



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

The US and India do not need to be allies, but they want cooperation for global influence



The United States and India have been raising their relations to a higher level, which would ensure their strategic partnership for a longer period, without the risk of major turbulence.

The rapprochement of the largest economic and security global power and the most populous country in the world is under way. It is changing the landscape not only in the Indo-Pacific region, but globally.

During two days of meetings in Washington this week, the most senior officials from the two state administrations, along with leaders from the technology sector, laid the basis for long-term, strategic cooperation between the US and India in critical and emerging technologies, including defence cooperation.

Both countries see a great benefit from mutual rapprochement, primarily due to the growing influence of China, which both perceive as a threat to their interests in economic, security and technological areas.

According to a fact sheet published by the White House, this week's list of agreements between the governments and companies from India and the US paves the way for a multi-decade technological and defence partnership.

Agreements were reached on strengthening two innovation ecosystems, defence innovation and technology cooperation, resilient semiconductor supply chains, cooperation in space technology and next generation telecommunications.

No political obstacles to partnership

The strategic partnership has strong political support in both countries. President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have met more than 15 times, most recently at the G20 summit in Indonesia last November.

Cooperation with India is one of the few foreign policy issues that have bipartisan

support in Washington. In the November congressional elections, five representatives of Indian origin entered the House.

India is not likely to become an ally of the US, nor does that seem to be the goal either in Washington or New Delhi. But both capitals want to raise the level of partnership and thus avoid some heavy burdens which have existed so far.

The US alliance with Pakistan has traditionally turned India towards military cooperation with Russia. Security relations were also worsened by the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, leaving the country under the control of Taliban extremists, raised in Pakistan.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is the point where the positions of the two countries separate.

While the US is by far the most active supporter of the Ukrainian resistance to Russia, India remains neutral, and also makes use of the benefits resulting from the crisis: primarily cheaper energy imports from Russia.

However, some of the closest allies of the US, such as Turkey, Israel, and India, have remained neutral regarding the war in Ukraine.

Reorientation of India's military complex

One of the stars of this week's high-level talks between the Indian and US administrations and businesses in Washington, was Lockheed Martin, which would accelerate the project to build jet engines in India, for installation in Indian aircrafts.

"This is the kind of thing where we're looking to make fast and ambitious progress", said national security adviser Jake Sullivan, one of the hosts of talks with Indian officials in Washington.

He said that in addition to jet engines, the main priorities in that area are joint development of artillery systems, armoured infantry, vehicles and maritime security.

The goal of the US regarding these projects is to provide an alternative for India in the military complex: that is, to reduce and possibly minimise its reliance on Russian weapons.

“Building alliances and partnerships are a top priority for the Pentagon, in the region’s increasingly contested strategic environment”, US Deputy Secretary of Defence Kathleen Hicks told Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.

Control over critical technologies

The US-India partnership regards countering Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region to be another important point of the strategic partnership.

Given that, according to the US 2022 National Defence Strategy, China is considered a "growing multi-domain threat", cooperation with India in the field of advanced technologies is an integral part of efforts to reduce the threat from China.

In this respect, these talks with Indian political and business leaders are part of an effort to reduce China's access to advanced technologies, which are essential for the development of its military potential.

The US-India talks come after the US agreements with Japan and the Netherlands to limit exports of advanced microchip equipment to China, and have the same purpose. This time, the goal is to include India's enormous technological development and human potential in the partnership.

The goal of the US and its allies is to move the production and development of critical technology out of China's reach and transfer it

to partner countries, among which is certainly India.

“President Biden really believes that no successful and enduring effort to address any of the major challenges in the world today...is going to be effective without a close US-India partnership at its heart”, said Jake Sullivan after the talks in Washington.