

STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC TIES BETWEEN US AND INDIA: ANALYZE THE CURRENT STATE OF US-INDIA RELATIONS AND EVALUATE THE EFFORTS MADE BY THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION TO ENHANCE BILATERAL TIES. EXAMINE THE AREAS OF COOPERATION SUCH AS DEFENSE, TRADE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

Introduction:

The relationship between the United States and India has been growing in importance over the years. The two countries share a common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and have worked together on a range of issues including defence, trade, and climate change. The Biden administration has signalled a commitment to further strengthening this partnership, and has taken several steps to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Defence Cooperation

One of the main areas of cooperation between the US and India is defence. The two countries have signed several agreements aimed at enhancing defence cooperation, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA). These agreements enable greater military interoperability between the two countries, and facilitate the sharing of defence technology and intelligence.

The Biden administration has continued to prioritize defence cooperation with India. During his visit to India in February 2021, US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin emphasized the importance of the US-India defence partnership and discussed ways to enhance it further. The two countries are also cooperating on regional security issues, such as countering terrorism and ensuring freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Trade and Investment

Another area of focus for the Biden administration is trade and investment. The US and India are each other's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade in goods and services exceeding \$146 billion in 2020. However, trade relations have been strained in recent years, with both countries imposing tariffs on each other's goods. The Biden administration has signaled a willingness to work towards resolving these issues and has emphasized the importance of strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

The Biden administration has also announced plans to invest in India's infrastructure, including its transportation, energy, and digital sectors. This will create opportunities for US businesses and contribute to the development of India's economy. The US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) has already announced a \$1 billion investment in India's infrastructure projects.



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Climate Change

Climate change is another area where the US and India have the potential for cooperation. The two countries are among the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, and have a shared interest in addressing this global challenge. The Biden administration has made climate change a top priority, and has announced plans to work with India on issues such as clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, and adaptation.

In April 2021, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry visited India to discuss climate cooperation. The two countries announced the launch of a new clean energy partnership, which will focus on renewable energy, energy storage, and green hydrogen. They also announced the formation of a new working group on climate change, which will address issues such as climate finance and adaptation.

Challenges Ahead

Despite the progress made in US-India relations, there are still challenges to be addressed. One of the main challenges is trade disputes. The US has raised concerns about India's trade barriers, including tariffs on US goods, and has threatened to impose tariffs in retaliation. India has also criticized the US for imposing tariffs on its steel and aluminium exports.

Another challenge is differences in approach towards regional issues. The US has been critical of India's human rights record in Kashmir and has urged India to restore internet access and release political detainees. India, on the other hand, has been critical of the US's handling of the Afghan peace process.

Conclusion

The current state of US-India relations suggests that there is significant potential for cooperation in several areas, and that the relationship will continue to be an important one for both countries. The Biden administration has taken several steps towards enhancing bilateral ties with India, particularly in areas such as defence, trade and investment, and climate change. While challenges remain, such as trade disputes and differences in approach towards regional issues, there is a shared commitment to strengthening the relationship and finding ways to work together towards common goals.

As India continues to emerge as a global power and the US seeks to maintain its strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region, the partnership between the two countries is likely to become increasingly important. A strong US-India relationship can contribute to regional stability, economic growth, and the promotion of democratic values and human rights. As such, it is important for both countries to continue building on the progress made in recent years and to find new areas of cooperation and collaboration.



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