

***ETHNIC LOBBIES, THE NEW INDIA LOBBY, AND THE INDIA-PAKISTAN***

***INFLUENCE GAME***

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**Spring 2009**

**General University Honors**

## Introduction

An examination of U.S. foreign policy is incomplete without the consideration of the influence of special interest groups in shaping foreign policy. Because the U.S. democratic system is open to the tugs and pulls of special interest groups, certain well-organized ethnic groups systematically use their influence to benefit their community and their motherland, perhaps sometimes more than in proportion with their numbers. This paper examines the role of ethnic lobbies in shaping U.S. foreign policy in the United States. It then traces the evolution of the Indian lobby within the last decade and discusses the tactics it uses to gain effectiveness. Finally, it discusses the role of the Pakistani lobby as the two South Asian countries battle for influence in Washington.

My analysis uses a two-pronged approach, where it examines the role of the governments of both India and Pakistan as well as the role of the grassroots ethnic communities residing in the United States. It will trace the lobbying activity hired by both the governments in the context of their evolving relationship with the United States, their relationship with each other, as well as the larger geopolitical dynamics that they operate in. It will analyze the grassroots lobbying efforts of the two diaspora communities, led by two citizen interest groups, within the context of how interest groups operate to affect policy. As a framework, the aims and tactics of the successful Israel lobby are briefly discussed. My analysis explores the strengths of the two interest groups as forces representing the interests of the two ethnic communities, and as catalysts for the strengthening their country's relations with the United States.

## Ethnic Lobbies

Like other societal interest groups, ethnic identity groups establish formal organizations devoted to advancing their group's interests. Some of these groups are created for explicitly political purposes. These interest groups seek to influence policy in line with a specific agenda, both domestic and international. These ethnic lobbies are concerned with the well being of members of the self defined ethnic group, wherever they reside. Among some of the best known ethnic lobbies are the Polish American Congress, the Cuban American National Foundation, TransAfrica, the National Association of Arab-Americans, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Armenian Assembly of America, and the American Hellenic Institute Public Affairs Committee.

Ethnic lobbies primarily seek to influence policy in three ways: framing, information and policy analysis, and policy oversight.<sup>1</sup> Interest groups place an issue on the government's agenda, shape perspective of that issue, and influence the terms of debate. Given the large number of issues confronting the congressional staff, they get some of their information from interest groups, but most likely with a spin beneficial to their agenda. Interest groups closely monitor government policies pertaining to their agenda and react to those policies by distributing supplementary information, letter-writing campaigns, pushing for hearings, and mobilizing support or opposition of certain candidates.

Since the founding of the United States, ethnic identity groups have played a role in U.S. foreign policy. Despite pressures to assimilate into an exclusive American national identity, many individuals retained strong ties to ethnic kin and homelands outside of the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ambrosio, *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 2.

The end of World War II brought substantial changes in the role of ethnic identity groups and U.S. foreign policy as the United States shifted its foreign policy from isolationism to internationalism. Resistance to the Soviet Union and communism meant that the United States would take an active role in the international system. This role would be shaped and reinforced by the influence of ethnic identity groups in the United States. Smith discusses the following examples:<sup>2</sup> Americans of both East European and West European ancestry united in opposition to Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe and in support of the fledgling democracies of the West. From the founding of Israel to the formation of a close alliance between Israel and the United States, Jewish Americans have been an influential lobby in the United States. The *intifada* uprising of the 1980s, which pitched Israelis against Palestinians, further mobilized Jewish-American organizations and also led to the creation of Arab-American organizations. The awakening of African American consciousness, the successes of the civil rights movement in facilitating African American organizational ability and access to the U.S. policy process, and the movement against South Africa's apartheid regime all led to a growing role for African-Americans in the foreign policy process. Cuban-Americans helped to ensure that the United States' anti-Castro Cuban policy would be unchanging throughout the Cold War. The Cyprus conflict mobilized Greek-Americans in order to push for an arms embargo against Turkey. However, during the Cold War, America's perception of a singular threat from the Soviet Union and communism and the relative inflexibility on this position, reduced the range of influence that ethnic lobbies could have as ethnic lobbies strived to convince Congress that they are on the right side.

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<sup>2</sup> Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: the Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 47-48.

The end of the Cold War created a more permissive environment for ethnic lobby influence. The end of the bipolar conflict with the Soviet Union meant that U.S. interests were malleable. This created an unprecedented opportunity for ethnic lobbies to influence the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. Ethnic lobbies have exploited this period of increased fluidity in order to promote the interests of their ethnic kin and motherland. Also, Ambrosio argues that demographic change in the U.S. polity has led to a generally greater public acceptance of ethnic lobbies, as earlier norms of assimilation have given way to greater emphasis on distinct identities.<sup>3</sup> The growing acceptance of ethnic group influence on U.S. foreign policy was bolstered by the greater opportunities available to ethnic groups due to the lack of a singular security threat. Rigid cultural assimilation was rejected and there was growing support for expressions of ethnic diversity. Although interstate war has been rare in the past decade, conflicts within states have given many ethnic identity groups a reason to be active. The collapse of the former Yugoslavia pitted American Muslims, Croats, and Serbs against each other. The U.S. led NATO war over Kosovo caused a split between many Orthodox Christians and the American government. The conflict in the Transcaucasus between Armenians and Azeris has also increased lobbying activities by both groups. The conflict in Haiti, although not an ethnic conflict, has energized African-Americans. The second *intifada* in the occupied territories has mobilized both Arab and Jewish Americans. Perhaps most critically, the late Cold War saw expanded congressional oversight of executive foreign policy initiatives—largely a legacy of the Vietnam war—and this move to a "more open, contentious, and

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<sup>3</sup> Ambrosio, *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 8.

pluralistic system" has given interest groups of all kinds greater points of access to influence policy.<sup>4</sup>

Among the plethora of interest groups that are active on the American political scene, the Israel lobby stands out for its strength and effectiveness in shaping U.S. policy outcomes. The emerging Indian lobby is in fact compared to the Israel lobby.<sup>5</sup> The most prominent Israeli citizen interest group is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Initially registered as a foreign agent under the name of the American Zionist Council, AIPAC started its lobbying efforts in the 1950s. Until the mid-1980s, AIPAC focused on the Congress, leaving contacts with the executive branch to the Conference of Presidents. In the last two decades AIPAC has lobbied both the executive and the legislative branches by following a systematic approach. Each day AIPAC staff attends every Congressional hearing, session or markup that has a bearing on U.S.-Israel relations. Meanwhile, AIPAC staffers work with key officials in the White House, federal departments and agencies, and on Capitol Hill in proactively shaping policy and legislation.<sup>6</sup>

AIPAC's lobbying agenda is both sharply focused and matches its extensive capabilities. It consists of maintaining Israel's security by expanding U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation programs aimed at combating present and future threats from Israel's neighbors. It works to ensure a U.S.-Israel partnership of peace to forge peace between Israel, the Palestinians, and other Arab states. Its advocacy also includes efforts to change U.S. policy to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital. In addition, its agenda consists of maintaining

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<sup>4</sup> Jason A. Kirk, "Indian-Americans and the U.S. India Nuclear Agreement: Consolidation of an ethnic lobby?" *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 3 (2008): 280.

<sup>5</sup> Mira Kamdar, "Forget the Israel Lobby. The Hill's Next Big Player Is Made in India," *The Washington Post*, September 30, 2007, sec. B.

<sup>6</sup> Ambrosio, *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 147.

continued U.S. economic aid to Israel and securing Israel's economic future by expanding U.S.-Israel trade, investment, and research and development.<sup>7</sup>

The Jewish lobby has been effective on a wide range of issues such as securing foreign aid for Israel, shaping a pro-Israel U.S. foreign policy, forging U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation, and getting a U.S. commitment regarding regional security. This effectiveness is the result of the skillful utilization of the resources and capabilities of the Jewish community to pursue political objectives that enjoy strong grassroots support. There are many factors that come together to make the Jewish lobby as effective as it is. Despite cultural pluralism within the Jewish-American community, it has forged a consensus on a clear and long range Jewish agenda. Such a strong consensus provides a foundation for focused and consistent political action. There is also a congruence between the views of the Jewish-American community and the views of the Israeli state. The Jewish lobby has pursued an ambitious recruitment and training campaign to develop a highly competent and committed cadre of political activists. AIPAC's efforts to develop and mobilize its grassroots constituencies to participate in small parlor meetings, discussion groups, and statewide workshops provide opportunities for all types of people to get involved in the political process. The end product of these efforts is to mobilize the Jewish grassroots and recruit the next generation of leaders for positions in the Jewish lobby, as well as in U.S. government agencies. The Jewish lobby also has a solid intellectual base with policy papers and position reports published and disseminated by specialized think tanks such as the Washington Institute for Near East policy and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs. The Jewish lobby's most significant quality is its ability to

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<sup>7</sup> American Israel Public Affairs Committee, *Learn About AIPAC*, [http://www.aipac.org/about\\_AIPAC/Learn\\_About\\_AIPAC/26.asp](http://www.aipac.org/about_AIPAC/Learn_About_AIPAC/26.asp) (accessed 28 March 2009).

influence policymakers at the critical hour by using an array of tools. Their success at mobilizing people for bloc voting and the large amount of campaign contributions lends them significant political leverage. This is a prime example of the Jewish lobby making full utilization of their communities' wealth to influence policy.

Another influential ethnic lobby that the new India lobby can be compared against is the loosely defined Taiwan lobby. The Taiwan lobby is the group of activists considered by many observers to have the most consistent and in-depth influence in the U.S.-China policy process. Consisting of Taiwan government officials, members of the business community, groups of American citizens of Taiwanese or Chinese ancestry, and U.S. based groups advocating independence for Taiwan,<sup>8</sup> this pro-Taiwan group represents various interests at every relevant point in the American policy process. The Taiwan lobby was a critical factor in 1995, for instance, when Congress passed a resolution urging the President to invite Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui to the United States. This invitation reportedly contributed in large part to the 1996 Taiwan Strait missile crisis that involved live-fire missile exercises by China and the corresponding American dispatch of two carrier battle groups to the area. This is considered to be the most confrontational crisis in U.S.-China relations since normalization of relations in 1979. In another instance, in 1997, Taiwan interests promoted the passage of a resolution urging Taiwan's unconditional admittance to the World Trade Organization. The bill required the U.S. to develop plans for a theater missile defense system for Taiwan and several resolutions reaffirming and clarifying U.S. support for Taiwan. In 1998, Taiwan interests were

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<sup>8</sup> Kerry Dumbaugh, *US-China Policy: Interest Groups and their Influence* (Huntington: Novinka Books, 2001), 38.



reflected in the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, a bill designed to enhance U.S.-Taiwan military communication and cooperation, and strengthen Taiwan's security.<sup>9</sup>

A new ethnic lobby gaining rapid prominence on the U.S. political scene is the India lobby. The rise of the India lobby within the last decade coincides with a new direction in U.S.-India relations. Recognition of India's increasing stature and importance — and of the growing political influence some 2.3 million Indian-Americans — is found in the U.S. Congress, where the India and Indian-American Caucus is now the largest of all country-specific caucuses. It is active on immigration, family reunification, and health care issues and works against discrimination, hate crimes, and glass ceilings. However, it is become best known as a foreign policy force working to improve U.S.-India ties.

Over the past six years, legal Indian immigrants have come to the United States at a more rapid rate than any other group.<sup>10</sup> Indian-Americans are not only concerned about conventional ethnic issues such as immigration, discrimination, and India-US relations, but they also have strong political interests in issues such as crime and education. They have established political organizations, have accepted appointments to high level public policy positions, and are beginning to run for elected office in greater numbers.

Indian-Americans have some advantages that other hyphenated communities do not necessarily have such as the overall affluence of the community. It is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. The per capita income of Indian-American exceeds that of every

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Congressional Research Service, India-U.S. Relations (RL333529; Jan. 30, 2009), by K. Alan Kronstadt, Text in: GalleryWatch CRS Reports; Accessed: April 2, 2009.

other group in the county (including white Americans) except Japanese-Americans.<sup>11</sup> But Indian-Americans have only recently begun to turn their affluence into political clout. For too long, Indian-Americans would throw enormous sums of money, for instance, just to get their pictures taken with politicians. But money was never systematically used to lobby lawmakers to be sympathetic to issues important to Indian-Americans.

Secondly, Indians come to this country already speaking English and a large segment of them have professional degrees. Fifty-eight percent of the adult community has at least a bachelor's degree, compared to twenty-two percent of whites.<sup>12</sup> Indians are concentrated in the medical, scientific, and computer fields and a significant number hold managerial and professional positions. While previously they were concerned only with wealth creation and worked toward becoming well-off, there is an increased awareness and desire to actively participate in politics and make their voices heard on the issues that affect them. Second-generation, American-born Indian-Americans feel comfortable with activism and publicity, and are beginning to hit the political stride. There is a shift in attitude among Indian-Americans, one from that of pursuit of individual success and quiet establishment in this country to one that is confident and deserving attention. As a result, they are making an effort to venture out of their comfort zones to make their voices heard. Indian-American candidates are not afraid to contest in districts with a relatively small Indian-American constituency. This cannot be said about other ethnic minority candidates like Chinese-Americans. Chinese-Americans tend to get elected exclusively in districts with high Chinese presence. Because the Indian-American

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<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Hathaway, "Unfinished Passage: India, Indian Americans, and the US Congress," *The Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2001): 24.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

community is relatively evenly distributed throughout the country, few congressional districts are without at least a handful of Indian American families. The largest concentrations, however, reside in the major industrial-urban states of New York, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, Florida, and Massachusetts.<sup>13</sup> But, most Indian-American lawmakers and officials (with the exception of some in New Jersey) have not depended on their communities' vote to get into office; they are mainstream representatives and appeal to the wider population. A case in point is Bobby Jindal who was elected governor of Louisiana two years ago. While he is widely recognized as the 'first Indian-American' governor and although he is sympathetic to the Indian cause, it is not one of the major planks of his policies. He was elected on merit of his experience in the Louisiana state government and somebody who could implement economic development and conduct policy in a transparent manner post-Katrina.

### **India's Rise in Strategic U.S. Calculations**

It is surprising that given their numbers and their prominence, the community had a negligible presence on the political scene until just a few years ago. The evolution of the lobby has been parallel to India's presence, or lack of, in U.S. foreign policy considerations. India claims it did not get the respect and attention it deserved for being a 'well-behaved' state in the international arena for a long time. But now that is changing. Perhaps the newfound importance of India in strategic U.S. calculations is what was needed to bring the community out of its shell and to drive itself into the mainstream as participants in policy making. Indeed, USINPAC Director of Government Affairs, Michael Taylor believes that they no longer have to

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 24.

make the case for India to U.S. lawmakers and officials.<sup>14</sup> The case is already made and India is now universally accepted as a prospective major player in international relations.

But this is a very recent development. During the Cold War, in spite of being the world's largest democracy, India ended up siding with the opposite camp on most global issues. While this was mostly in response to the United States' tilt toward Pakistan and China, India's two immediate rivals, it was also because the Indians adopted a state-socialist model that shunned commercial engagement with the outside world. Washington and New Delhi were never able to work together because India had no option but to align itself with the Soviet Union. Every move by the U.S. seemed to be problematic in New Delhi as the United States was perceived, accurately, to be siding with Pakistan by default. In a zero sum game environment, this caused anti-U.S. sentiments in India.

The end of the Cold War and the dire state of the Indian economy in 1991 gave India some space to recast its strategic framework. Left without an ally after the Cold War, domestic growth performing under potential and the world's only superpower supporting Pakistan and China, India looked to break out of its traditional shackles of nonalignment and looked to conduct its foreign policy in a more pragmatic fashion. It looked to engage the U.S. throughout the 90s because it realized that its great power aspirations could not be realized without U.S. support. The liberalization of the economy in the 1990s has reestablished India's trade and investment linkages in its immediate and distant neighborhoods. With the United States, trade

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Taylor, personal interview, April 4, 2008.

has reached enormous levels and the Trade Policy Forum was established by the two nations in 2005 to find ways to solve trade and investment problems between the two countries.<sup>15</sup>

But the Clinton administration was preoccupied with nonproliferation and Kashmir when it came to South Asia and pinned its relationship with India on these two issues. This ran directly counter to core Indian beliefs of territorial integrity and addressing Kashmir bilaterally as well as its security concerns. However, the administration was forced to turn its attention to India after the 1998 nuclear tests. By conducting nuclear tests in May 1998, it sent shockwaves throughout the world as it established itself as an official nuclear state. While India had nuclear weapons for a few years and the technology to make nuclear weapons for decades, Pokhran II was a loud awakening to the world that India had arrived as the new nuclear power and was looking to play a role in world affairs as a nuclear power. Despite the reprimands and sanctions that India faced in the wake of the tests, it was a brave gamble that paid off well in the long run.

India (and Pakistan) faced sanctions under the 1994 Glenn Amendment that punishes non-nuclear weapon states that detonate nuclear explosions. However, most of the restrictions on India under this provision on bilateral and multilateral economic assistance of various types had been gradually lifted under the Clinton administration itself and the Bush administration lifted the remaining. Bringing the two countries in a serious discussion and a genuine interest in listening to India's concerns were enough to tone down some of the antipathy that existed between the countries for the past five decades. Clinton's harsh disapproval of Pakistan during Kargil and his 2000 visit to India were instrumental in creating

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<sup>15</sup> Embassy of India, *India and United States discuss Key Trade Issues*, [http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press\\_release/2008/Feb/9.asp](http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press_release/2008/Feb/9.asp) (accessed 28 March 2009).

goodwill and building confidence that the U.S. was not going to be biased against India anymore.

The Bush administration looked to take its relationship with India to the next level. It was willing to see India in the larger perspective of the Asian balance of power rather than just a South Asian one. It dismantled all the post-1998 sanctions as it believed that its policy with India was both unrealistic and misplaced. India's nuclear gamble came at an opportune time because the Bush administration was willing to de-hyphenate India and Pakistan and look at both countries separately and view its relationship with the U.S. independently. The potential that each country offered in its relationship with the U.S. became very clear to the administration after 9/11. Cooperation with each nation was viable without it being a zero sum game.

The Bush administration was comfortable with calling India, only India, a responsible nuclear power and was willing to change the terms surrounding the nonproliferation regime built around the NPT to accommodate India into the nuclear club. Bush agreed to change American domestic non-proliferation law and persuade the international community to change the existing guidelines on nuclear commerce to facilitate full civilian nuclear cooperation with India.<sup>16</sup> The administration's declaration early in its tenure that it will help India reach great power status was a gesture that clearly signaled a new path for the U.S. Bush believed that the U.S. nonproliferation policy was misguided and impractical and he took a more hands off stance on Kashmir. He put civilian nuclear cooperation on the table and it became clear that India's wait was over – Washington no longer was going to be an impediment to India's progress,

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<sup>16</sup> C. Raja Mohan, "India and the Emerging Non-Proliferation order: The Second Nuclear Age," in *Indian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World*, ed. Harsh Pant (New Delhi: Routledge, 2008), 65.

instead it will be a supporter. India grabbed the opportunity and entered a limited alliance of sorts with the U.S. For the first time in ever, given the convergence of U.S. and Indian interests, the partnership reached an unprecedented stage where New Delhi no longer suspected Washington of trying to undercut its influence in the region. As a result, it became more prepared than ever to work with the United States and other Western powers to pursue regional goals.

### **The New India Lobby**

Almost parallel to the rise of India in strategic U.S. calculations, is the rise of the Indian-American community's presence. No lawmaker wants to pass up a chance to recognize the community as an important constituency and one that positively contributes in their districts because they understand the increasing financial clout that the community holds. Despite there being a concern with outsourcing of jobs to India, lawmakers are careful not to tie these two occurrences together. They recognize, and the people recognize that the presence of Indian-Americans in their areas does not directly lead to the outsourcing of jobs to India.

While there have been many groups that have come together to coordinate and converge around a common industry like The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the Indian American Friendship Council, the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA), and they all flirt with advocacy in Washington, none of them exclusively deal with lobbying influential people in Washington to advance Indian-American causes. The U.S. India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), formed in 2002, is the first of its type that systematically represents a united voice of the Indian-American community on Capitol Hill and the White House. In addition, it offers bipartisan support to candidates who support the issues

that are important to the community such as the strengthening of Indo-U.S. relations, immigration, anti hate crime measures, equal opportunity, civil rights, and entrepreneurship.<sup>17</sup> USINPAC has become the most visible face of Indian-American lobbying during the past five years. Other groups that are political by nature, but limited in scope in their lobbying capabilities are the National Association of Americans of Asian Indian Descent, the Indian American Forum for Political Education, and the India Abroad Center for Political Awareness.

While the prominence of the Jewish lobby in the United States and its impact of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is well understood, and even looked at as dangerous, it serves as an inspiration to the Indian-American community. They see American Jews as role models - as a small minority that has succeeded in combating prejudice and building political clout. They look up to what the Jews have done not only in terms of Congressional lobbying but also in areas like establishing community centers and advocating civil rights.<sup>18</sup> Indian-Americans have reached out to American Jews, in part, because of the growing friendship between India and Israel which was not the case during the Cold War. Some have also argued for a stronger friendship with the Jews on the basis of a common threat to India and Israel from Islamic terrorists. One of the efforts of the Washington based American Jewish Committee is to improve India-Israel-U.S. relations. It has worked with Indians on issues such as immigration and hate crimes legislation as well coordinated dialogue between Indian-Americans and Jews and Palestinians living in Israel.

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. India Political Action Committee, *Mission Objective*, [http://www.usinpac.com/mission\\_objective.asp](http://www.usinpac.com/mission_objective.asp), (accessed 5 April 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Neela Banerjee, "In Jews, Indian Americans See a Role Model in Activism." *The New York Times*, October 2, 2007.



Indeed, USINPAC is inspired by AIPAC. Sanjay Puri, founder and chairman of USINPAC, is an admirer of the Jewish lobby. He admits, "What the Jewish community has achieved politically is tremendous, and members of Congress definitely pay a lot of attention to issues that are important to them. We will use our own model to get to where we want, but we have used them as a benchmark."<sup>19</sup> Indian-Americans share some of the same qualities as Jewish-Americans are well on the path to replicate the Jewish illustration. Their high levels of education and increasing wealth make them a natural for political contributions. Despite wide cultural and religious differences within the Diaspora, Indian-Americans of all ethnic and religious affiliations seem to converge when it comes to advancing the Indian cause. For instance, the large Indian Muslim population in the United States has mainly stayed within the larger Indian umbrella instead of pushing its own agenda. Like the Jewish lobby, the Indian lobby, through groups like USINPAC, The Alliance for U.S.-India Business and U.S.-India Business Council has started to systematically court officials in Congress and the White House. The fact that the Indian-American community enjoys a good image among the American public, an image of law-abiding citizens and quiet contributors, means that lawmakers do not face any backlash from their constituencies when they support the communities' causes. Furthermore, the newfound importance of India on the world scene in the past decade is a major reason why the Indian lobby has been successful. The effort in Washington to recognize India as a strategic partner in its own right, separate from the South Asian prism of the India-Pakistan counterbalancing game, has lent Indian issues greater credibility.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Following on AIPAC's footsteps, USINPAC is getting results in Washington and having a profound impact on U.S. policy, with important consequences domestically and internationally. For instance, after former Senator George Allen's 'macaca' comment made to his opponent's campaign volunteer in 2006, USINPAC quickly mobilized the Indian-American community to express regret over the slur. Mr. Puri, along with colleagues and Indian-American leaders in the community hosted a meeting with the senator and got him to apologize publicly. Allen later lost his seat to his opponent by a small margin, proving the comment to be costly and ending his political career. In another instance last year, Senator Barack Obama's staff circulated a memo criticizing Senator Hillary Clinton's deep ties with the Indian-American community and her apparent support for outsourcing referring to her affiliation as "D-Punjab." USINPAC pounced on it and successfully demanded an apology.

### **The Historic Nuclear Deal**

However, the Indian lobby's most significant achievement is its influence in the passage of the Hyde Act (2006) - the bill approving President Bush's 'nuclear deal' offer to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the passage of the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Non-proliferation Enhancement Act (2008) – the bill finalizing the deal, and the culmination of the US-India Nuclear Deal. Since 2005, the Indian-American community, geographically dispersed, and well entrenched in several U.S. business sectors, conducted a major lobbying effort to encourage the congressional passage. It is the Indian lobby's professional and persistent effort in pushing the deal through Congress that has caused some in the media to draw comparisons with the Jewish lobby. This deal, strongly supported by the Bush administration, gives India access to U.S. nuclear technology and delivers fuel supplies to

India's civilian power plants in return for placing them under permanent international safeguards. Under the deal's terms, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) -- for decades the cornerstone of efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons -- are in effect waived for India, just ten years after the Clinton administration slapped sanctions on New Delhi for its 1998 nuclear tests. Some critics in Congress have criticized the deal for giving India too much and asking for only modest commitments, in addition to weakening the NPT. Furthermore, the deal entails changing U.S. domestic law to make a country specific exception, an unprecedented move, in order to accommodate India in the nuclear regime.<sup>20</sup> Add to that, the deep concerns regarding India among some members of Congress about support in Iraq, immigration, and the outsourcing of jobs, one can see why Capitol Hill might have been skeptical of the deal.

But the Indian lobby launched a campaign on many fronts resulting in the overwhelming passage of the Act in 2008. Pushing the effort were the public relations firms Veneble LLP and Barbour Griffith & Rogers led by former U.S. Ambassador to India, Robert D. Blackwill and Philip D. Zelikow, a former top adviser to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. These firms were paid hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Indian government to lobby various U.S. government entities. Other business groups likely to benefit from the deal also paid enormous sums to push the deal. The U.S. India Business Council and the Confederation of Indian Industries hired top lobbyists to highlight the commercial potential that the deal holds for U.S. industries.<sup>21</sup> Indian-American groups, such as doctors and hotel owners associations, banded together with political activists to promote the deal. The powerful Israeli lobby worked less conspicuously, but made

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<sup>20</sup> Esther Pan and Jayashree Bajoria, "The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal," *The Council on Foreign Relations*, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9663/>

<sup>21</sup> Francis C. Assisi, "Intense Lobbying Clinched Indo-US Nuclear Deal," *Indolink*, <http://www.indolink.com/displayArticleS.php?id=111806094151>

its substantial network available to the new friends in the Indian Embassy and the Indian lobbies. The American Jewish Committee expressed its strong support for the deal by sending letters to influential lawmakers. Collectively, they launched a massive lobbying effort by blanketing Capitol Hill with receptions, meetings and briefings, and the like. The lobbyists worked energetically to highlight the commercial potential for the U.S. nuclear industry to participate in the projected build-up of nuclear power in India. They also sponsored numerous trips to India by the American lawmakers and their staff.<sup>22</sup>

USINPAC paid regular visits and sent letters to Capitol Hill, raised awareness, mobilized the Indian-American community, and met with top lawmakers to highlight the potential benefits the deal holds for both countries. When the agreement ran into opposition domestically in India, USINPAC led efforts to explain U.S. officials the reasons behind the setback and urged them to be patient. It conducted a fact-finding delegation to India where it met with senior leaders of the government, opposition party leaders, and the U.S. ambassador to India to understand differing perspectives on the opposition in order to come back and report to the community and on the Hill, while being sensitive to India's internal democratic processes.<sup>23</sup> It gathered support in the executive branch including State Department officials and continued to mobilize grassroots support for the deal to gain momentum in Congress. It repeatedly engaged friendly legislators, asked them to garner support, and reminded them of the benefits of passing the agreement in time, that is, before the White House switched administrations opening the possibility for it to run into more political obstacles. The

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<sup>22</sup> Subrata Ghoshroy, "The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal: Triumph of the Business Lobby," *Audit of the Conventional Wisdom*, MIT Center for International Studies, September 2006, [http://web.mit.edu/CIS/pdf/Audit\\_09\\_14\\_Ghoshroy.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/CIS/pdf/Audit_09_14_Ghoshroy.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> U.S. India Political Action Committee, *U.S. India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement*, [http://www.usinpac.com/nuclear\\_deal/index.html](http://www.usinpac.com/nuclear_deal/index.html) (accessed 15 April 2009).

agreement passed in the House and Senate with safe majorities just days before Congress ended its session amidst scampering to come up with an economic recovery package. Jason Kirk from the Virginia Military Institute concludes that the unprecedented mobilization of the community from USINPAC down to the local levels, and the willingness to engage in explicit money politics with members of Congress, suggest that the U.S.–India nuclear agreement may signal a consolidation of the India lobby and the rise of a powerful potential influence on U.S. policy in South Asia and beyond in the 20th century.<sup>24</sup>

Among other issues, USINPAC has worked for anti-hate crime legislation, the passage of Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act which provisions federal prosecution of crimes based on race, color, religion or national origin. It has supported the campaigns of Indian Americans for political office, established a process to provide Indian-Americans an opportunity to serve in the administration, and has facilitated appointments in key state boards and commissions. It is working on lobbying Congressional members on increasing the largely coveted H1-B visa cap and worked with the Department of Homeland Security to exclude Indians from the post-9/11 Special Registration Program. It is also pushing Congress to implement greater oversight of Pakistan's commitment to dismantle its terrorist organizations in return for U.S. aid and greater U.S. efforts in safeguarding and combating the proliferation of WMDs in Pakistan.<sup>25</sup>

We can look at the “power” of the new India lobby through the lens of DeGregorio who theorized one definition of power. She states that power = (motivation+capacity)/resistance.<sup>26</sup> By motivation, she means a commitment or a focus to accomplish a certain goal and the will to

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<sup>24</sup> Kirk, *Indian-Americans and the U.S. India Nuclear Agreement*, 297.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. India Political Action Committee, *Achievements*, <http://www.usinpac.com/achievements.asp> (accessed 5 April 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Christine DeGregorio, “Power and Change,” in *Directions in Community Health Nursing*, ed. Judith Sullivan (Boston: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1984), 277.

use power over another person or group. Capacity includes the ingredients that a group possesses to obtain power such as resources, money, knowledge, skills, news outlets as well as credibility. One can argue that the India lobby has had the capacity to be powerful for a long time but lacked the motivation. Now, the community has become motivated, waking up to the realization that by organizing, it can affect policy in significant ways. Finally, it is also encountering less resistance as India enjoys an increasingly positive standing in Washington.

### **Maintaining a Washington Front**

The governments of both India and Pakistan have spent enormous sums of money to top Washington lobbying firms to manage their Washington fronts and advance their goals with the U.S. government. The Government of India has hired Barbour, Griffith and Rogers (BGR) since 2005 to focus on foreign policy issues, with an emphasis on the nuclear deal. The BGR officials who have been active in lobbying for India include former ambassador to the U.S. Robert Blackwill and former House Foreign Affairs committee staffer Robert Walker. India spent around \$2.23 million since 2005 on BGR as the period between 2006 and 2008 was crucial as the nuclear deal went through the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate during that period.<sup>27</sup> The Indian Embassy has also hired Democrat-leaning lobbying firm Patton Boggs last year.<sup>28</sup> Led by Graham Wisner, a brother of former U.S. ambassador to India Frank Wisner, it will have more sway in with the Democrats in government.

After the passage of the nuclear deal, the Indian government still continues to engage lobbyists in Washington for advice on dealing with the new administration and the U.S.

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<sup>27</sup> *The Economic Times*, "India lobbies hard in US to stay ahead," January 29, 2009, [http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/PoliticsNation/India\\_lobbies\\_hard\\_in\\_US\\_to\\_stay\\_ahead/articleshow/4044733.cms](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/PoliticsNation/India_lobbies_hard_in_US_to_stay_ahead/articleshow/4044733.cms).

<sup>28</sup> Laura Rozen, "India's stealth lobbying against Holbrooke's brief," *Foreign Policy*, January 23, 2009, [http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/01/23/india\\_s\\_stealth\\_lobbying\\_against\\_holbrooke](http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/01/23/india_s_stealth_lobbying_against_holbrooke).

Congress. India was able to successfully lobby the Obama transition team in the weeks before it took office to ensure that the special envoy for South Asia appointee, Richard Holbrooke's mission left India and Kashmir out. Lobbying efforts also contributed to a resolution in the U.S. Senate recently on the Mumbai terror attacks that unanimously condemned the attacks and praised India's restraint.

The Pakistani governments have also hired top lobby shops in Washington over the years but all has not been smooth sailing. A month after signing a \$1.2 million contract with Cassidy and Associates to promote Pakistan as an "important strategic partner of the US," the firm withdrew when President Musharraf established martial law in November 2007.<sup>29</sup> Another firm, Van Scoyoc Associates continued to work for the government during this time to contain the fallout from the destabilizing actions by President Musharraf, as congressional Democrats and the Bush administration sought a review of the country's foreign aid and a planned sale of F-16s.<sup>30</sup> Mark J. Tavlarides, director for legislative affairs at the National Security Council during the Clinton administration, led the account engaging in discussions with the Legislative and Executive Branches . . . on issues of interest to the Government of Pakistan" which included foreign aid and the sale of F-16s.<sup>31</sup>

Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto also hired public relations giants in Washington during this time convincing U.S. officials that the former prime minister is still a key figure in Pakistani politics and is relevant to advancing the democratic process in Pakistan. Indeed, after Bhutto's Pakistani People's Party came to power last year, the government hired

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<sup>29</sup> Chidanand Rajghatta, "US Lobby firms dump Pakistan," *The Times of India*, November 10, 2007, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2531091.cms>.

<sup>30</sup> Patrick O'Connor and Samuel Loewenberg, "Pakistan's lobbyists target Congress," *Politico*, November 6, 2007, <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=1228DEA1-3048-5C12-00FE46B05D430F12>.

<sup>31</sup> Judy Sarasohn, "India, Pakistan sign with U.S. lobby shops," *The Washington Post*, September 15, 2005, sec. A.

Locke Lord Strategies (LLS) for \$590,000 in 2008.<sup>32</sup> LLS's responsibilities are to publicize "the country's recent political, social and economic developments" and to maintain a favorable standing in Washington. Heading the account is Mark Siegel, with strong Democratic Party ties. He served as executive director of the Democratic National Committee and was deputy assistant to President Jimmy Carter. He was a close personal friend of the now-assassinated Benazir Bhutto, has been a consistent defender of Pakistan in Washington, and helped her write her last book *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*. He shares a great relationship with President Zardari and the Pakistani Ambassador in Washington, Hussain Haqqani. He claims that his services are always professional and the goal ultimately is to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the United States and Pakistan. The major chunks of his agenda include lobbying to increase aid to Pakistan and defending President Zardari as his nation looks to recast its image in Washington.<sup>33</sup>

### **Showdown after Mumbai**

The India lobby has indeed been much more organized recently to make the Indian-American voice heard. A few months after the Mumbai terrorist attacks of November 2008, Indian-Americans from all over the country gathered in Washington on January 26 and 27 to meet with think tanks, institutes, and members of Congress to express their views and push their agenda. A month after the Mumbai attacks, USINPAC took the lead in bringing major Indian-American organizations into one umbrella to create the "Task Force on the Mumbai

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<sup>32</sup> OpenSecrets.org, Lobbying Spending Database – Embassy of the Islamic Republic/Pakistan, 2008, <http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?year=2008&lname=Embassy+of+the+Islamic+Republic%2FPakistan&id=> (accessed 30 March, 2009)

<sup>33</sup> Roxana Tiron, "Bhutto's man behind the scenes presses in D.C.," *The Hill*, January 6, 2009, [http://www.lockelord.com/files/News/287cfb7b-44a9-48f6-9b88-67c8cc9803d5/Presentation/NewsAttachment/a9d686a3-a5fb-4d1e-a9b7-6a527278648d/2009-01\\_TheHill\\_Butto-SiegelMark.pdf](http://www.lockelord.com/files/News/287cfb7b-44a9-48f6-9b88-67c8cc9803d5/Presentation/NewsAttachment/a9d686a3-a5fb-4d1e-a9b7-6a527278648d/2009-01_TheHill_Butto-SiegelMark.pdf)



Terror Attacks.” The Task Force’s goal was to support community advocacy for conditioning of the U.S. government’s economic and military assistance to Pakistan on the nation’s compliance with a series of anti-terror measures. Prominent national organizations like the Indo-American Friendship forum and the National Federation of Indian American Associations as well as regional ones like the Indian American Political Action Committee (Texas) and the North Carolina Indian American Political Action Committee were included in this framework.<sup>34</sup> The Task Force conducted a Washington Lobby Day (*Washington Chalo*, translated Let’s Go to Washington) on January 27, 2009 in the nation’s capital. The national lobbying day was organized to show members of Congress the support that Indian-Americans and all Americans expressed for the victims of the Mumbai attacks and for continued U.S.-India joint efforts on the war against terrorist organizations based in Pakistan.

The India lobby has been lobbying U.S. officials for a long time to take action against Pakistan-originating terrorism that targets India and has been frustrated at the U.S.’s singular focus on groups that target the West. By singling out Americans, Britons, and Jews among other Indian elites, the Mumbai attackers went a step further in equating the two types of terror originating in Pakistan and highlighted the notion of global jihad – a jihad against Hindus, Christians, and Jews. The group suggested that this was something new in India’s history of terrorism – that this attack represents a much broader attack on U.S. and Western interests, turning India into a global frontline on the Global War on Terrorism. The campaign used this to convince lawmakers and other stakeholders that this was not just an Indian problem anymore; it was now a global problem. It looked to present these developments not just as a threat to

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<sup>34</sup> Task Force on the Mumbai Terror Attacks, *About*, Washington Chalo, <http://www.112608.com/about.html> (accessed 10 April, 2009).

the security of India, but to the security of the United States and the rest of the world.<sup>35</sup> The logic was: what happened in Mumbai was inspired by what happened in Bali, Madrid, and London and could happen in any other city.

The manner in which USINPAC seized the moment to bring the community under one umbrella to appeal to lawmakers is consistent with Rosenstone and Hansen's theory of mobilization.<sup>36</sup> Interest groups mobilize citizen participation around especially salient issues. In the course of their struggle for influence, politicians, interest groups, and activists mobilize when conditions – such as a terrorist attack – make it possible for them to muster public support. Political leaders identify opportunities for citizens to influence governmental decisions and propagate information through organizations such as citizen interest groups. Their activities inform, direct, and give people a cause to rally around. They generate political discussions and occasion the creation of social rewards for political involvement. By their efforts, interest group leaders turn public grievances into political action.

The lobbying campaign used the notion of globally connected terrorist attacks to alert Americans that this is a common enemy and looked for allies to rally behind the cause. As Lowery and Brasher state, some issues have the ability to make groups form unlikely coalitions.<sup>37</sup> The India lobby had dialogues with rightwing think tanks like the Heritage Foundation, American Values, and the American Enterprise Institute to cooperate on this issue of Pakistani based terrorism and this made for strange bedfellows. All of these groups are

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<sup>35</sup> USINPAC and Indian-American Organizations Coalition on Mumbai Terror Attacks, "Briefing Document Prepared for the White House, Members of Congress and President Elect Obama Transition Team," *USINPAC*, <http://www.usinpac.com/pdf/Brefing%20document.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996), 117.

<sup>37</sup> David Lowery and Holly Brasher, *Organized Interests and American Government* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 177.

committed to the fight against Islamic extremism. The campaign's main focus was to make an argument for more accountability and conditioning of U.S. foreign aid to Pakistan. The delegation wanted Congress to use its appropriation powers to leverage control over the situation by making military and economic aid conditioned upon the dismantling of all terrorist camps and the arrest of all known terrorist leaders in Pakistan. It also lobbied to tie aid to bringing Pakistan's military, and especially its spy agency – the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) – under civilian control, and the removal of all hate-based teaching against India and the West in schools.<sup>38</sup>

After meeting with players who influence policy like think tanks, the delegation set out to meet with members of Congress on January 27 by organizing a series of short meetings throughout the day. Over 100 Indian-Americans gathered, prominent and ordinary ones, from all over the country in a hotel in the Capitol Hill area to chart out the day's plan. Volunteers helped sort and assign the visitors according to their state and district so that they got to participate in meetings with their own representatives as much as they could. It was, indeed, an important goal of the planning committee that people approach members of Congress as constituents, not just as representatives of an interest group. Legislators respond best to voters.<sup>39</sup> Thus, it was important for the group to show that the people appealing for these issues have a direct say when it comes to the ballot box. The group was using outside lobbying tactics, a typical tactic that citizen interest groups use according to Kollman.<sup>40</sup> It was an effort to signal the legislators about constituent strength. In fact, some of these meetings with

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<sup>38</sup> USINPAC and Indian-American Organizations Coalition on Mumbai Terror Attacks, Briefing Document, *USINPAC*.

<sup>39</sup> Ken Kollman, *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion & Outside Group Strategies* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

certain legislators were set up by constituents themselves who had an existing relationship with their representatives. For example, the Indian American Political Action Committee (IAPAC) based in Houston set up meetings with Congressmen Al Green, Pete Olson, and Kevin Brady and continued to take their relationship forward in Washington this time instead of Texas.

One of the tactics that the group emphasized in its briefing was framing the issue correctly – framing the issue such that legislators are receptive to it. For a long time, the Indian-American lobby has framed their issues as India-centric and has approached members of Congress as Indians. In this campaign though, there was a concerted effort made to approach legislators as Americans - tax-paying, voting Americans. The group's strategy was to approach legislators as Indian-Americans, not Indians in order to appeal to them. In every meeting throughout the day, groups of 8-10 Indian-Americans expressed their frustration with terrorism and made suggestions on what the U.S. could do to help. They talked about attaching more conditionality to the military and economic aid that the U.S. gives to Pakistan for increased accountability and to prevent abuse. The group argued that large amounts of aid money is either going toward bolstering the military for a future war against India or is being used by the military and intelligence agencies to sustain extremist groups that turn around and hurt the U.S. and its allies. These groups have long been used as strategic assets by the Pakistani military establishment. The argument followed the logic that American taxpayer money was being spent on military aid to Pakistan, which in turn was coming back to bite the U.S. and its allies.

It was absolutely important to make a domestic connection to the argument for it to be appealing. Sanjay Puri, who is from Virginia, talked about how frustrated he was that three

Virginians were killed in the senseless attacks.<sup>41</sup> The group suggested that terrorism is a global phenomenon and could affect any of us if not curbed. The group insisted that they are not anti-Pakistan or anti-Islam, instead, the group believes that the stability of Pakistan is in everyone's best interest and that the U.S. should invest in the long term stability of Pakistan. The group argued that it is dangerous that the civilian government in Pakistan does not have any real control over the country's foreign policy and security issues, which is controlled by the military establishment. The organization accused for the attacks, Lashkar-e-Taiba, was set up and nurtured by the Pakistani intelligence services to fight a proxy war against India.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the group advocated tying U.S. aid to bringing the military establishment under civilian control in order for it to stop supporting rogue elements.

In April 2009, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Howard Berman introduced legislation that incorporates the perspectives of the Indian-American advocacy efforts. It focuses on funding to help Pakistan confront its issues – a *jihadi* onslaught, economic collapse, and a broken education system – while holding strict accountability and monitoring requirements to ensure that the funds are used for their stated purposes. The bill places particular emphasis on strengthening democratic institutions, promoting economic development, and improving Pakistan's education system while requires that the vast majority of military assistance be focused on critical counterterrorism efforts and requires that the

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<sup>41</sup> Sanjay Puri, personal interview, April 15, 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Eric Schmitt, Mark Mazzetti, and Jane Perlez, "Pakistan's Spies Aided Group Tied to Mumbai Siege," *The New York Times*, December 7, 2008.

Government of Pakistan demonstrates a sustained commitment to combating terrorist groups and makes progress towards that end.<sup>43</sup>

The Pakistani-American community organized a Pakistan Advocacy Day in response on February 26, 2009. The Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (PAKPAC) led this effort by bringing together various political organizations like the Pakistani American Congress and the Pakistani American Leadership Center and various professional associations like the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America and the Association of Pakistani Professionals. The delegation's stated goal was to educate U.S. lawmakers about Pakistan's needs, and establishing the basis and guidelines of US-Pakistan relationship.<sup>44</sup>

In January 2009, just before the Indian Advocacy Day, the Pakistani American National Alliance (PANA), a U.S.-wide coalition of Pakistani-American organizations, issued a press release at the National Press Club. The purpose of the press release was to preempt and counter Indian efforts aimed toward what they saw was an anti-Pakistan campaign. The press release urged the Obama administration and Congress to act in line with U.S. interests in the context of world peace and stability instead of any one community's interests. The PANA leadership contended that the campaign by the Indian Task Force amounted to advocating for "coercive diplomacy" and it will revive old hostilities, re-polarize the Indian and Pakistan

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<sup>43</sup> U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Berman Legislation to Help Strengthen U.S.-Pakistan Ties, Boost Development Assistance," April 3, 2009, [http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/press\\_display.asp?id=606](http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/press_display.asp?id=606)

<sup>44</sup> Pakistan Public Affairs Committee, "Pakistan Advocacy Day," February 2009 E-Letter, [http://pakpac.net/Newsletter%20Feb09/LTR\\_Feb09.asp](http://pakpac.net/Newsletter%20Feb09/LTR_Feb09.asp)

communities, jeopardize U.S. interests, undermine prospects for peace in South Asia, and weaken the centrist forces while strengthening the extremists.<sup>45</sup>

In order to organize the National Advocacy Day, PAKPAC used various regional and local Pakistani associations to spread the word through their channels in Pakistani-American communities nationwide. Again, it encouraged participants to contact their representatives themselves to set up meetings in Washington and to invite them to the luncheon reception organized on the Hill. This is one more example of how important it is for citizen interest groups to use constituents to get attention in Congress. The basic idea behind the National Advocacy Day was that if a large number Pakistani-Americans from all parts of the country arrive in Washington and speak with one voice, they will leave an imprint on the legislators' minds.

In order to facilitate this effort, PAKPAC put up documents to help the visitors get familiarized with the advocacy process. It posted suggested letters and briefing documents on everything from requesting an appointment to following up effectively and put up guidelines and tips on delivering the message successfully. It also put up briefing documents that contained talking points that the visitors could use so that they stick to the message and speak with one voice. PAKPAC recognized that the Pakistani-American community could only amount to a voting bloc in the eyes of legislators if they seemed motivated and seemed to represent the voice of the majority of Pakistani-Americans living in this country.

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<sup>45</sup> *Reuters*, "Pakistani Americans to Ask Obama, Congress to Shun Anti-Pakistan Campaign, Suggest a Partnership for Peace," January 23, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS254565+23-Jan-2009+PRN20090123>

A major talking point for the group was to highlight the losses and deaths that Pakistan faced in the War on Terror in an effort to present Pakistan as a victim of terrorism also. It suggested that the U.S. should play a constructive role in Pakistan by making long-term investments in education, healthcare, and economic infrastructure. This involves providing the masses with a “*madrasa* alternative”, granting favorable trade terms, and considering debt write-offs for Pakistan.<sup>46</sup> Both the Indian-American and Pakistani-American groups agree that the U.S. must invest in the long-term stability of Pakistan by investing in Pakistan’s civilian institutions. However, the Pakistani community rejects the idea that additional conditions need to be put on foreign assistance. Dr. Saur Anwar, President of PAKPAC, contended that conditions placed on economic aid will cripple the aid and is thus going to weaken the U.S. position in Pakistan and ultimately, on the War on Terrorism. However, he stated, that conditions on military aid are a reasonable option as it was in everyone’s interest that the aid money does not get abused and supported transparent mechanisms for delivering aid.<sup>47</sup>

PAKPAC supports a change in U.S. policy toward Pakistan from the current transactional relationship to one that involves a strategic partnership and it supports a shift in U.S. engagement directed towards the people instead of the Pakistani government. It supports a change in the way the U.S. looks at Pakistan by moving away from a tactically driven set of short-term exercises in crisis management to a deeper, broader, long-term strategic engagement. An initiative by Vice President Biden and Senator Lugar, strongly supported by PAKPAC, proposes this change and authorizes 1.5 billion annually in aid that would be available

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<sup>46</sup> Pakistan Public Affairs Committee, “Recommendations on the Long Term Pakistan US Relations,” Pakistan Advocacy Day Talking Points, [http://www.pakpac.net/DOH6\\_PAK\\_US.doc](http://www.pakpac.net/DOH6_PAK_US.doc)

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Saud Anwar, personal interview, April 11, 2009.



for institution-building, infrastructure development, education, and healthcare.<sup>48</sup> PAKPAC has been highlighting this bill in its newsletters to its members and looked to mobilize support to double the aid amount proposed in its advocacy campaign on the Hill.

However, the stark difference in both countries' view on Kashmir is also apparent in their respective ethnic lobbies. The Pakistani-American community urged legislators that the U.S. must use its muscle to intervene because, it argues, that Kashmir is the central challenge in this whole situation and once resolved, will lead to other advances. The Indian-American community rejects the notion of tying Kashmir to other discussions as it supports a bilateral solution between the governments of India and Pakistan. Most legislators are unable to take a clear side on the question of Kashmir because the problem is not domestic enough. Both groups have therefore, approached other relevant access points such as the Foreign Affairs and Appropriations Committees in both chambers. The presence of chamber rules and committee system provide ample access points for groups to approach to pass or block legislation.<sup>49</sup> Although the Lugar-Biden bill of 2008 is now expired, the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress is revisiting it and the proposal is currently being heard in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.<sup>50</sup>

As the activities by both ethnic groups post-Mumbai indicates, both groups have come a long way in learning the Washington game. Led by citizen interest groups, both communities are present in sufficiently large numbers across certain key states, enjoy a positive image as

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<sup>48</sup> Pakistan Public Affairs Committee, "Article by Senator Lugar and suggested response," PAKPAC: Important Action Request, <http://pakpacnet00.web102.discountasp.net/SenLugar2.asp>

<sup>49</sup> Mark J. Rozell, Clyde Wilcox and David Madland, *Interest Groups in American Campaigns: The New Face of Electioneering* (Washington: CQ Press, 2006), 27.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Committee Hearings 111th Congress First Session – 2009," Hearing Schedule, <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearing.html> (accessed 19 April, 2009).

productive communities, and report higher than average education and income levels (especially second generation) relative to other ethnic groups.

As citizen interest groups, it is beneficial for USINPAC and PAKPAC that although present across the United States, the two communities are highly concentrated in certain states and districts and represent a voting bloc in those areas. Thus, the legislative branch is the prime destination to wield influence. Both groups have worked over the years to build and cultivate relationships with legislators and staffers and attain credibility. Sanjay Puri believes that the key to USINPAC's success has been its consistency and continuity in its leadership and relationships. He states that presenting a balanced approach is important to gain credibility in the eyes of officials - a perspective that is well thought out and not extreme.<sup>51</sup> USINPAC has worked hard to become the go-to resource for information on India and Indian-Americans for officials. It hosts regular fundraisers, youth symposia, and receptions on Capitol Hill, and maintains a highly professional website that offers ready briefings to members of Congress on Indian-Americans. It has helped legislators network and make the most out of their India trips and demonstrated a level of activism that is noticed. The nature of this rapport demonstrates the symbiotic relationship that DeGregorio has theorized.<sup>52</sup>

USINPAC has strategically courted friends of India on the Hill and looked to these individuals to advance their goals. The Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans that was convened by Frank Pallone (D-NJ), who came from a district with one of the highest

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<sup>51</sup> Sanjay Puri, personal interview, April 15, 2009.

<sup>52</sup> Christine DeGregorio, "Assets and Access: Linking Lobbyists and Lawmakers in Congress," In *The Interest Group Connection: Electioneering, Lobbying and Policymaking in Washington*, eds. Ronald G. Shaiko, Paul Herrnsen, and Clyde Wilcox (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Pub. Inc, 1998), 139.

proportion of Indian-Americans, now includes more than a fourth of the House members.<sup>53</sup>

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) led the creation of the Senate's "India Caucus." Congressman Joe Wilson proudly sports an Indian flag next to the customary American flag in his office. These are, among others, champions in Congress for USINPAC. Lowery and Brasher state that interest groups rely on "champions" in Congress who not only vote favorably, but influence colleagues and push the issue through the multi-step legislative process.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the leaders of the India Caucuses, including Eli Faleomavaega (D-AS), Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Joe Crowley (D-NY), Jim McDermott (D-WA), Ed Royce (R-CA), and David Price (D-NC) have been influential in a number of ways from arranging discussions of the nuclear agreement to pushing for pro-India amendments in proposed legislation.

PAKPAC was founded in 1989 and grew out of the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America, but it has not experienced the same kind of growth or acquired similar clout, partially because of the relatively smaller population and the tendency for Pakistani-Americans to identify themselves more with Islamic groups.<sup>55</sup> However, PAKPAC has had its share of successes through effective community mobilization. It has helped defeat several incumbents that have taken an anti-Pakistan stance including Senator Larry Pressler who slapped the Pressler Amendment on Pakistan withholding military aid in response to Pakistan's nuclear program.<sup>56</sup> PAKPAC strongly believes in a democratic Pakistan and is passionately independent from the Pakistani government. It is comfortable with criticizing the government. For example, when Musharraf declared martial law, PAKPAC came out strongly disfavoring the move. Dr.

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<sup>53</sup> Hathaway, *Unfinished Passage: India, Indian Americans, and the US Congress*, 28.

<sup>54</sup> Lowery and Brasher, *Organized Interests and American Government*, 151.

<sup>55</sup> Ali Eteraz, "Lobbying for Pakistan," *The News*, June 22, 2008, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print1.asp?id=119835>

<sup>56</sup> Pakistan Public Affairs Committee, "PAKPAC Work and Achievements," <http://pakpacnet00.web102.discountasp.net/Achieve.asp>

Saud Anwar states that the foremost guiding principle for PAKPAC is the long term stability of Pakistan which is essential to maintaining stability in the region, and its advocacy focuses on attracting U.S. support to attain that objective.<sup>57</sup>

For PAKPAC, the Biden-Lugar bill that changes the ad hoc nature of the military assistance to Pakistan to an economic partnership has been a rallying point. Both Senator Lugar and Vice President Biden support a shift away from a transactional relationship with Pakistan. Congresspersons Sheila Jackson (D-TX) and Dan Burton (R-IN) are co-chairs of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus launched in 2004 with the direct input of President Musharraf. The caucus was created to help Pakistani-Americans facilitate dialogue with their political representatives in Congress and to improve and strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and the U.S.<sup>58</sup> Jan Schakowsky (D - IL) and Andre Carson (D-IN), one of only two Muslims serving in Congress are the other champions of Pakistan. PAKPAC is working hard to educate legislators and staffers regarding Pakistani issues and increase the membership of the caucus.

Both ethnic groups are beginning to have a mounting impact on American politics in a variety of ways. They are becoming important as activists, as voters, as candidates, as political contributors, and as participants in the policy debates. They are not a silent or inactive minority anymore; they are expressing themselves in distinct ways.

After decades of Washington tilting towards Pakistan under a Cold War mentality, Pakistani-Americans are now facing a challenge in order to maintain pro-Pakistan views in Washington. As a key nation in the War on Terrorism, the state of Pakistan is going to intense

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<sup>57</sup> Dr. Saud Anwar, personal interview, April 11, 2009.

<sup>58</sup> Pakistani American Leadership Center, "Congressional Pakistan Caucus," <http://www.pal-c.org/pakistancaucus.html> (accessed April 10, 2009).

scrutiny as an effective U.S. ally. Pakistani-Americans insist that Pakistan is taking the right steps and it requires continued U.S. support in order to make progress. They warn that abandonment by the U.S., as in the past, will further deteriorate conditions and will ultimately hurt U.S. efforts.

For the Indian lobby, recently, the pattern of organization has evolved to include more explicitly political groups, and new communications technologies have linked previously scattered community organizations. With an eye on a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, generational change has given rise to a younger activist population that is increasingly self-confident, interested in India's global standing, and savvy in the ways of American politics. Perhaps most importantly, it is becoming clear that Indian-Americans are developing a self-consciousness about their potential strength and their interests, that is, they are beginning to think of themselves as a political force. It is also becoming clear that Indian-Americans at many different levels of society are accumulating political experience through their involvement in established political processes, be it at the local, state, or national levels. These experiences, coinciding with an improvement in U.S.-India relations, send a loud and clear message to practitioners and academicians in Washington that India and the Indian-American community will not be ignored anymore.

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