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US- INDIA RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION



President Biden and Prime Minister Modi of India at a recent state visit in June of 2023

CNN

India is one of nine nuclear powers in the world and is home to one of the largest militaries.

In June 2023, President Joe Biden met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as part of a historic state visit. During the visit, they discussed strengthening defense partnerships and struck deals relating to technology and defense (Jacob 2023). The United States promised to share its semiconductor technologies, begin building jet engines for India's air force, and continue dialogue on the US-India defense partnership. There were even talks about India potentially entering into a free-trade agreement with the U.S (Jacob 2023). The US's willingness to share its technology with India and elevate the partnership is a remarkable turnaround from decades past.

The state visit is a culmination of India's remarkable rise as the central figure of the US's diplomatic and economic strategy against China. India is shaping up to be a major economic and political player in the Indo-Pacific region. In May of 2023, India overtook China as the world's most populous country and the gap in population will continue to rise as the 21st century progresses (Ellis-Petersen 2023). The rapid rise in population means that India has a large pool of cheap labor, allowing for other countries to tap into its manufacturing capabilities. Today, its \$3.75 trillion economy is the 5th largest in the world and is expected to increase in the coming years (Forbes India 2023). In addition to cheap labor, the large population means that India is home to one of the largest militaries in the world, in addition to being one of nine countries with nuclear capabilities. Its proximity to China, importance in global trade, and large military are among the many reasons why the United States has made it a central figure in its China strategy.

Still, skeptics have raised serious questions about whether India is a truly reliable ally. India has notably played both sides in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, seeking a neutral stance on the issue. It has

refused to vote in favor of resolutions condemning Russia at the United Nations General Assembly and has even bought enormous quantities of Russian oil sanctioned by the West. Domestically, there are serious concerns about human rights abuses and a rise in Islamophobic policies adopted by the Modi government, as well as democratic backsliding. The time is now to establish a clear framework for a US-India partnership that deftly balances the US security needs with its commitment to human rights and democracy.



President Truman and Prime Minister Nehru in 1949

Truman Library

EXPLANATION OF THE ISSUE

Historical Development

The US and India have a long and storied relationship that dates back to India's independence from the United Kingdom in 1947. The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, met with President Truman in 1949 to enunciate a neutral stance in the ensuing Cold War, allowing the country to play both sides. The United States was constrained by India's ambiguous stance on the Soviet Union, but still chose to support India in its border war with China in 1962 (Council on Foreign Relations 2023). The support marked the beginning of a strong strategic and military partnership between the US and India. The US even began supporting the development of the Indian Institute of Technology to jumpstart academic and research partnership between the two countries. However, the partnership fell apart once the United States sided with Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, which led to India signing a treaty of cooperation with the Soviet Union the following year (Council on Foreign Relations 2023). The relationship was further strained by India conducting its first nuclear test in 1974, increasing nuclear proliferation and the anxiety of nuclear conflict.

For the following 20 years, the two countries were at odds, with the US imposing sanctions on India for nuclear testing. It was not until 2001 that then President George W. Bush lifted all economic sanctions with India, and reignited cooperation between the two nuclear powers (Office of the Spokesman 2001). As trade relations between the countries improved, talks about a new strategic defense framework took off, culminating in the 2005 US-India Defense Relationship (Council on Foreign Relations 2023). Nuclear treaties were signed in subsequent years, paving the way towards complete normalization of the US-India relationship. Throughout the Obama and Trump presidencies, the ties between the countries have continued to improve.

Then-President Obama advocated for India to become the 6th permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Current Situation

India along with the US, Japan, and Australia re-established the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad)** in 2017 as part of a joint-defense strategy to counter China's rising influence in the region (CSIS 2023). The Quad marked a clear shift towards a defensive alliance and highlighted India's role in Indo-Pacific security. The Biden administration accelerated cooperation with India, announcing of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET) as a part of an emerging defensive tech sharing program (Council on Foreign Relations 2023). The United States sought to reduce India's arms purchases from Russia and move towards a closer defense relationship. In a span of 20 years, India has transformed from an adversary into an indispensable part of the US Indo-Pacific defense strategy.

The Quad – the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue comprising Australia, India, Japan, and the US to coordinate security in the Indo-Pacific. Note that unlike NATO, if a member country is attacked, this partnership does not require the other member countries to take military action.

Scope of the Problem

At the surface level, the relationship between US and India appears strong, but there are deep disagreements about US hegemony, India's civil rights violations, shifting alliances, and democratic backsliding. Although the United States has consistently argued that it seeks to champion human rights and democracy abroad, it has largely been hesitant to critique India for pursuing policies that violate human rights and could pave the way for the erosion of democratic institutions in India. The US has consistently turned a blind eye to these policies, preferring to maintain the alliance rather than stand up for these ideals abroad. However, there is an intense debate regarding India's trustworthiness as an ally and whether the US should pressure India to comply with global norms.

Nearly 70% of all Russian gas exports go to India. The country receives a steep discount of \$16 per barrel compared to market prices.

Shifting Alliances

India has been opportunistic when it comes to alliance-making. They largely prioritize national interest over collective interest and may seek to defect from Western consensus when it is beneficial to their own goals. In this section, the briefing will give a quick overview of India's perspective when it comes to international relations. It will then outline the US perspective on the relationship with India, which will be the basis for senators' deliberations.

From India's perspective, careful diplomatic maneuvering has kept the country out of proxy wars waged by larger powers. India's stance has given it leverage in negotiations and access to critical resources and technology from both Russia and the US. Take, for instance, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. India's refusal to sanction or condemn Russia has netted it access to cheap Russian gas. Nearly 70% of all Russian gas exports are headed towards India. India now obtains gas for \$16 per barrel less than market prices (Bala 2022). Besides cheap gas, India has also used its dependency on Russian

arms as a reason for the US to step up and give it access to new weapons. India has managed to have it both ways, getting cheap resources from Russia and technology transfers from the United States.

The US perspective on India's lack of commitment is one of concern. As tech sharing increases, the US risks supporting a country that may not have its back in times of crisis. In a recent survey of high-ranking diplomats from each of the four Quad countries, India is an outlier in its strong opposition to the creation of a standing military task force (Buchanan and Rimland 2020). However, when asked about economic and developmental assistance, India is strongly in favor. The clear discrepancy highlights the divergence between US and Indian priorities in the region. The United States should recognize that India continues to pursue a policy of non-alignment, even as it receives a greater amount of aid and access to emerging technologies from the US. Senators must leverage US aid to secure an Indian commitment to regional security. They ought to consider how the United States can increase Indian commitment to protecting shared interests in the region. What mechanisms can be implemented to decrease India's cooperation with strategic rivals of the United States?



Widespread protests following the announcement of the CAA and the National Register of Citizens

Getty Images

Human Rights Concerns

Since taking office in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pursued myriad policies that have marginalized Indian Muslims, who comprise about 14% of the country's population. The Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 (CAA), passed by the Modi's party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), exempted millions of non-Muslim illegal migrants from deportation without making the same move for Muslim migrants. At the same time, the BJP passed a bill to create the National Register of Citizens, forcing Indians to either prove their citizenship or face statelessness and potential deportation. For millions of Muslims living in the country, the two bills represent the purposeful removal of their citizenship. Since Muslims are not exempted from being considered an "illegal immigrant" and Indians must prove their citizenship to be included in the registry, it is selectively forcing Muslim Indians to prove their citizenship to India. Muslim Indians who have lived in the country for generations can be stripped of their citizenship if they are unable to comply with the stringent verification process, and those who lose citizenship are liable for deportation (Sen 2022). The shocking announcement sparked widespread protests throughout the country, leading to a brutal crackdown of protestors. Over 65 people were killed, 175 injured, and over 3000 were arrested.

The two policies were just the most visible part of Modi's plan to transform India into a Hindu-nationalist state. In day-to-day life, the legal system has turned against Muslims in India. The Modi

Over three thousand people were arrested and 175 were injured during the citizenship protests.



Cow vigilantes come in mobs seeking suspected cattle herders, who are Muslims, to brutally lynch.

The News Minute

government passed bans on the slaughtering of cows that disproportionate affect minority communities in rural Indian states. The government even announced a national commission for cow protection in February of 2019 (Human Rights Watch 2023). The intense rhetoric against cattle ranchers, who are mostly Muslims, has fueled vigilantism among Hindu-nationalists. Across India, at least 44 Muslims suspected of engaging in the cattle trade have been lynched. Despite the rapid rise in hate crimes and lynching, many of the attackers were never prosecuted, with most cases being left unresolved. Moreover, politicians from the BJP party have on occasion even justified the religious violence. The State Department has noted that officials in India, especially among the BJP, have openly called for genocide against Muslims and have enacted attacks on places of worship and demolitions of homes (Aljazeera 2023). All these human rights violations have been well-documented and acknowledged by the United States in past years. However, as the partnership with India has become more important, the concerned voices have been pushed to the side.

Democratic Backsliding

Prime Minister Modi has reshaped democratic institutions in India to favor his party over the course of his administration. The press in India has come under considerable pressure in recent years. Owners of media outlets must stay on the good side of the BJP as they need government support for their businesses. Institutional pressure from the BJP has reduced the number of dissenting voices on Indian airwaves (Chotiner 2023). Modi has also revoked semi-autonomous status for the state of Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in India (Chotiner 2023). His policies have weakened political opposition parties, with all indicators pointing to another landslide victory for the BJP in the upcoming 2024 elections.



Rahul Gandhi arrested for calling Prime Minister a “thief”

BBC

In February of 2023, Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the Indian Congress Party, was banned from parliament (Chotiner 2023). He was the main opposition to Modi. His crime? Defamation by calling Modi a thief. The trial was carried out in Modi’s home state of Gujarat — controlled by the BJP — and led to Gandhi sentenced to two years of prison, the exact amount of time to disqualify him from parliament. The arrest of Rahul Gandhi, effectively banishing him from political life, is a clear indication of the democratic backsliding in India. Across the country, media outlets are under attack and opposition figures are jailed. All this stands in sharp contrast of both Modi’s comment of India being the mother of democracy and Biden’s initiative to strengthen global democracy.

As the United States seeks to strengthen ties with India, it should consider taking steps to pressure India to refrain from undermining its democratic institutions. A strategic partnership should not come at the cost of national values. Senators should consider how the US

can shape its alliance with India to ensure that it does not strengthen an increasingly illiberal country.

NDAA – National Defense Authorization Act, an act renewed by Congress annually that authorizes defense spending.

Congressional Action

Congress has been largely supportive of strengthening ties with India. Congress’s **National Defense Authorization Act of 2023 (NDAA)**, a must-pass bill that authorizes defense spending each year, included an enhancement of the defense partnership with India. It authorizes intelligence sharing, drones, fourth and fifth generation aircraft, 5G, cyber-capabilities, and more (Congress 2022). The most important part of the act was the move to waive sanctions against India for its purchase of Russian defense hardware. Essentially, the United States is willing to carve out an exemption to its stance against Russia to win India’s partnership. Thus, India may still purchase Russian hardware and other goods even as it receives technological support and military support from the United States.

Outside of legislation, lawmakers have expressed concerns about the US preferential treatment of India and have engaged in boycotts and petitions to raise awareness of the continuing human rights violation and democratic backsliding. Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, and Ilhan Omar are among the many Democratic representatives who boycotted Modi’s address to Congress in June 2023 (Ray 2023). On the Senate side, only Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) has publicly accused Modi of issues regarding backsliding and human rights violations. He has encouraged the White House to engage in discussions of how to resolve these concerns with Modi (Ray 2023). Some senators such as John Cornyn (R-TX) and Mark Warner (D-VA) have criticized India for not taking a firm stance against Russia (The Wire Staff 2023). Though individual legislators have expressed concerns for various stances taken by India, the support for strengthening US-India ties remain largely bipartisan.

Other Policy Action

The Executive Branch – the primary diplomatic arm of the United States – has been very proactive in bolstering ties with India. Starting with President Bush, the executive branch has seen India as an upcoming player on the world stage worthy of being courted. The Civil Nuclear Deal drafted in 2005 authorized US nuclear energy trade with India while the US-India Economic and Financial Partnership of 2010 improved relations relating to trade and investment (Council on Foreign Relations 2023). Starting in 2010 with President Obama, the US has held a strategic dialogue with India every single year to discuss issues of defense and the economy. Since 2018, India has been considered a major defense partner of the US due to a treaty signed in 2015 allowing for cooperation on



President Obama and Prime Minister Modi discussing a new nuclear and defense agreement.

Reuters

emerging defense tech. In short, the last four administration have each taken subsequent steps to strengthen ties between the two countries. However, it was not until the Russian invasion of Ukraine that India's reliability as a strategic partner is called into question. However, the White House remains firmly aligned with bolstering ties with India.

IDEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS

India paid nearly \$5.5 billion to gain access to Russian S-400 surface-to-air missiles

Conservative View

Conservatives prioritize national security and will focus on whether the US-India relationship advances national security interests. Thus, conservatives are more concerned about India's continued stance of non-alignment, especially as it pertains to Russia. Many conservatives worry that India will benefit from defense support from the US while enabling and empowering American adversaries through trade and defense deals. Historically, conservatives have been willing to take punitive actions against countries that violate US interests, including allies. The US decided to sanction Turkey, a NATO ally, for its purchase of Russian S-400 surface-to-air missiles despite existing US sanctions (Duetsch Welles 2018). Hence, conservatives are willing to act against countries that violate US sanctions.

A situation where India takes a position counter to the US may see conservatives moving to quickly to take punitive action such as sanctions or revocation of defense agreements. However, conservatives are mindful that India is a critical ally of the US in the region.

Liberal View

Liberals are also concerned with India's non-alignment, but the most pressing issue for them is the violation of human rights and erosion of democratic norms in India. In boycotting Modi's address to Congress in June of 2023, many progressive Democrats have voiced concern about the US lack of regard for human rights violations in India (Ray 2023). By showering Modi with new defense agreements and tech sharing treaties, they fear that he may be emboldened to continue India's path towards an illiberal democracy. It is critical to note that even among liberals, there is a divide over these issues.

Some liberals argue that the US has no choice but to support India due to its strategic importance. If the US pushes India too far, it can choose to align with America's adversary, thus destroying the current Indo-Pacific strategy. However, many progressives are arguing that the United States should do more to put pressure on the Modi



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez announcing her boycott of Narendra Modi's speech to Congress. She is joined by her fellow progressive Democrats.

Associated Press

government to fix its human rights issues if it wants deeper ties with the US.

CAATSA – *The Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act of 2017 that create a framework for sanctions against countries who purchase weapons or other resource from one of America’s adversaries. The four adversaries include Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.*

Indonesia’s \$1.14 deal with Russia was seen as a CAATSA violation by the US but India’s \$5.5 billion deal was exempted.

AREAS OF DEBATE

This part of the briefing will provide a quick overview of the potential policies that the US Senate should consider. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather a springboard for you to conduct research.

Revoke CAATSA Exemption

The Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA) was passed by a Republican-controlled Congress and signed into law by President Trump as an authorization to impose punitive economic sanctions onto countries and individuals that violate existing US-imposed sanctions (Congress 2017). However, India has been an outlier in terms of skirting US retribution. During the Trump administration, India violated US sanctions in the purchase of \$5.2 billion worth of Russian S-400 surface to air missiles and 9 million barrels of Iranian oil (Deutsch Welles 2018). President Trump threatened India with sanctions, but ultimately chose not to follow through.

The Biden administration, with Congressional support, decided to exempt India from CAATSA regulation relating to India’s purchase of S-400 weapons from Russia (Miglani 2021). It was argued that the strategic partnership was more important than punitive sanctions. With the passage of the NDAA in 2022, the US lost an economic tool that could potentially be used as leverage in negotiations. However, should India violate the CAATSA provision again, Congress can always revoke the exemption for India. The primary question concerning this tool is exactly how permissive the US ought to be of India’s partnership with adversary countries such as Russia.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Calls for CAATSA exemption have come from both sides of the aisle, primarily because cultivating the relationship with India to counter China is a bipartisan priority. Still, there have been instances where the US have chosen to enact CAATSA against partners who were planning to strengthen ties with Russia. For instance, the Trump administration had threatened CAATSA sanctions against Indonesia for its plan to buy Russian SU-35 fighter jets forcing the country to back down (Greenlees 2018).

Conservatives would see economic sanctions to deter India from maintaining its friendly relationship with Russia. Still, based on past conservative support for keeping the CAATSA exemption, conservatives might argue that the cost of India’s purchase of

Russian weapons and use of Russian oil does not outweigh the benefit of the alliance. Hence, it is not necessary to invoke CAATSA. Senators should look to past decisions to sanction allies and other partners to determine how much leeway the US should permit.

Liberals could look beyond CAATSA and see economic sanctions more broadly as a potential solution to force India to address human rights abuses and religious freedom violation. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), established by President Clinton in 1998, has recommended sanctions against India four years in a row due to its continued suppression of religious freedom among its Muslim population (Al Jazeera Staff 2023). Using a sanction framework like CAATSA may be helpful to applying pressure on Modi's government.

Australia paid \$368 billion to access US nuclear submarine technology.

Withhold Key Defense Technology

Despite India's request, the United States has refrained from sharing its most sensitive technologies. For years, India has asked the US for sensitive technology related to nuclear submarines, only to be repeatedly denied (Unnithan 2021). The US decided that the technology was safer in the hands of Australia, a member of **AUKUS Trilateral agreement**, than with India. However, following the state visit by Prime Minister Modi, the chairs of the US Senate India Caucus, Mark Warner (D-VA) and John Cornyn (R-TX), introduced legislation that would reduce the time it takes to share defense tech with India. This bill has faced steep opposition in Congress.

Many congressional members argue that India is trying to have the privileges of being a US ally without the responsibilities (Brunnstrom 2023). A potential method to force Indian compliance would revolve around negotiating what type of defense tech should be held back and under what conditions would they be released. In doing so, the US would gain a political bargaining chip with India.

AUKUS – a trilateral security pact between Australia, the UK, and the US to strengthen security in the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

There is bipartisan consensus that the US should take precautions to safeguard its sensitive technology from India, even if it is rapidly becoming a defense partner (Brunnstrom 2023). There are differences in how the US should approach tech sharing with India. For instance, conservatives might prefer to impose restrictions on India that prevents any addition of Indian IP to the shared tech (Brunnstrom 2023). On the other hand, liberals might prefer to use access to tech as a bargaining chip for improved human rights. Both sides of the aisle will have to agree on where to draw the line on defense tech sharing with India. This is because the President does not have the power to unilaterally decide which tech can be shared. Congress must set a limit and do it quickly.

Coordinate with Allies to Pressure India



Picture of the Quad nations and their leaders at the Quad Summit in 2022.

Asia Society

India's appearance as the power broker of the emerging Indo-Pacific order is, to some extent, illusory. The United States may need India in its strategy to counter China, but India also needs the US and its Quad partners — Australia and Japan — for national security as well. The Quad partnership, despite its lack of a formal military agreement, is critical to deterring Chinese expansion in the region (Miller 2021). India appreciates the flexibility the partnership offers since it still allows for India to partner with its fellow Quad members on vaccine distribution, climate change tech, and defense (Miller 2021). Thus, the US can coordinate dialogue with the other members of the Quad to increase pressure on India.

There is also increasing signs of strain on India-Russia relations as the war in Ukraine continues. India is turning to the US for weapons because Russia not only has fallen behind in arms shipment due to sanctions but is providing subpar weapons compared to those of the US (Carafano 2023). Hence, India's pivot may give the US the upper hand in future negotiations as the country looks Westward. Senators should consider collaborating with allies to increase pressure on India should they want stronger ties with the West.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

Both conservatives and liberals want to push India towards accepting a defense pact that would involve all the responsibilities coming with US alliance. However, India has remained steadfast against the idea. Conservatives may seek to utilize the existing Quad framework to extract more concessions from India. Likewise, progressives may also want to push hard to gain India's commitment to uphold human rights and protect democracy. However, centrists on both sides such as Joe Biden, may prefer the status quo due to fears that India may withdraw from these security frameworks if pushed too hard.

Bolster Economic and Defense Partnerships

This option is a more accelerated version of the status quo. Some senators such as Warner and Cornyn want an acceleration of tech sharing and increased economic cooperation. The argument is that the U.S can reduce India's dependence on countries such as Russia, Iran, and China by increasing energy exports, tech transfers, and arms sales that can meet India's growing needs (Brunnstorm 2023). There is increasing evidence that the US can increase supply chain resiliency shifting some technological manufacturing to India (Taneja and Zakaria 2023). As the US seek to shift its supply chains out of China, India is the only viable alternative. Proponents of this path would say that concerns about India's non-alignment, religious intolerance, or democratic backsliding should not inhibit the

The US overtook China to become India's largest trading partner in fiscal year 2023.

development of India-US relations. This solution would prioritize the gains in security and economic growth over the concerns that have been raised by congressional members.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

The solution is broadly popular among centrists, with many Democrats and Republican voting to increase defense partnerships with India through the reauthorization of the NDAA (Congress 2022). However, progressive Democrats may be hesitant to fully support this solution since it does nothing to address concerns about human rights and democratic backsliding. Instead, their concern would be the unintentional empowerment of an increasingly authoritarian regime. On the other hand, some conservatives may be wary about sharing technology and defense knowledge to a country that famously plays both sides of intense global conflicts.

Shifting Focus from India

Although India remains an important ally for the US, it is far from being the only ally in the Indo-Pacific region. As tensions in the Taiwan strait heats up, allies such as the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Japan are essential to countering China in the Pacific (Widakuswara 2023). Already these four nations along with South Korea form a crescent buffer zone that completely encircles China's eastern flank, cutting off access to the Pacific Ocean. The US has pursued a strategy of containment in the eastern front, one that does not require Indian participation. Moreover, AUKUS has overseen providing security through the patrolling of international waters with its fleet of nuclear submarines with no support from India (Brunnstorm 2023). All this indicates that while India is an important of US's strategy in the region, it is not the only focal point.

This strategy would entail a de-emphasis of India as being central to a broader strategy to counter China. For instance, the US could seek closer ties with emerging manufacturing hubs such as Bangladesh and Vietnam to ease the dependency on Indian and Chinese manufacturing. Moreover, the US can leverage existing partnership such as AUKUS to fulfill some of its security goals and bypassing India.

Political Perspectives on this Solution

This is a largely unexplored solution that has yet to be considered on either side. As of right now, a growing number of lawmakers are reconsidering the US' commitment to the partnership with India. Chris van Hollen (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) have all encouraged the White House to take a firmer stance against India's shift towards illiberal democracy and address human rights concerns (Jha 2023). If India's human rights violations continue to pile up, it is not unreasonable to



Image of a nuclear submarine shared with Australia.

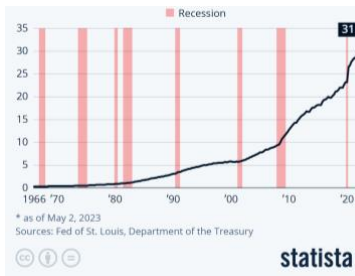
The Guardian

expect more progressive senators to back away from supporting closer ties with India. On the other hand, conservatives who are currently supportive of the alliance may be turned away by India's lack of commitment in the future. Thus, this option is a possibility for senators who are concerned with the long-term stability of the alliance with India and are in search of a reasonable alternative.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The United States Senate can ratify treaties negotiated. It alone does not have the ability to control budgetary matters in Congress. If you choose to pursue a policy that requires increased funding, consider how it will play in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. As monetary values get discussed, please also be mindful of your Senator's stance on increased government funding. If your Senator is a fiscal conservative, they may refuse to support legislation that authorizes large amount of funding for instance.

Besides considering your positions, try keeping your resolutions and bills realistic. The US can fund new initiatives in three ways: raising taxes, reallocating funds, or borrowing. If you choose to raise taxes, be specific on what type of tax and the magnitude of the tax increase. Be realistic and consider whether you face political backlash for this decision. If you choose reallocation, be clear about where the money is coming from, how much money, and where it is going to. Finally, if you choose to borrow be mindful of the ever-increasing debt which sits at \$32.5 trillion USD or 125% of GDP (US Department of the Treasury 2023). These are all considerations that must take place if you seek to include funding in your legislation.



The US debt stands at \$31.5 trillion as of May 2023 when this graph was published. It is now \$1 trillion higher.

Statistica

CONCLUSION

The rapid shift in relations between the US and India is an indication of a larger change global geopolitics. As China becomes the next US rival, India has risen to become one of the most important partners of the US. Each successive administration since George W. Bush has sought to strengthen the US-India relationship in the hope of countering Chinese influence in the region. However, with each agreement, the US is conceding more of its coercion power and potentially compromising its values to make the relationship work. From exempting India from sanctions to ignoring its human rights abuses, the US has prioritized a good relationship with India above all else. However, there are those that question whether this approach is sustainable in the long-term.

At the heart of issue lies the delicate balancing act of forming practical alliance while seeking to promote intangible ideals of

democracy. How the United States approaches its relationship with India can serve as an indication to the rest of the world of how strongly the US is willing to promote the ideals it espouses. While there is widespread support for a stronger US-India relationship, there is plenty of debate to be had about the boundaries of such a partnership. Senators should seek to clearly demarcate potential red lines that should not be crossed. As this is an emerging issue, the stance of your Senator may not be available yet. If so, look to how they approached partnerships with other countries. Have they critiqued NATO members for not paying their fair share or chastise Turkey for being too pro-Russia? Based on some of these responses, one can infer about how they would approach drafting a framework for US and India. The time is now to get this right as the US seeks to gain a new ally in South Asia while holding steadfast to its ideals of human rights and democracy.

GUIDE TO FURTHER RESEARCH

This briefing should be a springboard into research for the topic. Delegates should seek out credible sources such as mainstream news, think tanks, and government publications while being mindful of the bias presented with each source. Mainstream news can include: The New York Times, Foreign Affairs Magazine, The Diplomat, The Wall Street Journal and more. Think Tanks can include the Council on Foreign Relations, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Human Rights Watch to name a few. Finally, government sources contain excellent information on new legislation and policies pursued by both governments.

GLOSSARY

AUKUS – A trilateral security pact between Australia, the UK, and the US to increase joint security in the Indo-Pacific region and counter Chinese expansion in the South China Sea.

CAATSA – The Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act of 2017, an act dedicated to creating a framework that authorizes sanctions against countries that purchase weapons or other critical resources from America’s adversaries. In this case, Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.

The Quad – The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, a group comprising Australia, India, Japan, and the United States dedicated to advancing mutual security and economic interests in the Indo-

Pacific. Note that unlike NATO, if a member country is attacked, this partnership does not require the other member countries to take military action.

NDAA – National Defense Authorization Act, an act renewed annually by Congress that authorizes defense spending in the US

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