

The Impact of Donald Trump's Election Victory on India-U.S. Relations: Opportunities and Strategic Benefits

Anchal¹, Dr. Wijeesh Ronit Saimon²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, St. John College, Agra, UP

²Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, St. John College, Agra, UP

Abstract

The bilateral relationship between the United States and India is expected to be considerably impacted by the re-election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2024. This article delves into the historical context of India-U.S. relations during Trump's first term, emphasising critical areas of collaboration such as energy, trade, and defence. It evaluates the potential advantages for India in the context of a Trump administration, with a particular emphasis on strategic partnerships, economic collaboration, and counterbalancing regional adversaries. Furthermore, it addresses potential obstacles that may result from Trump's immigration policies and protectionist policies. In conclusion, this analysis offers a perspective on how Trump's leadership could cultivate a more robust and reciprocal partnership between the two countries.

Keyword: US Election, Bilateral Relationship, INDO US Relation

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the relationship between India and the United States has undergone a substantial transformation, transitioning from mutual suspicion to a strategic partnership that is defined by shared economic interests and democratic values. The election of Donald Trump as President in 2016 was a critical juncture in this relationship, as his administration embraced a more assertive approach to global partnerships. It is imperative to examine the manner in which this will affect India-U.S. relations as Trump commences his second term following his re-election in 2024. The objective of this article is to conduct a thorough analysis of the potential advantages that India could accrue under Trump's leadership. It will concentrate on a variety of topics, including energy partnerships, defence cooperation, economy, and regional security dynamics. Moreover, it will examine the obstacles that may result from Trump's policies and the methods by which both countries can navigate these complexities in order to improve their bilateral relationships.

Historical Context of India-U.S. Relations

Early Relations: From Cold War to Liberalization

India and the United States have maintained a complex relationship since India's independence in 1947. During the Cold War era, India maintained closer ties with the Soviet Union while adopting a non-aligned stance (Khan, 2020). The U.S., on the other hand, viewed India with suspicion due to its socialist policies

and reluctance to align with Western powers. The liberalisation of India's economy in the early 1990s marked a significant turning point in bilateral relations, as economic reforms resulted in increased trade and investment flows between the two countries (Basu & Venkatesh, 2021). The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement signed in 2008 further solidified their partnership by facilitating civilian nuclear cooperation (Mohan & Singh, 2019).

The Trump Administration's First Term (2017-2021)

The relationship between the United States and India underwent a substantial transformation during Donald Trump's inaugural tenure. His administration prioritised strategic partnerships that were founded on mutual interests, rather than ideological alignments or historical connections (Kumar & Singh, 2022). During this time, the following were the most significant developments:

1. **Defense Cooperation:** The U.S.-India defence relationship was deepened substantially because of the escalation of military exercises and joint operations.
2. **Trade Relations:** Although disputes regarding tariffs and trade imbalances hindered bilateral trade, it achieved unprecedented levels of growth.
3. **Counterterrorism Efforts:** The Trump administration provided assistance to India in its endeavours to combat cross-border terrorism that originated in Pakistan (Raghavan & Gupta, 2020).

Strategic Benefits for India Under Trump 2.0

As Trump begins his second term, several strategic benefits are likely to emerge for India:

1. Enhanced Defense Cooperation

Defence cooperation has been one of the most significant aspects of U.S.-India relations. This partnership is anticipated to strengthen under Trump's leadership by:

- **Technology Transfers:** The Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) is one of the initiatives through which the United States has initiated the transfer of advanced military technologies to India. India is expected to maintain this trajectory, which will facilitate the modernisation of its military (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2023).
- **Joint Military Exercises:** The interoperability between Indian and U.S. forces has been enhanced through the implementation of regular joint military exercises, including Malabar and Yudh Abhyas. The operational readiness against prevalent hazards can be improved by increasing the frequency and complexity of these exercises. (Srinivasan & Choudhury, 2023).
- **Regional Security Frameworks:** The U.S., India, Japan, and Australia, collectively known as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), are committed to maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific region against Chinese aggression. A more robust Quad framework that emphasises collective security may result from Trump's re-election (Bansal & Mehta, 2022).

2. Economic Collaboration

Economic ties between India and the U.S. have grown significantly over recent years:

- **Trade Growth:** India's main trading partner is the United States, with bilateral trade surpassing \$150 billion annually by 2023 (Ministry of Commerce & Industry [MCI], 2023). Sectors including agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and information technology may experience additional expansion as a result of persistent emphasis on economic collaboration.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** The Trump administration has expressed a desire to boost foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, with a particular emphasis on the manufacturing sector, as

evidenced by initiatives such as "Make in India." This has the potential to increase India's manufacturing capabilities and generate employment opportunities (Kumar & Singh, 2022).

- **Digital Economy Partnerships:** There are opportunities for collaboration in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), and fintech, as both nations are concentrating on digital transformation (Nair & Ranjan, 2023).

3. Energy Partnerships

Energy security is a critical component of India-U.S. relations:

- **Diversification of Energy Sources:** The U.S.'s emergence as a leading producer of oil and natural gas presents an opportunity for India to diversify its energy sources away from traditional suppliers like Iran (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).
- **Renewable Energy Collaboration:** Both countries have pledged to combat climate change by implementing renewable energy initiatives. American companies can access one of the fastest-growing markets while simultaneously enhancing India's renewable energy capacity through collaborative initiatives (Patel & Desai, 2023).

4. Counterbalancing Regional Threats

China's growing influence poses challenges not only for India but also for global stability:

- **Strategic Alliances:** A robust partnership between the United States and India can act as a counterbalance to China's assertive policies in the South China Sea and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Raghavan & Gupta, 2020).
- **Intelligence Sharing:** Enhanced intelligence-sharing mechanisms can improve both nations' capabilities to address shared security concerns related to terrorism and regional instability (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2023).

Challenges Ahead

Although there are numerous opportunities to fortify bilateral relations under Trump's leadership, there are numerous obstacles that must be overcome:

1. Trade Disputes

Trump's protectionist policies may lead to tensions over tariffs:

- **Tariff Impositions:** If not effectively managed, the potential for increased tariffs on Indian goods to strain trade relations exists (Basu & Venkatesh, 2021).
- **Trade Negotiations:** Differing priorities between the two nations may present obstacles to ongoing negotiations for a comprehensive trade agreement.

2. Immigration Policies

Trump's stance on immigration could complicate bilateral relations:

- **H-1B Visa Restrictions:** Indian IT companies that depend on qualified labour from India may be affected by H-1B visa restrictions (Nair & Ranjan, 2023).
- **Public Sentiment:** The diaspora community of India in the United States, which is instrumental in cultivating interpersonal relationships, may be adversely affected by negative perceptions of immigration policies.

3. Regional Geopolitical Dynamics

The geopolitical landscape in South Asia remains complex:

- **Pakistan Relations:** Although Trump has expressed his endorsement of India's stance against terrorism that originates from Pakistan, any change in U.S.-Pakistani relations could potentially affect

India's security calculus (Mohan & Singh, 2019).

- **China's Response:** The region may experience heightened tensions as a result of China's response to the strengthening of U.S.-Indian relations, which would require meticulous diplomatic manoeuvring.

Conclusion

There are both opportunities and challenges for India-U.S. relations in the wake of Donald Trump's re-election. India is poised to considerably benefit from a strengthened bilateral relationship with the United States under Trump's leadership by leveraging enhanced defence cooperation, economic partnerships, energy collaborations, and counterbalancing regional threats. Nevertheless, the most effective way to realise these advantages will be to navigate trade disputes, immigration policies, and regional geopolitical dynamics. An assertive strategy prioritising communication and cooperation will be crucial for both countries as they endeavour to establish a more resilient alliance that advances their shared interests.

References

1. Bansal, R., & Mehta, A. (2022). The Quad Alliance: A New Era of Security Cooperation. *Journal of International Affairs Studies*.
2. Basu, S., & Venkatesh, R. (2021). Economic Ties Between India and USA: Trends and Challenges. *Indian Journal of Economic Policy*.
3. Chaudhary, P., & Sharma, R. (2023). Defense Technology Transfers Between India and USA. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*.
4. Khan, A. R. (2020). India-U.S Relations During Cold War Era. *South Asian Review Journal*.
5. Kumar, A., & Singh, P. K. (2022). U.S.-India Relations Under Trump Administration. *Global Policy Review*.
6. MCI [Ministry of Commerce & Industry]. (2023). Annual Trade Report. Government of India.
7. Mohan, C., & Singh, R. (2019). The Civil Nuclear Agreement: A Milestone in Indo-U.S Relations. *International Journal of Nuclear Policy Studies*.
8. Nair, S., & Ranjan, K. (2023). The Impact of Immigration Policies on Indian IT Sector. *Journal of South Asian Economics*.
9. Patel, D., & Desai, M. (2023). Renewable Energy Collaboration Between India and USA. *Energy Policy Journal*.
10. Raghavan, S., & Gupta, N. (2020). Counterterrorism Cooperation Between India and USA. *Journal of International Security Studies*.
11. Srinivasan, R., & Choudhury, A. (2023). Joint Military Exercises Between India and USA: Enhancing Interoperability. *Military Review Journal*.