

Current Affairs

Topic: US-India Strategic partnership, its impact on South Asia.

1- Introduction:

The growing Indo-US nexus also termed as "strategic partnership" has received a great of attention around the world. There are many advantages and prospects behind this alliance however, some considered it worrisome for South Asia's peace and stability especially for Pakistan. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize its prospects as well as challenges for the region. There are many concerns regarding the new era of arm race, disruption in balance of power among nuclear states and its impact on Pakistan, China and Russia.

2- Strategic Partnership Between India and United States (US):

Strategic Partnership between India and US mean strengthening of ties between both in different spheres of shared interests. It signifies a change from previous limited involvement to multidimensional cooperation that covers both global and local aspects.

During the cold war era, both countries never reached the point of becoming partners. For instance, US was leading the world and wanted peace and stability in South Asia region. Moreover, US made an alliance with India's rival neighbour Pakistan in cold war. The first prominent relations between both were developed in 2004 named as Next Step in Strategic Partnership (2004) NSSP.

Signing of framework of defense relation → (2005)

Renewed in 2015

US identified India as Major Defense Partner (2016)

Agreements in 2018 (COMCASA) Communication Compatibility and Strategic Agreement

BECA 2020 (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement)

ICET (Initiative on Critical Emerging Technology)  
2022

Recently, US Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin paid two day visit to India and met Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh - to reinforce his country's defense partnership and advance cooperation in critical domains, with India to augment his capabilities to deter China. Moreover, the Narendra Modi visit to US was billed as meetings of two greatest democracies as per New York Times. Both declared themselves as the closest partners in the world.

### 3. Key highlights of Recent Agreements:

The US sees India as a counterweight to China's dominance in the region. It has stepped up its efforts to enhance bilateral military-to-military and technological ties. Moreover, it is seeking to turn Delhi away from traditional dependence on Russia for defense supplies. As per World Times Magazine, India is the largest arms importer, depends on Russia for its half military supplies. Along with defense developments, there has been agreements in other spheres including economic, technological,

energy sector etc. Some of key developments of US-India Strategic Partnership are as follows:

### i- Economic Developments:

The US has emerged as India's greatest trading partner in FY 2022-23. India is considered as one of top FDI units by US. In the year 2022-23 India was largest trading partner with rise in 7.65% from previous year, followed by China and UAE.

### ii- Scientific and Technological Developments:

It includes ICET (Initiative on Critical Emerging Technology) 2022 to provide India Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing, wireless telecommunication etc. Moreover, India has made partnership with US-led MSP (<sup>Mineral</sup> ~~Military~~ Security Partnership) to boost critical energy and global supply chains. It makes collaboration with NASA to train ISRO astronauts for joint International Space Mission 2024.

### iii. Developments in Energy and Climate Sector:

It includes "Clean Energy Agenda" 2030 and "Global Biofuel Alliance" between US, India and Brazil for consumption of biofuels in transportation sector.

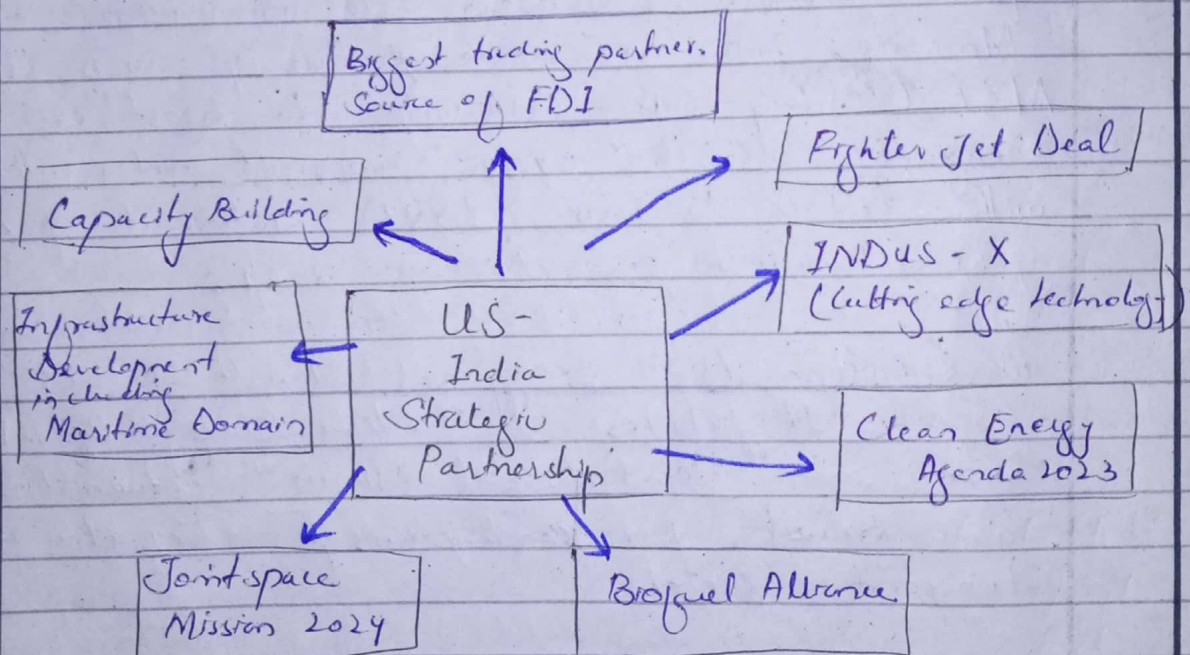
### iv. Security Developments:

An initiative was started in 2010- to counter terrorism in cooperative way. To expand collaboration on this aspect, information sharing and capacity building's agreements were finalized.

## v. Defense Cooperation :

Defense cooperation was considered as one of significant sphere of recent agreements. As per New York Times Magazine, Washington top envoy to East Asia has said that US expects India to patrol the <sup>South</sup> China sea.

The major deal in recent agreement includes **INDUS-X** (India-US Defense Acceleration Ecosystem) - an initiative to advance cutting-edge technology cooperation. US also agreed to share technology with India for fighter jet engines called as **Fighter Jet Deal (GE-414 Jet)**.



## 4. South Asia's Instability due to US-India Strategic Nexus :

Adunthabi Roy in her article "The Illusions of US-India Strategic Partnership" - published in

New York Times writes that,

"We don't need to be shocked by US choice of friends. The enchanting folks that US has cultivated as partners including Shah of Iran, a well known General in Pakistan, Afghan Mujahideen etc. The central test for US foreign policy has been democracy while dictatorship for its non-white friends. The partnership that US is cultivating now is one of the most dangerous people in the world who would turn the world into a tinderbox."

Analysts have provided multiple reasons <sup>of instability</sup> due to growing nexus between US and India.

Threat to Pakistan's security	leads to Arms Race in South Asia
Impact of US-Ind Partnership on other actors in the region	Will disrupt balance of power between two important nuclear states

### i- Leads to Arms Race:

US-India strategic nexus might encourage the arms race in Asian region where four main nuclear powers lie. Among all, Pakistan is located in geographically tensed region with strong rival neighbour India. As, US will provide recent

and modern nuclear arsenals which would lead other nations, especially Pakistan to strengthen its nuclear arsenals. So, the partnership between the two could exacerbate proxy wars and escalate tensions in the region, endangering peace.

## ii- Description in the Balance of Power:

Indo-US news will impact the power dynamics in the Asian region. India military capabilities may be improved due to defense cooperation between strategic partners. This is a threat that cutting edge technology will surpass the Indian military over militaries of other states. The US backing for India might provide her an opportunity to interfere in domestic issues of other states, which could alter the balance of power between India and other regional states.

## iii- Threat to Pakistan's Security:

Pakistan shares one of its borders to India and has faced multiple security threats internally including terrorism across the country. Pakistan's nuclear resources are critical to country's security conditions. The strategic cooperation between US and India raised questions about how would this affect security of Pakistan. India has interfered in country's issues multiple times including the raw agent Kalboshan Jadhav, interruption of territorial limits - case of Balakot, involvement in escalating terrorism in Balochistan.

#### iv. Impact of Strategic Partnership on Relations With China and Russia:

Many analyst argued that this strategic partnership aims to checkmate growing China's influence in the region. India is important for US as it sits in Indian Ocean with massive military and is largest arms importer. The flip side is that there are no free lunches and US sharing of cutting edge technology has some post goals. India's ties with Russia are deep re-around 90% of military equipments are imported from Russia sourced by MVT. Moreover, it is biggest importer of Russian crude oil with \$2.2 million per day in June 2023, despite of US sanctions. Nor, she can truly stand up against China, being it's largest importer. India is no match for China - neither militarily nor economically. Analysts viewed India as being put herself in a risk game which will not last long.

#### 5. Policy Recommendations for Pakistan:

As per article published in Pak Journal of International Affairs titled "Indo-US Strategic Nexus: A Threat to Pakistan's Security" has identified few options to counter US-India strategic nexus which are as follows:

- i- Pakistan has to make strong strategic partnership with China.
- ii- Pakistan has to make alliance with Russia and China to counter US-India nexus.
- iii- Pakistan has to develop indigenous capability to develop nuclear and missile programmes to balance India.

iv. Pakistan has to develop good relations with US and tried to get more alliance with her.

## 6- Conclusion :

The US-Indo strategic nexus has grew stronger with time, poses a threat to Asian stability and peace. It has caused serious concerns for Pakistan's security, but it is not impossible to counter. Through effective leadership and strong alliances with other regional players can maintain peace and stability.

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- Note**
- Please add suggestions to focus on <sup>which</sup> specific domains
  - Any other suggestion, might be helpful.
  - Mark answer out of 20.