



INDIA - UAE: EMERGING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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Abstract:

India's relation with UAE has flourished since the Federation of UAE in 1971 when trade was the primary source of their relation. From the very beginning, UAE has shown interest in maintaining relation with India as one of the growing and emerging economy throughout the world. India has also been trying to regain International power in whole West Asia which has resulted increasing number of visits of the ministers to UAE, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Palestine. Although, India has engaged with a number of West Asian Countries but established a significant strategic relation with UAE. Relation has further blossomed since the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to UAE in 2014 and return visit of UAE's crown Prince to India in 2016 and in 2017 on the occasion of Republic Day. During these visits, many agreements were signed related to security, defence, trade, investment, and infrastructure, combat terrorism as relation has moved towards strategic from bilateral. UAE has assumed chairmanship of India Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) immediately after India; therefore, greater understanding was developed on the maritime issues as well. It is important to note that with shrinking markets in Europe and the USA, UAE is looking towards India for trade and investment. The aim of this paper is to highlight factors and interest of both countries to come closer in region as well in international arena.

Keywords: cooperation, strategy, agreements, visits

1. Introduction

In recent decades, India's rapid growth and modernization, along with its endowed human resources and large markets, make it one of the anchors of the global economy.

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UAE's economic progress has been one of the global success stories, transforming the nation into a regional leader and a thriving international center that attracts people and business from across the world. India has emerged as one of the major world powers, contributing to the advancement of global peace and stability. The dynamism of the two countries has translated into a rapidly expanding economic partnership.ⁱⁱ

Since many years India has been trying to expand its influence in West Asian countries in general and in gulf countries in particular which resulted continuous visits of ministers to Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and vice versa. Although India has cultivated relations with many countries but increasing strategic relationship with UAE because it has been largest trading partner and strategically important country. About 2.6 million migrants are working in UAE. Multiple factors are responsible in bringing the two nations closer like historical linkages, culture, economy, polity, security, changing geostrategic and maritime environment.ⁱⁱⁱ Although earlier at one stage India's relation with UAE strained because of UAE's stand on Kashmir with Pakistan. But gradually India's emerging status throughout the world convinced UAE to change its policy towards India and its stance on Kashmir since 2014. Growing relation between these two countries has affected their foreign policy. UAE's minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdullah Zayed bin Al Nayahan described India as an "*ally and cherished neighbor*" and said that UAE would like to have a 'strong presence' in the Indian market in the future. He also expressed need to work together with India on some debating issues like stabilizing Afghanistan, combating maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden as well as stabilizing Somalia and religious and sectarian fault lines emerging in the West Asian countries.^{iv}

2. Historical Linkages

The relations between India and UAE have started centuries ago. From 1820-1971, UAE under the British colony relation was confined to economic and trade was the primary source to connect the people of both the countries. After 1970's relation has expanded with the expansion of oil industry and the evolution of free trade. Relation further improved since the establishment of UAE embassy in New Delhi in 1972. In 1973, the Emirati consulate was established in Mumbai along with the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and Indian consulate in Dubai. In 1975 UAE's founding father Sheikh Zayed bin

ⁱⁱ Press Information Bureau Government of India Prime Minister's Office, *Joint Statement between the United Arab Emirates and India*, Press information bureau (August 17, 2015):1
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126127>

ⁱⁱⁱ Zakir Hussain, "India and the United Arab Emirates: Growing Engagements," *Indian Council of World Affairs*, New Delhi, (June 24, 2012):1.

^{iv} Ibid: 2.

Sultan Al Nahyan made a historic visit to India and met with the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi where he stressed upon their relationship and signed cultural agreement along with other ground breaking agreements. Next year in 1976, Dr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad the then Indian President made a return visit to UAE when their relation entered into a new phase.^v Late Sheikh Zayed visit of 1975 was followed by his visits of 1983 and 1992 brought the two nations closer. At the time of his visit in 1992 he emphasized that their relation are strong because of historical ties of cooperation and collaboration. During the meeting leaders of both the country talked on many national as well international issues and need to increase the international efforts to resolve the disputes between nations peacefully through supporting in United Nation's effort in bringing peace and stability and attain freedom for all whose land are occupied by foreign forces.^{vi}

3. Relations after Indira Gandhi visit

Indira Gandhi visit to UAE in 1981, was first Prime Ministerial visit to UAE.^{vii} Although India and UAE forward there steps towards defence cooperation in 1990 but practically the progress started since 2003.^{viii} With the goal of giving military training, military medical services, export and import of arms, peacekeeping operations, security and defence policy^{ix} When they signed defence cooperation agreement. Along with a Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) was set up which met for the first time in 2006.^x The navies of both states held joint exercises in 2003 and they initiated naval staff talks in January 2007. And India has been frequently participating international Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) in the UAE. Besides, both the countries have been participating in counterterrorism. Example of extradition of high-profile terror suspects

^v Angel Tesorero, "A partnership that dates back centuries," Khaleej times, January 12,2017, accessed on March 15, 2107

<https://www.pressreader.com/uae/khaleej-times/20170122/281844348343567>

^{vi} "UAE, India: A lasting friendship and advanced relationship," February 11, 2016, accessed on March 14, 2017, <http://www.sify.com/news/uae-india-a-lasting-friendship-and-advanced-relationship-news-international-qclmdMgifiafe.html>

^{vii}"UAE India partnership elevated as Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed wraps up successful visit", *The National*, February 12, 2016, assessed on May 16, 2016 <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/uae-india-joint-statement-as-sheikh-mohammed-bin-zayed-wraps-up-successful-visit-1.171305>

^{viii}Geoffrey Kemp, *The East Moves West: India, China, and Asia's Growing Presence in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), p-49

^{ix} Prasanta Kumar Pradhan, "India's Relationship with West Asia: Facing the Challenges of Arab Spring" in *Geopolitical Shifts in West Asia: Trends and Implications*, ed. Prasanta Kumar Pradhan (New Delhi: IDSA, Pentagon Press, 2016), 233

^x Geoffrey Kemp, *The East Moves West: India, China, and Asia's Growing Presence in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), p-49

to India shows the concern towards counterterrorism efforts.^{xi} Relations between India and UAE have converted to political and strategic with high level of ministerial visits from both sides. Late President Sr. A P J Abdul Kalam visited UAE in 2003.^{xii} There have been benevolence visits of Indian Navy ships to the UAE at regular interval. First India-UAE Joint Air Force exercise took place in September 2008 in Abu Dhabi. Three Indian Naval Ships INS Krishna, INS Teer and CGS Veera visited to the UAE ports in March 2011. UAE held the meeting of the 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS) in May 2010 at Abu Dhabi, where India has given its chairmanship of the IONS to the UAE.^{xiii} Fourth meeting of joint defence cooperation committee was took place in April 2011 in Abu Dhabi and next (forth) in New Delhi on May 2012.^{xiv}

Later in November 2010, President Pratibha Devisingh Patil visit to UAE emphasizes the importance of GCC countries for India. She visited to UAE on four day state visit to discuss political, business and community related issues. President Patil stated, *"India is committed to pursuing a common strategic vision for promoting regional peace and security and for enhancement of our relations in the political, economic, security and cultural fields."* And discussed investment prospects in India with UAE.^{xv} During a speech at the Indian Social and Cultural Centre in Abu Dhabi, the Indian President emphasized the contribution of the Indian labour force to the UAE economy. H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan's visit to India in May 2012, marked a new phase in bilateral relations. The UAE-India Joint Task Force on Investments was established in April 2012, under the chairmanship of H.H. Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chief of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, and India's then Minister of Commerce and Industry, Anand Sharma, as a platform to discuss shared issues associated with investments between the two countries and to encourage and facilitate cross border investments.

The first UAE-India Joint Task Force meeting was held in February 2013, and resulted in a broad discussion about matters of mutual interest, including the identification of sectors that have priority in possible investments in the two countries. Since then, the task force has consistently worked to strengthen and develop bilateral

^{xi} Geoffrey Kemp, *The East Moves West: India, China, and Asia's Growing Presence in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 49

^{xii} Embassy Of India, Abu Dhabi (UAE), "India UAE bilateral relation", accessed on January 29, 2015 available at <http://indembassyuae.org/political.html>

^{xiii} Ministry of external affairs, government of India, "India-UAE Relations" July 2013 at accessed on October 2, 2016, https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-UAE_Relations.pdf

^{xiv} UAE's defense ties with India set to grow: Relations cover defense, security, fighting terrorism By Staff *Emirates247*, February 09, 2016 , accessed on October 02, 2016, <http://www.emirates247.com/news/emirates/uae-s-defence-ties-with-india-set-to-grow-2016-02-09-1.620299>

^{xv} Prasanta Kumar Pradhan, Accelerating India's "Look West Policy" in the Gulf, IDSA issue brief, New Delhi, February 3, 2011

relations in the field of investment, and in December 2013, it signed a bilateral agreement for the protection and promotion of investments, which serves as a platform to strengthen the legal protection of investments in both countries^{xvi}.

4. Relations since present NDA government

Indian foreign policy has been influencing and shifting throughout the world in general and West Asia in particular. Several changes have been made since coming in power the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi has restructured India's foreign policy in West Asian Region. He is as a pioneer of new foreign policy of India, committed further importance to the UAE. Both nations have been improving their bilateral relations through visits and various agreements and cooperation between them.

4.1 Bilateral Visits

Major issues among nations were resolved through negotiation which the leaders do during their bilateral visits. Therefore, visit has become an important instrument of foreign policy. During their visits, the leaders discuss regional as well as global issues. Visits on higher levels like Prime minister or President of countries bring good results between nations as they talk about on big issues and treaties and agreements bring changes in their relations. Direct contact between them brings positive impact between the countries.^{xvii}

4.1.1 Prime Minister Modi Visit to UAE

Prime Minister of India visited UAE in August 2015. After Indira Gandhi visit to UAE in 1981, it was first any Prime Ministerial visit after 34 years. So it was a historic visit. During this visit, both the region agreed to enhance cooperation on many grounds including security, trade and investment, counterterrorism, joint defense cooperation and IT and electronics.^{xviii} Indian President Pranab Mukherjee said Modi's visit to UAE in 2015 first by an Indian Prime Minister in 34 years, has brought increasing mutual understanding and friendship between the two regions. And added, "*The joint statement issued during that visit reflects the desire to intensify cooperation between the two countries in a wide range of sectors political, economic, security as well as on regional and multilateral*

^{xvi} "UAE, India: A lasting friendship and advanced relationship," February 11, 2016, accessed on March 14, 2017, <http://www.sify.com/news/uae-india-a-lasting-friendship-and-advanced-relationship-news-international-qclmdMgifiafe.html>

^{xvii} Ernest Petric, Foreign Policy: from Conception to Diplomatic Practice, (Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013), 237-239.

^{xviii} "UAE India partnership elevated as Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed wraps up successful visit", *The National*, https://article.wn.com/view/2016/02/12/UAEIndia_partnership_elevated_as_Sheikh_Mohammed_bin_Zayed_w/

issues.”^{xix} Both the sides signed agreements in various sector. Modi termed UAE as a “mini India” in an interview with *Khaleej Times*. Both the region has a common aim regarding combating terrorism and money laundering. Both in a joint statement condemn terrorism in all forms. Both the countries have also agreed for joint defense exercises and for the production of defense equipment. This was the sign for all states to abandon the terrorist activities, either from where or by whom it is committed.^{xx} During Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to UAE both the countries signed “*strategic partnership*” and decided to make strong cooperation in combating terrorism, trafficking of drugs, extradition arrangements and law enforcement. Except the above decided to cooperate in inhibiting use of cybercrime and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purpose like in the field of science and technology. Indian media called this visit “huge success”.^{xxi} The leaders agreed on the following:

1. Establish a dialogue between their National Security Advisors and National Security Councils. The National Security Advisors, together with other high level representatives for security from both nations, will meet every six months. The two sides will also establish points of contact between their security agencies to further improve operational cooperation.
2. Encourage strategic partnership in the energy sector, including through UAE's participation in India in the development of strategic petroleum reserves, upstream and downstream petroleum sectors, and collaboration in third countries. Encouraging strategic relationship in the energy sector
3. Strengthen cooperation between UAE's increasingly sophisticated educational institutions and India's universities and higher research institutions. Promote scientific collaboration, including in the areas of renewable energy, sustainable development, arid agriculture, desert ecology, urban development and advanced healthcare.
4. The overwhelming global response to the International Day of Yoga was a reflection of global community's ability to come together to seek a peaceful, more balanced, healthier and sustainable future for the world. Prime Minister thanked UAE for its strong support to the International Day of Yoga on June 21 this year.
5. The 70th anniversary of the United Nations is an occasion to press for early reforms of the United Nations, and that the Inter-Governmental Negotiations on

^{xix} “India, UAE Sign 7 Agreements across Various Sectors”, *NDTV*, February 11, 2016, assessed on May 16, 2016, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-uae-sign-7-agreements-across-various-sectors-1276448>

^{xx} Shashwat Tiwari, “The UAE: India’s Key to West Asia?” *The Diplomat*, October 1, 2015, accessed on May 16, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/the-uae-and-indias-reengagement-with-west-asia/>

^{xxi} Sanjeev Singh, “UAE Denounces Terrorism, Backs India for UN Security Council Seat” *NDTV*, August 17, 2015, accessed on May 16, 2016, <http://www.ndtv.com/cheat-sheet/uae-backs-india-stand-on-pak-sponsored-terrorism-in-joint-statement-1208211>

the reforms of the UN Security Council should be concluded expeditiously. Prime Minister thanked UAE for its support for India's candidature for permanent membership of a reformed United Nations Security Council^{xxii}.

4.1.2 Crown Prince First Visit to India

Next year on February 11, 2016 the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed visited India. And stated satisfaction at the progress from both the sides since Modi's visit last year.^{xxiii} The National media from the UAE report, *"They looked forward to the early signing of the comprehensive strategic partnership agreement, and resolved to build on the momentum by pursuing the following areas of collaboration: trade, investment and economic development."*^{xxiv} Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces visited India in February 2016 at the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who visited UAE in August 2015, where both the leaders agreed to uplift only the friendly relation to a complete strategic partnership. In the meeting of New Delhi they both expressed satisfaction at the progress made since August 2015 and talked about following:

- They recognized the development achieved through regular security dialogue between their National Security Councils.
- They agreed to reinforce their strategic partnership working thoroughly together security issues, particularly on maritime security, counterterrorism and cyber security,
- Both the sided agreed to co-operate on sharing information and communication technology.
- Both the leaders agreed to heighten their cooperation to strengthen maritime security in the Indian Ocean region and the Gulf, which is vigorous for the prosperity and security of both countries.
- Expressed satisfaction at the development which was attained in fifth round of navy to navy staff talks held in Abu Dhabi in September 2015. And both the leader agreed for the next meeting of Joint Defence Cooperation Committee in

^{xxii} Press Information Bureau Government of India Prime Minister's Office, *Joint Statement between the United Arab Emirates and India*, Press information bureau, August 17, 2015, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126127>

^{xxiii} "UAE India partnership elevated as Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed wraps up successful visit", *The National*, February 12, 2016, assessed on May 16, 2016,

<https://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/uae-india-joint-statement-as-sheikh-mohammed-bin-zayed-wraps-up-successful-visit-1.171305>

^{xxiv} Antony Clement, *India And UAE Relation*, accessed on May 16, 2016,

http://modern diplomacy.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1256:indiaanduaerelations&Itemid=645

future and to accelerate the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Mutual Protection of Classified Information.^{xxv}

4.1.3 India's Defence Minister to UAE

Manohar Parrikar's visit to UAE on May 2016 is a symbol of strengthening the relationship between India and UAE in defence and security field after coming in power of Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2014. Both countries now seeing to grow their relation in security and defence affairs beyond terrorism and counter-terrorism.^{xxvi}

4.1.4 Crown Prince Visit to India as a Chief Guest on Republic Day

Second visit of Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi as a chief guest on 26 January 2017 is a step towards consolidating the comprehensive strategic relationship between UAE and India. His first visit to India was on February 2016. In August 2015, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi's visit to UAE was a landmark visit towards strengthening their relation. These visits provided a platform for both the countries to elevate their bilateral relation to the strategic level. Instability in West Asia; changes in regional order; uncertainties over US policy under President Donald Trump and India's continuous growing interest in gulf countries followed by its economic and trade ties and more than seven million Indian migrants in the gulf are the important aspects which attracting both the region towards enhancing their relationship. New Delhi considers UAE as "valued partner" and this visit is expected to open doors in many new areas.^{xxvii}

4.2 Cooperation in Multi-Dimensional Sectors

To enhance their strategic relation both the countries signed many agreements in various fields like defence, security, energy and trade except from comprehensive strategic partnership agreement. Modi termed the discussion as a "fruitful and productive", He said, "*We have shaped an ambitious roadmap of engagement to make our comprehensive strategic partnership purposeful and action oriented.*"

^{xxv} Ministry of External affairs, Government of India, "India-UAE Joint Statement during the State Visit of Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi", February 12, 2016, accessed on October 2, 2016, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26349/India+UAE+Joint+Statement+during+the+State+Visit+of+Crown+Prince+of+Abu+Dhabi>

^{xxvi} Samanth Subramanian, "UAE and India set to forge closer trade and military ties," *The National*, May 17, 2016, accessed on August 25, 2016, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/uae-and-india-set-to-forge-closer-trade-and-military-ties-1.216635>

^{xxvii} Meena Singh Roy, "India, UAE Set to Give New Impetus to Strategic Partnership" January 24, 2017, accessed on March 12, 2017, <https://thewire.in/102258/indiauaesettogivenewimpetustotheirstrategicpartnership>

4.2.1 Cooperation in Defense and Security

An important significant pillar in growing their relation is cooperation in security and defence matter. With the rise of global terrorist organization and spread of extremism in Gulf and South Asia India looks to strengthen cooperation with the Gulf countries including the UAE to combat terrorism and radicalism. Simultaneously both the countries are looking towards enhancing cooperation to safeguard peaceful maritime trade and prevent organized crime. "Desert Eagle II" a ten day air combat exercise was held in May-June 2016 between the air forces of UAE and India. In 2016, agreements were done to enhance cooperation in defence and security through joint defence training and exercise. The India-UAE joint statement issued in 2017 further gave impetus to make strong the relations through joint exercise, training of naval, air and land forces as well through participation in defence exhibition.^{xxviii}

Modi said earlier areas of cooperation were limited to trade, energy and diaspora but now it has extended to security and defence cooperation. Both the region is rapidly forwarding their steps towards the cooperation in the areas of defence, maritime security, space, civilian nuclear energy and collaboration between security agencies to combat terrorism.^{xxix}

4.2.2 Combating Extremism and Terrorism:

Both the countries oppose and criticize to use religion in the name of terrorism against other countries. Both are against of those efforts by countries which give religious and sectarian color to political issues and disputes. Although Pakistan was not claimed directly but pointer was obvious. This was the big achievement for India as UAE has been the traditional partner of Pakistan. Pakistan refusal to send troops to Yemen to fight Houthi rebels under the Saudi leadership also became reason for UAE's dissatisfaction. Under these circumstances, UAE moved closer to India. Common menace from Islamic State also attracted both the region to cooperate in security and defence issues^{xxx} Pathankot and Uri attacks was criticized by UAE which became the first country to condemn the terrorist attack and supported India's surgical strike inside

^{xxviii} Meena Singh Roy & Md. Muddassir Quamar, "India - UAE Relations: New Dimension to Strategic Partnership", IDSA, New Delhi February 17, 2017.

^{xxix} Press Information Bureau Government of India Prime Minister's Office, *Joint Statement between the United Arab Emirates and India*, Press information bureau (August 17, 2015):1 <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126127>

^{xxx} Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Bridging the Gulf: UAE India relations have turned a new, exciting corner," *The Economic Times*, Sep 11, 2015, accessed on February 11, 2017, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/bridging-the-gulf-uae-india-relations-have-turned-a-new-exciting-corner/articleshow/48907515.cms>

Pakistan.^{xxxi} The assassination of five diplomats of UAE in Kandahar on January 10, 2017 became the cause of concern for UAE regarding the terrorist activities because it was the first time when UAE diplomats were attacked in any foreign country.^{xxxii}

During Modi's visit to UAE both, the region decided to work in the adoption of India's proposed Comprehensive convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations.^{xxxiii}

Modi said (2017) "We have agreed to expand our useful cooperation in the field of defense to new areas including in the maritime domain. The MoU on Defense Cooperation, signed earlier today, will help steer our defense engagements in the right direction," Modi noted. "We also feel that our growing engagement in countering violence and extremism is necessary for securing our societies." he said. "Our shared concern on growing threat from radicalism and terrorism to the safety and security of our people is shaping our cooperation in this space."^{xxxiv}

4.2.3 Energy sector

UAE is the only fifth largest supplier of crude oil to India, there is a vast opportunity to mutually cooperate in the energy sector. India imports 8 percent of its oil from UAE which was the fifth largest supplier of crude oil to India in 2015-16. Both are seeing beyond it. In 2016-17, India plans to import 2.5 million tons more than from 16.11 million tons which it purchased in 2016. Importantly the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) has agreed to store crude oil in India's maiden strategic storage facility and give two thirds of the oil for free to India.^{xxxv}

4.2.4 Cooperation in Trade and Investment

India is UAE's second largest trading partner and UAE is also India's second trading partner behind the US. Now both the countries are trying to enhance their cooperation in trade and investment sector also, although economy and trade is the backbone of their relation. In 2014, trade reached 60 billion dollars and both want to increase it 60

^{xxxi} Swaran Singh, "Shifting sands of India-UAE relations," *The New Indian Express*, January 26, 2017, accessed on March 03, 2017, <http://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2017/jan/26/shifting-sands-of-india-uae-relations-1563548.html>

^{xxxii} Meena Singh Roy & Md. Muddassir Quamar, "India - UAE Relations: New Dimension to Strategic Partnership", IDSA, New Delhi February 17, 2017.

^{xxxiii} Sanjeev Singh, "UAE Denounces Terrorism, Backs India for UN Security Council Seat" *NDTV*, August 17, 2015, accessed on May 16, 2016, <http://www.ndtv.com/cheat-sheet/uae-backs-india-stand-on-pak-sponsored-terrorism-in-joint-statement-1208211>

^{xxxiv} Bernd Debusmann Jr., "UAE and India sign partnership agreement" *Khaleej Times*, January 25, 2017, accessed on March 4, 2017, <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae-india-ties/uae-to-help-india-fill-its-strategic-oil-reserves>

^{xxxv} Meena Singh Roy & Md. Muddassir Quamar, "India - UAE Relations: New Dimension to Strategic Partnership", IDSA, New Delhi February 17, 2017

percent in next five years. Times of India in a report said, “*The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), one of the world’s largest sovereign wealth funds, has been keen to invest in India’s infrastructure sector and build a strategic partnership with New Delhi. ADIA is already an investor in India and sees India as an attractive investment destination. India has huge needs for investment in railways, roads, ports, industrial corridors and smart cities.*”

UAE has shown interest to invest \$75 billion in India’s infrastructure projects and looking forward to boost cooperation in the field of defence, security and space. Navdeep Singh Suri, India’s ambassador to the UAE, said in a recent interview, “*We hope that we can encourage some of the top companies in the UAE to either undertake investments or expand their investments in India, in real estate or petrochemicals, for example.*”

MoU signed between both the countries for cooperation in the sector of road transport and highways was approved by Indian Union Cabinet. This agreement will not only help in investment in infrastructure development but also help both the countries in creating institutional mechanism for cooperation in the field^{xxxvi}.” The two sides were able to establish the UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund, with the goal of attaining a target of USD 75 billion to support investment in India’s plans for rapid growth of next generation infrastructure, especially in railways, ports, roads, airports and industrial corridors and parks. Simultaneously they agreed to facilitate involvement of Indian companies in infrastructure development in the UAE and endorse strategic partnership in the energy sector. ^{xxxvii}. Trade with India has grown significantly in the last decade – from \$13 billion in 2005-06 to \$49.7 billion in 2015-16. Since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government coming into power in May 2014, India has put efforts in attracting foreign investments and the Gulf countries can be a major source. India- UAE trade is relatively expanded as in 2015-16 India exported goods worth \$30 billion to the UAE where heavy machinery, petroleum products, food and dairy products was the main export commodities. It is expected that with the launch of India-UAE Business Council in September 2015 and regular meeting through various business and investment forums this target seems to be attained^{xxxviii}.

5. Conclusion

India’s relation with UAE is very old as it has been started centuries ago since the UAE was the British colony from 1820-1971. But in 1971 after the creation of UAE federation

^{xxxvi} Bernd Debusmann Jr., “UAE and India sign partnership agreement” *Khaleej Times*, January 25, 2017, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae-india-ties/uae-to-help-india-fill-its-strategic-oil-reserves>

^{xxxvii} Shubhajit Roy, “PM Narendra Modi’s UAE visit: quick take” *Indian Express*, August 18, 2015, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/pm-narendra-modis-uae-visit-quick-take/>

^{xxxviii} Meena Singh Roy & Md. Muddassir Quamar, “*India - UAE Relations: New Dimension to Strategic Partnership*”, IDSA, New Delhi February 17, 2017

relation has become flourished. Since then many ministerial visits has been taken place and agreements were signed on both regional as well international level and relation between then has moved from political and economic towards strategic relation. Since NDA government coming into power in 2014 relation has expanded in many different fields like defence, security, infrastructure, combating terror besides trade and energy. During the visit of Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi in 2016, nine agreements were signed and during his recent visit to India on Republic Day 14 agreements were signed to reinforce their relation in the areas of cyber security, infrastructure investment, renewable energy etc. This visit of UAE's crown prince is an important step towards strategic partnership and holding first strategic dialogue on January 20, 2017 is an indication of growing engagement in security issues. An agreement on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) signed in 2017 gave a new momentum to their relation There is also a need to smoothen problems faced by Indian migrants due to cumbersome and strict regulations that favor the Emirati employers and at times leads to serious problems for Indian workers, especially unskilled workers.

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6. "UAE, India: A lasting friendship and advanced relationship," February 11, 2017, accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.sify.com/news/uae-india-a-lasting-friendship-and-advanced-relationship-news-international-qclmdMgifiafe.html>
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