

INDIAN INVOLVEMENT IN US INTERESTS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

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Abstract

This thesis examines the dynamics of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between India and the United States of America against the background of global geopolitical changes in recent years, the important directions identified in the development of mutual relations, and the impetus for strengthening cooperation. It is dedicated to the analysis of the main factors and existing shortcomings, the expected prospects for the relations between the two countries.

Keywords: strategic partnership, trade, defense, security, artificial intelligence, Indo-Pacific region

INTRODUCTION

The US is India's most comprehensive strategic partner, and the two countries cooperate in many areas, including trade, defense, multilateral intelligence, cyber space, civil nuclear energy, education and health. As they enter the new decade, they have set a new agenda for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, seeking to be "free and open".

Geopolitical changes in recent years and the Covid-19 pandemic have led to a prospective assessment of bilateral relations. Cooperation on emerging technologies, education, national security and defense, space and cyber security, counter-terrorism, trade, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, infrastructure financing, and a rules-based order in a free and open Indo-Pacific have been identified as the main directions in the development of India-US relations in the coming years.

Today, bilateral defense cooperation is being streamlined, reducing bureaucratic obstacles, conducting new military exercises, and reinvigorating the defense trade and technology initiative.



At the same time, in recent years, two multilateral strategic groups - India-Australia-Japan-US Quartet (QUAD), revived in 2017, and Israel-India-UAE-US Group of Nations established in 2021 West Asia Four (I2U2) managed to expand its activities in a short time. These quartets have become the best format for India and the US to pursue purposeful multilateral cooperation with like-minded democracies, especially the focus of the West Asian quartet on technological cooperation has gained particular potential.

The withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan has reduced its dependence on Pakistan for roads, and now India and the United States have begun to expand joint efforts to fight against terrorist groups in Pakistan. Also, India and the United States have begun to strengthen cooperative relations with regional advanced countries to meet the need for infrastructural investments in the Indo-Pacific and to have a credible alternative to China's Belt and Road initiative.

The main part

Emerging technologies and national security

India-US technology cooperation has been growing in recent years, and the two sides signed several new agreements in 2021. Specifically, in March 2021, the India-US Science and Technology Forum's Artificial Intelligence Initiative (USIAI) will focus on cooperation in artificial intelligence, including bilateral research and development, healthcare, smart cities, agriculture, aimed at the development of research areas in the field of energy and production. In September 2021, US President J.Biden and Indian Prime Minister N.Modi discussed expanded cooperation in the fields of space security, cyber security, health security, semiconductors and next-generation communication technologies. They also agreed to coordinate mutual efforts to respond to cyber threats through addressing vulnerabilities and threats in cyber space, dialogue, joint meetings, training and sharing of best practices. This meeting defined areas of action in two domains - cyber security and artificial intelligence.

Cyber security

In recent years, the rise of cyber-attacks, including ransom ware, spyware campaigns and other malicious activities, has raised concerns about the resilience of critical infrastructural and digital assets. As just one example, the Indian Emergency



Response Team (CERT-In) reported that 1.4 million cyber security incidents occurred in India in 2021, making India one of the countries that experienced the highest number of cyber attacks in Asia this year.

The overall cyber resilience of industry, government and communities is critical, and the nature of the cyber security threats facing India and the US also has a geopolitical dimension. A clear indication of the growing importance of cyber security in India-US bilateral cooperation is that the India-US National Security Dialogue Senior Officers' Meeting was held in January 2022 with the main objective of strengthening cooperation in cyber security and critical infrastructure focused on strengthening.

Building core defense and security cooperation

In 2016-2020, India and the US held the "2+2" defense and foreign ministers' dialogue, and during this period three major military agreements were signed - the Memorandum of Agreement on Logistics Exchange (LEMOA), the Communications Interoperability and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). They allow for the mutual provision of logistics supplies and services, the transfer and use of encrypted communication equipment, and the development of geographic intelligence exchange. During the same period, the two sides also signed the Helicopter Interoperability Agreement (HOSTAC) and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which allows the US government to share classified information with the Indian defense establishment.) and the Industrial Security Agreement (ISA) were also signed.

In October 2020, the US National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence emphasized that India should be viewed as a force that maintains US technological ties in the Indo-Pacific. It was also proposed to create a US-India strategic technological alliance for defense and security. In March 2021, the US-India Artificial Intelligence Initiative (USIAI) was launched in collaboration with the Science and Technology Committee of India and the US State Committee. USIAI has started organizing symposia on artificial intelligence in healthcare, agriculture, urban planning, education, energy and transportation. While the USIAI has promoted knowledge sharing between relevant stakeholders in the two countries, perhaps due to US wariness of India's relationship with Russia, ties in this direction



have slowed. India's reference to the Ukraine crisis that all countries have equal rights indicates that the US attitude towards India on this issue may soften. In April 2022, US Secretary of State Blinken said that "today we are able and ready to partner with India in almost every area - commerce, technology, education and security" "he states.

At the moment, India and the US are developing dialogue on various areas of security - maritime security, space security, internal security, cyber security and strategic security - within the framework of expanded and military exercises. The Joint Working Group on Combating Terrorism and the Interagency Working Group on Defense Trade Development are active. India currently deploys a permanent representative in Bahrain with the US Central Command and the US has been invited to join India's naval exercise MILAN. In addition, a US liaison officer has been deployed to the Information Fusion Center-Indian Ocean Region Group (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram, India.

In 2020, when the crisis began on the China-India border, the Trump administration provided India with two modern surveillance drones and cold weather support equipment. Some prominent US lawmakers and government officials have also condemned China's aggression along the Line of Control.

US arms sales to India continue. Between 2008 and 2018, India purchased US defense equipment worth more than USD 20 billion, while the last major defense deal was signed in 2020 and included 24 submarines worth more than USD 3 billion for the Indian Navy helicopter and purchased six Apache helicopters for the Indian Army. Negotiations are underway to supply India with US armed drones, and India plans to sign many defense deals in the future as part of its military modernization programme.

China's increasingly aggressive behavior, particularly the disputed Sino-Indian border, is prominent among the broader and more pressing issues in India-US cooperation. The 2020 border crisis was the deadliest in more than 40 years of fighting, and both countries continue to deploy troops along their borders. J.Biden administration and the US Congress openly condemn China's aggressive tactics along its borders with India, and this indicates that the US is ready to provide India with the capabilities and intelligence it needs to protect its territorial integrity. China is expanding its infrastructure along the eastern sector of Arunachal Pradesh's border



with Tibet and still claims 90,000 sq km of border territory. Instead, the US reminds Beijing that it recognizes India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh.

In October 2020, the US P-8 maritime surveillance aircraft was flown to an Indian military base for the first time. Since this year, the Malabar Sea exercise has been held between Australia, India, Japan and the USA. India and the US are planning to conduct naval exercises in the Indian Ocean under India's Andaman and Nicobar Command.

In 2017, the revival of the India, Australia, Japan and the USA Quartet, in 2019 the holding of military exercises called "joint sails" between India-Japan-USA-Philippines through the South China Sea, in 2021 the new India- The announcement of the Israel-UAE-US quadrilateral dialogue, the India-Japan-US trilateral agreements, etc., are to preserve India's strategic autonomy and strengthen a more flexible strategic partnership with important strategic countries and from the past of non-alignment while reflecting the goals of distancing, it also reflects the world's transition from centuries of military treaty alliances to more flexible and functional coalitions.

Emerging concerns in counterterrorism

The establishment of the India-US Joint Task Force on Counter-Terrorism and the establishment of dialogues between the US and India in this regard have increased the importance of counter-terrorism in the bilateral diplomatic mechanisms. These institutional efforts have played a crucial role in bridging existing gaps in counter-terrorism geopolitics between the two countries. These gaps include differences in India's views on the fight against the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria, the overthrow of Al-Qaddafi in Myanmar, and US efforts to resolve the 2011 conflict in Libya.

Overall, there is great scope for India and the US to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, particularly in South Asia. Apart from the traditional areas of counter-terrorism, a joint comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism by India and the US should focus on the financing of terrorist groups. While India and the US have worked on various aspects of counter-terrorism, the prohibition of terrorist financing in South Asia – Hawala – continues to elude the formal financial system. Another potential aspect of India-US cooperation in the fight against the financing of terrorism is the careful examination of the channeling of donations to terrorist groups located in the region from West Asia to Pakistan.



Among other areas of concern for both countries, increased propaganda, recruitment and financing of the use of cyber-attacks by terrorist groups remains another major challenge. In addition, in recent years, the use of encryption technologies such as VPN and TOR by terrorist groups in South Asia has become a major concern of security institutions. India and the US should work together to counter these trends by partnering with tech companies.

Bilateral trade and global value chains

India and the US have important economic ties. First, the US is India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade hitting a record high of US\$19 billion in 2019. The US is also the largest source of foreign investment in India, with inward investment flows of \$48.2 billion, and the growing trade and investment relationship not only complements their strategic partnership, but also shapes the emerging economic architecture in the Indo-Pacific gives the opportunity. Facilitating direct investment for trade in key sectors and encouraging the participation of multinational corporations in bilateral trade and production are set as strategic trade plans.

A trade and global supply chain strategy for the US and India cannot be effective without a commensurate plan for investment. Without investment from leading US firms or partner firms in Western Europe and East Asia, India's integration into global value chains, particularly high-tech sectors, will remain difficult.

Attracting large amounts of direct investment from the US to India can stimulate bilateral trade in key sectors. The US government has taken various measures over the years to support trade with India in key areas such as nuclear energy (eg. the India-US Nuclear Deal), natural gas and defense equipment (eg. the India-US Defense Technology and Trade Initiative) in the frame.

For now, it's a little difficult to say that the idea of American firms diversifying from China to India is coming to fruition. Of the few US firms that have branched out from China, most have chosen Vietnam, with only a few investing in India.

In some sectors, Indian companies have a huge presence in global markets. For example, India's telecommunications industry ranks second in the world, pharmaceuticals ranks third, automobile manufacturing ranks fourth, and chemicals trade ranks sixth. In other sectors such as electronics, engineering goods, capital goods and agriculture, India attracts less investment flows and therefore finds it difficult to compete, trade or negotiate favorable terms in the global market.



However, recent analysis shows that electronics exports are on the rise, with India expected to export electronics worth Rs 16 billion in 2021.

Over the past few years, the US has been taking steps to respond to geopolitical and economic imperatives to shift and redirect supply chains away from China. India will benefit from some of these measures. With an improved business environment and government cooperation, it will be possible to strengthen supply chains that support the Indian and US economies and their strategic interests.

Summary

The US has proven to be a reliable partner in advancing India's regional and global multilateral interests, including at the United Nations. As the geostrategic landscape continues to change, both India and the US are seeking to further align their strategies in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. Over the past two decades, India and the US have increasingly aligned their bilateral and multilateral agendas to achieve synergy between their individual interests and global goals. These analyzes identify five areas that require special attention from India and the US: emerging technologies and national security, defense cooperation, prioritization of bilateral and multilateral interests, counter-terrorism, and trade promotion. . The focus on these areas is expected to shape the trajectory of India-US relations to a large extent over the next decade. At the same time, this requires unprecedented coordination with not only bilateral, but also regional and global stakeholders. Under these five specific sector ambitions, sub-domains of cooperation for both countries are expected to be created.

The following recommendations are put forward for the further development of India-US cooperation in the specified areas:

1. Strengthen cooperation on emerging technologies and artificial intelligence, as data regulation, information sharing, and privacy protection become critical to maintaining national security.
2. Strengthen coordination on multilateral and international issues, including prioritizing bilateral and multilateral strategic dialogue that has been developing in recent years.



3. Continue cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Incorporating security and defense issues into the emerging technology agenda, such as focusing on defining common principles for AI defense applications.

4. Increase investment in each other's economies to boost bilateral trade and encourage multinational corporations to participate in these initiatives.

5. Greater coordination among ministries working on cyber security, especially to identify appropriate partners on specific issues.

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