

NATO ally like status to India

July 11, 2019

Source: The Hindu

Manifest pedagogy

Indo-U.S relations has been in news both for increasing closeness and frictions between the two. Students will get a holistic view about the relations if they read the GSP article in the same section and also GSP (Generalized System of Preferences) related articles from Economy section

In news

- Senate Bill grants India NATO ally like status

Placing in syllabus

- India US bilateral relations

Static dimensions

- History of Indo US Defence relations

Current dimensions

- Meaning and importance of NATO ally status to India

Content

The U.S. Senate has passed a legislative provision which was contained in the **National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA)** for the fiscal year 2020, that brings India at par with America's NATO allies and countries like Israel and South Korea for increasing defence cooperation. Once it's passed, India will be given Nato ally like status. The bill would be signed into law after both the chambers of the U.S. Congress – the House of Representatives and the Senate – passes it. The House is

expected to take up its version of the NDAA sometime in July.

History of Indo-US defense relations

The Indo-US defence relationship has been growing since the signing of the **New Framework for Defence Cooperation in 2005** and more particularly after the US Congress passed the Hyde Act in December 2006 to enable bilateral cooperation on nuclear issues and resulting in intensification in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, collaboration and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy and exchanges between each of the three services. 'Framework for India-US Defence Relations' was renewed in June 2015.

The process of forging closer politico-military relations was set in motion with the signing of the **Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)** in 2012, which aimed at simplifying technology transfer policies and exploring possibilities of co-development and co-production to invest the defence relationship with strategic value. The DTTI is not a treaty or a law. It is a flexible mechanism which aims to

- Transform the bilateral defense relationship into one that is limited only by independent strategic decisions, rather than bureaucratic obstacles or inefficient procedures.
- Strengthen India's defense industrial base by moving away from the traditional "buyer-seller" dynamic toward a more collaborative approach.
- Explore new areas of technological collaboration from science and technology cooperation through co-development and co-production.
- Expand U.S.-Indian business ties.

Taking the defence relationship further required India signing the so-called three "foundational accords". The first of these is the **Logistics Support Agreement (LSA)**, which the US signs with allies to facilitate each side's military operations for

purposes of refuelling and replenishment and providing basing arrangements. The next in line is the **Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA)** – a legal framework that enables the transfer of critical, secure and encrypted communications between weapon platforms to facilitate “interoperability”. And the third is the **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** for sharing sensitive geospatial intelligence gathered from satellites and other space-based platforms.

Apprehensions were raised that signing the CISMOA would allow America to intrude into Indian military communication systems. After renegotiation, a military logistics agreement called Logistics Exchange Memorandum Of Agreement (LEMOA) was eventually signed in August 2016. LEMOA is a customized version of the LSA to facilitate each other’s operations.

The India-US Defence Relationship regained its momentum following the signing of “**Joint Strategic Vision**” between Barack Obama and Narendra Modi in January 2015 for a shared vision for peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. This also coincided with India’s declaration of its ‘Act East’ policy. In December 2016, India was designated as a “**major defence partner**” of the US which commits the U.S. to facilitate technology sharing with India to a level commensurate with that of its closest allies and partners, and industry collaboration for defence co-production and co-development.

The CISMOA has been re-christened as **Communications, Compatibility, Security Agreement (COMCASA)**, in order to reflect its India-specific character. It is meant to facilitate the use of high-end secured communication equipment to be installed on military platforms. The signing of the COMCASA in 2018 was a historic development that enables the two countries to further expand their relationship towards more practical and meaningful areas of cooperation. The COMCASA will facilitate India to obtain critical defence

technologies from the US, and access critical communication network to ensure interoperability among the US and the Indian armed forces. It will also allow the installation of high-security US communication equipment on defence platforms being sourced from the US which includes greater interoperability and information-sharing.

The two countries now conduct more bilateral exercises with each other than they do with any other country. India is participating in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises, Malabar naval exercises. Bilateral dialogue mechanisms in the field of defence include Defence Policy Group (DPG), Defence Joint Working Group (DJWG), Defence Procurement and Production Group (DPPG), Senior Technology Security Group (STSG), Joint Technical Group (JTG), Military Cooperation Group (MCG), and Service-to-Service Executive Steering Groups (ESGs). Fuel Exchange Agreement was signed in November 2015, Technical Agreement (TA) on information sharing on White (merchant) Shipping signed in May 2016 and the Information Exchange Annexe (IEA) on Aircraft Carrier Technologies was signed in June 2016

Meaning and importance of NATO ally status to India

The status does not automatically include a mutual defense pact with the United States but still confers a variety of military and financial advantages that otherwise are not obtainable to other non-NATO countries.

- The amendment provides for increased US-India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean in areas of humanitarian assistance, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy and maritime security.
- This allows India to buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from America on par with that of the closest allies and partners of the US, and ensures enduring cooperation in this sphere.
- This bill will not only make India a big associate of US

in defence deals but also it will increase India's status in the international arena.

- It increases US engagement with India in multilateral frameworks to promote regional security.
- It eases entry into cooperative research and development projects with the Department of Defense (DoD) on a shared-cost basis.
- It paves way for priority delivery of military surplus (ranging from rations to ships).

Defence cooperation and peacekeeping are two key areas of the rapidly growing US-India partnership as envisioned in the Trump administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy. India has made it clear that Trump's "me first approach" is not acceptable and it would not be guided by any other country on its import of weapons. Meanwhile US is increasing the scope, complexity and frequency of its military engagements with India. Hence more prudential moves by India along with US contributes to regional security thus preventing adversaries from establishing an effective military presence in the Indian Ocean that threaten the security of vital commerce and continued economic growth and development.