.S commitment to maintain

stability and security in Asia Pacific. Finally the Russian attack on Ukraine resulting in a war has witnessed very different responses from India and U.S. Despite the rise of such potent immediate common threats the Indo-U.S responses have remained informal and flexible with no signs of upgrading into a formal alliance. Their asymmetry in power and strategic perspectives limit their chances to consider a threat with the same magnitude and security.

The study signifies that despite of rise of compelling threats we are not witnessing an Indo-U.S alliance is due to the entrenched fundamental difference in strategic worldview of a superpower and a rising power, their incompatible objectives and the divergences in their viewpoint over the future international system they wish to uphold. Their coming together to form an alliance to deter immediate threats is thwarted by the deep rooted differences in power asymmetry and sense of entitlement which further informs their core strategic considerations and their engagements.

Difference over strategic thinking

The first objective of U.S foreign policy is to preserve U.S. supremacy by politically, economically, and militarily outdistancing any global challenger (Posen & Ross, 1997). Prevention of the rise of a competitor at the global or regional level that can or may have the potential to threaten U.S primacy globally or in a region is considered a priority. A constructive American strategy to forward its interests and to address any sort of non-conformity or challenges is to work through multilateral cooperation or alliance system. The core of India's strategic worldview is the enduring and deep rooted aspiration of achieving the status of major power within the international system. Closely following its desire for a major power status is India's stress on maintaining independence in its foreign policy (Hoffmann 2002:229; Bajpai & Sahni 2008). India's objective of attaining a major power status is largely based on its inclination in retaining the independence over strategic choices and policies so as to create a niche foreign policy as an alternative to following the overarching international structure maintained by a single or handful of powerful states and being reduced to the satellite status in world politics. India's engagements in bilateral or multilateral forms are focused on identifying areas of agreement to avoid confrontations and to forward its distinct interests while maintaining its autonomy in strategic thinking.

India's penchant for recognition and status as a new major power runs in contrast to United States' prime objective of maintaining unrivalled primacy and prevention of the rise of new power in any part of the world. However, it can be noticed since the Bush Presidency U.S has showcased its support for India's rise and also proclaimed so in official statements like helping India become a major world power in 21st century. It can be understood in a way that U.S have maintained its policy of working through alliances where the allies remain committed to U.S led international structures and in similar lines it perceives that nurturing a strategic partnership with rising India will be conducive to U.S interests in the region and larger global platform. But India's strive for a major power status is strongly rooted in its quest for 'redistribution and recognition' on its own terms which will essentially ensure its independent decision making in accordance with its distinct needs and interests that may or may not coincide with the structures and norms maintained by the dominant state (Nell,2010:956). Hence, being a confirmative ally or a satellite state is non-consistent with India's core strategic objective.

The divergent perception of international system

U.S founded the liberal international order based on global system of alliances, institutions and norms to further and maintain U.S primacy. The key to this order is to be able to pursue its interests in part by creating and maintaining a web of institutions, norms and rules which constructs a framework that shapes much of international politics. The United States provides security guarantees to allies to restrain regional initiatives and competition binding all through an interdependent economic structure. It became an order as its rules and norms have gradually assumed a degree of independent influence (Lind & Wohlforth, 2019: 71)

India being an emerging power eager for status and recognition has always advocated an international system with multiple centers of power. The strategic thinking on this includes concepts covering international power structures that India thinks will be preferable to its rise. India prefers a world with diffused centers of power. A polycentric or multipolar world will not only be more conducive towards absorbing a new power but it will also be conducive towards acknowledging it with more flexible terms of operation. In consonance with its preference of a multipolar world India voices its concern over biases in international order and also invests in being part of

indigenous regional initiatives thus, India can be said to espouse prominent changes in the present international order. Thus, India seeks an inclusive and emancipatory international order where India can assume leadership role.

Given such differences in strategic worldviews and perceptions of international system, the identified areas of convergence or common goals are marked by divergent approaches and the outcomes or agreements are often very specific or modified versions to suit both U.S and India. This is amply highlighted in the last chapter over four issue areas where they have strategically engaged by outlining negotiated terms to mitigate disagreements and finding ways to cooperate. Thus, a binding commitment of alliance is not suited to Indo-U.S relations.

Moreover, it must be taken into account that an emerging power like India that wants to achieve a higher status based on projecting its niche ideas and interests will not actually prefer to enter into a formal alliance structure with U.S. The idea of alliance construction must be reoriented from that of a superpower or great powers prerogative to that of strategic understanding of the secondary states. The rise of new centers of power has broadened the scope of strategic thinking and contributed to new ideas about international order which provides them with opportunities to exercise enabling strategies to make choices about the ways they wish to engage. These emerging powers with their novel outlook might not even choose to enter into an alliance with the dominant power as that might restrict their strategic flexibility. The idea of basing the study of alliance politics implicitly or explicitly from U.S point of view subsidizes the agency of U.S allies or security partners in determining the character of the changing regional order and the role of U.S within it (Goh & Sahashi, 2020).

Can Indo-U.S relations be defined by temporary arrangements of Entente or Ad hoc Coalitions?

Entente in general denotes friendly agreement between two or more sovereign states. In comparison to alliances, entente is more informal in nature and does not entail binding treaties. The iron clad commitments of alliances are missing in entente. Robert A. Kann calls entente ‘the classical case of flexible agreement of co-operation between two sovereign powers’ (Kann, 1976:611). Thus, ententes are loosely defined and are primarily motivated to address political cooperation. The element of military

commitment is not a definite clause in ensuring an entente. As discussed above, that Indo-U.S relation is difficult to be imagined within the airtight commitments of an alliance as they significantly differ in their strategic outlook and objectives. They have common interests and the necessity to engage with each other to serve diverse goals on both ends. Does a flexible informal arrangement of entente suit the parameter to assess their relationship?

Despite entente being a loosely defined arrangement without strict commitments it will not be able to define Indo-U.S relations. The strategic engagement between India and the U.S encompasses diverse issue areas ranging from economics to cyber technology, where defense and capacity building agreements form an important part. Ententes are loose understandings to retain cohesion through diplomatic consultations and support. Indo-U.S relations might not be as binding as alliance partners but their strategic engagements can no more be defined as loose understanding. Entailing a global strategic partnership they have given serious efforts to identify areas of engagement, invested resources to build strong pillars of cooperation and have committed to ensure stability and security of regional and international order. Furthermore, entente is a crisis oriented strategy that serves specific situation or crisis and does not involve the inclination of long term sustained partnership. It is a long shot to determine the future sustainability of Indo-U.S engagements but both sides showcase the intent and commitment for an enduring and robust partnership despite their differences.

Ad-hoc coalitions are another form of temporary arrangement where two or more states cooperate temporarily to tackle a specific issue or threat. It is a short term congruence to meet an emergent need or crisis and does not entail long term engagement. Karlsrud & Reykers (2020) define ad hoc coalitions as autonomous arrangements with task specific mandates established at a short notice for a short period of time.

Such single agenda congruence again cannot rightly define the contours of Indo-U.S relation. The strategic engagement between India and the United States is a multidimensional partnership that spreads across a broad spectrum of issues and areas that are not aimed to serve a single crisis or issue. Ad hoc coalitions may be formed by India and the U.S as a task force to address any specific objective or crisis

on an immediate basis. Such formations of ad hoc coalitions then are a part of the larger understanding of having a strategic partnership. Thus ad hoc coalitions are not part of long term strategic consideration or planning and are devised to be utilized for immediate purposes. The strategic engagement that U.S and India has curated to cooperate over diverse issues cannot be fathomed under ad hoc coalitions that are made to respond to specific mandates.

Indo U.S Alignments

Strategic partnerships entail a structured framework for collaboration between states that go beyond normal diplomatic interaction and provides for regular exchanges (Wilkins, 2012). The strategic partnership between India and U.S does not entail formal security commitment as in an alliance but it is not as loosely structured as to be defined by entente or ad hoc coalitions. Alignment refers to upgrading of bilateral relations from regular diplomatic channels to an elevated or intensified condition (Wilkins, 2012:114). The redistribution of power, widening of strategic thinking and discourses and the changed nature of the security environment also introduced newer forms of cooperation that does not fit with the conventional alliance archetype. Thus, alignments are informal in nature, entails a degree of fluidity and flexibility but at the same time harps on constructive cooperation, a level of institutionalization (treaty or agreement signing), support and concerted action. Alignments offer the strategic flexibility to a state that wants to choose limited cooperation based on the objectives or interests it wants to achieve. It offers the benefit to the states to be able to regulate the depth and level of involvement or commitment (Erkomaishvili, 2019).

India and the United States have cemented their strategic partnership by overcoming years of misperceptions and have made concerted efforts to build a constructive partnership by upgrading their engagements and understanding. Though they are not alliance partners, they cooperate and invest in diverse important areas exhibiting a substantial level of commitment and involvement cutting across the strategic differences. An important factor of alignment choices are a formal demonstration of an actor's interests (Erkomaishvili, 2019:32). The intent on both sides to elevate their relation into a strategic partnership while retaining an amount of flexibility and areas of modifications makes the case stronger for alignment.

India and the United States have identified diverse areas of congruence ranging from economy, strategic, defense and have intended to cooperate to address various global and regional issues and elevate their bilateral relation through strategic dialogues, framework agreements and regular exchanges. A closer look into these engagements will point to the presence of a negotiating space that allows both of them to put forward their respective ideas and interests, a degree to which they want to commit and most importantly to make necessary modifications to cooperate despite differences. As noticed in the last chapter, despite differences in understanding and long term strategic objectives both sides exhibit persistent efforts to adopt, alter and negotiate through continued interaction and involvement. Thus, a structure of engagement that entails a level of commitment yet offers the flexibility to cooperate while retaining individual state's space to regulate in accordance to its specific strategic thinking is most suited to Indo-U.S relations. If the case of LEMOA be considered here it will amply show how they have aligned to cooperate over a defense agreement while making modifications to suit India's reservations regarding binding clauses in the foundational U.S agreements. Similarly, while they both want to ensure an open inclusive regional architecture in Asia Pacific they have aligned to maintain that without a confrontational approach to China and India has avoided upgrading their cooperation in QUAD into a security community. Despite such differences they have solidified their cooperation over Indo- Pacific to a great extent marking it as one of the main pillars of Indo-U.S strategic partnership. Gestures of alignment with U.S include participation in joint military exercises or involvement in U.S led operations.

Uniqueness of Indo-U.S alignment

Here one can notice a uniqueness of alignment in case of India and U.S where they participate in joint military exercises like the Malabar but have not proceeded with joint patrolling.¹⁶ India has cautiously avoided directly taking part in U.S led operations as in Afghanistan where it has not been a part of the military operations but has contributed heavily in humanitarian and rehabilitation operations (Price, 2013). Alignment between U.S and India is not formed over a specific issue area rather can be applied over the broad spectrum of engagements like a *modus operandi* that efficiently calibrates their strategic partnership.

Alignment is a value neutral concept that does not center round a strong security objective rather enables cooperation on diverse issue areas (Chidley, 2014:154). The strategic engagement between India and U.S could strengthen over multiple issue areas without a consensus on addressing a core security agenda. George Struver (2016) asserts that bilateral partnerships based on alignments help ridge ideological gaps, enabling the partner's pursuit of economic gains and diplomatic preferences. The difference in their strategic thinking and objectives have often dissuaded them from cooperating in the past but the understanding that engagements are necessary even to be able to address the differences have opened up the opportunity to align. The confidence and trust that grows from aligning on several issue areas helps them to negotiate and deliberate over areas of divergences and hence we see the development of a long term strategic global partnership over the years.

To draw upon the conceptual analysis of Wilkins (2012:67) alignments provide the structured framework of collaboration between India and the United States in a non-binding way which aims to enable the pursuit of shared interests and addressing common challenges in different issue areas and facilitate further cooperation.

Alignments facilitates the engagements of India and the U.S on many levels

- (a) Alignment entails upgraded cooperation or involvement between them whereby they stress on identifying areas of cooperation, open up mechanisms to forward such cooperation that will further advance their collaboration. Indo-U.s partnership has entailed agreements on issues of core interests like nuclear energy, defense or greater strategic challenges while they continue to deviate over approaches, long term objectives of these and over other issues like international trade norms or climate negotiations.
- (b) Alignments provide high levels of flexibility and regulatory options to the states. John Ciorciari (2010) has argued that in post-cold war situation most developing countries prefer this kind of limited engagement because it allows them to reap the rewards such as economic and security assistance, without the attendant risk such as the loss of autonomy.

India has always harped on retaining its strategic autonomy and has avoided getting in formal alliance structures or security pacts. Alignments offer

emerging powers like India the needed opportunity to integrate with the superpower and yet retain the power to determine the degree to which it wants to involve or the parameters of cooperation without compromising its independence of decision making. It also enables U.S to engage with India through negotiations or modifications to arrive at suitable terms and not sacrifice the whole process for certain disagreements. The intent of cooperation on both sides also makes it easier for them to develop an understanding of each other's interests and limitations and the flexible terms of an alignment gives a structure to the collaboration.

- (c) Alignments are 'goal driven' rather than 'threat driven'. While Struver (2016) utilizes this goal driven approach as characteristics of strategic partnership the same can be applied for alignments. The foundational notion in alignment is the willingness of the parties to commonly pursue joint interests and mutual goals while leaving aside more conflictive issues. (Struver, 2016:8). The understanding between India and U.S that engagements are necessary and beneficial to both and must not be hostage to underlying differences makes alignment the most suited strategy. Their strategic partnership is indeed goal or objective oriented that is aimed to serve diverse regional and global issues. As noted earlier while choosing engagement strategies India's consideration has been less influenced by threat perception arising from U.S power preponderance than the benefits it can accrue from its partnership. Similarly, emerging India is engaged by the U.S as it is beneficial to larger U.S interests and its accommodation will contribute to the stability of the international order. Thus, they cooperate on the basic understanding that their engagement is crucial to attainment of many common areas of interest. Correspondingly, their engagement is not rooted primarily to deter any security threat rather it is aimed at achieving diverse strategic goals.

Flexible strategic alignment as a pattern of Indo U.S engagement

The continuance of difference over strategic thinking, long term objectives and the kind of international order they wish to uphold points to the fact that a semi-structured, flexible, non-binding and goal oriented engagement pattern is most suitable. Alignment with its integral component of being flexible yet being built on a

foundation of intent or willingness seems to be the appropriate engagement pattern for Indo-U.S relations. Alignment as discussed is a value neutral concept that takes shape in accordance to the intent, interest and degree of integration of the participant states. Hence, Indo-U.S alignments also possess some unique features; firstly, their alignment is not restricted over specific issue areas rather alignment is like a pattern of engagement that elevates the partnership. It is the preferred mode of operation that defines the structure of commitment. Secondly, when they have identified a common area of cooperation there exists multiple regulations regarding the approach, content and the degree of involvement within the same issue area. With an agreed defense framework agreement there were new negotiations regarding logistics agreement and further modifications led to the development of LEMOA, an India specific agreement. Thus, alignment occurs at multiple levels. Thirdly, the alignment has developed as a process of incrementally strengthening the partnership. To start with their alignment was very loosely defined and limited in scope but aligning over various issue over time has not only culminated into deeper levels of cooperation but also enhanced their understanding about each other's interests and foster trust. Thus, one can notice a cumulative upgrading alignment process.

Indo-U.S partnership can be therefore appropriately assessed in terms of a flexible strategic alignment. It introduces new aspects to the general concept of alignment by pointing to the fact that alignment is not just a strategy to be chosen by cooperating on certain issues and setting aside disagreements. Alignment can be a pattern of partnership between a superpower and an emerging power that differs significantly over strategic thinking and goals yet chooses to cooperate on common interests. It is strategic alignment in the sense that it goes beyond specific issues like economics, capacity building and entails a formidable commitment towards maintenance of security and stability of the regional order and enhancing leadership roles to address global challenges without having a core security commitment at the heart of this partnership.

Chapter Brief

The chapter tries to build a framework of engagement strategies that can be utilized by a superpower and a regional power and thereby tries to identify whether Indo-U.S relations can be assessed through any dominant strategy or combination of strategies. India and U.S are placed side by side to highlight how their asymmetry in power position, difference over strategic objectives informs their understanding of engagement.

While U.S policies are predominantly motivated to retain its dominance and it engages with regional powers to maintain its influence and stability of the order and minimizing the challenge poised from rise of new powers. India seeks to enhance its capabilities or international status that requires its engagement with the superpower but again its desire to acquire a major power status based on its distinct ideas (often contradicts with the prevailing order) makes engagement with others essential. Despite divergences they tend to cooperate on diverse issues entailing a global strategic partnership. To cater to areas of common interests and to balance the divergences the role of suitable engagement strategies are significant.

Divulging from prominent dichotomy the contradictory approach of balancing or the conciliatory approach of bandwagoning, this study mainly focuses on new strategic responses that enable secondary states to manage their relation with the preponderant power and simultaneously enhance their own influence and extend distinct interests. Four engagement strategies are considered for analysis, soft balancing, bandwagoning and hedging and omni- enmeshment as probable strategies that can be adopted by India. A comparative study is undertaken to assess these strategies on the basis of means, advantages and costs incurred to identify which strategy suits India's purpose. A combination of soft balancing and omni- enmeshment enables India to maintain its flexible yet strategic partnership with U.S, nurture multiple engagements with others and most importantly to project its distinct ideas and interests. The rise of new powers with alternative or different ideas requires U.S to undertake suitable strategies to address the challenges. Strategies like accommodation, engagement, satellization and regional containment are considered to analyze how they might be utilized by U.S to retain its dominance and absorb new challenges. The strategies of engagement and

accommodation ensures providing specific measures beyond the alliance structure to entwine India by insulating shared initiatives from areas of disagreements. The study further stresses on elements of absorption within the greater strategy of accommodation. Indo-U.S relations are thereby assessed in terms of alliance, ententes, ad-hoc coalitions and alignment. While formal security centric alliances are not suited to address the existing divergences that remains within the partnership very issue specific and temporary arrangements like entente or ad-hoc coalitions are too loosely defined to sustain a global partnership. Alignments being value neutral does not necessitate a security agenda but provides for integrated and constructive cooperation.

Alignments are more suited to Indo U.S relations as it offers the needed flexibility along with the space for concrete cooperation over multiple issues. However, specifically for Indo-U.S relations alignment as a strategy has assumed certain unique features like rather than issue based alignment one can notice alignment has evolved as a pattern of engagement or dominant mode of operation that elevates the partnership. The study signifies Indo-U.S relations can be appropriately assessed by flexible cumulative upgrading alignments.