

The Emerging Strategic Bilateralism between Washington and New Delhi: An Overview of the Trump Era

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Abstract

Strategic bilateralism between Washington and New Delhi has become a permanent feature of American South Asian policy which reached its zenith under the Trump administration. The two-sided strategic interaction under the Trump-Modi diplomacy witnessed an unprecedented growth of Indo-US bilateralism. Both countries not only multiplied the general areas of bilateral collaboration in the fields of security and defense, but the government authorities under Trump and Modi administrations also decided to uphold each other against common security threats. In this way, an alliance for countering China's economic rise and Beijing's growing trade relations with Islamabad has resulted in the Indo-US strategic partnership parallel to the Sino-Pak economic alliance. Beyond South Asia, the strategically collaborative bilateralism between the US and India became an undeniable feature of global power politics. The American pursuit of keeping India as a close strategic partner has been considered a significant move of the Trump administration in Asian power politics. This article thus studies Indo-US bilateral ties and their growth under the Trump regime.

Keywords: Strategic Bilateralism, Indo-US Relations, Trump-Modi Diplomacy, South Asian Politics, American Foreign Policy

1. Introduction:

Bilateral relations between India and the United States have become a gravitational point of South Asian politics. Both sides witnessed an era of unprecedented growth under a close strategic interaction because President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi who decided to strengthen the

foundations of their cooperative diplomatic contacts parallel to exploring various avenues for a strategic partnership. Trump's objective of keeping New Delhi close to Washington resulted in an increased strategic bilateralism under Trump-Modi diplomacy's broader framework, which was translated as principled or conservative realism.ⁱ Trump administration's vision for rationally managing the foreign policy was mainly informed by the realist school of thought because Trump emphasized the core national security issues of the United States. According to the changing geostrategic landscape of world politics, further ideations for accurately arranging foreign relations altered the existing formats of Washington's bilateralism with the pair of South Asian nuclear powers. Trump's geopolitical calculations' main focus convinced the administration to pay significant attention to Indian role in world politics. Instead of considering the impacts of Modi's role in its home region, the American state authorities deeply observed India's potential in world politics. The formal acknowledgement of India in Washington's geopolitical priorities was mentioned in the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America. In 2017, the NSS under the Trump administration emphasized the Indian role in South Asia's regional and extra-regional affairs.ⁱⁱ India's standing beyond its domestic region highlighted New Delhi's bigger role in the Indo-Pacific region which covers the areas between the west coast of India and the western shores of the US. In addition to highlighting the Indian role in its home region, the Trump administration calculated New Delhi's significant position beyond South Asia in the NSS 2017.ⁱⁱⁱ

An overview of the Trump administration's impacts on the broader South Asian policy reflects a focus on India. The dramatic changes in the strategic interaction between the two countries intensified the regional security environment of the nuclearized subcontinent. Apart from NSS 2017, Washington's subsequent formal documents concerning American foreign engagements considered India an emerging leading global power that could be a close defense partner and a strategic confidante. It further added India into the

quadrilateral alliance with Australia and Japan in the Asia Pacific region. The Indian specific designs of American South Asian policy declared India as a Major Defense Partner (MDP)^{iv} of Washington in 2016.^v The same year witnessed another bilateral strategic initiative in the form of Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) for using the military facilities of each other against the common security threats.^{vi}

Prior to this, the two countries had also signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), extending the bilateral strategic collaboration between two governments in 2002.^{vii} A major change in the bilateral ties occurred under the Bush-Singh diplomacy when the strategic communities from both sides explored new avenues of cooperation. Washington and New Delhi signed Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) in 2004 for the expansion of cooperative ties in three selected areas: “civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programs, and high-technology trade.”^{viii} The evolving patterns of Washington-New Delhi defense cooperation concluded a civil nuclear agreement in 2005 which was completed in 2008 as a part of the larger Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative.^{ix} The Obama administration continued the India-inclined policy of Bush. The then-Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and Indian External Affairs Minister, Shri Krishna, met in Washington in June 2010 for “India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue.” For the persuasion of a global strategic partnership, the two countries under Obama and Singh administrations developed a consensus for supporting each other in international strategic affairs.^x In this way, the aim of strengthening the cooperative relations in the fields of defence and security initiated by the Bush administration was expanded through multiplying the bilateral strategic measures in diverse areas.

The Trump administration showed its commitment to stretching its strategic bilateralism in world politics’ territorial and maritime affairs. The government officials from both sides heightened their expectations for exploring new avenues and directions in the military domain against common threats

belonging to China and Beijing's pleasant economic ties with Islamabad. After admitting India's inseparable and significant role in global power politics, the NSS under Trump showed Washington's alacrity for supporting New Delhi in the larger Indian Ocean security framework. Apart from signing an Indian specific version of Communication and Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement (COMCASA) parallel to providing Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) status to New Delhi in 2018, the Trump administration signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) in bilateral ministerial dialogue in 2020.^{xi} The evolving strategic collaboration in the military domain resulted in a dramatic change under Trump-Modi diplomacy's shadows. The Trump administration's attempts to widen the areas of multiple collaborations cemented in a greater policy of de-hyphenation. The de-hyphenation policy started carrying a strict configuration of American bilateralism without considering its impacts on the other nations. The dramatic changes in the two-sided strategic bilateralism became a responsible source for undermining a stable regional South Asian strategic landscape vision.

Thus, the presence of diplomatically cooperative and strategically collaborative bilateral values between the world's largest and oldest democracies became a permanent feature of nuclearized subcontinent. Therefore, this article explores Trump-Modi diplomacy that allowed both nations to augment their bilateral strategic cooperation during Trump and Modi administrations. The article argues that the Trump administration increased cooperation with India in the military domain in particular. Furthermore, the leading patterns of the strategic bilateralism between Washington and New Delhi resulted in a de-hyphenation policy in the South Asian region. After theoretically reviewing American foreign policy in the Trump regime under the theoretical domain of conservative realism, the article provides an analytical survey of the Trump era by examining its India-specific strategic bilateralism. The evaluation of the strategic collaboration in diverse dimensions has its genesis in the American South Asian engagement,

therefore, a brief survey of Washington's engagement in the South is required to understand the growth of Washington-New Delhi strategic relations under Trump.

2. Trump and South Asian De-Hyphenation:

The ongoing strategic convergence between Washington and New Delhi grew unprecedentedly under the Trump and Modi administrations because the leading architectures of national security strategies from both sides attempted to widen the bilateral collaboration in the strategic domains. An increased format of high-level bilateral engagement in the form of Trump-Modi nexus explored various mutual avenues by considering India as a "natural strategic partner" and a closed diplomatic supporter in global power politics. The unprecedented growth of bilateral strategic engagement with New Delhi is an essential feature of Washington's South Asian engagement in which the American state officials started treating both nuclear powers on a separate basis. The persuasion of separate bilateral relations with New Delhi and Pakistan resulted in US-Pakistan and US-India relations on a parallel basis in the presence of protracted India-Pakistan conflict.^{xiii} The Trump administration altered the general calibrations of American South Asian engagement by modifying the South Asian strategy's ongoing formats. It was based on Washington's geopolitical calculations linked to China's economic rise and Beijing's confrontation with New Delhi. Moreover, India's emerging role in the regional and extra-regional affairs has raised New Delhi's potential status in the American policy circles. The growing Indo-Russian defence collaborations equivalent to multiplying strategic initiatives between New Delhi and Washington have further led India to increase its trading ties with China. An exceptional value of multidimensional ties with the UN Security Council's five permanent members has increased India's significance in the American regional policy for the nuclearised subcontinent. In response to the increasing Indian role in the global political landscape, the foreign policy decision-makers of the US emphasized New Delhi under President Trump and developed bilateral ties in the fields of

security, defence, counterterrorism, and intelligence sharing. The cooperation in the mainstream security and defence areas further shaped the two-sided bilateral collaborations in various other domains of technology, space, and cyberspace.^{xiii}

The multi-layered strategic cooperation between both nations is rooted in the conception of de-hyphenation, which means de-hyphenating Washington's bilateral relations with New Delhi and Islamabad in a parallel sequence. It is a strategic and political attempt of Washington to treat both strategic contestants of South Asia on a separate basis without considering their conflicted ties flagged in the toxic diplomatic values.^{xiv} The de-hyphenating policy's formal declaration for the achievement of major American geopolitical objective of the South Asian role appeared in 2007 when the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, voiced the policy for separate bilateralism in the nuclearised subcontinent. Adopting disparate standards for both South Asian allies of the war on terror was a way of conceiving New Delhi and Islamabad in different cooperative silos. While keeping in view the merits and demerits of each in the broader American South Asian policy, the leading US state officials under different political administrations started observing nuclear powers of the subcontinent in contrast to their bilateral contacts. The separate bilateralism with both nuclear powers declared Pakistan a close US ally in the global war on terror and India a vital strategic partner in world politics.^{xv}

The initial phase of the de-hyphenation policy started in the Clinton administration when the confrontational designs of hostility between New Delhi and Islamabad compelled the two-sided governments to acquire nuclear weapon capabilities. In addition to the nuclear weapon capabilities, the global counterterror campaign's commencement and South Asian directions engaged both nuclear rivals with Washington. The rising Chinese influence in the South Asian region through finalising various trade agreements with Islamabad introduced Beijing's vision of expanding its sphere of influence in the surrounding regions. The rising Chinese influence created an

active Sino-Pak economic cooperation that pushed New Delhi and Washington towards a close strategic partnership. It was a reflection of US de-hyphenating policy, an attempt of dealing with New Delhi and Islamabad in contrasting ways. The three main reasons behind this strategic shift are rising Indian importance in world politics as a democratic state; India's status as a potential market for multiple trading and business opportunities; and New Delhi's inherent capability for counterweighting China.^{xvi} In this way, a regional policy of separate bilateralism structured on the logics of de-hyphenation in South Asia between the two nuclear rivals, based on "Aristotelian Approach where justice meant to each as per their virtues and assets free of each other."^{xvii}

The imprints of global geopolitical competition between the US and China created new strategic commonalities between the two nations because New Delhi raised its significance in Washington due to its Chinese counterbalancing ambitions. New Delhi's growing concerns over the rising Chinese role in South Asia's territorial and maritime affairs let Washington and New Delhi's bilateralism reach its zenith. The increasing level of strategic convergence between the US and India witnessed a dramatic change under Trump-Modi diplomacy. The reciprocal visit of the two countries' leaders symbolized an enhanced bilateral interaction in the multi-layered defence cooperation. Thus, the main political objective between the leaders of both nations was each other's support on the regional and extra-regional affairs. While upholding its agenda of regulating global security and strategic affairs, the US decided to support its major strategic partners where India acquired an undeniable role in the South Asian region. Due to the central strategic challenge of China's economic rise, Trump and Modi administrations fostered the bilateral cooperation.^{xviii} In addition to the aims of creating "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," the updated context of Washington's policy observed China as a potential strategic competitor. The American geopolitical designs of the Indo-Pacific approach added India to deepening quadrilateral strategic collaboration with Japan and Australia.^{xix} Due to India's emerging role in South and Southeast Asian region, American regional designs

declared India one of the few prominent dimensions of Washington's foreign engagement.

Consequently, the South Asian version of an increased Indo-US strategic partnership created American de-hyphenating approach's broader framework. The formal implementation of the de-hyphenation policy was Trump's initial plan for acknowledging Indian essential role in the global world politics in which India has been accepted as a major defence partner in the National Defense Authorization Act for the fiscal year of 2017. It declared India globally the closest partner in the fields of defence, trade and technology transfer.^{xx} The Trump administration was strong-minded in focusing the Asian power structure in the mainstream agenda of American foreign policy where India stands above all in playing a leading role against China. The Indian leading role as a balancing power in Asia against China's potential rise was the fundamental point of attraction for the Trump administration.^{xxi}

3. Trump's Conservative Realism:

Under the Trump administration, the American foreign policy was a reflection of realist ideas backed by conservative realism, which compelled Washington to redefine its position in world politics. The promotion of conservative ideas in the realist-driven principles of world politics was an attempt of American leaders, starting from the Bush administration's decision to launch a global war on terror, to focus on the US position in the emerging new order of the international system. Consequently, the tragic incident of 9/11 changed the world's entire structure by initiating a global counterterror campaign against the covertly working non-state actors across the world, Washington intensified its global engagement. The post-war on terror world started witnessing a different change in the geopolitical landscape of global politics. Several factors including Putin's position on Ukraine, China's rising influential role in East Asia, and the rise of radical Jihadist networks from the Middle East fabricated a different strategic environment. These developments in the global political

landscape forced American state officials to redefine their national security interests in the world of new geopolitical attributes. In the world of post-globalised and post-twenty-first century realities, the United States was compelled to communicate its strong standing in international politics to focus on its allies and potential rivals.^{xxiii} In response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the United States preferred to adopt a principle of acting militarily in world politics to defend core national security interests.

American oscillation between the realist and idealist interpretations of the international political affairs compelled the US leaders to find a right balance in the global geopolitical competition of great powers. Washington's leading conservative policymaking circles crafted a different US position beyond the recurring debates emphasising the national versus international priorities.^{xxiii} The domination of conservative thoughts on American foreign policy's mainstream structure resulted in three debates: conservative internationalism, conservative non-interventionism, and conservative realism. The first idea in the foreign policy advocates an active US role in world politics, parallel to upholding the liberal internationalist order. The second concept supports American retrenchment in the world while preferring a policy of strong national defense; the 'staying close to home' vs. 'considering the alliances as a burden' perspective. The third concept emphasizes an appropriate American response to the important shifts in the international geopolitical order.^{xxiv}

The predominance of conservative realism in Washington's foreign engagement under the Trump foreign policy shaped the "America First" foreign policy.^{xxv} The Trump regime was strong-minded in adopting US global engagement based on security interest more than normative concerns. By shaping foreign policy on realist grounds, Washington's less-liberal approach diminished the promotion of democracy and human rights in foreign policy priorities.^{xxvi} Trump's approach for managing core national security interests was inherited in the broader agenda of Washington's global engagement on four

fronts. Such a way of managing foreign relations on the conservative realist domain is widely considered a Trumpian doctrine due to its diverse repetition in foreign policy's existing framework. The Trump doctrine refers to a particular visualisation of world politics through an altered brand of foreign policy. Under the predominance of Trumpism in American foreign relations, American President attempted to replace "randomness with purpose, ideology with strategy, and chaos with peace."^{xxvii} An anti-liberal internationalist approach of Donald Trump was based on disengaging the US from the failing post-Cold War international system. The varying patterns of the debates on Trump's isolationist or non-isolationist behaviour are synthesised on his realist way of protecting American interests beyond the humanitarian and moralistic grounds.^{xxviii}

The prime considerations of Trump's foreign policy were drafted in the NSS 2017, which translated the core premises of American foreign engagement and its South Asian directions. India has emerged as a potential state for strategic collaborations. The combination of economic and strategic support to New Delhi was a preoccupation of conservative realism on the American Indian-inclined South Asian policy. The prevalence of conservative realist thoughts on an India-inclined South Asian policy under the Trump administration led Washington to extending military, defence, and balancing of the power to preserve peace. Under Trump, Washington preferred to strengthen the basis of its security and defence cooperation with India to "formulate a comprehensive, enduring, and mutually beneficial defence partnership."^{xxix} On a reciprocal basis, Trump's Indian romanticism was based on a rational explanation of American geopolitical interests, which were equally appreciated and applauded by the Modi government. The varying levels of Trump's strategic bilateralism with New Delhi resulted in de-hyphenating India and Pakistan's patterns in American greater South Asian policy. The unprecedented growth of bilateral strategic cooperation further introduced various strategic collaborations between Washington and New Delhi in global world politics.

4. An Unprecedented Strategic Bilateralism

An overwhelming wave of American unprecedented strategic bilateralism in South Asia preferred India as the most suitable state to achieve its global geopolitical interests. The two-sided strategic communities occupied the mainstream foreign policy decision-making circles of Washington under the Trump administration because various meetings between Trump and Modi at different regional and global platforms shaped the close diplomatic collaboration of two governments in defence and security. In addition to different security and defence cooperation ascendancy, the leaders involved in the foreign policy decision-making mechanism convinced their respective governments to develop strong ties of two-sided intelligence communities. The pursuit of collaborating in several military domains let the political authorities under Trump and Modi combine their strategic lengths against the rising China. The varying dimensions of China's increasing economic power in the international system were a primary force behind Modi-Trump diplomacy. The leading architectures of national security strategies from both sides considered China a potential threat to their global standings.^{xxx} The leading political authorities from both sides were forced to reexamine their fundamental frameworks of foreign relations against China's rising role.

President Donald Trump preferred to inaugurate a new Indo-US relation era under a multi-layered strategic interaction while meeting Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in the White House after assuming presidency in January 2017. During the meeting, both nations' leaders agreed to alter the main course of their foreign relations.^{xxxii} In the first meeting, both democratic nations' leaders selected various potential areas for keeping Washington and New Delhi in a close alliance. Multidimensional strategic bilateralism between the two nations widened in defence, maritime security, and counterterrorism.^{xxxiii} The cooperation in the three key areas multiplied in different dimensions and resulted in various bilateral strategic interaction domains for the achievement of mutual geopolitical objectives against common security

threats. In this way, the leading patterns of strategic cooperation between the governments under Donald Trump and Narendra Modi witnessed the following principal changes:

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is mainly known as intergovernmental security forum consisting of US, India, Japan, and Australia against the potential common threats in China. Washington's strategic considerations for the broader Asian region shaped a different direction in the Asia Pacific region under Trump. During the 2017 ASEAN 30th and 31st Summits, US-leaders initiated dialogues with the prime ministers of Australia, Japan, and India that were considered a quadrilateral group of like-minded nations with common strategic patterns.^{xxxiii} This alliance of three governments under Trump combined four states' common concerns against China's economic rise. To place China at a disadvantageous position in the broader Asia Pacific region, the Trump administration marked the quadrilateral alliance a larger Asia-Pacific Alliance comparable to NATO. In this way, the secretary of state (Mike Pompeo) under Trump's leadership dubbed this multilateral military alliance an Asian NATO.^{xxxiv} The scope of the dialogues between the four military allies was discussed between Trump and Modi in the 2018 G20 Buenos Aires Summit when Modi said that the conventional foundations of a naval alliance between Japan, America, and India is 'JAI' which means success in Hindi.^{xxxv} The JAI was a reference to the trilateral naval collaboration to address potential security threats originating from China in the Asia Pacific region.

Malabar Naval Exercises: An informal quadrilateral strategic connection among Washington, New Delhi, Tokyo, and Canberra is paralleled by the multilateral naval exercise in the Pacific Ocean. Under the American umbrella, the Indian and Japanese navies included Singapore and Australia as non-permanent members to the annual naval exercises. New Delhi's decision for staying out of China-led wider regional economic integration model based on multilateral connections with the world's biggest trading bloc has made India the

closest nation to the United States. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) with its fifteen members has been considered the most influential tool for strengthening the Chinese role in the Asia Pacific region.^{xxxvi} In this way, the combined visions of countering China dragged Trump and Modi towards increased cooperation in the form of various naval exercises. The inclusion of Australia in the trilateral naval collaboration in 2020 was also done to keep the Pacific region out of Chinese influence. US Deputy Secretary of State, Stephen Edward Biegun, expressed Trump administration's interests in Washington's position on its military alliances: "The quadrilateral naval collaboration [is] an essential feature of Asian politics which should be more regularised and more formalised between the participating nations."^{xxxvii} Further meetings of two-sided naval authorities were arranged under the Trump-Modi diplomacy for the enhancement of maritime cooperation under the US-India 2+2 Intersessional and Maritime Security Dialogue.^{xxxviii}

Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership: The reciprocal visits of Trump and Modi for strengthening bilateral strategic ties emphasized the formulation of new concrete shapes of India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership which was initiated in 2013 under the Obama-Singh diplomacy. Donald Trump and Narendra Modi's meetings focused on deepening defence and security cooperation beyond maritime affairs. The updated dimensions of Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership started covering the fields of "information sharing, joint cooperation; exchange of military liaison personnel; advanced training and expanded exercises between all services and special forces; closer collaboration on co-development and co-production of advanced defence components, equipment and platforms."^{xxxix} During a joint meeting in February 2020, both nations' leaders further decided to attach their defence industries in the areas of mutual interests. State officials from Washington and New Delhi decided to advance collaboration between the US Department of Homeland Security and the Indian Ministry of Home affairs to revitalise Homeland Security Dialogue.^{xl} Political authorities under Trump and Modi preferred to

venerate their strategic partnership by structuring the Washington-New Delhi Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP) to increase progress parallel to calculating major accomplishments and exploring new areas for further joint ventures.^{xli}

STA-1 status to India: Trump administration provided Strategic Trade Authorization (STA-1) status to New Delhi and declared India the third most important country in the Asian region after Japan and South Korea. After becoming the third state in terms of receiving the STA-1 status from the US in the broader Asian political order in 2018, Washington made India the 37th country which is the recipient of STA-1 status in the world.^{xlii} The STA is part of the Export Control Reform exception license that the United States grants to specific countries. This license exception allows the US government to export controlled or dual-use items (or commonly known as sensitive technologies) to specific countries. In other words, the STA allows, under the export control regulations, the export of defined items to allies or certain friendly states without a specific license.^{xliii} The decision to place India in STA-I list resulted in New Delhi's access to defence-related material and hi-tech technology without licensing obstacles. The granting of STA-I status to India meant integrating American cutting-edge and sensitive defence technologies to India. The granting of STA-I status to New Delhi proclaimed India a close American strategic partner because India's addition in the STA-I list of 36 countries raised Indian significance in American global strategic planning. The first South Asian or the only South Asian state allowed to join a group of 36 states under the STA-I status improved Indian position among American allies like NATO partners. The abolition of the license approving process has not only reduced wastage of resources in a bilateral alliance, it has also fostered bilateral strategic interaction of the two states. By granting license-free access to India, Trump administration widened the bilateral defence trade relationship with India based on an expanded volume of Washington's export to New Delhi.

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA): The Indo-US strategic partnership also resulted in the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) in bilateral ministerial dialogue. The signing of BECA during a 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue meeting of American and Indian officials has been a milestone. The American Secretary of State (Mike Pompeo) and Secretary of Defense (Mark T. Esper) finalized the agreement in a meeting with their Indian counterparts. It was decided to provide India access to US satellites. The Indian Defense Minister (Rajnath Singh) and External Affairs Minister (Subrahmanyam Jaishankar) welcomed American authorities and signed BECA for the geospatial cooperation between two countries.^{xliv} The agreement signed on October 2020 between both sides' authorities is designed to facilitate New Delhi in sharing sensitive information and intelligence data, enabling India to enhance its military capabilities against the territorially adjoining nations. The finalising of intelligence sharing cooperation between Washington and New Delhi was a two-sided consensual measure for improving interoperability for both countries' armed forces.

The agreement is intended to maintain a bilateral exchange of mainly sensitive classified data which could be useful for various strategic objectives. The strategic areas of common interest between two countries have enabled New Delhi to improve its targeting and navigating capacities with US satellites' help. Apart from the satellites, sensitive information collected through different Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), reconnaissance aircraft, and aerostats will further empower Indian conventional forces. Mainstream geospatial information patterns would help Indian conventional forces to increase their situational awareness for the planning of offensive strikes against the adversarial nations mainly located in its home region. The substantial improvements in the monitoring and surveillance capabilities for designing conventional and nuclear strikes against the adversarial countries mainly located in its neighbourhood, will further facilitate Indian armed forces to advance their long-range navigation and missile targeting capabilities under an updated pattern of strategic interaction with the US.^{xlv}

5. Conclusion:

The ongoing cooperative relations in various defence fields between America and India has become an undeniable reality of international world politics. During the last four years of American South Asian engagement, Trump administration decided to rely on India's geopolitical potential heavily, and the leading decision-makers from Washington tried to use New Delhi as an active card for the achievement of core foreign policy goals linked to the countering of the emergence of potential competitors. In the list of potential states capable of countering the US global standing, China stands above all due to its rising global economic influence. Therefore, leaders from Washing and New Delhi adopted an anti-Chinese alliance to counter Beijing's global economic plans. Growing Sino-Pak relations economic cooperation was another source of worry for Washington. In this scenario, India was considered an appropriate player in regional and international affairs that could firmly stand against China and the Sino-Pak economic alliance. This has changed the geostrategic landscape of nuclearized subcontinent in which Sino-Pak economic alliance has created Indo-US strategic nexus. The geostrategic objective of countering China in its surrounding regions has led Washington to formulate different policy initiatives for its major allies, close strategic partners, and other diplomatic supporters from the Indo-Pacific region. For the achievement of its security and economic interests, Washington passed The Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) in 2018 with President Trump's approval.^{xlvi} The ARIA recognized the vital role of New Delhi and its strategic partnership with Washington. Apart from ARIA, the Trump administration kept New Delhi in its high priorities and commenced various strategic collaboration initiatives with the Modi government. The Trump-Modi diplomatic alliance was the motivating factor behind the two countries' alignment of strategic affairs.

Mutual strategic concerns of the US and India resulted in the augmentation of their strategic interaction in diverse fields,

however, without considering its impacts on other nations. Trump's strategic assistance during his Presidential tenure has improved New Delhi's position in the international system with respect to securing its memberships to multilateral export control regimes, and its position in American foreign policy has also become more prominent. India is now capable of enhancing its role in the nuclearised subcontinent. In the future, India will be able to stretch its strategic muscles in the territorial and maritime domains. With Trump's multidimensional strategic assistance to India, New Delhi will further aim to acquire a prominent position in world politics beyond South Asia through US defense equipment, which could potentially jeopardize South Asian region's security. The collaboration will allow New Delhi to meet its strategic objectives by implementing its hegemonic designs in the South Asian region. In short, with the help of the United States, India is capable of addressing its security problems mainly linked to the neighbouring states. However, US-India strategic bilateralism will adversely impact South Asian security environment where maintaining peace and stability has been a challenging task.

End Notes

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