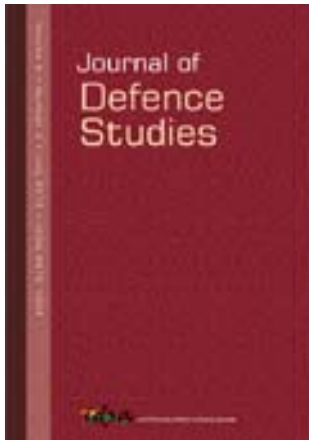


Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi-110010



Journal of Defence Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.idsa.in/journalofdefencestudies>

Logistics Support Agreement : A Closer Look at the Impact on India-US Strategic Relationship

Saroj Bishoyi

To cite this article: Saroj Bishoyi (2013): Logistics Support Agreement, Journal of Defence Studies, Vol-7, Issue-1.pp- 151-172

URL: http://www.idsa.in/jds/7_1_2013_LogisticsSupportAgreement_SarojBishoyi

Please Scroll down for Article

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.idsa.in/termsfuse>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

Views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IDSA or of the Government of India.

Logistics Support Agreement

A Closer Look at the Impact on India-US Strategic Relationship

*Saroj Bisboyi**

Logistics support between the armed forces of India and the US will be a vital aspect for enhancing cooperation in capability development to respond to natural disasters and address emerging security threats of the twenty-first century. As the 2005 India-US New Framework Defence Agreement highlights the broader areas of convergence of security interests, the exchange of logistics support facilities would further enhance bilateral defence cooperation as well as India's strategic role, keeping in view the projected expansion of the Indian Navy's role beyond the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The absence of appropriate logistics support mechanism between the two countries would hamper such capabilities to effectively deal with the security challenges during emergency situations. This article argues that the logistics support agreement the US has signed with many other countries and a similar agreement that it had proposed for India, is a mutually beneficial agreement. However, both sides need to make efforts to arrive at a consensus that is consistent with their national interests and policies.

INTRODUCTION

Cooperation in the fields of defence and security has been central to the recent upsurge in the India-US strategic relationship. The Indo-US defence relationship has, in fact, grown from solely military-to-military links into a mature partnership that encompasses dialogues on a range of issues, including military exercises, defence technology sales, professional military education exchanges, and practical cooperation.¹ The crux of the

* The author is a researcher at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.



defence cooperation is related to defence procurements, transfer of dual-use technologies, research and development, and India's defence industrialization. The two countries now talk about collaborating on multinational operations and strengthening the ability of their armed forces to respond quickly to disaster situations by mitigating logistics shortfalls. The US even looks towards building a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to counter the emerging security threats and to develop procedures for facilitating cooperation in future contingencies.² However, such practical cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries and their ability to perform effectively get affected by the absence of proper logistics support arrangements.

For removing such barriers and enabling practical cooperation, the US first proposed a Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), the India-specific version of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), at the sixth meeting of the India-US Defence Policy Group (DPG) in June 2004.³ The arrangement aimed at the exchange of logistics support, supplies, and services between the armed forces of the two countries on reciprocal basis. In pursuit of their shared vision of an expanded and deeper strategic relationship, in June 2005, they signed the New Framework for Defence Cooperation in which they agreed to work together to further develop their defence relationship by expanding defence trade, technology transfer, conducting joint military exercises, training, and building worldwide capacity to conduct successful peacekeeping and disaster relief operations.⁴ In the March 2006 strategic partnership agreement, they agreed to finalize an LSA at the earliest to facilitate logistics support during joint military exercises, peacekeeping, and disaster relief operations.⁵ They also agreed to the conclusion of a Maritime Cooperation Framework (MCF) to enhance maritime security to prevent piracy and other transnational crimes at sea, respond to natural disasters, address emergent threats, and enhance cooperative capabilities, through logistics support. Since then the US has been insisting on signing the LSA to overcome the barriers that stand in the way of further developing the defence and strategic relationship between the two countries.⁶ But India has been citing domestic political compulsions and stating that the agreement needs closer scrutiny and assessment from the viewpoint of the benefits that India would accrue by signing it.⁷ It is now pending before the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for clearance at the time of going to press.

This article argues that India can obtain more defence and strategic benefits by signing the logistics support agreement with the US and

should, therefore, move ahead to do so. However, both sides need to make efforts to arrive at an agreement that is consistent with their national interests and policies. The article examines and analyses in detail the LSA and its implications for India's independent foreign policy as well as for the India-US strategic relationship. The key issues it covers are: What is the LSA and what are its main characteristics? How can the agreement be operationalized? Does LSA compromise India's independent foreign policy? Whether India has to provide basing rights under this agreement? What are the main reasons for opposition to this agreement? What are the benefits that India will accrue through this agreement? And, finally, how it will affect the evolving India-US strategic relationship?

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AGREEMENT

As already mentioned, the LSA is similar to the ACSA that the US has with many of its North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies. The ACSA statute, formerly known as 'NATO Mutual Support Act', was enacted in 1979 to simplify exchanges of logistics support, supplies, and services between the US and other NATO forces. Subsequently, it was amended in 1986, 1992, and 1994 to permit acquisition and cross-servicing agreements with non-NATO eligible countries or international organizations.⁸ At present, the US has signed such agreements with over 80 countries around the world, including NATO member countries. In South Asia, it signed this agreement with Afghanistan in February 2004⁹ and with Sri Lanka in March 2007¹⁰ for ten years to transfer and exchange logistics supplies, support, and re-fuelling of services during joint military exercises, peacekeeping missions, and humanitarian relief operations.¹¹ It is quite pertinent to mention here that the US Department of Defense (DoD) and the Pakistan's Ministry of Defence had also signed this agreement in February 2002 which lapsed in February 2012.¹² In a recent report, Pakistan's Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) recommended that the agreement 'may only be renewed if required on new terms and conditions that should include respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan and ensures the national interests.'¹³ Besides India, the US is currently negotiating with other South Asian countries¹⁴ for signing this agreement which will enhance DoD's rapid deployment capacity and capability to conduct global operations by adding logistical options in South Asia, which ultimately reduces cost and provides flexibility to US forces moving through the region.

Defining LSA

The US DoD defines LSA—which is also referred to as Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)—as an international agreement between the DoD and an eligible country or international organization under which the US agrees to provide Logistics Support, Supplies and Services (LSSS) to military forces of eligible countries or organizations and in return for the reciprocal provision of logistics support, supplies and services by such governments or organizations to the US military forces.¹⁵ It is, thus, an arrangement between the US and host nations to exchange LSSS for their armed forces in a more collaborative environment.

Objective of the Agreement

The objective of the agreement is to provide legal authority for LSSS. It is used for joint military exercises, training requirements, deployments, unforeseen emergencies, exigent circumstances, peacekeeping and disaster relief operations, and wartime needs, and also exercises to correct logistic deficiencies which cannot be met by a nation on its own.¹⁶ It is considered to be a ‘critical logistics enabler’ by providing commanders enhanced operational readiness and cost effective mutual support. It provides flexibility to commanders for engagement and also for worldwide military-to-military interoperability between the signatories. Interoperability between the armed forces means that military personnel of India and the US can use each other’s equipment and better conduct joint operations such as peacekeeping and disaster relief operations.¹⁷ At the strategic level, the agreement provides for timely, flexible, and efficient logistics. Since the agreement is cooperative in nature, it also strengthens the relationship between the countries and promotes the goals of foreign policy interests.

Operationalization of the Agreement

Once the proposed agreement comes into force, either India or the US can indicate its requirement in a prescribed form to the other. The requirements permitted to be fulfilled under the agreement entail LSSS items only. In other words, the agreement allows the participants to exchange food, water, clothing, medical services, billeting (accommodation), transportation including airlift, petroleum, oils, lubricants, storage services, communication services, base operations support (and construction incident to base operations support), use of facilities, training services, spare parts and components, repair and

maintenance services, and air and sea port services. General purpose vehicles and other items of non-lethal military equipment not designated as Significant Military Equipment on the United States Munitions List (USML) may be leased or loaned for temporary use.¹⁸

But the agreement prohibits the exchange of major-end items: fighter aircrafts, missiles, bombs, gunship, etc.; weapon systems such as guidance systems for missiles, torpedoes, aerial bombs and naval guns; deterrent systems such as chaffs and chaff dispensers; ammunition as covered in the USML; and nuclear and chemical ammunition.¹⁹ Items not eligible for transfer under this agreement also include 'those items which are barred for transfer under the national laws of the two countries'.²⁰ On the receipt of the request, the recipient may review the request and should decide whether or not it can fulfil the requested requirement. The order for LSSS should be mutually agreeable and consistent with each party's priorities. Moreover, it does not place any obligations on the number or value of transaction to be provided by either party. Any transaction may be declined by the potential provider as deemed necessary.²¹ If the request is accepted, the order is counter-signed; the logistics support, supplies and services are delivered or provided; and the participants have a specified period of time from billing date to settling date.

Methods of Payment for LSSS

A logistics support agreement enables the exchange of LSSS through three types of transactions—cash, replacement in kind (RIK), or equal value exchange (EVE). At present, for logistical supports including food, fuel and stores, both the Indian and the US governments pay in cash only.²² However, it should be noted that the agreement does not aim at making or receiving donations. What has been obtained should be paid for within a reasonable time period according to the agreed terms. It also does not aim at making additional profits. The agreement requires the participants to charge each other what they charge themselves. This gives both parties a substantial cost benefit by reducing overheads. In other words, the lowest rates applied to the Defence Ministry will be charged from the recipient (US), not the usual higher rates applied for foreign military sales (FMS). The three types of transactions are explained below.²³

- (i) *Cash*: The first mode of payment for LSSS is through standard cash transactions. For instance, if the US provides \$2 million worth of food, water, oil, medical services to the Indian armed

forces engaged in a joint military exercise, India can settle the amount by paying the same to the US in cash.

- (ii) *RIK*: In this case, the receiving party replaces logistics support, supplies, and services that it receives with logistics support, supplies, and services of an identical, or substantially identical, nature. For instance, if the US armed forces in a peacekeeping or disaster relief operation get \$2 million worth of food and oil for its armed forces from India, the US government can settle that amount by providing food and oil worth the same amount to the Indian armed forces going to US harbour.
- (iii) *EVE*: In a transaction conducted under this agreement, payment by the receiving nation of LSSS is made by exchanging LSSS of an equal value to those received. This process allows the participants to exchange different goods and services of equal worth. For instance, if the US provides \$2 million worth of food and water to the Indian armed forces, India may provide clothing and medical services of equal worth to the United States armed forces and settle the amount.

THE LSA AND INDIA'S INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY

In a written reply to questions in the Lok Sabha, India's former External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said that the agreement 'will not affect the independence of India's foreign policy.' It would rather provide a 'framework for mutual logistical support when deploying defence resources in disaster relief operations or joint exercises.' Further, the logistical support, supplies, and services 'that will be provided in disaster relief operations abroad will enhance India's ability to assist affected countries efficiently.'²⁴

Logistical support between the armed forces of India and the US is not something new. During the 1990–91 Persian Gulf War, in fact, 'India granted overflight rights for Desert Shield missions through the Pacific.'²⁵ In January 1991, it also permitted US military aircraft to refuel in Bombay. However, this decision of the Chandra Shekhar government stirred domestic controversy which withdrew the refuelling privileges in February 1991 to deflect the criticism of the Congress Party that India's nominal pro-US tilt betrayed the country's non-aligned principles.²⁶ Nevertheless, since the relationship between the two countries has improved in recent years, their armed forces have cooperated operationally on important occasions.

During the December 2004 tsunami, they successfully conducted humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.²⁷ In January 2006, the American Navy rescued Indian mariners off the Horn of Africa whose ship had been hijacked by Somali pirates. Under the India-US disaster relief initiative, approved in July 2005, India airlifted supplies and made a contribution to the American Red Cross following Hurricane Katrina.²⁸ Both navies are also conducting counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden since 2008. As a result of these practices, cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries, the operational capabilities of the Indian armed forces and their ability to better perform in such situations has been enhanced.

The LSA and Basing or Access Rights

The agreement does not permit permanent basing rights for the military forces in either country. It is also not an agreement for access to rights for foreign troops. If India signs the proposed agreement, it will not compel India to support or make an alliance with the US. There are no requirements to commit Indian forces or in any way participate in any ongoing US military operations. As India's former External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee said that 'This (LSA) does not envisage providing military facilities to US forces. Neither does it provide for unqualified Indian support to the US in any armed conflict to which India is not a party.'²⁹ He had also made it clear that the proposed agreement 'does not carry any commitment to assist each other during periods of armed conflict.'³⁰ Thus, it gives freedom to both the sides to decline any request for logistical support if that is not in their national interests.

Reasons for Opposition to the Agreement

The following are the major reasons for the opposition to the agreement:

- (i) The LSA envisages Indian and American armed forces providing logistical support, transportation including airlift, refuelling, and storage services for each other's warships and aircraft on a reciprocal basis at the time of joint military exercises and disaster relief operations. Though the US government has been persistently urging India to sign the agreement soon to facilitate such cooperation, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government remains reluctant to do so because of the resistance from opposition political parties. The left-wing political parties, Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India-

Marxist CPI (M), had earlier contended that the agreement would give the US unfettered access to Indian military bases.³¹ The opposition leaders also alleged that it could lead India getting caught up in US regional military operations.³² The provisions of similar agreements that the US has signed with a number of countries do not allow permanent basing rights or carry any commitment to assist each other during military conflicts; however, such oppositions hinder in building political consensus in signing the agreement.

- (ii) The critics of the agreement argue that the proposed agreement is not simply an agreement governing minor courtesies extended by one friendly country to another but extension of such support services has a clear military purpose. The growing India-US defence relations and especially the escalating joint military exercises between their armed forces are also seen by the critics as pretext to create military alliance in Asia and to put more pressure on India to purchase expensive weaponry from the US.³³ The recent tranche of US embassy cables made public by *WikiLeaks* show how an anxious Washington over the last several years has tried to push these agreements but failed to get anywhere.³⁴ Moreover, the Indian armed forces do not want to be 'tied down to only one (US) system'.³⁵ These security concerns arise despite LSA being seen as a mutually beneficial and cost-effective arrangement to provide logistical support for each other's armed forces during joint operations.
- (iii) India-US joint military exercises aim at advancing closer military-to-military relations, greater familiarity with each other's equipment, and operational systems, and interoperability in joint operations where LSA will be very critical. India, in fact, 'conducts more exercises and personnel exchanges with the United States than with any other country',³⁶ and this is the most visible aspect of the growing India-US defence relationship. In the last one decade, India has conducted over 60 joint military exercises with the US in an effort to build the capacity of the armed forces for peacekeeping and disaster relief operations. However, this has triggered spirited protests by the opposition political parties, particularly by left-wing parties. They object to the exercises on the ground that these will further draw India into the strategic orbit of the US and integrate India more closely with

Washington's global agenda, which they oppose on security and political grounds.³⁷ It needs to be pointed out here that India is not a small country and its foreign policy decisions cannot be dictated by any other country, and that bilateral defence cooperation is solely based on mutually beneficial national interests.

- (iv) The critics of the agreement also point out that United States military forces are operating all over the world including the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The LSA with India would, therefore, benefit the US more than India because currently India's military forces are not operating near America.³⁸ The critics argue that the dividends of logistical cooperation and on-going joint military exercises are skewed in favour of the US. The fact is that the US has signed logistics support agreements with South East, South Asian, and also with Middle East countries. If India will not sign the agreement it will not affect much the US military operational capability in these regions. However, as India looks for playing a larger role in these regions and wants to protect its key foreign policy interests by countering emerging security challenges, its closer strategic relationship with the US in this context will thus be in its interest.
- (v) The US demands that unless India signs LSA along with two other technology safeguard agreements—the Communication Interoperability and Security Agreement (CISMOA), and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA)³⁹—the advance of bilateral defence cooperation will be hampered and India will keep itself away from obtaining cutting-edge defence technologies which will affect operational capability of its armed forces. As the former US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, stated on a visit to New Delhi in January 2010, that not getting the outstanding agreements signed 'is an obstacle to Indian access to the very highest level of technology.'⁴⁰ The US maintains that deficiency of these equipment hamper the ability of the Indian armed forces to better perform in contingency operations. Despite these claims, however, senior Indian armed forces officials pointed out that the absence of these agreements will not make any substantial difference to India's operational capabilities.⁴¹ These proposed agreements are also seen as the strings attached to the development of defence cooperation.

- (vi) Critics also cast doubt on the reliability of the US as a logistics support and supply partner. These doubts have their origin in its imposition of sanctions after India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998. The US also cut off weapons supplies to India after war broke out between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971. India's defence establishment has had a residual distrust of the US since then, and this has not changed despite subsequent, positive developments in the bilateral relations.⁴² An enduring trust deficit is thus hindering in building consensus on key security areas for cooperation.
- (vii) India seeks recognition from the US that it is a special partner entitled to receive certain priorities and concessions that are not extended universally. In this regard, Michael Mazza of the American Enterprise Institute, addressing India's recent decision against buying an American-made fighter jet in its Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA), argued that 'the United States requires all foreign buyers to sign up to end-use monitoring agreements (EUMAs). That includes our oldest and closest allies. The Brits and the Australians can find this just as frustrating as the Indians do. I sometimes get the sense that folks in India expect special treatment from the United States as a show of good faith.'⁴³ Sunil Dasgupta and Stephen P. Cohen also make a similar point when they argue that 'as long as Washington is unwilling to grant India special privileges, it will not be able to turn endless discussions into genuine cooperation.'⁴⁴ Thus, strategic analysts contend that if the US wants its appropriate share of the large economic opportunity presented by India's defence market⁴⁵ and if it wants to build up 'a long-term strategic partnership with India',⁴⁶ it is necessary for the political and bureaucratic leadership in the US to remove these strings and extend administrative and regulatory preferences to India.
- (viii) Finally, India does not want to be seen as a military ally of the US. Instead, it wants to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with all major powers, including United States. Kanwal Sibal, former Foreign Secretary of India, expresses this sense when he states that 'India wants to develop broad-based mutually beneficial relations with various global power centres rather than being seen as excessively leaning towards one power centre.'⁴⁷ India now has signed 'strategic partnerships' with over 30 countries

and the significance of each of these strategic partnerships differs from one another because of their different political, economic, and security dimensions.⁴⁸ It is thus believed that the proposed agreement may upset India's other strategic partners, particularly Russia. As Brahma Challeney pointed out: 'If India gets sucked into the US strategic dominion through EUMA and other arrangements—with the Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) next on Washington's list, along with the Mutual Logistic Support Agreement (MLSA)—its special relationship with Moscow is bound to change.'⁴⁹ Furthermore, at a time when the United States economic and political power is relatively declining, and India's regional and international profile is growing, it is perceived that its balanced relationship with all the major countries of the world is very critical to its rise as a major power in the twenty-first century.

Benefits of the Agreement

In spite of the above security concerns and domestic political compulsions, the agreement offers several benefits to both the nations and provides best opportunities for their armed forces to work together to counter the security challenges of the twenty-first century. The following are the key benefits of the agreement.

- (i) The logistics support agreement will enhance operational capabilities of Indian armed forces and help mitigate logistics shortfalls. The June 2005 India-US new defence framework agreement had laid out a road-map for joint military exercises, training, and service exchanges. Since then their armed forces have conducted the maximum number of joint military exercises, and their growing strategic partnership is taking these operations to highly advanced levels. Service officers have been attending expert exchanges and participating in joint seminars, conferences, and observer programmes. In this regard, General V.P. Malik, former Chief of Army Staff, pointed out that Indian exposure to the combined arms training at the US National Training Centre has been very useful. Such training contributes to further refinement of the Indian military's war doctrine, rapid force deployment, higher defence management, etc. Officers have also benefited from the US experience of fighting cyber terrorism,

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) defeating mechanism in Iraq and Afghanistan,⁵⁰ infrastructure development in strife-torn regions and inaccessible areas, and execution of rescue and relief operations during natural disasters. On the other hand, the Indian military has invaluable operational experience in all types of terrain, dealing with sub-conventional wars, conflicts in ethnically diverse societies, and international peacekeeping. These are essential aspects in the nature of current conflicts and come handy in conflict resolution. Therefore, the two countries can share their respective operational capabilities and experiences for further strengthening the capabilities of their armed forces to counter the non-traditional security challenges of the twenty-first century. This will further get institutionalized and regularized once both the nations operationalize the proposed agreement. The Pentagon also argues that the signing of the LSA would ease accounting and book-keeping hassles during frequent joint exercises between the two sides.⁵¹ The US, thus, believes that India-US defence cooperation will get further impetus with having proper logistics support mechanism.

- (ii) As part of the March 2006 India-US Maritime Cooperation Framework,⁵² they had agreed to conclude LSA at the earliest that would allow each side to use maintenance, berthing, and support services of the other side during deployments. The agreement is important because the MCF provides for joint Indo-US maritime operations, including joint-patrolling of energy trade routes including the Malacca Strait, anti-piracy, and other transnational crimes at sea, search and rescue operations, anti-pollution at sea, and rescue and relief operations during natural disasters. The Pentagon believes that 'Deepening maritime security cooperation with India holds great potential over the next five years across'⁵³ these security issues. Furthermore, expressing growing concern over pirates' influence beyond the western Indian Ocean, Thomas P. Kelly, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs, in a briefing said that 'India's a critical partner in our multilateral efforts to combat piracy.'⁵⁴ The US also sees the Indian Navy's growth in capability as an adjunct to its own progressively swelling operational commitments in South Asian waters. They see such an agreement as a logical conclusion to the escort assistance provided by the Indian Navy to American

merchant vessels passing through the Malacca Strait after the September 11 terrorist attacks.⁵⁵ Thus, India and the US can be key security partners in the vast expanses of the IOR and the LSA will be very useful in mitigating capability gaps and logistics shortfalls while addressing regional contingencies.

- (iii) The exchange of the LSSS facilities between the two countries around the world would also enhance India's strategic role, keeping in mind the projected expansion of the Indian Navy and its growing footprint. Since India's economic and foreign policy interests are no more confined to the South Asian region, its close defence and strategic relationship with the US would be a critical factor in its larger desire to be able to protect and promote its foreign policy interests well beyond South Asia. On the other hand, the US would be unlikely to sniff at the opportunity to take advantage of Indian logistics support facilities in an institutionalized manner as it already has a respectable number of options in the IOR. One of them is at Diego Garcia.⁵⁶
- (iv) The agreement will thus help increase the operational outreach of Indian armed forces and strengthen the Indo-US strategic relationship. The US even regards India as 'a rising power and a responsible global power'. US President Barack Obama has called, 'the relationship between the United States and India will be a defining partnership in the 21st century', rooted in common values and interests.⁵⁷ At the same time, the US government also stresses upon India to play a larger role in Asia and beyond in the coming years. As former US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton pointed out: 'the United States is making a strategic bet on India's future—that India's greater role on the world stage will enhance peace and security.'⁵⁸
- (v) The proposed agreement has economic benefits too. Once the agreement comes into force, India would be able to save around \$20 million per war game, when Indian forces take part in any of the joint military exercises with the US on American soil, such as the Red Flag War Games held in 2008;⁵⁹ this is because India would not have to pay the money for receiving logistics support while participating in such military exercises. Instead, it would be able to provide reciprocal logistics support under the provision of replacement in kind and equal value exchange in this country whenever the US defence forces require them.⁶⁰ India would save

money by providing LSSS items because of the cost differences between India and the US. The countries under the agreement also share the costs and burdens of logistics support, supplies, and services. This sharing results in efficiency and reduction of the logistics shortfalls. In addition, sharing of the burden leads to a common operating picture and start-point, and provides the commanders with a unified, multinational perspective.⁶¹

- (vi) Some argue that the ongoing Indo-US joint military exercises and the benefits of logistical cooperation are at present tilted in favour of the US. However, it is pertinent to point out here that the current global geo-strategic environment is marked by a contradiction. On the one hand, countries are forging 'promiscuous' politico-diplomatic partnerships. On the other, they are adopting hedging strategies as a result of uncertainties about the intentions of the emerging poles. For India, joint military exercises with the United States serve both imperatives concurrently.⁶² Consequently, identifying convergence of interests between the two countries and absolute gains are more crucial for India than extracting a 'balance-of-dividends' and relative gains.

THE WAY AHEAD

The logistics support agreements that the US has signed with many other countries are mutually beneficial agreements. India thus should move on the pending LSA to strengthen defence and strategic relationship with the US. So far, the Indian government has not clearly indicated any objections to the provisions of the agreement. If there is any objectionable element in the proposed agreement, then it should be identified and the two sides should negotiate to arrive at an agreement that is consistent with their national interests and policies. As mentioned above, the agreement has several benefits from both the defence and strategic aspects. It helps in mitigating capability gaps and logistics shortfalls. The systems and methods of LSSS, when integrated and supplemented with the proposed agreement, would decrease wait time and increase sustainable capabilities. Since it is a two-way agreement, the two countries would share both the responsibility and benefits of the agreement.

The increasing seriousness of non-traditional security challenges, coupled with the criticality of the South Asian region on the stability and security of both the world and India, also increases the importance of the agreement to have all the needed LSSS in a timely, efficient, and effective

manner. Moreover, as India's role and foreign policy interests are growing in the world, to match its growing role the need of logistics support is very clear. The agreement will help Indian armed forces to develop their capabilities, play better humanitarian assistance and relief operations, and to operate beyond the South Asian region in safeguarding its vital national interests. At present, however, it seems that political sensitivity, deep-seated distrust, bureaucratic and procedural hurdles, and some short-sighted domestic policies in both countries are stalling this process.⁶³

Yet, despite these difficulties, the India-US relationship has witnessed a remarkable transformation in the last decade. The US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's visit to India in June 2012 further highlighted the growing convergence of India-US strategic interests and rising India's significance to the United States' Asia-pivot strategy.⁶⁴ Now both sides need to sustain the momentum on the issues where they have made progress, including cooperation on defence, technology transfer, trade, energy, the environment, and education. They need to move their disagreements towards cooperation, without reverting to the acrimony that characterized past relations.⁶⁵ The 'wider public in India accepts that establishing good relationship with the US is a desirable objective. Pragmatic thinking in India supports the inclination of the government to bring India and the US closer.'⁶⁶ On the other hand, the US government has also placed its strategic focus on improving its relations with India. The scope of the opportunity, diplomacy, and negotiations between the two countries are also underway to iron out the existing disagreements in a manner acceptable to both sides. These efforts would put a promising India-US strategic relationship back on track. They now need to turn their common interests into complimentary policies.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his sincere thanks to Dr G. Balachandran, Dr S. Kalyanaraman, Col Vivek Chadha, Dr Anit Mukherjee, Cdr Sarabjit Singh Parmar, and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions which were of great help to the enrichment of the paper.

NOTES

1. The White House, Fact Sheet, 'US-India Defense Cooperation', White House press release, 8 November 2010, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/india-factsheets/US-India_Defense_Cooperation.pdf, accessed on 25 April 2012.

2. See US Department of Defense, 'Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense', January 2012, p. 2, at http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf, accessed on 15 June 2012; also see the Speech of US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy on 'Investing in the Future of US-India Defense Relations', at the Asia Society on 1 July 2012, available at http://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/100701_flournoy_transcript.pdf, last accessed on 15 June 2012.
3. Bedi, Rahul, 'Strategic Partners in Defense', *Span*, March-April 2005, pp. 20-4, available at <http://span.state.gov/wwwfspmarapr4.pdf>, last accessed on 4 May 2012. Initially, the agreement that the US had proposed for India was named 'Access and Cross-Servicing Agreement'. Due to political opposition to the word 'Access', it has been changed to 'Logistics Support Agreement'. Similarly, the US has signed such agreements with a number of countries but the names differ, such as 'Mutual Logistics Support Agreement' with Philippines; 'Logistics Support, Supplies and Services' with Japan; 'Logistics Support Agreement' with Hungary; and 'Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement' with Israel and Singapore.
4. The 2005 defence agreement covers the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation. For details see Embassy of India, Washington, DC, 'The Joint Statement on the New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship', 28 June 2005, available at http://www.indianembassy.org/press_release/2005/June/31.htm, last accessed on 15 July 2005.
5. The agreement was signed between US President George W. Bush and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on 2 March 2006, during the former's visit to India. For details see the text of the India-US Joint Statement, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2006/03/02js01.htm>, accessed on 17 September 2006.
6. Kronstad, K. Alan and Sonia Pinto 'India-U.S. Security Relations: Current Engagement', Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report No. R42823, 13 November 2012, p. 12.
7. During the visit of US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates to New Delhi in January 2010, India's Defence Minister A.K. Antony said that India was unsure of the benefits that would accrue from it by inking pacts like CISMOA and LSA. Defence Secretary Gates also conceded that 'We have not done an adequate job on the American side in spelling out for our Indian partners the benefits to India of signing these agreements.' See 'Even as Top US Chief Comes Visiting, India Reluctant about Military Pacts', *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 22 July 2010, and Embassy of the United States, 'Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates Press Conference', Press Release, New Delhi, 20 January 2010, available at <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr012110.html>, last accessed on 26 April 2012.

8. 'Mutual Logistic Support between the US Army and Governments of Eligible Countries, NATO Subsidiary Bodies, and United Nations Organizations', Headquarters, United States Army, Europe, and Seventh Army (HQ USAREUR/7A), 15 April 1997, p. 4, available at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/ccap/cc/jcchb/Files/Topical/acsa/policy/ur12-16.pdf>, accessed on 9 April 2012; also see 'Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)', available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/acsa.htm>, last accessed on 9 April 2012.
9. The ACSA, with annexures, was signed by the US and Afghanistan at Doha and Kabul on 22 January and 16 February 2004 and it entered into force on 16 February 2004. See US Department of State, 'A List of Bilateral Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States in Force as of 1 January 2011', Washington DC: Office of the Legal Adviser, US Department of State, 2011, p. 1.
10. The US and Sri Lanka signed ACSA, with annexures on 5 March 2007 and entered into force on 5 March 2007. See US Department of State, 'A List of Bilateral Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States in Force as of 1 January 2011', p. 258.
11. The logistics support agreement between the two countries had been on hold for years because of India's objections. India earlier perceived it would give the US military a foothold in its sphere of influence. Since the bilateral relationship has improved in recent years, and since India and the US began to see each other as economic and strategic partners in the emerging Asian order, India shed its objections to the agreement. See 'US, Sri Lanka Sign Logistics Pact', *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 6 May 2007, available at <http://hindu.com/2007/03/06/stories/2007030602831400.htm>, accessed on 21 April 2012; also see 'US and Sri Lanka Sign Military Pact', *Tamil Guardian*, available at <http://www.tamilguardian.com/article.asp?articleid=1127>, accessed on 21 April 2012.
12. The US and Pakistan signed ACSA at MacDill Air Force Base and Rawalpindi on 9 February 2002 and entered into force 9 February 2002. See US Department of State, 'A List of Bilateral Treaties and Other International Agreements of the US in Force as of January 01, 2011', p. 212.
13. Malik, Maqbool, 'Tough Terms Set for US Re-Engagement', *The Nation*, 21 March 2012, available at <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/national/21-Mar-2012/tough-terms-set-for-us-re-engagement>, accessed on 10 June 2012; and Raja Asghar Raja, 'Parliament Sets Out To Reorder US Ties', *Dawn*, 21 March 2012, available at <http://dawn.com/2012/03/21/parliament-sets-out-to-reorder-us-ties/>, last accessed on 10 June 2012.
14. The US Department of Defense also first proposed this agreement to Bangladesh in 2006. Since 2011, it has intensified its diplomatic efforts to

- make the Armed Forces of Dhaka agree to sign the agreement. See Shakhawat Hossain, 'Dhaka Under Pressure to Sign US Military Co-Op Deal' 13 May 2012, available at <http://www.newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2012-05-13&nid=10126>, last accessed on 10 June 2012.
15. Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), 'Department of Defense, Directive, No. 2010.9, 28 April 2003', pp. 2–3, 12, available at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/201009p.pdf>, last accessed on 2 April 2012.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
 17. Interoperability 'is a measure of the degree to which various organizations or individuals are able to operate together to achieve a common goal'. For a detailed analyses of the concept see 'Chapter 2: A Broad Definition of Interoperability', in Myron Hura, Gary McLeod, Eric V. Larson, James Schneider, and Daniel R. Gonzales, *Interoperability: A Continuing Challenge in Coalition Air Operations*, Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2000, available at http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1235/MR1235.chap2.pdf, last accessed on 24 April 2012.
 18. DTIC, 'Department of Defense, Directive, No. 2010.9, April, 28 2003', p. 13. The USML is a list of articles, services, and related technology designated as defence and space related by the US federal government. This designation is pursuant to sections 38 and 47(7) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), 22 USC 2778 and 2794(7). These articles fall under the export and temporary import jurisdiction of the Department of State.
 19. DTIC, 'Department of Defense, Directive, No. 2010.9, 28 April 2003', pp. 4–5.
 20. 'UPA'S Issue-wise Response to Rejoinder by Left Parties dated 22 October 2007 and November 16, 2007,' *India's Foreign Relations—2008: Documents*, New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, Published in Cooperation with Public Diplomacy Division Ministry of External Affairs, 2009, p. 942.
 21. Ministry of Defence and Urban Development, Government of Sri Lanka, 'ACSA: Facts and Fallacies', 21 August, 2011, available at http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20070325_03, last accessed on 20 April 2012.
 22. For details see DTIC, 'Department of Defense, Directive, No. 2010.9, April 28, 2003'; and also Sandeep Unnithan, 'New Gates Mission,' *India Today*, 1 March 2008, available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/New+Gates+mission/1/5240.html>, accessed on 26 April 2012.
 23. DTIC, 'Department of Defense, Directive, No. 2010.9, April 28, 2003', pp. 12–14.
 24. The then India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's reply to questions in the Lok Sabha, 'Logistic Support Agreement with USA', New Delhi, 21 November 2007. For details see *India's Foreign Relations 2007:*

- Documents*, New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, Published in Cooperation with Public Diplomacy Division Ministry of External Affairs, 2008, p. 1955.
25. Cohen, Eliot A., *Gulf War Air Power Survey, Volume 3, Logistics and Support*, Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, 1993, available at www.fas.org/sgp/library/gwapsv3.doc, last accessed on 23 April 2012.
 26. Heitzman, James and Robert L. Worden (eds), (eds), *India: A Country Study*, Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1995, available at <http://countrystudies.us/india/131.htm>, last accessed on 23 April 2012.
 27. For details see V.P. Malik, 'Indo-US Defence and Military Relationship: From Estrangement to Strategic Partnership' in Sumit Ganguly, Andrew Scobell, and Brian Shoup (eds) *US-Indian Strategic Cooperation into the 21st Century: More than Words*, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 93–94.
 28. US Department of Defense, Fact Sheet: 'US-India Defense Relationship', March 2006, available at <http://www.defense.gov/news/Mar2006/d20060302us-indiadefensereationship.pdf>, last accessed on 15 June 2012.
 29. India's External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee's reply to questions in the Lok Sabha, *India's Foreign Relations 2008: Documents*, New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, Published in Cooperation with Public Diplomacy Division Ministry of External Affairs, 2008, p. 942.
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. Left Parties Note on 'Defence Cooperation with the US: Implications for India's Security' and 'Left Rejoinder to UPA's Response on Foreign Policy and Security Matters', *India's Foreign Relations 2008: Documents*, New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, Published in Cooperation with Public Diplomacy Division Ministry of External Affairs, 2008, pp. 875–82, 943–4, 947–49; also see Rajat Pandit, 'Military Logistics Pact with US on Backburner?', *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 6 July 2009.
 32. Kronstadt, K. Alan, Paul K. Kerr, Michael F. Martin, and Bruce Vaughn, 'India: Domestic Issues, Strategic Dynamics, and US Relations', Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report RL33529, 1 September 2011, pp. 86–88.
 33. *India's Foreign Relations 2008: Documents*, pp. 878, 880–81.
 34. Varadarajan, Siddharth, 'US Cables Show Grand Calculations Underlying 2005 Defence Framework', *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 28 March 2011.
 35. Pandit, Rajat, 'Wargames Fine but No More: India to US', *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 3 April 2011.
 36. The White House Fact Sheet, 'US-India Defense Cooperation', Press Release, 8 November 2010, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/india-factsheets/US-India_Defense_Cooperation.pdf. Last accessed on 25 April 2012.
 37. Left Parties Note, *India's Foreign Relations 2008: Documents*, pp. 879–80; and Praful Bidwai, 'US Exercising India's Military Muscles', *Asia Times Online*,

- 8 September 2007, available at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/II08Df01.html, last accessed on 20 April, 2012.
38. Pandit, Rajat, 'Even as Top US Chief Comes Visiting, India Reluctant About Military Pacts', *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 22 July 2010.
 39. The CISMOA requires purchasers of the US defence equipment to ensure that equipment supplied to India is compatible with other American systems. The BECA provides for mutual logistical support and enables exchanges of communications and related equipment. It is, however, believed that India does not want to get into a tight security embrace with the US. See K. Alan Kronstadt, Paul K. Kerr, Michael F. Martin and Bruce Vaughn, 'India-US Relations', Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report RL33529, 27 October, 2010, p. 52.
 40. US Department of Defense, 'Media Availability with Secretary Gates Enroute to India', Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), 19 January 2010, available at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4538>, last accessed on 27 April 2012.
 41. Air Chief Marshal P.V. Naik, at a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) event in New Delhi in October 2010 said that the 'Government had asked us about our opinion on these agreements and we told them that this will not make any substantial difference to our operational capabilities.' See 'IAF Says Not Inking Pacts with the US Will Make No Difference', *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 15 October 2010, and 'Absence of Military Pacts with US Will Not Impact Capability: IAF Chief', *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 16 October 2010.
 42. Dasgupta, Sunil and Stephen P. Cohen, 'Arms Sales for India: How Military Trade Could Energize US-Indian Relations', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 2, March-April 2011, p. 23.
 43. Mazza, Michael, 'Still Reason for Optimism in US-India Partnership', *The American*, online magazine of the American Enterprise Institute, 4 May 2011, available at <http://blog.american.com/2011/05/still-reason-for-optimism-in-u-s-india-partnership/>, last accessed on 27 April 2012.
 44. See Dasgupta and Cohen, 'Arms Sales for India: How Military Trade Could Energize US-Indian Relations', n. 42, p. 23.
 45. India is expected to purchase military equipment worth \$100 billion by 2022 and another \$9.7 billion is to be spent by 2016 on homeland security.
 46. See US Department of Defense, 'Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense'.
 47. Sibal, Kanwal, 'The Arc of the India-US Partnership', *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2, April-June 2012, p. 35.
 48. In this regard, the FNSR Group of Experts' report points out that some strategic partnerships are more comprehensive than others, depending on

- the number of core areas of national interest are involved in which the two sides can fruitfully and actively engage to their mutual benefit the scope and depth of their relations. See *India's Strategic Partners: A Comparative Assessment*, New Delhi: Foundation for National Security Research, November 2011, and Sarita Azad and Arvind Gupta, 'Evaluating India's Strategic Partnerships using Analytic Hierarchy Process', IDSA Strategic Comment, 17 September 2011, available at http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/EvaluatingIndiasStrategicPartnershipsusingAnalyticHierarchyProcess_agupta_170911, last accessed on 27 April 2012.
49. Chellaney, Brahma, 'End-use Monitoring Woes for India', *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 27 July 2009, available at <http://www.hindu.com/2009/07/27/stories/200907275490800.htm>, last accessed on 26 April 2012.
 50. Malik, V.P., 'India-US Defence Relations: A Close Look at the Emerging Realities', *The Tribune*, 20 October 2010, Chandigarh, available at <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2010/20101020/edit.htm#4>, last accessed on 21 April 2012.
 51. 'Absence of Military Pacts with US Will Not Impact Capability: IAF Chief', *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 16 October 2010.
 52. US Department of Defense, the final India-US Agreed Version of 'Indo-US Framework for Maritime Security Cooperation', 2 March 2006, available at <http://www.defense.gov/news/Mar2006/d200600302indo-usframeworkformaritimsecuritycooperation.pdf>, last accessed on 12 June 2012.
 53. US Department of Defense, 'Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation', November 2011, available at http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/20111101_NDAA_Report_on_US_India_Security_Cooperation.pdf, last accessed on 12 June 2012.
 54. 'International Counter-Piracy Update', State Department Briefing, Washington DC, 20 April 2012, available at <http://fpc.state.gov/188213.htm>, last accessed on 11 May 2012.
 55. 'US Admiral Delhi-bound to Put Maritime Pact on Fast Track', *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 24 April Tue 25 April 2006, available at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/us-admiral-delhibound-to-put-maritime-pact/3150/>, last accessed on 26 April 2012.
 56. 'Obama Offers Trade-Offs', 9 November 2010, available at <http://www.indian-military.org/news-archives/indian-army-news/1146-obama-offers-trade-offs.html>, last accessed on 22 April 2012.
 57. The White House, 'Remarks by the President at US-India Strategic Dialogue Reception', Press Release Washington DC, 3 June 2010, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-us-india-strategic-dialogue-reception>, last accessed on 24 April 2012.

58. Clinton, Hillary, 'America's Pacific Century', *Foreign Policy*, No. 189, November 2011.
59. 'New Direction in Indo-US Strategic and Military Ties', *Indian Defence Year Book 2011*, New Delhi: IDYB Group, 2011, p. 383.
60. 'Antony Likely to Ink 3 Pacts During US Visit', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 18 August 2008, available at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Antony-likely-to-ink-3-pacts-during-US-visit/Article1-332140.aspx>, last accessed on 9 May 2012.
61. Matlock, Patricia, *Acquisition Cross-Servicing and Mutual Logistics Support in the Pacific*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 30 March 2009, p. 15.
62. Khurana, Gurpreet S., 'India-US Combined Defence Exercises: An Appraisal', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 32, No.6, 2008, p. 1061.
63. Malik, "India-US Defence Relations: A Close Look at the Emerging Realities", n. 50.
64. Indian sensitivities on pending defence agreements even led US Defense Secretary Panetta to downplay its significance by stating that the disagreements between the two countries on specific agreements would not be barriers to improving its relations with India. For details see US Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta's Speech on 'Partners in the 21st Century', 6 June 2012 at IDSA, New Delhi, available at <http://www.idsa.in/key speeches/LeonEPanettaonPartnersinthe21stcentury#.T9D0fT5YtDE>, last accessed on 7 June 2012.
65. Feigenbaum, Evan A., 'India's Rise, America's Interest: The Fate of the US-Indian Partnership', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 2, March-April 2010, pp. 76-91.
66. Sibal, 'The Arc of the India-US Partnership', n. 47, p. 35.