



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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POLICY SHIFTS AND LEADERSHIP CHANGES: THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S VISION''

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Former President Donald Trump has won the U.S. presidency, and Republicans have regained control of the Senate. Control of the House of Representatives—currently held by Republicans with a narrow majority—is still up in the air. If Republicans secure the House, a second Trump administration would gain broader authority to advance its tax, energy, trade, and regulatory agenda.



INDIA-USA RELATIONSHIP TIES TILL NOW:

1. Historical Background

Cold War Era (1947-1991): India's non-alignment and U.S. ties with Pakistan led to a cool relationship, with differences over issues like the Vietnam War and India's ties with the Soviet Union.

Post-Cold War (1991-2000s): India's economic reforms and nuclear tests (1998) initially strained ties, but the 2005 Civil Nuclear Agreement marked a shift toward closer cooperation.

2. Strategic Partnership

Defense Cooperation: India and the U.S. have built strong defence ties, including joint exercises and agreements on defence technology. India is now a “Major Defense Partner” of the U.S.

Counterterrorism & Regional Security: Both countries collaborate on regional security, particularly in the context of China’s growing influence and tensions with Pakistan.

3. Economic Ties

Trade & Investment: Bilateral trade exceeds \$160 billion, with the U.S. being a major investor in India. Key sectors include IT, energy, and infrastructure.

FDI: The U.S. is one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, and India has increased its investments in the U.S.

4. Global & Regional Cooperation

Indo-Pacific & China: Both countries have a shared interest in countering China’s influence, particularly through the Quad (India, U.S., Japan, Australia) framework.

Climate Change & Health: The U.S. and India work together on global issues like climate change, health, and space exploration.

5. People-to-People Ties

Indian Diaspora: The large and influential Indian-American community fosters stronger economic, political, and cultural ties between the two nations.

Education & Tech: There’s significant collaboration in education and technology, with many Indian professionals leading U.S. companies.

FURTHERING AREAS OF COOPERATION UNDER THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION:

1. Continuity of Policy

Strategic Cooperation: Both countries have maintained a consistent partnership, emphasizing shared democratic values, security, and global stability.

2. Defense Cooperation

Key Agreements: Growing military ties, with agreements like LEMOA, COMCASA, and BECA, alongside joint exercises, especially in the Indo-Pacific.

Strategic Partnership: India is a major defence partner, strengthening regional security and countering China’s influence.

3. People-to-People Ties

Indian Diaspora: The large Indian-American community fosters cultural, educational, and economic links.

Educational Exchange: Thousands of Indian students in the U.S. strengthen long-term ties.

4. Trump Administration’s Approach

Stronger Ties: Focused on bolstering defence, trade, and diplomatic relations.

Pakistan: A tougher stance on Pakistan, aligning with India’s security concerns.

China: Increased cooperation to counter China’s rise in the Indo-Pacific.

5. Pakistan Sanctions

Terrorism & Security: U.S. sanctions and pressure on Pakistan for supporting terrorism aligned with India’s security priorities.

6. China Policies

Indo-Pacific Strategy: Shared concerns about China led to stronger ties, including through the Quad (India, U.S., Japan, and Australia) to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

ISSUES THAT CAN HUNT INDIA- THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION:

1. Migrations & H-1B Visas

H-1B Visa Restrictions: U.S. visa restrictions for skilled workers, especially in tech, affect Indian professionals.

There are concerns about job competition and tightening visa quotas.

2. Trade Issues

Tariffs: Both countries have imposed tariffs on each other's goods, particularly on steel, agricultural products, and tech.

Intellectual Property: Disagreements over U.S. intellectual property protections, particularly affecting India's generic drug industry.

Trade Imbalance: The growing U.S. trade deficit with India remains a concern.

3. Defense & Arms Restrictions

Sanctions: India's defence deals with Russia, like the S-400 missile system, have raised tensions, as U.S. law (CAATSA) sanctions countries that purchase Russian arms.

Cooperation vs. Procurement: While defence ties have strengthened, India's reliance on Russian military equipment complicates full alignment.

4. Regional Organizations & Alliances

China & Indo-Pacific: Both share concerns over China's influence, but India's cautious approach to organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) contrasts with U.S. policies in the Quad. BRICS: India's participation in BRICS (alongside China) occasionally diverges from U.S.-led initiatives.

5. Global Governance (WTO, WHO)

WTO: Disagreements on agricultural subsidies and intellectual property rights.

WHO: Tensions over U.S. criticism of the WHO during the COVID-19 pandemic, though both countries are now cooperating more on global health issues.

6. Climate Change

Paris Agreement: Differences on climate financing and emission reduction commitments, with India seeking more financial support from developed nations.

7. Tech & Cybersecurity

Data Localization: India's laws requiring data storage within the country create friction with U.S. tech firms.

Cybersecurity: While collaboration on cybersecurity is growing, there are concerns over digital trade and foreign tech control.

MANAGING TIES WITH NEW US ADMINISTRATIONS:

1. Strategic Dialogue & Diplomacy

Regular High-Level Talks: Mechanisms like the 2+2 Dialogue (foreign and defence ministers) and Strategic and Commercial Dialogue can address security, trade, and technological cooperation.

Track-II Diplomacy: Encouraging informal discussions to build trust and resolve sensitive issues.

2. Cooperation in Science, Technology, & Health

Technology Collaboration: Joint ventures in AI, space, and green energy can drive innovation. The U.S. and India can focus on sustainable tech solutions to address global challenges like climate change.

Public Health: Post-COVID, both can collaborate on vaccine development, disease surveillance, and health data technology.

3. Managing Common Concerns (China)

Quad: The U.S., India, Japan, and Australia can counter China's influence by enhancing maritime security, infrastructure investment, and cybersecurity.

I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE, USA): Strengthening energy, water security, and technology ties as a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

4. Economic & Trade Relations

Trade Liberalization: Negotiate agreements to enhance market access and reduce trade barriers, particularly in agriculture and services.

Investment: Foster greater bilateral investments in tech, healthcare, and infrastructure.

5. Global Challenges: Collaborative Action

Climate Change: Both nations should lead global efforts to reduce emissions and invest in clean energy, especially for developing nations.

Geopolitical Stability: Partnering in conflict resolution, ensuring a rules-based international order, and promoting democracy in the Indo-Pacific.

CONCLUSION:

The India-U.S. relationship has evolved into a strategic partnership based on shared values of democracy, security, and economic growth. While challenges like trade disputes, defense procurement, and regional alliances persist, cooperation in areas such as defense, technology, and climate change has strengthened both nations' ties. Moving forward, continued dialogue and collaboration on global issues—particularly countering China's influence, advancing technology, and addressing climate change—will be key. Strengthening defense cooperation and resolving trade concerns will further solidify the partnership.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. The U.S. has designated India as a "Major Defense Partner" under which administration?

- A. Bill Clinton
- B. George W. Bush
- C. Barack Obama
- D. Donald Trump

Answer: C

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Discuss the evolution of India-U.S. relations from the Cold War era to the present. What factors have contributed to the strengthening of this bilateral relationship?

(250 words, 15 marks)

Ritik singh

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