

CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



CENJOWS

FUTURE OF INDIA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS



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U.S.-India ties are a “natural partnership of shared endeavors” India’s Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said in his speech to the U.S Congress in year 2000.¹ Same sentiments were expressed by President Obama in his address to the Indian parliament during his visit of India in 2015 “India and the US could have a defining partnership, “The world will be better if we stand together. I believe America can be India's best partner”.² On this, PM Modi in his address to the US congress in 2016 said that, “India and the U.S. have overcome the hesitations of history” and called for the “stronger economic and defense ties between the two countries.”³

During the cold war, India and United States treaded on separate path. India staunchly opposed to alliances, spearheaded a non-aligned movement along with Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia and Yugoslavia.⁴ There was a brief interlude caused by signing of Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 which however, was never described as a military alliance. On the contrary, it claimed that it

¹<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/vajpayee-recognized-the-significance-of-ties-with-us-pompeo/article24713171.ece>

²<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-can-be-americas-best-partner-president-barack-obama-at-delhi-townhall-734237>

³ https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26886/Prime_Ministers_remarks_at_the_US_Congress

⁴<https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?20349/History+and+Evolution+of+NonAligned+Movement#:~:text=A%20key%20role%20was%20played,movement%20and%20its%20emblematic%20leaders.>

strengthened the basis for India's strategic autonomy, and its capacity for an independent action.⁵ At the end of the cold war, the geopolitical changes ushered thereafter with the China's rise, has brought the United States closer to India to tackle the resultant global and regional challenges together. The importance of our partnership has been affirmed in a recent White house statement, "India is an incredibly important partner to the United States in the region and globally. We work with India on a range of issues, as you well know-economic, strategic, security". (White House press secretary Jen Psaki. Daily news conference, Jun 21)⁶

Both nations however, had a chequered relationship in the past as the United States and India, one oldest and other largest democracies did not engage with each other in a meaningful manner after India's independence in 1947. India's leadership role in the non-aligned movement, its socialist economic model of development wherein, the state sector dominated the state economy, close relations with erstwhile Soviet Union and US- Pakistan close relationship mainly prevented friendship between them.⁷ After mutual wariness of past half century, India-U.S. bilateral relations have grown into a "global strategic partnership", with considerable convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. The relationship is unique as we have neither shared any strategic concern in the past, nor were allies or have fought any war together.

What brought this sea change in the US attitude was India's measured response to push the Pakistani invaders across the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kargil war in year 1999 and President Bill Clinton, taking a fair view of Pakistani forces incursion in the icy heights of Kargil, sought Pakistan to withdraw to the Line of Control (LoC). The changed circumstances laid a foundation for the redefined India- US relations added by the fact that the term of the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty of 1971 had also expired.⁸ The change in US attitude became evident when Clinton visited India in 2000, and spent longer time in India in contrast to few hours at Pakistan. Thereafter, India 's support of the United States in its global war of terror; and changes in geostrategic realities with the rise of China which have brought the Indo-Pacific region to the center stage of action. Latter development dictated United States interest in India as a counter weight to China.

⁵ https://indianembassy-oscov.gov.in/pdf/Indo%20Soviet%20Treaty_2021.pdf

⁶ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/india-is-incredibly-important-partner-to-united-states-in-the-region-and-globally-white-house/articleshow/83866198.cms>

⁷ https://www.globalasia.org/v16no3/feature/balancing-act-indias-growing-relationship-with-the-us_rup-narayan-das

⁸ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/07/24/how-the-1999-kargil-conflict-redefined-us-india-ties/>

Thereafter, the mutual needs of both nations resulted in conclusion of spate of agreements between them which charted a course of the long-term US India relationship. India and US signed Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) in January 2004, Indo-US defence Frame Work Agreement in 2005, Indo-US Nuclear Deal announced by President, George W. Bush in July 2005 (formally signed in 2008). Further, in quest for better understanding and interoperability between the armed forces, both nations signed the foundational agreements namely, General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016, the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018, the Industrial Security Annex (ISA) in 2019 and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) in 2020.^{9,10}

Today, our relations are broad-based and multi-sectoral, covering several common areas of interest. Apart from the frequent apex level meetings between the two heads of states, there are more than 50 bilateral dialogue mechanisms covering virtually all areas, including the annual broad based Global Strategic Dialogue (instituted in 2010) and 2+2 meeting (instituted in 2018) where defence and foreign relations between the two nations constitute the focus areas.¹¹

Regular exchange of high-level political visits has provided sustained momentum to bilateral cooperation, while the wide-ranging and ever-expanding dialogue architecture has established a long-term framework for India-U.S. engagement. We maintain strong people-to-people ties between our countries, which is reflected in a four million-strong Indian American diaspora who provide tremendous support and strength to our partnership. Our economic ties are also on the upswing. America has emerged as the third largest trading partner with overall trade in goods and services reaching \$149 billion in 2019 with potential to rise further. In 2020, there has been some drop in value of trade due to the Covid 19 conditions (\$121.8 billion)¹² but, it would resume rising trajectory in the coming years. At the international level, India and the United States co-operate closely at multilateral fora along with US support for a reformed UN Security Council that includes India as a permanent member.¹³

⁹https://www.globalasia.org/v16no3/feature/balancing-act-indias-growing-relationship-with-the-us_rup-narayan-das

¹⁰ <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/be-ca-india-us-trade-agreements-rajnath-singh-mike-pompeo-6906637/#:~:text=India%20and%20the%20United%20States,%20%E2%80%94%20completes%20a%20troika%20of%20%E2%80%9C>

¹¹<https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-india/>

¹² <https://www.trade.gov/knowledge-product/exporting-india-market-overview>

¹³<https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-india/>

Defence has emerged as a major pillar of our relationship. America has designated India as a “Major Defence partner” in that it promised to facilitate defence trade and technology-sharing with India to a level at par with that of the United States’ closest allies and partners. We have also signed several defence agreements which promise transfer of hi-end technology, support and co- development of defence equipment, sharing of geospatial intelligence, bases/ports and military facilities and communication etc. All these strengthen the mechanisms of co-operation between the two militaries. Besides, we also regularly participate in bilateral and multilateral exercises and exchanges which are the key enablers in building interoperability and strengthening of our defence coordination. (e.g., Malabar-Naval, Yudh-Abhyas-Army, and Cope India & Red Flag-IAF, Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) etc.) India and United States are partners in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) along with Australia and Japan. Apart from maritime security, QUAD has also provided a platform for cooperation in several other areas of common interest like response and preparedness to COVID-19 pandemic, infrastructure, space, clean energy, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, cyber security, resilient supply chains, 5G infrastructure deployment and critical and emerging technologies.¹⁴

Why India is Important to the United States?

The wide-reaching changes in the world order coupled with geo-political shifts in the world with diffusion of the US dominance, rise of China and its intimidating stance in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, has prompted the United States to seek India on its side. The overall environment has worsened with spread of Covid -19 pandemic and worldwide adverse fall out of climate change. No one nation can handle these threats. It has become more important for the affected nations to work closely with like-minded partners to advance shared interests. India is at the forefront in confronting these issues. It is of strategic interest of the United States to support India’s emergence as a powerful economy and a leading global power, to balance China’s rise in an effort to ensure that the Indo-Pacific is a region of peace, stability and growing prosperity.¹⁵

Why US is Important to India?

Apart from our shared democratic values, we have increasing convergence of interests with the United States on bilateral, regional and global issues.

¹⁴<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/fact-sheet-the-united-states-and-india-global-leadership-in-action/>

¹⁵<https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-india/>

Besides, US is a store- house of technology and innovation. Attraction for the United States runs deep in Indian Diaspora which sees United States as a land of opportunity in their career, growth and for leading a good life. Indians started immigrating to the United States since early 19th century and as of 2020, there are nearly 4 million strong Indian immigrants in the United States ¹⁶. These form the largest ethnic group with nearly 6% of the population second only to Mexico.¹⁷ Compared to other groups, many of the Indian immigrants are highly educated, work in senior management positions, and have higher incomes. Over a dozen executives of Indian-origin, are presently leading the global multinationals in the United States. Their competency and dedication have resulted in their being chosen for high positions in the US administration too and as many as 17 hold key positions in the current US government.¹⁸ Their positioning in the American society provides a tremendous inspiration for the close India–US partnership.¹⁹

Despite the Close people to people ties, India had been wary of the United States deep-rooted ties with Pakistan, its dependence for access to Afghanistan and exit strategy from Afghanistan but, a clear and live Chinese challenge on our borders and its aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific region have spurred the Indian leadership to seek US cooperation at military to military, in fight against terrorism and other areas of science and technology. In particular, we are seeking to gain access to the US equipment, transfer of hi-end technology, investment and co-development in to attempt to develop our own domestic industry particularly, in the defence sector which have remained import dependent.

Challenges Impacting the Future Relationship

Domestic Politics. Democratic system of governance, wedded to free speech, rule of law and the pluralistic character of both India and United States have certainly contributed directly and indirectly to the development of the U.S.-India partnership over the last two decades. But under certain circumstances, both India and United States could face political domestic constraints which at times run counter to our expectations. In general, public perception, close partnership between India and the US is considered favourably but, US based lobbyist opposing India and some miniscule groups / political parties in India with leftist ideology which oppose capitalist

¹⁶ibid

¹⁷<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-and-emigrant-populations-country-origin-and-destination>

¹⁸<https://www.oneindia.com/india/indian-ceos-list-2021-top-5-indian-origin-ceos-in-american-companies-3341831.html>

¹⁹<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019>

character of the United States, can influence the foreign policy and strain the ties of both nations.

Past Baggage. US was indifferent and even hostile to the Indian interests in the past. The declassified documents of 1971 show that US hostility towards India during the war with Pakistan was very intense. It was outright partial to the Pakistan its ally outside NATO as even after declaring embargo for supply of military hardware to both India and Pakistan, US continued to arm Pakistan²⁰ and even goaded China for intervention. In fact, Nixon administration had three battalions of marines ready to deter India and its aircraft carrier USS Enterprise had orders to target the Indian Army. The United States probably wanted to open another cold war front against Soviet Union to unsettle it and thus wanted to mend ties with China which Pakistan's was facilitating by opening communication between US and China.²¹ On the other hand, India was viewed as Russian stooge by the United States.

India may have become strategic partner of United States after 50 years of indifference. Yet, mistrust and a sceptic perception of each other still runs deep in mind and many strategists still believe that India and the United States relations are transactional and lack a solid foundation of trust and reliability.

Fear of India's Empowerment. America looks for strategies to countervail today's rapidly rising China. In this effort, no nation in the Indo- Pacific region is more important than India as only it can match China's vast population, low-cost labour availability, and vast world-class technical talent. Just as the US is dependent on manufacturing on China, it is almost dependent on the cheap and competitive IT services from India. Indian IT services suppliers such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL, Cognizant and others, have collectively enjoyed some \$50 billion in sales to the U.S. in 2020. Some US strategists do not want to create another competitor like China by unconstrained support to India. They appreciate India's quest for Atma-nirbharta but, fear the empowerment of India lest, it may become another challenge to the United States.²²

The United States and India signed DTTI in 2012 with the singular aim to create opportunities for co-production and co-development of defence equipment. Four Service-led Joint Working Groups (JWGs) were formed to execute projects and activities under DTTI: Land Systems (LS), Naval

²⁰<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/us-forces-had-orders-to-target-indian-army-in-1971/articleshow/10625404.cms>

²¹<https://tfipost.com/2021/12/when-america-urged-china-to-attack-india-during-the-1971-war/>

²²<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2021-05-18/us-needs-to-balance-dependency-on-india-for-it-services>

Systems (NS), Air Systems (AS), and Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation (ACTC). In 2019, DTTI Industry Collaboration Forum (DICF), was also established²³ but, cooperation under DTTI has remained suboptimal. After lapse of 10 years, the first project agreement for Air-Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle has been signed.²⁴ US interlocutor suggests that focus of DTTI should move away from big-ticket items to co-development of smaller platforms and nascent technologies as India's technology ecosystem and absorptive capacity are low.²⁵ This appears to be an excuse as India's home grown technology has shown promise particularly in nuclear, space and even defence, in areas like missile, submarine, fighter aircraft and aircraft carrier. It is probably due to the lack of trust, that United States have not transferred strategic high-end technology, despite such an assurance at the leadership level.

With this background, in absence of specific attention by the leadership of both countries, the U.S.-India ties might simply tread along and never reach their full potential.

Trade and Economic Issues. During the Trump Administration, bilateral trade tensions grew over imposition of tariffs and revocation of India's preferential trading status under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) which allows eligible developing countries to export duty-free goods to the US. Its withdrawal in June 2019 causes a loss of nearly 6.3 US\$ billion (2018).²⁶ The trade differences persist on India's agricultural market access, India's tariff regime, Intellectual Property (IP) rights, Digital Services Tax (DST), termination of the India's eligibility for the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the sometimes-diverging U.S. and Indian views in the World Trade Organization (WTO).²⁷ In addition, the loss of revenue due to the trade substitution with Make in India is making it more difficult for U.S. companies to sell their goods and services in India. This is particularly true when Indian equivalents are available. U.S. exporters may also be pressured to start manufacturing their products locally to retain market access, particularly if similar goods are not produced in India.²⁸ We do not have a trade deal with the United States, its early conclusion can solve most of the outstanding problems.

²³<https://www.acq.osd.mil/ic/dtti.html#:~:text=In%202012%2C%20the%20Department%20of,and%20Trade%20Initiative%20or%20DTTI.>

²⁴<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1770443#:~:text=The%2011%20thDefence%20Technology,virtually%20on%20November%2009%2C%202021.&text=However%2C%20this%20DTTI%20meeting%20was,of%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic.> (10 Nov 21)

²⁵<https://www.stimson.org/2020/opportunities-and-challenges-in-u-s-india-strategic-relations/>

²⁶ <https://www.orfonline.org/research/understanding-the-impact-of-gsp-withdrawal-on-indias-top-exports-to-the-us/>

²⁷ <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF10384.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.trade.gov/knowledge-product/exporting-india-market-overview>

Human Rights Criticism. United States pontificates India on its human rights record which is often misplaced and unjustified since, as it comments without knowledge of real facts, local conditions and information.²⁹ Indian democracy is liberal by all standards and issues if any are subjected to due process of law. It is uncalled for to comment on internal matters of other countries. Such attempts have potential to harm our bilateral relations.

Emerging Anglo Saxon Bias. On 16 Sep 21, the US suddenly announced formation of new trilateral security grouping 'AUKUS' for the Indo-Pacific region with Australia and Britain just before the Quad meeting, which raised reasonable doubts about its commitment to Quad. The AUKUS deal mainly involves sharing of the nuclear propelled submarine technology to Australia. The nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) will give Australia a naval heft in the Pacific, where China has been particularly aggressive. The agreement also covers wide-ranging key areas of security such as artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, underwater capabilities, and long-range strike capabilities.

Since the United States has chosen pursue the security paradigm with its perceived more reliable "Anglo-Saxon" partners, there lies a possibility that Quad with India may be relegated to less substantive issues. Just as in this case, the United States may eventually restrict India's access to critical technologies however, time will clarify true import of AUKUS agreement. In any case, the three AUKUS countries already share extensive intelligence with Canada and New Zealand through the Five Eyes alliance which is a formal security grouping.^{30, 31, 32}

Strategic Autonomy. While the Strategic Autonomy is an "exercise of choice" driven purely by sovereign considerations and interest."³³ There has been criticism at home that closer partnership with the United States could exert pressure on India's core national interests. Yet another view is that "alignments can enhance strategic autonomy", as alignment when based on issues, gives a capacity to maintain multiple engagements.³⁴ Therefore, India engagement in 'Quad,' has actually enhanced strategic autonomy of India vis-à-vis China.

²⁹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/india/>

³⁰ <https://www.statecraft.co.in/article/what-does-india-s-exclusion-from-aukus-mean>

³¹ <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/aukus-agreement-to-equip-australia-with-nuclear-submarines-7513013/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%2C%20United%20Kingdom,submarines%20in%20the%20Pacific%20region.>

³² www.dni.gov/files/ICIG/Documents/Partnerships/FIORC/Signed%20FIORC%20Charter%20with%20Line.pdf

³³ <https://warontherocks.com/2020/11/strategic-autonomy-and-u-s-indian-relations/>

³⁴ <https://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/strategic-autonomy-and-us-indian-relations>

The United States expects India to play greater role in the regional and world affairs. Many of these, in view of India's policy makers are not necessarily in India's interest. In fact, both the United States and India are at times at opposite end of the spectrum³⁵e.g., on foreign military interference, hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan's support to Taliban, Iran, Russia and strategic issues like nuclear proliferation and nuclear free world and with former US administration on Climate Change etc. Even in the Indo-Pacific region, the United States wanted India to take more proactive role like freedom of navigation patrolling in the South China Sea which India did not undertake. India endorses freedom of navigation in accordance with the principles of international laws but, does not have the naval capability to stake any kind of claim as a significant military power in the South China. For India, the South Asia and the broader Bay of Bengal are principal area of interest, while South China sea lies in the secondary area of influence.³⁶ In the international forums like the United Nations too, we have not towed US line and have taken independent positions. For example, in United Nation Human Right (UNHR) resolution against Sri Lanka in Mar 2021³⁷ and in the recant resolution in the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) in Jan 22, India chose to abstain from the voting in the security council on Ukraine situation in deference to our national interest.³⁸

From US point of view, it may seem that India is dragging its feet and not acting when compared to other US allies and Indian-U.S. ties are sometimes portrayed as under achieving or failing to meet expectations.³⁹

India also has strategic partnerships with other key countries in the European Union such as France, UK and Germany, some of whom are working out other frameworks for the Indo-Pacific to secure their interests.⁴⁰

Uncertainty of American Politics. Though, India-US relations are on upswing but, there is a lack of assurance of continued US support especially in view of past experience. There is a growing wariness on the Indian side about US unpredictability, willingness to roll back international agreements, especially relating to issues which pertain to Russia and Iran.⁴¹In the past, President Trump offered to mediate to resolve the Kashmir issue knowing

³⁵<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/united-states-india-forging-indispensable-democratic-partnership/>

³⁶ <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/india-us-relations-the-south-china-sea/>

³⁷<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/unhrc-adopts-resolution-against-sri-lankas-rights-record/article34141087.ece>

³⁸<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/russia-hails-india-for-abstaining-from-voting-on-ukraine-at-un-366289>

³⁹<https://warontherocks.com/2020/11/strategic-autonomy-and-u-s-indian-relations/>

⁴⁰www.deccanherald.com/opinion/india-us-ties-china-factor-set-to-play-big-role-911176.html

⁴¹<https://www.stimson.org/2020/opportunities-and-challenges-in-u-s-india-strategic-relations/>

fully that India opposes this, being a bilateral issue in terms of Shimla agreement.⁴²

In the previous US administration, India was subjected with additional cess for the exports, equating it with China which was in a trade war with United States. President Trump in fact looked at alliances and partnerships purely in terms of dollars and cents. US lost credibility as a reliable security partner when Trump sought payment (\$5 billion from South Korea and \$8 billion from Japan) for the protection which US extended to its allies.⁴³ All these indicate that the United States relationship with other nations is often transactional.

The Russian Factor. Russia is viewed as a competitor and adversary by the United States and any expansion and deepening India-Russia defence cooperation actually complicates the relationship for it believes that weapon acquisitions from Russia means aiding as well endorsement of Russian belligerence. While, the US while appreciates our dependence on Russia for legacy weapons, it is particularly concerned about our purchase of high value defence equipment like the S-400 air defense system from Russia and may subject India to sanctions in accordance to its federal law, Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). The purchase in US view, would eventually fuel the Russian power and could also affect defence interoperability between U.S. and Indian forces and perhaps expose US technology to Russia as well as open up the possibility of espionage.⁴⁴ This precludes the United States in sharing sensitive weapons technologies. In that sense, it limits what the United States does with, shares with, and sells to India.

India justifies its relationship with Russia on four counts. First, to ensure continued Russian support for spares and maintenance for India's vast stock of Russian arms; second, to gain geopolitical support in multilateral world forums (United Nations Security Council and others); third, by being a reliable defence partner helps in slowing the Russia-China defence technology relationship and even driving a wedge between them and finally, accessing Russian weapons technology for joint-production of weapons (e.g. nuclear submarines, advanced cruise missiles). In comparison to Russia, United States refuses to share transfer of certain high-end items

⁴²<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/on-kashmir-and-pakistan-donald-trump-offers-mediation-but-with-a-twist-1649930-2020-02-25>

⁴³<https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-opinion-trump-global-alliances-ivo-daalder-20200618-ngal77mo35cqnkivdhlveufqai-story.html>

⁴⁴<https://www.stimson.org/2020/opportunities-and-challenges-in-u-s-india-strategic-relations/>

(e.g., nuclear submarines) to India. Its offers are often on non-competitive and inflated prices (e.g., air defense systems)⁴⁵

US must appreciate that India needs Russian cooperation in some matters where US cannot help. For example, after American withdrawal from Afghanistan, India needs Russia's co-operation to deal with the emerging geopolitics in the region particularly to fight terrorism.

China Factor. China has always been a critical factor in India's growing strategic partnership with the US. Chinese forceful curtailment of autonomy of its special administrative region, Hongkong⁴⁶, its unjustified claims in the South China sea, threatening posture against Taiwan and frequent incursions on Indo-China LAC has positioned China as a major disruptor for the region and the world at large. It looks with suspicion on India's foray into the South China Sea which are carried out for strategic and commercial intent such as freedom of operations in global commons and for exploration of hydrocarbons in participation with Vietnam. Chinese aggressiveness has been countered with formation of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) by United States, Australia, Japan and India. Its naval exercises show a convergence of outlook and approach amongst the group members and in particular between India and the US in the maritime domain.⁴⁷ India is the main anchor in the US's Indo-Pacific strategy given its growing economy, big professional armed forces, its strategic location and determination to resist China's aggressive behaviour.⁴⁸

Pakistan Factor. Today, United States is wary of the Pakistani role in Afghanistan and its support to Taliban in Afghanistan and terror outfits which target India. It continues to urge Pakistan to take decisive and irreversible action against terror groups. Despite these concerns, Pakistan continues to be important to the United States. While Pakistan is a Non-NATO ally of US, it is close to China, a US strategic competitor and that it holds nuclear weapons which could fall in hands of terror groups. It is not in the Indian or U.S. interests to see Pakistan becoming either a radicalised Islamic state or a collapsed nuclear weapons state. At the same time, US is well aware that in view of the long-standing India-Pakistan dispute, any support to Pakistan which helps Pakistan to continue its hybrid war against India will impact India US relations.

⁴⁵<https://www.stimson.org/2020/opportunities-and-challenges-in-u-s-india-strategic-relations/>

⁴⁶Under the doctrine of "one country, two systems," China allowed the former colony to continue to govern itself and maintain many independent systems for a period of 50 years at the end of the British lease in 1997. The Basic Law defines the limited autonomy of Hong Kong.

⁴⁷⁴⁷https://www.globalasia.org/v16no3/feature/balancing-act-indias-growing-relationship-with-the-us_rup-narayan-das

⁴⁸<https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/india-us-ties-china-factor-set-to-play-big-role-911176.html>

Conclusion

The emerging geopolitics have made India and the United States incredibly important to each other. Today, India besides being a strategic partner, is also designated as a “Major Defence partner” by the United States. It promises technology-sharing with Indian industry to a level at par with that of the United States’ closest allies and partners. America has also emerged as one of three largest exporters of weapons to India. This has helped India to diversify its weapon procurement source as well as provided it an opportunity to develop and upgrade India’s defence industry with the help major weapon manufactures of the United States. In the geopolitical realm, US support for reforms and permanent membership in the UN Security Council, nuclear deal and international forums like Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) mean a lot to India. India is also important to the United States in the Indo-Pacific region as a balancing power against aggressive and coercive China with expansionist designs. Despite a rising trajectory in bilateral relationship, there have been some areas of under performance particularly in transfer of technology and in co-development and manufacturing of hi-end equipment.

The history of past scepticism, domestic politics, fear of supporting another competitor, India’s strong belief in its independent foreign policy and strategic autonomy, its traditional relationship with Russia, and China/Pakistan factor have the potential to affect deepening of our relationship. Therefore, United States and India will have to ensure better understanding of each others core area of interest and sensitivities.

In spite of the above constraints, the geostrategic and geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific region in general and world at large will become even more competitive and challenging with actions of China; and China and Russia combine. Hence, it is interest of India and the United States not only to co-operate but, take this relationship to greater heights.

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