

Expanding Scope of India-US Military-to-Military Cooperation

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Abstract

India and the United States at present enjoy strategic partnership on a multi-dimensional aspects and the foremost being the defence and security cooperation. Joint military exercises form an important component of the unprecedented developments that have witnessed in India-US defence relations over the last more than one decade. With every passing year, India-US military-to-military exercises have gained significant momentum and expanded its scope to cope with the contemporary security challenges facing the world. India and the United States have institutionalized the Malabar series of naval exercises plus the army and air force series of exercises which are being held on a regular basis. However, at present, navy-to-navy cooperation appears to be the most robust in terms of frequency of exercises and personnel exchanges being concluded on a regular basis. The increasing number of military-to-military exercises involving all the three branches is a reflection to the gaining security understanding between the two countries. The paper argues that the expanding scope of the joint military exercises is in response to India's emerging military capabilities and its readiness to play a global role to meet the global challenges of the twenty-first century. The paper attempts to make an analysis on the progress made so far in the directions of joint military-to-military exercises between India and the United States. Besides, it also discusses the advantage of such military exercises to India.

Keywords: India, US, Military-to-Military Exercises, Interoperability, Security Challenges, Commanding, Foundation, WMD, Combat.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Defence and security cooperation between India and the United States have started flourishing seriously after the turn of twenty-first century but the foundation was laid in the 90s. Expanding defence cooperation between India and the United States signifies common interests, mutual desire and the long-term commitment to meet the twenty-first century touch security challenges. The major objective of the expanding defence and security cooperation has been to achieve interoperability. It is aimed at developing capabilities and confidence, jointly confront multilateral global security issues such as protection of the sea lanes of communication, ensure free and uninterrupted passage of energy supplies and conduct joint peacekeeping operations, combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The evolving defence ties are for the mutual benefit of the two countries and not directed at any third party. Both sides have a lot to gain from this expanding defence relationship in terms of gaining mutual understanding, familiarity with each other military operations and procedures.¹

Initially, military-to-military exercises between India and the United was very much limited in scope. But today, with every passing year, military-to-military exercises are gaining in terms of its size, momentum, sophistication and expanded its scope. Since the dawn of the twenty-first century in general and 9/11 events in particular, military exercises and operations are increasing in size, intensity and complexity. The increasing number of military-to-military exercises involving all the three branches is also a result of the gaining security understanding between the two countries. In 2006, India and the U.S. conducted the largest bilateral air exercises. From the Indian side, SU-30 MKI aircraft was deployed, while America deployed F-16 jets (Mitra and John Ryan, 2006, October).

Over the last more than one decade since the turn of twenty first century, both the countries have conducted more than fifty combat exercises. In January 2009, the U.S. and Indian army conducted the joint exercise titled, 'Exercise Shatrujeet' aimed at developing mutual capability to undertake counter-terrorism operations. This was followed by an advanced transport and helicopter fleet exercise between IAF and USAF in Agra and Chandigarh. This exercise comprises of operations by Special Forces after paradropping from transport aircraft like the Indian IL-76s and AN-325 and the American C-130J Super Hercules.²

However, at present, navy-to-navy cooperation appears to be the most robust in terms of frequency of exercises and personnel exchanges being concluded on a regular basis. The paper argues that the expanding scope of the joint military exercises is in response to India's emerging military capabilities and its readiness to play a global role to meet the global challenges the twenty-first century. The paper attempts to make an analysis on the joint military-to-military exercises between India and the United States involving all the three branches of the armed forces. Besides, it also discusses the advantage of such military exercises to India.

2. FOUNDATION OF JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES BETWEEN INDIA AND US

¹ Refer to, *People, Progress, Partnership: The Transformation of U.S.-Indian Relations* (New Delhi: Public Affairs Section, Embassy of the United States of America, n.d.), p. 38.

² See, "Indo-US Defence Ties will only get Better", *Times of India* (Pune), 13 December 2008 and also see, "India-U.S. Joint Exercise Shatrujeet 2009 Conducted", *India Review*, vol.5, No.2, February 2009, p. 8.

The initiative has been taken by Lt. Gen. Claude M. Kickleigher, former commander of the Army in Pacific, who made significant number of proposals to intensify the level of defence and military cooperation between the two countries. It calls for reciprocal visits of Chief of Army Staff, conducting strategic symposium annually that will be participated by Indian and U.S. armies, establish executive steering committee to review, refine and redefine the agreed upon goals and objectives, exchange of staff, staff information exchanges for the reciprocal flow of information, training to be provided to commandoes and mutual participation in regional conferences in order to improve the ability to work together **(Saksena and Suzette Grillot, 1999: 157-58)**.

In response to the Claude Kickleigher proposal, both countries had set up an Army Executive Steering Group (ESG) in January 1992, followed by the Navy and Air Force in March 1992 and August 1993, respectively. The Army Executive Steering Group is co-chaired by the Indian Vice Chief Army Staff and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC), the Navy ESG by the Indian Deputy Chief of Naval Staff and the Commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and the Air Force ESG by the Indian Vice Chief of Air Staff and the C-in-C of the U.S. Pacific Air Force. The Executive Steering Groups of the three services meet regularly. This has given way to the first ever-joint training exercise named 'Teak Iroquois'. It was conducted in February 1992, in which the army and air force paratroopers of the two countries participated. The second such exercise was held in October 1993. Between May 1992 and mid 1997, the navies of the two countries had witnessed three rounds of naval exercises-Malabar I, II and III **(Kumar, 1997, August: 44-45)**.

The Agreed Minutes on defence relations agreement signed on 1995 set out the roadmap for military cooperation between India and United States. In this, both sides have agreed to increase the service-to-service cooperation which encompasses observation of each other's military exercises, professional training and joint exercises **(Prabhakar, 2000: 74)**. Military Cooperation Group (MCG) is the main mechanism which not only review but also guides for the services related cooperation matters and inter-service coordination between the two sides. However, the primary mechanism guiding the defence cooperation between India and United States is the Defence Policy Group (DPG). MCG comes under the DPG.

3. BILATERAL INDIA-U.S. NAVAL EXERCISES

Since the end of cold war, the navies of the two countries have conducted several rounds of Malabar exercises reflecting the growing importance the U.S. gives to military cooperation with India. It is code named as the 'Malabar Exercise' because it is being held off India's southwestern Malabar Coast. The purpose of such exercise basically is designed to develop professional skills thereby increasing interoperability between the two navies while cementing the cooperative military relations between the two countries. The ongoing military exercise is in response to the growing strategic relationship between the two countries. After the 9/11 events, the United States in particular had declared India as a natural partner in the fight against terrorism.³

The first ever joint bilateral naval exercises named Malabar-I held in May 1992 was limited in scope, preliminary and exploratory in nature. While the second and third rounds of the Malabar exercises were three dimensional in nature comprising of maritime reconnaissance aircraft,

³ See, "Naval-Gazing off the Malabar Coast", 07 October 2004, available at <<http://www.rediff.com/news/2004/oct/07spec.htm>> (accessed on 5 November 2012).

surface ships and submarine. During this exercises, the U.S. navy introduced its nuclear powered submarine and the P-3C Orion maritime patrol and attack aircraft (**Kumar, 1997, August: 44-45**). The Malabar 1996 exercise encompasses anti-submarine warfare (ASW) tactics and mock destruction of submarines. At the naval executive steering group meeting held in Singapore on November 1996, both sides had agreed for conducting the fourth joint naval exercises in early 1997 at a much better scope and more sophisticated than the previous exercises. Unfortunately, the exercise could not take place as decided owing to the possibility of nuclear tests. After which, the bilateral Malabar exercises between the navies of the two countries lapsed owing to a series of India's nuclear tests in May 1998 (**Singh, 2003: 128-9**).

However, due to timely and longest ever strategic dialogue concluded between the two countries, the military relations between the two started bounced back strongly by the dawn of twenty-first century. Both sides had agreed to return to the joint Malabar exercises from 2002 onwards, indicating their eagerness to strengthen the military relationship. In September-October 2002, the fourth in a series of Malabar exercises took place in the Arabian Sea where USS Chancellorsville and the USS Paul F. Foster participated and the Indian navy ships involved were the INS Delhi and INS Gomati. It comprises of the surface, sub-surface and air warfare over the Arabian Sea. Since then, there has been a continuous Malabar exercises without even a year break is something the world is close watching.⁴ In the 2003, Malabar exercises around 1,500 Indian and American naval personnel took part in a three day naval exercises. The 2003 exercise centered on anti-submarine warfare tactics. Besides this, it would also focus on VBSS (visit, board search and seizure operations). At a joint press conference, captains of the four Indian and American warships said the exercise would greatly enhance mutual understanding of the two navies.⁵

Before the start of the Malabar 2004 exercises, Indian Navy spokesman Commander Vinay Garg had said, "In order to streamline interoperability and derive maximum training value for such exercise, the two navies have also evolved standard operating procedures (SOPs), which would be tested during the exercise." He further added that the thrust of the exercise would be on anti-submarine warfare, sea control missions, fleet air defence, surface firing, maritime interdiction operations and VBSS operations, night time underway replenishments and a "war at sea."⁶ With every passing year the military exercises gained sophisticated and becoming more complex. The Malabar 2005 exercise was the largest naval exercise India had with any other country. It was for the first time that India had introduced its aircraft carrier INS Viraat, while the U.S. introduced its aircraft carrier Nimitz. The exercises reflected the increasing security understanding between the two countries. The thrust of the Malabar 2005 exercise was on aviation inter-operability, advanced anti-submarine warfare, sea control missions, fleet air defence, surface firings, maritime interdiction and VBSS operations towards anti-piracy and counter terrorism actions at sea. SOPs evolved will be tested and updated during this exercise. The highlights of this exercise were the

⁴ *People, Progress and Partnership: The Transformation of U.S-India Relations*, n. 1, pp. 42-43.

⁵ See, "Indo-U.S. Naval Exercise Begins Today", available at <<http://www.hindu.com/2003/10/06/stories/2003100602700500.htm>> (accessed on 7 November 2012).

⁶ See, "US to Send Nuke Submarine for Naval Exercise with India", *Aerospace and Marine International* (Mumbai), vol. 1(19), 3 October 2004, p. 8.

24-hour-long naval mock war.⁷ The same year India and the United States was also engaged in joint naval salvage exercise named 'SALVEX CY-05' off Kochi from 12-23 September 2005. This exercise involves joint diving, salvage operations and underwater demolition (Annual Report, 2005-06: 37-8).

The Malabar-2006 exercise was the eighth of the series of bilateral India-U.S. naval exercises. This time also the navies of the two countries were engaged in anti-submarine operations, maritime interdictions, weapon firings, Visit Board Search and Seizure operations, Dissimilar Air Combat (DACT), cross deck flying and a simulated 'war at sea'.⁸ For the first time Malabar exercise was carried out two times in a year-one in Okinawa (at the bilateral level), while the other one in Bay of Bengal (at the multilateral level). Every time they came up with new ideas that would add to the scope and depth of the exercise (More details on equipment deployed in bilateral naval exercises between India and the US are given in Table 1).

The U.S. is not the only country with whom India has engaged in close military exercises. India enjoys military exercises with Russia, France, China, Britain, Japan, Singapore, etc. But without any doubt, the US is at the forefront for India when it comes to engaging military exercises at a regular interval. After a gap of almost 36 years, the U.S. 7th fleet was back in the Bay of Bengal in September 2007. Unlike the previous one, this times the U.S. came with a second aircraft carrier, a nuclear submarine and scores of fighter jets. It is meant for ensuring peace and security in the region. For the first time bilateral Malabar exercise was expanded to include three other countries-Australia, Singapore and Japan. India was engaged in joint war games with the United States and three other friendly countries. This is the biggest and the largest ever joint naval peacetime exercises between India and the United States in which about 25 ships, 150 aircraft and 20,000 personnel took part (Annual Report, 2007-08: 32-3).

With increasing military-to-military exercises involving India, many held the view that India has given away its independent foreign policy. In response to this wrong speculation India's Defence Minister, Mr. A.K. Antony had said, "The propaganda that conduct of joint military exercises will amount to surrendering India's independent policy had no basis as such exercises had taken place under all government since 1992." This is quite right because whatever development that have taken place so far is the continuation of what have been done before. He further added that, "Joint exercises are some (of the) measures for maintaining good order at sea in the (Indian Ocean) region. India also holds interactions and joint exercises with some other countries including the US. In such interactions, issues of mutual interest including providing security to sea-lanes in IOR (Indian Ocean region), are also discussed."

The significance of the 2007 exercise was highlighted in what Indian Navy Vice-Admiral Suthan said, "got an opportunity to see how the 'art' of launching jets with catapults was being sustained as his force has 'lost the art' after the retirement of its INS Vikrant aircraft carrier years ago. Besides this, the Indian navy was exposed to NATO procedures. These procedures as such were evolved by the U.S. These procedures are new to India. In these NATO procedures, the U.S. Navy F/A-18 super Hornets operating from the carriers Nimitz and Kitty Hawk flew upwards of 20

⁷ See, "Malabar 2005: Indo-US Naval Exercise in the Arabian Sea", *Defence Digest* (New Delhi), September-October 2005, pp. 14-16.

⁸ See, "Malabar 2006", *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 22(1), January-March 2007, p. 74.

“buddy” re-fuelling sorties with the Indian Navy’s Sea Harriers flying from INS Viraat. Later, it was extended to other sector of the exercise as well in areas like anti-submarine warfare drills and aerial offensive and defensive manoeuvres (Ved, 2007, September: 10-13).

All together twenty seven vessels, eight from the Indian navy, fourteen from the U.S. Navy, two each from the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and one from the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

4. INDIA-U.S. ARMY-TO-ARMY EXERCISES

The army-to-army exercises between India and the United States can be categorized into two types- one is the Special Forces exercises called the Vajra Prahar while the second one is the regular army exercise called Yudh Abhyas. The first Special Forces exercises were conducted in Agra in 2002, while the first army exercise was held in Mizoram in March 2004. Description of these two exercises and other such exercises are given below (Samuel, 2007, March: 219).

Given the increasing challenges posed by the insurgency and terrorism to both India and the United States, joint special operations are very important. Joint special operations will benefit both the countries in meeting the serious challenges posed by the terrorist and insurgent activities. Since 9/11, joint special operations between the Armed Forces of the two countries have become a routine work. United States believe that the Indian special operations forces have a significant role to play in the fight against terrorism and in operations other than war.

For the first time, after a gap of 39 years, Indian armed forces were engaged in a Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercise with the U.S. Special operations Command in May 2002 in Agra. This JCET is part of India-U.S. engagement named “Balance Iroquois”, which India refers to this as “Vajra Prahar”. In this exercise, 90 troops from SOCOM and PACOM and 150 Special Forces from the Indian Army were involved (Air Forces from both the countries also took part for lift) (Fair, 2005, April: 164).

The exercise was aimed at weapons familiarization, battle drills and airborne operations. In this exercise, the special forces of the two countries tested each other’s equipment and jumped from each other’s planes. Indian commandos jumped from a U.S. Air Force MC-130 Hercules transport aircraft using U.S. parachutes, while the U.S. Special Forces wearing Indian parachutes jumped from Indian AN-32 and IL-76 transport aircraft. It was a learning experience for both the countries and was conducted successfully. Lt. Col. G.S. Buterbaugh, Commander of the 353 Special Operations Wing after the conclusion of the exercise was quoted as saying, “I have trained with several foreign air forces and the Indian Air Force is certainly among the most professional forces I have known.”⁹

This was followed by a combined exercise between the special forces of the two countries in April 2003 in the jungle terrain in Mizoram, located in the Northeastern part of India. This exercise was aimed at providing training on how to deal with the terrorist hideout in the jungle terrain of Mizoram. In this exercise, members of the Indian Army 21st Parachute (Special Forces) Battalion and the U.S. Army Special Forces lived and trained together at India’s Counter-insurgency Jungle Warfare School at Vairengte in Mizoram. Moreover, Indian and American forces were engaged in

⁹ See, “2002: Balance Iroquois- Renewing India-U.S. Defence Cooperation”, Prepared by *Asia-Pacific Defence Forum Staff*, available at <http://forum.apan-info.net/Fall02/19_21/20.html>.

“Vector Iroquois” in Guam in May and June 2003. Within few months i.e. on September 2003, India and U.S. forces were also engaged in Balance Iroquois exercises in the Tibetan plateau in Leh (Fair, 2005, April: 164). Both sides learn on how to employ combat teams in the jungle terrain more effectively. The main objective of such exercise was to develop effective tactics for tracking, patrolling, reconnaissance, surveillance and ambushes of terrorist operating in the dense jungle terrain.¹⁰

The latest Yudh Abhyas was carried out for a three week long at Babina in Uttar Pradesh in 2009 under the tutelage of the army’s Southern Command. It is aimed at counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in a semi-urban setting using tactical armoured vehicles. It was during this exercise, the United States for the first time introduced Stryker infantry armoured vehicles outside of its operational area to a foreign land.¹¹ Indian side was represented by Mechanised Infantry Battalion comprising of about 50 infantry combat vehicles while the American forces comprises of 17 Strykers of the IInd Squadron of 14 Cavalry of 25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team with 325 personnel.¹²

From the above discussion it becomes very clear that the focus of Joint Special Forces operations is on airborne operations, counter-terrorism training, jungle warfare, etc., to meet the twenty-first century challenges.

5. INDIA-U.S. AIR FORCE TO AIR FORCE EXERCISES

The air forces of the two countries carried out Cope-India and Cope Thunder series of exercises in India and the U.S. respectively. So far six rounds of such exercises have been completed. Such forms of exercises are also meant for achieving interoperability. In the first ever air transport exercise named Cope India-02, the air force and army personnel of the two countries observed each other’s procedures such as loading and unloading procedures, expeditionary airfield operation and Para-dropping of personnel and cargo from the aircraft.

For the first time, the IAF participated in a multilateral exercise named Cooperative Cope-Thunder-03, where 31 Indian observers got the opportunity to interact with observers from other countries. Followed by IAF participation in a Cope-Thunder 2004 exercise where countries like Malaysia, Japan, Mongolia, Canada, Italy and United Kingdom also took part (Malik, 2006: 104).

In the Cope-India series of exercises, the air forces of the two countries engage in fighter tactics, fly against each other on a one-on-one combat basis, as well as simulated combat scenarios. The Cope India 2004 air exercise was the first such air combat exercise where the IAF personnel displayed its skills effectively. Because of which they were highly acknowledged by the American counterpart. According to Colonel Mike Snodgrass, Commander of the 3rd Wing at Elemendorf

¹⁰ Robert D. Blackwill, “U.S.-India Defence Cooperation”, available at <<http://www.hindu.com/2003/05/13/stories/2003051301101000.htm>> (accessed on 25 November 2012).

¹¹ See, “India, US Armies Fight Urban Terror”, available at <<http://news.rediff.com/slide-show/2009/oct/15/slide-show-1-yudh-abhyas-2009-images.htm>> (accessed on 2 December 2012).

¹² See, “India, US Armies Fight Urban Terror”, available at <<http://news.rediff.com/slide-show/2009/oct/15/slide-show-1-yudh-abhyas-2009-images.htm#contentTop>> (accessed on 2 December 2012).

USARB (United States Air Force Base), the training standard and some of the equipment of the IAF was decidedly better than what they had anticipated.

The simulated combat operations which is part of this exercise comprises of offensive and defensive counter air scenarios. In the offensive counter air scenarios attempt has been made to intercept an enemy strike aircraft by making use of American F-15Cs aircraft before reaching the target that was guarded by a large number of Indian fighters, while in the defensive counter air F-15Cs would attempt to defend a target against Indian fighters. Overall, the IAF outplayed USAF in this form of exercise.¹³

When the air forces of the two countries came forward for the third Cope India exercise in 2005, the aim was to enhance mutual operational understanding and to refine procedures for future joint exercises between the IAF and the USAF. Both sides set forth four key objectives to be achieved during the exercise:

- Learn about each other's operational concepts through closer interaction.
- Familiarize fighter controllers with each other's procedures and terminologies and train together with AWACS.
- Familiarize ground crew with each others maintenance practices and,
- To identify the areas of common interest in terms of operations and administration for the future exercises.

According to Col Rusty Cabot, director of the USAF for the exercise, "during the exercise all the objectives were achieved by both the air forces where the pilots from both the sides performed brilliantly." The Cope India 2005 exercise was significant one for Indian Air Force because it gave the opportunity to exercise in AWACS environment over the Indian skies. One Indian pilot at the base said, "These are the kind of manoeuvres which will benefit us immensely when we get our own AWACS." The exercise was divided into three phases: The first phase was about the flying of basic missions, the second one was a complex one with both sides flying mixed packages pitted against each other and in the last phase the pilots flew a missions where the AWACS platform escorted by two F-16s and Su-30 MKIs each was attacked by a mix of USAF and IAF.

According to Air Marshal F H Major, Air Office Commanding-in-chief of the IAF's Eastern Air Command "though the exercise were conducted simulating a 'hot war scenario', they were not against any third country and were meant to enhance peace and stability in the region" (Ajit K. Dubey, December 2005: 18). Lt. Gen. David A Deptula, Vice Commander of the USAF's Pacific Air Forces who was present at the closing ceremony of this exercise was quite happy with the performance of the Indian Air Force. He said at the end of the exercise that "though the exercise had gained the trust of each other's air forces so that in the future- for any possible contingency that pops up-we'll be able to hit the ground running and work together. What ultimately does is improve peace and stability in the region" (**Sengupta, 2005, December: 19**). For the first time, the Indian Air Force took part in the combat aviation Red Flag exercise in the US in 2008. This year also, India is preparing itself ready to participate for the second time in the Red Flag exercise in the US.

¹³ See, "COPE INDIA 2004- AN ANALYSIS (With inputs by Sayan Majumdar)", available at <<http://www.india defence.com/COPE.htm>> (accessed on 5 December 2012).

6. ADVANTAGES OF JOINT MILITARY-TO-MILITARY COOPERATION

Military-to-military exercises between India and United States occupy an important place in the rapidly growing U.S.-India strategic relationship. The more the exercise they conduct on a variety of activities, the more they will learn from each other. The U.S. can learn from India's expertise and vice-versa. India's experience in jungle warfare in the northeastern states is somewhat that the U.S. have to think of. Such exercises no doubt build understanding and confidence between the forces of the two countries (Mitra and John Ryan).

India has enough experience to offer to the U.S. when it comes to counter-insurgency operations. In conversation with Times of India, Shekatkar, former General Officer Commanding of the Indian Army's 4th corps at Tezpur, Assam, said, "We have a tremendous expertise in handling terror-induced situations, besides executing surgical strikes with the least possible collateral damage." He further added that, "On a long-term basis, joint exercise will serve to the benefit of both countries.¹⁴ During the Cope India-02, an air mobility exercise between the two countries, the Indian Air Force and Army learned to conduct airdrop operations from C-130J Hercules tactical airlift aircraft. Moreover, the more the two countries exercise together, the greater the rationale to provide India with compatible equipment, communications and technologies.¹⁵

The naval exercise would bring a close understanding among the naval forces of the two countries and in the long run would pave the way for close cooperation in the non-military operations such as anti-piracy which posed a serious challenges to the security of the sea, safety of the sea-lanes, drug-trafficking and its related activities such as smuggling of arms patrols and other issues relating to maritime order at sea. It is a platform where the forces of the two countries were given the opportunity to understand each other's rules of engagement, operating procedures and communications plans and aircraft operations (Sakhuja, 2002, April-June: 25-26).

According to Cmdr. Thomas Kearney, who led USS Alexandria during the Malabar 04 exercise, "I learned more about diesel submarine operations working with the Indian submarine INS Shankul than I would at home, because we don't have diesel submarine in the the U.S. navy. And John Sorce, Commanding officer of Cowpens is of the view that, "sure, we were learning about each other...it's all about building allies and friendships so if called upon in later days, it makes it easier for us all to work together and perform together."¹⁶ From the above discussion, it becomes very clear that by engaging more and more military exercises with the U.S., India would gain the following:

1. Get exposure to new method of military training, tactics and procedures.
2. Get exposure and access to US military technology of the present times.
3. It would open the way for access to highly advanced technology military equipment.
4. Enhance our country's military capability through professional military exchanges, advancing military skills, war-fighting skills at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

¹⁴ See, "Joint Exercises Offer Better Understanding Among Nations", *Times of India* (Pune), 12 December 2008.

¹⁵ People, Progress and Partnership: The Transformation of U.S.-India Relations, n. 1, pp. 42-45.

¹⁶ Rick Chernitzer, "Malabar 04 Exercises Conclude Successfully off Indian Coast", available at <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/10/mil-041014-nns02.htm>> (accessed on 8 December 2012).

The more the military exercises between India and the United States, the rationale for a more efficient provision of military capability through sharing of logistics capabilities. This would also create a stable, secure and peaceful environment in the region and world (Muthanna, 2006: 19-20).

7. CONCLUSION

India-U.S. defence and security cooperation in the post cold war period had seen a significant improvement in every aspects including, high-level military exchanges, joint and combined military-to-military exercises, military training and last but not the least defence sales. As such India-U.S. defence and security cooperation is a relationship for the mutual benefit of the two countries based on the converging strategic interests. This convergence has the possibility to cement the strategic relationship. Both sides have a huge task ahead before the emerging military and security relations reached a level of satisfaction.

The hard fought developments in recent years are a reflection of a healthy, maturing and evolving relationship. The ongoing defence and military relationship needs constant nurture so that it does not fell to a meager issue. They must have to ensure that the bilateral issues don't become a hurdle to the ongoing relationship (Banerjee, 2006: 137). The sustainment and further enhancement of the ongoing defence and military relations would rely on the reciprocity of benefits and sacrifices. Given the kind of interests that both countries share ranging from fighting terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ensuring stability in the south Asian region in general and international community in particular, one can expect a long-term and a lasting defence and security cooperation between India and the United States. And as the security understanding improves, one can see more and more joint military exercises between the two countries. As of now, the United States is ahead of other countries when it comes to conducting joint military exercises with India. In his speech delivered at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in 2009, former US defense secretary Robert Gates has made a strong and meaningful remark that, "In coming years, we look to India to be a partner and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond." After conducting exercises encompassing all the branches of the armed forces of different varieties, the time has come for both sides to decide future course of actions which can lead to regional and global security. (Latif, 2012, December: 2-4).

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