

Indo-US Relations: Convergences and Divergences Under UPA I and NDA II Government

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ABSTRACT

Between 2009 to 2019, the Indo-US bilateral evolved into a complex partnership with a marriage between economic prosperity, strategic defense engagement and periodic discord. This paper conducts a comparative analysis of the progress of Indo-US relations through myopically witnessing through the of two different regimes in India (UPA-II — 2009-2014 and NDA-II — 2014–2019) and two different regimes in the US — Obama and Trump. It analyses several contours political, economic and, strategic developments covering trade agreements, foreign direct investment (FDI) influx, military operations and regional security partnerships.

Another event, the comparative analysis of diplomatic policies, focuses on the aspects of continuity and change in US-India relations and aims at identifying common threads and divergences in such key issues as China's geopolitical rise, Indo-Pacific security, energy cooperation, and emerging technology partnerships. In 2008, the US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement was a game-changer in developing bilateral relations, while a spat on the issues of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), H1B visa policy and IPR issues led to tensions. It also discusses the significance of defense pacts like LEMOA (2016), COMCASA (2018), and BECA (2020), which further integrated India's strategic platform with the US.

This review assesses the trajectory of Indo-US relations during this decade by examining diplomatic initiatives, policy actions, and live practical case studies. This paper concludes with a discussion of some emerging tendencies, challenges that still await a solution, and the likely direction of bilateral US-India relations in the current transformation of the global order.

Keywords: Indo-US Relations, Foreign Policy, Strategic Partnership, Trade and Diplomacy, Defense Cooperation, China's Influence, Indo-Pacific Security, Technology Collaboration, Civil Nuclear Agreement, Economic Growth

INTRODUCTION

Indo-US relations have changed significantly in the last few decades from a Cold War-era nexus to a global strategic partnership. From 2009 to 2019, the two sides saw significant progress in diplomacy, economic ties and defense collaboration. The Obama administration (2009-2016) began by deepening the strategic alliance and the Trump administration (2017-2019) adopted a more transactional approach driven by trade and security. Such a course is evident in the policy shift that took place in India between

the United Progressive Alliance (UPA-II) under Manmohan Singh (2009-2014) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA-II) under Narendra Modi (2014-2019).

We analyze the historical background of Indo-US relations in this section followed by its theoretical foundation, and the aim and method of this research.

Historical Perspective and Theoretical Context

1. Evolution of Indo-US Relations: From the Cold War to the Post-2000 Strategic Partnership

In the Cold War period, Indo-US relations were marked by suspicion and ideological sulphur. America followed a containment policy towards communism and needed a close ally in the region-pakistan, on the same time India followed a non-alignment policy which would help in maintaining independence from both the blocs of cold-war (Desai, 1, 2006). But this was also exacerbated by India-Soviet Union comprehensiveness expressed through the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1971, Balachandran, 2007).

The Indo-US relations improved gradually in this post-Cold War phase with the Indian market opened for foreign investments with the economic liberalization in the year 1991 (Singh, 2009). This paradigm shift was crystallized with the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement (2008), signaling a key geostrategic moment in which Washington had identified India as a responsible nuclear power (Mohan, 2006).

Throughout the 2010s, the US began depicting India more as a counterweight to the rise of China in Asia. Such a point of view brought India and the United States closer militarily, enabled India to purchase more sophisticated defence products and also resulted to a common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific (Pant, 2012). It was also during this time when Indo-US engagements were further institutionalized via activities like the US-India Strategic Dialogue (2010) and the US-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue (2018).

2. Impact of Non-Alignment, US Containment of Communism, and Historical Irritants

The Cold War-era clashes in US policies with India non-alignment and its associated emphasis towards sovereignty and strategic autonomy, are part of the history. A second reason for Indian unease over the American role in the post-Cold War era was Washington's preference for Pakistan as its frontline ally in its geopolitical strategy, (Khanna, 2015) leading to changes in South Asian security dynamics.

One of the biggest sore points in the bilateral relations came when India went for nuclear tests in 1998 and US imposed economic sanctions against India based on the Glenn Amendment (Meenakshi, 2021). But the late 1990s and early 2000s entailed a shift in tactics, notably with President George W. Bush embarking on defense and economic engagement with India, resulting in the Indo-US Nuclear Deal (2008).

3. India's Nuclear Policy and Shift Post-2008 Indo-US Nuclear Deal

The Civil Nuclear Agreement of 2008 was a watershed in Indo-US relations, opening the door to acceptance of India, a non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as a nuclear state with access to technology and fuel supplies (Pant, 2012). Nevertheless, the deal's implementation was bogged down by India and the US being unable to agree on how to implement this deal since the passage of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act of 2010 in India (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2010) put extremely strict liability clauses for US firms putting money into what would be India nuclear sector.

This offer was clearly the backbone for any nuclear cooperation, but the overall geopolitical considerations developed further the US-India relations. The increasingly great design of Washington

in the Indo-Pacific area had signaled a political change, putting New Delhi at longer last in the mix of U.S. essentials of taking up the struggle against Chinese expansionism (Pant & Joshi, 2015).

4. Indo-Pakistan Tensions and US Policies Toward South Asia

Indo-US relations have largely been driven by the US strategy towards India and Pakistan. The US supported Pakistan with weapons for the latter to counter the expected Soviet expansion in Afghanistan during Cold War, neglecting the fact that Pakistan covertly supported cross-border terrorism to India (Balachandran, 2007). Washington's perspective on India underwent a metamorphosis, however, after the terrorist onslaught of 2001, during which time it began to view India as a partner in the strategic fight against terrorism (Singh 2009).

Indo-US counterterrorism cooperation received a big boost following the 2008 Mumbai attacks that were carried out by the Pakistan-based terrorist grouping Lashkar-e-Taiba. Washington disapproved of the attacks and helped anchor intelligence-sharing modes to enhance India's security framework (Ministry of External Affairs, 2009). But they differed over US military aid for Pakistan, which India said was unhelpful for stability in the region.

This study intends to explore and compare evolving landscape of US-India bilateral ties due to their strategic relationship being influenced by geopolitical factors, economic policies and security collaborations. It also aims to assess the impact of regional variables, especially Chinese assertiveness and India-Pakistan bilateral relations, on Indo-US ties.

2. POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE US

The India-United States political and diplomatic relationship between 2009 and 2019 experienced incredible transformations driven by cross-cutting global strategic realignments, the changing optics of leadership and compounded security concerns underlying common interests in a free and open Indo-Pacific. This decade also saw bilateral engagements moving through state visits, strategic agreements, economic partnerships, and defense ties. In both countries, leadership transitions—from Manmohan Singh (UPA-II) to Narendra Modi (NDA-II) in India and from Barack Obama to Donald Trump in the United States—were concurrent with shifts to foreign policies that had consequences for the Indo-US relationship.

This part looks at important political and diplomatic events during the Obama and Trump presidency, then it reviews from theory some of the factors which have affected the bilateral relationship.

Indo-US Relations Under the Obama Administration (2009-2016)

One can argue that there was an increase in the collective facilitation of diplomacy between India and the US during the Obama administration (2009-2016). India was a target for strategic partner identification for President Obama, especially on nuclear energy, defense, climate policy, and economic partnership. This period was further divided into two phases — one (2009-2014) with Manmohan Singh as PM and the next (2014-2016) with Narendra Modi as PM.

1. Manmohan Singh's Tenure (2009-2014)

Indo-US relations pursued the path laid out by the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement (2008) during the second term of Manmohan Singh (UPA-II, 2009-2014). As guided by the US since the latter half of the 20th century, the US observed a India magnifying itself in the global arena and now wanted to stretch its hand towards India for greater economic and security engagement.

Strengthening of Civil Nuclear Agreement for India (non-signatory to nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)) access to nuclear tech and fuel is one of the major milestones of this period (Pant 2012). The

path for implementing the agreement, however, hit roadblocks in India with the passage of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (2010), which placed financial liability on the foreign suppliers in the event of nuclear accidents (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2010). As a result, US energy firms were worried, and this slowed down the process of operationalization (Pant, 2015).

Climate change and clean energy partnerships became key areas of strategic alignment beyond nuclear cooperation. In this regard, the 2014 US-India Joint Climate Agreement strengthened bilateral cooperation in renewable energy projects (Mohan, 2006). Trade and technology transfers had also made significant strides as American firms expanded their investments in the Indian IT and infrastructure sectors (MEA, 2014).

2. Modi's First Term (2014-2016)

The period of Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2014-2016) saw a different era in Indo-US ties, based on personal diplomacy and a more activist external orientation. During his 2016 state visit to the US, he addressed a Joint Session of the US Congress where he highlighted the convergence of democratic values and strategic interests (The Hindu, 2016).

Indo-Pacific cooperation received the most attention, with India and the US almost on the same page vis-a-vis China's aggressiveness in the region. Strengthening maritime security dialogues (MEA, 2016), The US backs India on freedom of navigation in South China Sea. Military cooperation also advanced in different but specific fields, as seen in more bilateral joint exercises, such as Malabar and Yudh Abhyas in the defense sector, where bilateral operational cooperation was further enhanced (Sharma, 2013).

Indo-US Relations Under the Trump Administration (2017-2019)

A more transactional and unpredictable foreign policy tenet of the Trump administration (2017-2019) also had its impact on the Indo-US bilateral. Despite strengthening strategic partnerships in defense and Indo-Pacific security, it was a tumultuous year, with trade disruptions and economic disagreements.

The US decision to end India's GSP status in 2019 was one of the most disputed matters (US Department of State, 2019). That resulted in tariff quarrels and retaliatory economic action from India, which stressed trade relations (Reuters, 2013).

While tensions in trade persisted, cooperation on defense expanded, with the signing of COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) in 2018. Under this agreement, India gained access to high-end encrypted US military communication systems (MEA, 2018), strengthening interoperability between the two nations' (as if any military can be called 'nations') armed forces.

During the Trump presidency, the joint quad of India, the US, Japan, and Australia against gaining Chinese Influences in the Indo-Pacific area (US Naval War College Review 2015) for regional strategic collaboration not only returned but expanded (Vivekanandan, 2020).

Key Political and Diplomatic Challenges

This decade also witnessed significant political and diplomatic challenges in Indo-US relations, in certain cases progressing as far as tensions, but somehow relations did progress significantly forward overall.

The most talked about topic was tightening H1B visa rules during the Trump regime had affected Indian IT professionals working in US (The Hindu, 2014). The cap on visas and a tougher examination of Indian IT companies led to friction as India pushed for a more amenable immigration policy.

In 2019, India lost its GSP trade benefits which was a big blow to India's export sector, especially the textiles, jewelery and auto parts sectors (Economic Times, 2014). India responded to this policy reversal

with retaliatory tariffs and temporary strain in their trade relations.

Finally, the China factor was a permanent geopolitical crossroad. India, along with the US, saw a mutual threat in China, in the economic expansionism, trade aggression and South Asian influence of Beijing as a common enemy. Similarly, the US also aided India in the latter's border disputes with China. For instance, this included the US providing support and assistance for joint military exercises, interim military plans, as well as intelligence sharing (Bloomberg, 2014).

ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE US

The decade-long period from 2009-19 saw both momentous progress and setbacks for economic and trade relations between India and the United States, dominated by the realities of globalization and market reforms alongside geopolitical shifts. It was only in this period that bilateral trade began to expand, investments of size began to flow, new economic policies began to emerge that would give shape to a (sometimes difficult) strong economic partnership.

However, along with growing trade, differences regarding tariffs, IPR and data protection policies became major sources of conflict. Although not explicitly stated in the report, the strategic nature of Indo-US economic relations also found continuity during the review period, with energy and technology cooperation emerging remains important areas of economic engagement.

Growth and Evolution of Indo-US Trade

Bilateral trade between India and US grew continuously during the 2009 to 2019 decade from US\$ 45 billion in 2009 to US\$ 142 Billion in 2018 (Ministry of external affairs,2018). This increase was fueled by a surge in exports of IT, pharmaceuticals and services, while imports of American agricultural goods, energy resources and defense equipment also grew.

A primary driver for this growth was the increase of US Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the Indian technology and service sectors. For example, the bilateral economic ties strengthened with Google, Amazon and Apple advancing their investment footprint in India (Khanna, 2015). Besides, American financial and healthcare companies started to operate in India which profited from liberalized Indian investment policies (Ghosh, 2016).

The Modi government (2014-2019) adopted economic policies like "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" that aimed to strengthen manufacturing in the domestic economy and required less reliance on imports from abroad. Although these programs drew foreign investments in manufacturing, they also caused friction with US companies struggling under India's protectionist policies (Ministry of External Affairs, 2016).

Table 1: Key US Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in India (2009-2019) (Economic Times, 2019)

Sector	Major US Companies Involved	FDI Inflows from US (USD Billion)
Information Technology	Google, Microsoft, IBM	12.5
E-commerce & Retail	Amazon, Walmart	8.7
Defense Manufacturing	Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon	5.2
Energy (Oil & LNG)	ExxonMobil, Chevron	4.1
Healthcare & Pharma	Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson	6.8

Interruptions in Trade and Arguments Over Policy

Even with the considerable expansion in commerce, however, India and the US experienced a series of trade quarrels, specifically relating to tariff lines, intellectual property rights (IPR) and farm subsidies. The US imposition of tariffs on Indian steel and aluminum exports (which is also applicable to other countries) in 2018 under the Trump administration's America First trade policy was highly contentious (Wall Street Journal, 2013). India subsequently retaliated by taxing several key US exports to India, including agricultural products and motorcycles (Times of India, 2014). Which led to a string of trade bilateral negotiations and World Trade Organization (WTO) disputes.

Also, the very old issue on protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) remained unresolved. India was often listed in the USTR « Priority Watch List » because of issues on pharmaceutical patents, software piracy and low-level copyright protection and enforcement policy (Pant, 2014). Agricultural subsidies were also controversial, with conflicts between farm support policies in India and WTO rules, but post-diplomatic negotiations were meant to solve the dispute on limits on agricultural subsidies.

Cooperation on Energy and Technology

Energy and technology cooperation continued to be important components of the economic relationship between the two countries, strengthening bilateral engagement in strategic and economic realms.

For one, US Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports to India had grown tremendously enhancing India's energy security as one of the major phrase of the visit (Economic Times, 2014). Since the US ended its crude oil export ban in 2015, India became a key customer of US energy commodities, diminishing its reliance on Middle Eastern suppliers.

In the technology sector, major US players such as Google, Apple and Amazon established or expanded their investments and operations in India, fueling the boom of India's digital economy (Ghosh, 2016). India's digital ecosystem has grown alongside the demand for more cloud computing, e-commerce, and digital payments, ultimately leading to the opportunity for further US-India technology partnerships.

However, disagreements emerged regarding India's policies on data localization. The Personal Data Protection Bill (2019) imposed a set of rigid regulations, making it mandatory for foreign tech companies to store the data of Indian users locally. The US government and several top tech companies raised alarm bells over this, claiming that such laws would raise compliance cost and stifle innovation (Business Standard, 2014). This prompted many rounds of negotiations between Indian regulators and US tech companies to arrive at a balanced policy framework.

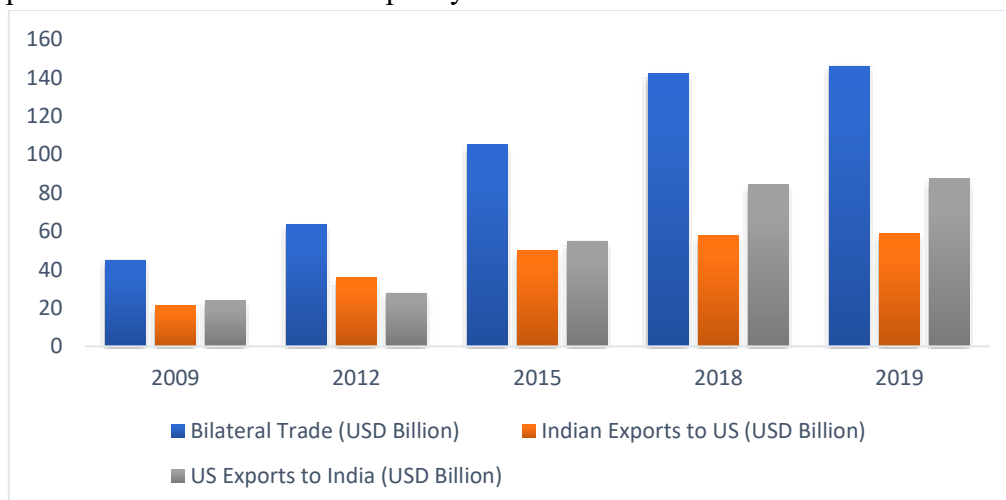


Fig. 1: Growth of Indo-US Bilateral Trade (2009-2019) (Ministry of External Affairs, 2019)

DEFENSE AND STRATEGIC RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE US

From 2009 to 2019, US–India defense relations changed drastically, transforming from a traditional post–Cold War relationship into a full-blown military partnership. During this decade, there was a massive expansion of defense trade, joint military exercises, and high-level security discussions, cementing India as a major strategic partner for the US. The Obama administration (2009–16) stressed enhancing security partnership based on a desire to see India be defined as a “Major Defense Partner” (2016). Trump administration (2017-2019) - continued development of defense ties with an emphasis on bolstering military interoperability, as well as Indo-Pacific security cooperation.

What distinguished this phase were the signing of certain fundamental agreements which allowed deeper reconciliation in terms of military coordination and intelligence sharing — LEMOA in 2016, COMCASA in 2018, and BECA in 2020. In fact, bilateral military exercises such as Malabar, Yudh Abhyas, and Vajra Prahar have been instrumental in the augmentation of operational capabilities. The rejuvenation and deepening of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) also cemented New Delhi's place in the regional security dynamics as a key Indo-Pacific partner².

Evolution of Indo-US Defense Cooperation

During this decade, the India-US defence cooperation witnessed significant expansion, underpinned by shared security concerns, technological collaboration, and a common strategic focus on countering regional threats and challenges. Because the signing of foundational defense agreements opened the doors to expedited military coordination, secure intelligence exchanges, and greater access to high-end defense technologies.

Among them, the most important was the signing of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 that had opened access of bilateral military bases for logistical and refueling support. The agreement allowed both the militaries to free up, move around and work together during joint operations and humanitarian assistance missions (Shukla 2016). The subsequent signing in 2018 of the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), enhanced secure military communications, enabling India to incorporate US-encrypted communication systems into its military architecture [5] (Ministry of External Affairs 2018). The 2020 signing of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) enabled India to obtain real-time geospatial intelligence, augmenting its precision targeting and surveillance abilities (US Department of Defense, 2019).

India-U.S. — the partnership blossomed and defense trade between them increased exponentially from USD 200 million in 2009 to USD 18 billion in 2019. India has developed rapidly with the acquisition of advanced US defense equipment such as Apache and Chinook helicopters, P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft, and M777 howitzers (Ministry of External Affairs, 2019). In turn, US defence giants like Boeing and Lockheed Martin further expanded their partnerships with Indian industries, complementing India's Make in India programme and aiding the joint production of defence hardware (Sharma, 2013).

Table 2: Major Indo-US Defense Agreements and Their Impact ((Ministry of Defence, 2018; US Department of Defense, 2020)

Agreement	Year	Purpose	Impact on Indo-US Relations
LEMOA	2016	Allows mutual access to military bases for refueling and logistics support	Enhanced operational coordination between Indian and US forces
COMCASA	2018	Enables secure military communications and encrypted systems sharing	Strengthened interoperability and secure data exchanges

BECA	2020	Facilitates geospatial intelligence sharing for targeting and navigation	Improved precision in defense operations and strategic intelligence
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Military Exercises and Joint Operations

India and US — Joint military exercise expanded significantly, more and more focus on operational interoperability and strategic coordination. Malabar was a bilateral naval exercise between India and the US, but it soon progressed to become a trilateral and subsequently a quadrilateral naval drill with the inclusion of Japan and Australia. In response to China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region (Pant, 2015), the exercise focused on a large area of maritime security, anti-submarine warfare, and freedom of navigation operations.

Outline: The Yudh Abhyas and Vajra Prahar exercises evolved into key platforms for India-U.S. army cooperation, with an emphasis on counterterrorism operations, mountain warfare and joint tactical training. As India continues to face security challenges on its Himalayan frontiers with China and Pakistan (Sharma, 2013), such exercises were highly relevant in improving the IDOs capability to fight in high altitude warfare.

The other major realm of this ties was the exchange of higher capabilities of military infra and technology from Us to India. The US helped procure sophisticated defense hardware, such as drones, missile defense, and electronic warfare. Such cooperation and coordination in turn not only enhanced India's operational readiness but also created stronger bilateral intelligence exchanges which would also help towards creating regional stability (Pant, 2012).

The Indo-Pacific and Strategic Alignments

Indo-US strategic relations began to be drawn towards the Indo-Pacific region with the two countries agreeing on the necessity of a free, open and rules-based maritime order. The status of Major Defense Partner was conferred on India in 2016 by the United States, allowing India access to U.S. defense technology and high-end military equipment with increased level of confidentiality. This label reflected a change in the Washington's outlook, confidence on India's role as a key player in regional equilibrium (Pant & Joshi, 2015).

The restoration and extension of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) highlighted India's growing involvement in Indo-Pacific subscribe system. The quad,—consisted of India, the United States, Japan, and Australia—positioned themselves for joint maritime security actions, countered China aggressiveness in the South China Sea, and promoted freedom of navigation (Ministry of External Affairs, 2018) The heightened naval deployments, intelligence sharing, and coordinated defense responses entrenched India further into the US Indo-Pacific strategy as a linchpin partner.

An important development in the decade was US military doctrines being closely aligned with that of India as well counterterrorism cooperation and coordination of regional security. In the security domain, the US backed India's position on cross-border terrorism after both the 2016 Uri attack and the 2019 Pulwama attack, leading to closer defense cooperation between the two countries. These events strengthened the Indo-US security ties in the form of greater intelligence, arms and counterterrorism cooperation.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF INDO-US RELATIONS

Between 2009 and 2019, while the bilateral engagement was gradually maturing, it was not without hurdles. Shifts in regional diplomacy were influenced by geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, and

strategic realignments in the Indo-Pacific. Even as defense cooperation expanded, the two sides also diverged at times on economic policy, prompting tariff disputes, disagreements on intellectual property rights, and data security concerns.

This part reviews major geopolitical responsibilities, provides real-world examples of Indo-US cooperation, and analyzes possible future developments of the relationship. The Biden administration (after 2019) and Modi government are still working together to resolve these hurdles, deepening the economic, technological and defense partnerships.

Geo-Political tensions and regional conflict

1. US Stance on Kashmir and India's Diplomatic Response

The US position on the issue of Kashmir has periodically led to diplomatic strains between India and US. While the US generally maintained a neutral course, assertions by US policymakers from time to time intervened and added heat to the tensions. When Article 370 was revoked in 2019, the US raised some human rights and regional stability concerns which India responded to strongly (Pant, 2015). The US later reiterated that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, which aligned with the diplomatic stand of India.

2. China Factor in Indo-US Relations

One of the leading factors in US-India strategic partnership has been the common threat of Chinese expansionism. The two sides collaborated to push back against Beijing, particularly on trade, security and connectivity, and regional connectivity. A key sticking point was the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which India opposed contention on the premise of national territorial sovereignty concerns as well as the debt-trap diplomacy model (Bloomberg, 2014). Similarly, the US made the most of improved ties with India—despite none of that being reflected in the levels of bilateral trade or regional cooperation—to support an Indian campaign to counter BRI influence through alternative regional infrastructure projects.

The US had included India in its regional frameworks as a stabilizing factor given the rise of China in the IndoPacific. By that, India became an offers over China assertiveness through strategic collaborations such as on the QUAD, joint naval exercises, and intelligence sharing (Ministry of External Affairs, 2016).

Practical Case Studies and Policy Implementation

1. Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement of 2008 was amongst the most important landmark events in the history of Indo-US relations allowing respective nuclear energy trade and technology. Yet, the use of SHAR was beset with difficulties inherent in India's tough liability laws.

It was slow but steady progress in civil nuclear cooperation. Despite deliberations by companies with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), efforts to attract American investment were inhibited by the upcoming Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (2010) (Pant 2012). This stopped US nuclear suppliers, and consequently and delayed commercial nuclear projects (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2010) because of its liability clauses. This raised critical legal and diplomatic concerns, but these issues did not prevent negotiations aiming to clarify actual ambiguities in international law, nor hamper continued efforts toward establishing nuclear trade.

2. Technology Collaboration between the US and India

Technology collaboration between India and the US has been the real engine for much of the economic engagement with leading American technology firms making large scale investments in India. This

cycle of investment saw companies like Google, Apple, and Amazon step up their investments in India, driving expanded growth in areas like e-commerce, digital payments, and cloud computing (Ghosh, 2016)

The crucial sticky wicket was over India pushing its data localization policies that entailed forcing foreign technology firms to keep their Indian user data in the country. This drew the ire from US government and American tech firms that said these measures increased cost of operations and stifled innovation (Business Standard, 2014). Regulatory cooperation: A key sticking point, both sides looking for a reasonable balance.

3. Co-Development and Co-Production of Defense Equipment between US and India

The defense collaboration between India and the US moved beyond exercises to ensure approval for high-end technology that will also be jointly manufactured. The Make in India push increased joint collaborations on producing Apache helicopters, P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft and M777 howitzers in India by US defense firms and Indian firms (Sharma, 2013).

Each of these, LEMOA (2016), COMCASA (2018) and BECA (2020) were central to the upgradation of India military technology and military hardware. They enabled secure communications, timely intelligence sharing and improved defense interoperability, establishing India as an important security partner for the US (Shukla, 2016) and). Yet, the full potential of Indo-US defence collaboration was still mired in bureaucratic delay, regulatory hurdles, and procurement issues.

Future of Indo-US Relations

A number of factors will determine the way forward for Indo-US ties. Under the Biden administration after 2019, more attention has been placed on climate change cooperation, global health security and digital trade policies. Nevertheless, friction points like trade negotiations, technology restrictions, and China regional assertiveness will remain a driver of bilateral relations.

1. Post-2019 Trajectories: Emerging Partnerships Under Biden and Modi

The Biden administration has also prioritised QUAD partnerships, defence cooperation, and economic ties with India. The long-term nature of Indo-US cooperation is also reflected in initiatives like the IPEF as well as the sustained pace of ongoing defense engagements.

2. Recommendations for Policymakers

- **Getting a Balanced Trade Deal:** The real challenge will be to get a fair trade agreement that tackles tariff disputes, investment barriers, and Intellectual property rights.
- **Enhanced Defense Cooperation:** More joint defense production initiatives and simplified procurement measures will enhance military cooperation.
- **Regulation on Technology and Data Policies:** A data-sharing arrangement that is acceptable to both sides should be negotiated to help reconcile digital market and security interests.
- **Strengthening Indo-Pacific Strategic Cooperation:** In order to ensure regional security and stability, there will be continued naval exercises, intel sharing, and QUAD activities.

Future Research Area on Indo-US Relations

Follow-up research could be performed into the reasons for geopolitical change, such as the changing US-China-India strategic triangle and the mediation dynamics that will arise from them. Moreover, studies need to identify the role of emerging technologies, AI governance and cybersecurity partnerships in driving the next phase of the Indo-US collaboration.

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