



INDO-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

The strategic alliance is formed between India and US in accordance with their respective internal and international political environments after the termination of the Cold War era. Without devoting much attention to their contrasts, most of the writing on the topic focused on the convergences of their strategic alliance. The emphasis of the article is mainly about the potential and prospects of the Indo-US strategic alliance as well as their obstacles. Thus, the study examines both places of convergence and divergence in forming their strategic alliance. The report also examines the problems posed by the U.S.' contentions over the Indo-Russian strategic partnership in the military sector, as well as consequences of Indo-Russian joint ventures in the Arctic area. In addition, the research examines additional independent variables, including Iran and Pakistan elements that have consequences for the dependent variables of the Indo-US strategic alliance. Multiple reasons have guided the steady development of India and U.S. strategic relations. Growing economic links ripple effect on military relations and civil nuclear energy collaboration. Despite the gradual development of their partnership, there are disparities in their separate objectives, concerns, power, and positions, as well as opposing opinions on international affairs.

Keywords: Indo-US Strategic Partnership, Challenges, Prospects

Introduction

The signing of the civil nuclear energy pact along with military and strategic connections in the post-Cold War era, relations between New Delhi and Washington were established on a solid basis through vigorous economic engagement and India's de facto nuclear power status. The relationship improved throughout the years of Bill Clinton's administration, and the tendency



accelerated under the presidency of George W. Bush. Bush made favorable remarks to India throughout his election campaign before becoming an officer. Since then, officials on both sides have used clichés to describe the relationship as a natural and definitive collaboration. However, rather than converging ideals, each has found the other pertinent to their self-interests. The strengthening of connections between the two nations has not occurred in a short time. However, it has developed gradually, with hard and soft power and geopolitical imperatives leaving their mark.

There are disparities in their aspirations, concerns, power, and position, as well as diverse opinions on international issues, notwithstanding the relationship's continuous improvement. In the India-US relationship, each side has viewed the other as beneficial to its interests rather than a convergence of ideals. The conclusion of the Cold War resulted in the dissolution of the USSR, which presented India with several chances to expand its overseas policy, focusing on enhancing its relations with the U.S. China's emergence was an additional aspect that altered India's relationship with the U.S. Due to its Asia-Pacific policy, American and Indian interests are congruent. In addition, India was viewed as a significant commercial prospect for the U.S. after the Cold War and 9/11 eras. These elements aided the development of a strategic alliance between both nations. Strategic agreements boosted the bilateral ties between the two states. In addition to Russia, many additional variables influence the U.S.'s strategic engagement with India. India's connections with Iran are the first such factor. In light of these issues, this article will investigate the consequences of obstacles on the planned support between the U.S. and India, typically overlooked in several analyses and research. The U.S. has remained skeptical about Indo-Russian relations. Despite the expanding strategic alliance between India and the U.S., Russia is a leading provider of defense equipment. India has partnered with Russia to invest in the Arctic area. Russian expansion in the Arctic area is adverse to U.S. national interests in a region where India cooperates with Russian firms.

Concept of the Strategic Partnership



During the Cold War era, both aggressive and defensive realists acknowledge that states have employed strategic partnership as a grand strategy instrument. Sean Kay contends that post-Cold War international relations have developed a new institutional character. Both aggressive and apologetic factions of pragmatists believe that strategic cooperation is connected to the grand plans of governments. States have sought to achieve both supremacy and balance through this structure. Due to the vagueness of the phrase, policy analysts in the U.S. The consequence of a few strategic associations distinguishes them from others. Others are unclear in structure but have apparent meaning. Alliances and other overseas procedure instruments have been affected by planned corporations. The U.S. has participated in various programs through foreign policy arrangements. The U.S. maintains its pre-eminence in the international order through the employment of balance in its foreign policy (Gul et al., 2021). Strategic cooperation has become a foreign policy tool for governments to preserve their authority.

Indo-US Strategic Partnership: Contextualization

The association between the world's *two* greatest egalitarianisms has been characterized as "cold peace" and "comrades in conflict." Numerous eminent academics have analyzed the Indo-American strategic alliance from various perspectives. During the Cold War, the contentious nature of bilateral ties between New Delhi and Washington prevented the formation of strategic cooperation. Historians have established that the U.S. and India had opposing agendas about the containment of communism in Asia and further afield. The Indo-American strategic relationship fosters economic cooperation between them and addresses common Chinese security threats. After the Cold War era, officials on both sides participated consecutively in efforts to build strategic cooperation because of their shared interests and concerns. The correlations and dynamics of this relationship are as follows: In a secure environment encompassing the Asian continent, shared interests include domestic security concerns and maritime security, and the safeguarding of critical strategic locations. Complex interdependence guides this Indo-American strategy (Jain, 2016). This study explores the existing involvement of academic work in India and



the U.S. as a strategic alliance. From this perspective, it is equally important to assess India's conduct concerning Russia. This study investigates worldwide issues posed by India-Russia and China factors.

Factors Converging to Form a New Partnership between India and the U.S.

The literature analysis demonstrates that the background of the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership are based on their shared interests in combating the growth of China, which is the primary reason driving the consolidation of the Indo-U.S. strategic alliance.

➤ Aspects from China

China is one of the most influential self-determining variables shaping the Indo-US strategic alliance. Although China has repeatedly promised the U.S. that it would not challenge the U.S.'s preeminent position, how it is expanding its financial and armed capabilities is resulting in an increase of its monetary and martial influence throughout Asia. So, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), formation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and engagement in provincial organizations demonstrate its growing importance over the global sphere (Ahmad et al., 2021).

➤ Aspects from the South China Sea

China has presented India with several challenges to its standing. First, China's unresolved border disputes have posed a military danger to India. Second, China's influence has increased in international organizations such as the United Nations Organization. Thirdly, strengthening China's strategic alliances with Pakistan and other South Asian states to curb India's influence. China is now economically stronger than India (Rajagopalan, 2020). India has been eager to engage with the United Government and other states in China Sea to combat these issues (Scott, 2009).

A Look at the Indo-Pacific Region



The Indo-Pacific region stretches from the western Pacific Ocean to the western Indian Ocean. In twenty-first century, it is a crucial geostrategic area for commerce, investment, energy supply, collaboration, and competitiveness (Malik, 2014). The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy is in which China competes with important actors India, Australia, and Japan. China is hesitant to join the Indo-Pacific strategy, and authorities of China trust the US-led policy is intended to restrict China (Malik, 2020). The strategic alliance between India and the Indo-Pacific strategy of the U.S. provides a chance to address India's foreign policy priorities. The Indo-American strategic partnership will utilize New Delhi to combat a rising the security setting. The relationship enables India to expand its ambassadorial clout.

The Diverging Factors of Difference in Indo-US Strategic Partnership

The previous section emphasized the foundations and converging aspects of Indo-US strategic cooperation. This section focuses principally on the potential of Indo-US strategic partnerships, while the obstacles to their strategic cooperation receive less attention.

➤ The Russian Factor

Despite having a strategic engagement with the US, India continues its defense and economic cooperation with Russia, a long-standing ally. The U.S. has voiced concerns on many occasions over India's collaboration with Russia. It is able to engage 36 aerial targets. India will acquire five of these systems under the S-400 agreement. India will utilize three against Pakistan and two against China. At a range of 400 kilometers, the system can detect airplanes, uncrewed aerial vehicles, cruise, and ballistic missiles, as well as other airborne threats.

Nevertheless, India's connections with Russia are notable and unique. Their growing defense ties are currently at a turning point. Washington is primarily concerned with the economics of the present agreement between them. Russia has surpassed the U.S. and India as the leading provider of military equipment, casting a shadow on the strategic alliance between the two



countries (Khan, 2018). India's recalibration of its defense connections with Russia is essential, yet, the expansion of the Russian defense market in India has led to a decline in the degree of ties between India and the U.S.

Due to divergent foreign policy trajectories on defense supplies, Indo-American strategic partnership issues frequently occur. Therefore, India's purchase of Russian-made weaponry is a prudent foreign policy move. India has also signed deals for four frigates of the Admiral Grigorovich-class and the production of the Ka-226T helicopter in India, in addition to the S-400 missile system (Kapoor, 2019). India's growing reliance on Russia for its defense and Russia's chance to fill the void created by the U.S. decision to make India its defense partner.

➤ **The Arctic Factor**

The Arctic is an oceanic region surrounded by continents. This area comprises the Russia Canada, Denmark, Norway and US (Tamnes & Offerdal, 2014). Because it is a zone of rivalry and collaboration, the Arctic region has gained prominence in international affairs. The lubricant and fume capitals are a crucial part of the geo-strategy of the interested governments in the Arctic in terms of intercontinental party-political economy (Raszeewski, 2017). The worth of the Arctic is determined by its geopolitical, military-strategic, socioeconomic, and environmental significance. In the future decades, it will face significant party-political and financial difficulties linked to vitality, transport, fishing, military and ecological disputes. Neorealists acknowledge the significance of the resources, and growing tension in the Arctic might lead to conflict. Different levels of national interests will lead to conflict among the littoral governments, including the U.S. and Russia. Russia has the highest estimated oil and gas potential in the Arctic, approximately 52 percent (Kiel, 2014). For the U.S. to preserve its national interests in the Arctic, Russian efforts to dominate critical resources have significant repercussions. The U.S. views the Sino-Russian advances in the Arctic as damaging to its security interests (Sorensen & Klimenko, 2017). China and Russia's foray into the Arctic may exacerbate security concerns and make it more difficult for the U.S. to maintain its influence in critical natural resource areas. In addition to China's Arctic collaboration with Russia, India has expanded



Arctic cooperation with Russia. The CEO of Novetak stated that India's rapid economic expansion necessitated regional energy purchases. Russia's energy businesses will grow in Asian markets due to its alliance with India. President Putin briefed Prime Minister

Modi on the "Lider" project, a 120MW icebreaker that would traverse the Arctic ice ("India Looks to the Russian Arctic," 2019) (Staalesen, 2020).

➤ Aspects from Iran

The Iranian issue is very important impediments to the growth of the strategic cooperation between India, and the U.S. India is having the second largest Shia population in the world. Their collaboration with Iran in military, economics, trade and natural oil has forged a strong friendship between them. Apart from it, India's essential connections with Iran have been deteriorated by American pressure, namely its withdrawal from the Iran-Pakistan-India Pipeline. India and Iran have formed a keen partnership to promote harmony and progress in Afghanistan. India and Iran have deep commercial ties in the crude oil and energy sectors. Like many other nations, India faces obstacles posed by U.S. sanctions on Iran pertaining to the trade of refined petroleum products. In this regard, obtaining close to \$900 million in loans for acquiring U.S. equipment from the U.S. Export and Import Bank (Exim Bank) proved difficult for many significant Indian corporations (Hafeez, 2019). The U.S. opposes intimate connections between them. As and when India attempted to cultivate relationships with Iran, the U.S. exerted pressure on India, warning that efforts would have a detrimental impact on India's civil nuclear accord.

➤ The Pakistan Factor

Occasionally, U.S. relations with Pakistan have posed obstacles to Indo-US strategic collaboration. Pakistan's deliberate worth increased in the world after the 9/11 war because of the U.S. war on international terrorism, in which Pakistan occupied a crucial role as a non-NATO partner against terrorism. The bilateral ties have been ups and downs, but Trump's resolve to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and pursue a political solution has lately drawn the U.S. closer to Pakistan, a key



stakeholder in the dogmatic resolution of Afghan concerns. The Trump government has acknowledged Pakistan's help in bringing the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table, which led to the U.S. and Taliban signing a harmony accord on September 29, 2020. President Trump has volunteered to mediate the Kashmir dispute to resolve concerns between them. In a two-day authorized appointment to India on February 25, 2020, the U.S. President underlined his commitment to mediation. In a meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan at the World Economic Forum on January 22, 2020, President Donald Trump offered to mediate the Kashmir issue between them. India was astonished by Trump's desire to arbitrate the Kashmir dispute on July 22, 2019, and this continuous when Imran Khan and Trump met in September 2019 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (Gul & Ahmed, 2020). Numerous scholars think that tight US-Pakistan collaboration in Afghanistan may diminish India's role in Afghanistan, prompting India to increase its collaboration with Iran and Russia to defend its regional benefits.

During Cold War, despite Pakistan's concerns as an American ally, nonaligned India's interests were not ignored.

Except for a few American sanctions, India's ties with the U.S. were mainly viewed as icy throughout the Cold War. This was in reaction to India's devotion to the policy of nonalignment, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's leanings toward socialist philosophy, and New Delhi's inclination to forge strong connections with the Soviet Union. However, India's sheer size and population encouraged the U.S. to attempt to include it in its Cold War military camp before Pakistan was even considered. India's stated policy of nonalignment prompted the U.S., which was dedicated to restricting Soviet influence, to establish an alliance with Pakistan, which, since its independence, has constantly sought opportunities to help match or, if feasible, surpass India's dominance. Pakistan received enormous sums of American funding, was a founder of the Central Treaty Organisation, an anti-Soviet alliance sponsored by the U.S. and the United Kingdom, and joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation in 1954 despite not being a Southeast Asian nation. However, when Nehru asked for military assistance in the 1962 border conflict with China, the



U.S. complied, although Pakistan felt deceived. The John F. Kennedy administration believed that a nation of India's size and population would serve as a buffer against Chinese ambitions in South Asia. In the India–Pakistan conflict of 1965, the government of Lyndon Johnson discontinued military supplies to Pakistan due to the conviction that the majority of the American help granted to restrain communism had been redirected to the military build-up and War against India. During the Cold War, the U.S. provided sporadic but essential help.

The U.S. Public Law (P.L.)-480 aid program provided India with a steady food supply, allowing it to avoid famine and redirect precious resources toward industrial growth. Many academics were concerned about an agrarian nation's dependency on the food import trade and its ties to U.S. corporations. However, the help of American scientists, the government, and the U.S. Agency for International Development cannot be understated in India's Green Revolution, which enabled the country to produce its food.

The U.S.'s need for Pakistan to conduct the "War on Terror" has not prevented its relations with India from expanding.

In 1991, India opened its economy, abandoned its declared devotion to socialist philosophy, and moved philosophically and politically closer to the West. Numerous formerly restricted areas of India's economy have been opened to Americans, and the U.S. software industry has engaged many Indian specialists both in the U.S. and overseas. As a symbol of American acknowledgment of India's rising influence, the Clinton administration moved aggressively in mid-1999 to urge Pakistan to remove its soldiers from Kashmir near the town of Kargil that had crossed the Line of Control. In the same year, the U.S. imposed sanctions on Pakistan due to General Pervez Musharraf's ouster of a democratically elected government in a military coup. India was one of the first countries to respond favorably to Bush's contentious National Missile Defense Programme, and its response to the altering U.S. stance was favorable. The 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks prompted the American leadership to denounce such actions and offer support for India's fight vs. terrorism. However, Pakistan's evident security a reference to Osama bin Laden, who



was ultimately slain in Abbottabad in 2011 during a U.S. raid, David The interrogation of Headley conducted by Headley himself. Disclosed Pakistani Inter- The relationships of Services Intelligence with al-Qaeda and the Taiba did not destroy bridges between Washington and Islamabad. India anticipated being allocated to the U.S. "war on terror" when it was proclaimed in 2001.

The U.S. removed nuclear sanctions on India in the aftermath of 9/11 and loosened export rules on dual-technology products, which serve both military and civilian purposes. Nonetheless, once Pakistan joined the War, the situation changed. Afghanistan had a more prominent role in the War on terror due to its geostrategic location. Americans relied mainly on British intelligence information rather than supplying and defending supply corridors for U.S. and

NATO convoys. Despite the growing reliance on the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA Intelligence Reports on Pakistan, India, and U.S. Relations. The Bush administration's legacy was sealed with the India–US Civil Nuclear Agreement signed in 1998. 2005 legislation designed to ease the export of American nuclear energy technologies. Uranium and nuclear reactors for India's civilian use. The agreement guarantees to give India would receive all advantages accorded to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty members.

The treaty is accepted despite India's refusal to sign the deal despite American pressure. From the Indian vantage point, this was a landmark in bilateral ties, despite valid worries about liability problems and economic viability under the current circumstance of the transaction. The agreement acknowledges India as a nuclear weapons state power. While the agreement was being negotiated, Indian nuclear power facilities encountered obstacles—uranium shortages, with several facilities on the verge of closing. Russia China had stressed at the time that it would only deliver uranium to India after it obtained a supply of uranium from Pakistan. Acceptance by the Nuclear Suppliers Group The significance of this situation is that This Indo– U.S. agreement expanded. The accord also demonstrates U.S. acknowledgment of India as a reliable nuclear power with avowed "no first use" policy minimum credible deterrent' and 'use' Contrary to the



U.S. view, this is the case. Pakistan, which reportedly shared nuclear secrets with Iran, and Continued instability in Libya heightens the risk of nuclear warfare into the possession of militants. The deal creates more opportunities for Strategic relations between India and the U.S.

As the Afghan conflict intensified, the Obama administration's reliance on Pakistan grew. Its regional plan suggested that By concentrating on the Afghanistan–Pakistan region, Washington was more concerned with combating terrorist organizations hostile to western interests. Although the origins of transnational terrorism over the Line of Control between Pakistan and India are located in Pakistan, The eastern provinces of Pakistan contain both India and Pakistan. Thus, the Indian view that the "war on terror" should be a whole campaign against terrorism. In the U.S., violent groups with organic ties had minimal impact. The discipline of international relations. Pakistan has again benefited from substantial American aid not just to combat terrorism but also to defend its territorial integrity and socioeconomic development. Washington feared Pakistan may. If the nation collapsed, its nuclear arsenal would fall into the hands of extremists. The 2008 Mumbai terrorist bombings prompted the American government to denounce terrorism. Heinous crimes and show support for India's fight against terrorism. However, Pakistan's blatant shielding of Osama bin Laden, who was ultimately murdered in Pakistan, prompted the U.S. to take action. In 2011, a U.S. raid on Abbottabad and the interrogation of David Headley revealed the location of the Abbottabad compound.

Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence's ties to al-Qaeda and the Taliban are concerning. The terrorist organization Lashkar-e-Taiba did not destroy any bridges between the capital cities of Washington and Islamabad. Plans formulated by the Obama administration to remove the U.S. military from Afghanistan impeded it from doing so. Any punitive actions U.S. dependency the need to focus on Pakistan rise to locate a political resolution to the Afghan conflict conundrum. Regardless, two U.S. Representatives in Congress presented a measure. State sponsoring Pakistan terrorist activity, and there were indicators.

An attractive strategic alliance between India and the U.S. after the terrorist assault against the troops of Uri. In the final months of his administration, Obama came in India.They have



contracted a bilateral Logistics Exchange Memorandum over the last decade. An agreement was granting respective forces access to each other's facilities to store and distribute supplies. In a significant effort to improve defense relations, adjustments are being made. Since his victory, Donald Trump has been unequivocal on the alleged role of Russia in the 2016 presidential election. Pakistan's support for terrorism made explicit comments of "great concern."

Following the release of the suspected mastermind of the Mumbai terror attacks, "worry" was expressed. From house arrest, Hafiz Saeed is attacked. Not only has his administration withheld Pakistan has been criticized for harboring "agents of anarchy" while receiving military aid. It is willing to give India a more significant role in its South Asian and Indo-Pacific area strategies. Thus, the strategic partnership between India and the U.S. has grown steadily in virtually every circumstance. Consecutive U.S. administrations and other events have led to strengthening relationships. While U.S. backing for Pakistan has grown, American relations with New Delhi have become increasingly autonomous as they have diminished. Relationships between the U.S. and Pakistan. Washington did not disregard Indian concerns, notwithstanding Pakistan's discontent throughout the years of the Cold War and despite its worries as a friend. After the event's conclusion, the connection's scope expanded tremendously.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates the Indo-US strategic cooperation has not evolved into a inclusive strategic partnership due to several aggravations and limitations. The report demonstrates that

a substantial amount of research has been conducted on the prospects and potential for consolidating strategic collaboration between them. However, there has not been much focus on the obstacles impeding the growth of their strategic cooperation into a long-term, broad strategic partnership. These include the geopolitical and geostrategic shift in the world, the modification of U.S. and Indian policies toward each other, the convergence of interests in containing the rise of China, and the development of a common approach in the Indo-Pacific. The report reveals that



the U.S. viewed India as an financial market for defense sales and made India a vital component of its plan to oppose China's ascent. India was viewed as a vital ally in the U.S. battle against terrorism. In addition, being one of the world's major democracies, India was viewed as a natural ally. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, India finds it advantageous to align itself with the U.S. to receive the benefits of defense technology transfer. The threats to the Indo-U.S. strategic alliance in the shape of India's defense collaboration with Russia and the expansion of their assistance in the Arctic area, which runs counter to U.S. security interests, are among the most critical issues discussed.

Variables influencing Indo-U.S. strategic collaboration are another subject examined in the paper. In one way or another, India's collaboration with Iran affects the execution of U.S. containment efforts, particularly U.S. sanctions on Iran over nuclear matters. India is increasing its oil and dynamism collaboration with Iran and requesting New Delhi-specific exemptions, in contrast to the desires of the U.S. In addition, the U.S. Afghan policy of peace negotiations with the Taliban does not align with Indian interests in Afghanistan, which might lead to a strengthening of collaboration with Iran and Russia in order to preserve its provincial dominance. As Pakistan played a pivotal role in the signing of the peace accord between the U.S. and the Taliban, it would expect the U.S. to play a mediating role in Kashmir, which might potentially cause friction between the U.S. and India. The impact of these growing issues on future U.S. collaboration with India in the Indo-Pacific area has been evaluated in this paper. The escalation of China's confrontations with both the U.S. and India would need a strengthening of strategic association between these countries and a willingness to accommodate one another in the face of their respective obstacles.

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