



Indian Ambiguous Behavior in Indo-Pacific: Implications for the US

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Abstract

Indian policies are ambiguous in the Indo-Pacific. It has maintained its strategic partnership with the US and trade ties with China simultaneously. US support for India is motivated by its policy of containment of China in the Indo-Pacific, whereas India has avoided the notion that it aims to balance China. India has been reluctant to convey this notion to the US straightforwardly, which has severe implications for Washington's interests in the Indo-Pacific. This article focuses on the various factors that have led to India's ambiguous behavior. These factors include its efforts to balance relationships with significant powers, diverse defense partnerships, involvement in multiple regional engagements, and economic priorities. The United States faces various challenges, such as achieving strategic alignment, countering China, promoting economic cooperation, shaping regional architecture, and building trust and reliability. The purpose of this article is to explore India's strategy using the theory of Hedging. The theory suggests that India's seemingly ambiguous behavior can be attributed to its security interests in line with those of the United States. In contrast, its economic interests are aligned with China. Primary and secondary data have been incorporated into the qualitative research methodology to conduct this research.

Key Words: Ambiguous behavior of India, Indo-Pacific, US-China competition, Strategic Autonomy, Implications for US

Introductions

The Indo-Pacific is a contested concept that is defined differently by different states. The US defines it in its Indo-Pacific Strategy 2022 as it includes states adjacent to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In contemporary global politics, this region claims vast significance due to the world's major emerging economies, convergences, and divergences of interests of the world's major powers – the US, China, India, Japan, and others. During the QUAD leaders' summit on September 24, 2021, Joe Biden highlighted the significance of this region and said that the future of the US and the world depends upon a free and open Indo-Pacific, and this dependency will last for decades to come. Furthermore, the US interest in containing the emergence of China in the South China Sea makes this region more significant and volatile. In this regard, New Delhi is an esteemed ally of Washington, yet the former has not clarified whether it will support the US.

Historically, Indo-US relations have faced severe ups and downs. During the Cold War, India remained reluctant to be allied with any of the two superpowers of that time and endured its non-alignment policy. However, the US continued strengthening its relations with India. For example, in the Sino-India War of 1962, the US explicitly extended its strategic, diplomatic, and military support to India. In the post-Cold War era, New Delhi's primary focus was on economic



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ties, while Washington wanted the former's role in containing the emergence of China. Moreover, in 2005, the US, under then-president George W. Bush's era, took a risk against the campaign to limit the spread of nuclear weapons by signing a nuclear cooperation agreement named "U.S.-India Civilian Nuclear Cooperation" with India to acquire mutualism against the rise of China. The agreement was finalized in 2008 with the formal approval of the US Congress. This strategic partnership was not only a bold but also a radical move motivated by the objective of counterbalancing China. In lieu, India continued its policy of rapprochement toward China. The central pillar of the rapprochement policy between the two countries was economic ties, which continued to grow despite other areas of conflict.

Meanwhile, India has concluded several bilateral trade and strategic agreements with the US. It has maintained its central role in US-led and Chinese-dominated international and regional institutions and cooperation in global governance. For instance, New Delhi is a signatory of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Financial Action Task Force (FATF) – which are arguably under the influence of Washington. On the other hand, India can actively be seen in multilateral alliances such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which Beijing equivocally dominates. Further, on the economic front, India and China have adhered to greater interdependency. Both nations have signed several agreements to enhance trade ties. They established diplomatic relations in the 1950s under the Panchsheel or The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence treaty but were suspended due to war in 1962. The official resumption of trade relations occurred in 1978, followed by the 1984 Most Favored Nation Agreement. In 2000, India and China signed a Trade Pact to facilitate the latter's entry into WTO. In 2022, the trade between New Delhi and Beijing touched an all-time high of US\$ 136 billion. This approach of New Delhi shows that despite the endorsement of the US policy of a Free and Open Pacific with emphasis on the addition of the term 'Inclusive' and procuring benefits from it, India has not entirely relinquished its extended-lasting policy of non-alignment and continues cooperation with China (EveryCRSReport, 2022).

The existing literature has discussed India's ambiguous relations with the US and China. However, there is a dearth of literature regarding the ambiguous Indian behavior followed by political and economic implications for the US. This study will thoroughly discuss the political and economic implications of unclear Indian policies in the Indo-Pacific for the US.

Literature Review

The literature on Indian behavior in the Indo-Pacific region suggests that India has maintained an ambiguous or arcane stance in the Indo-Pacific region in general and in US Indo-Pacific policy in particular. In this regard, Rajesh Rajagopalan argues in his work titled "Evasive balancing: India's unviable Indo-Pacific strategy" by characterizing the Indian ambiguous policies as 'Evasive Balancing' – which, according to him, is "an effort to engage in balancing while reassuring the target." Furthermore, the author proclaims that India's relations with the US are the precise response to China's rise, but policy-makers are cautious about saying this clearly.



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At last, he concludes by saying that the reassurance policy hardly works, and reassurance intermixed with balancing is highly unlikely to work (Rajagopalan, 2020).

Moreover, Pavan Kumar, a prominent writer on US-India relations, writes in his article "India Balancing China: Exploring Soft Balancing through Indo-Pacific" that India is aligned with the US to balance the rise of China, which is not in New Delhi's interest. The author further argues that the rise of China leaves potential security challenges for India in terms of the latter's sovereignty and sphere of influence in South Asia and international organizations. By concluding his arguments, the writer states that China has oversized India militarily and economically, so it would be costly for India to align (Bandwagon) itself with the US against China. Instead, India should balance China's behavior over its power through soft balancing (Kumar, 2021).

Likewise, J. Susanna Lobo has authored an article entitled "Balancing China: Indo-US relations and convergence of their interests in the Indo-Pacific," in which he writes that India has reshuffled its foreign policy and embraced a pragmatic approach. He further argues that India is open to espousing itself with any state with comparable security threats through the said approach. At the same time, it is also open to working with any state that may not be interested in entering security engagements. Additionally, despite being heedful while going into pacts and partnerships, India joins any partnership on equal terms and ensures its vital interests. Therefore, India's slight tilt towards the US might not be aimed at containing China. Still, it could be due to the assertiveness of China in the Indo-Pacific that provokes the former to make alliances with like-minded states in the region (Lobo, 2021).

Furthermore, Udai Bhanu Singh has made a significant point in his paper titled "Indo-Pacific and the Role of India within It" that many in the Indian strategic community have made their state cautious to avoid the spread of the Indian Navy into the South China Sea. Instead, it should focus on the Indian Ocean, where its vital interests are coupled. This also makes the Indian stance on China's balance uncertain (Singh, 2020).

In addition to this, another prominent scholar, Darshana M. Baruah, writes in his research paper named "India in the Indo-Pacific: New Delhi's Theater of Opportunity" that it is a fact that India is facing strategic challenges due to the rise of China in the region. However, the former still needs to present a clear policy stance and has tried to maintain a balance between China and the US. He further argues that India's primary focus is to increase its sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean, and it does not want to wake up the sleeping dragon that might challenge it. Regarding Washington and New Delhi's partnership, Baruah maintains it by saying that the West sees it as an opportunity to enhance its security profile [in the Indian Ocean] and other strategic interests in changing the security environment (Baruah, 2020).

This academic publication, titled "Changing Dynamics of India's Indian Ocean Policy," authored by Baljit Singh Mann, examines the evolution of India's strategy in the Indian Ocean region. This post examines the historical backdrop of India's engagement with the area, its strategic partnerships with other countries, and its endeavors to maintain security and stability. The essay examines the growing interconnection between India and the United States and its role in restoring equilibrium in the Asia-Pacific region. As per the report, India's maritime strategy



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has transitioned from a defensive stance to a proactive one, aiming to exert its influence in the region and enhance regional security and stability (Mann, 2018).

In the article "Balancing ACT: The China-India-U.S. Triangle," authored by Mohan Malik, an examination is conducted on the increasing impact of China, India, and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. This analysis suggests that China's economic and military strength are set to continue growing, while India is also making significant progress towards reaching rapid development. The expansion and impact of both China and India have led to a state of "Cold Peace" between the two nations, characterized by their rivalry for supremacy in the region. The scholarly article highlights that as a reaction to China's assertiveness, the most important democratic and maritime nations in Asia have established the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), intending to uphold a system of norms and regulations in the area. The article asserts that the collaboration among these nations may potentially result in establishing a maritime alliance or the "Indo-Pacific Maritime Order" aimed at counterbalancing China's sway in the Pacific region. The paper thoroughly examines the complex dynamics between China, India, and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region and the potential routes for forthcoming developments (Malik, 2016).

Research Questions

- 1) What is India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region?
- 2) What are India's goals in the Indo-Pacific region?
- 3) What are the implications of India's ambiguous behavior in the Indo-Pacific region for the United States?

Research Methodology

To pursue this research, qualitative research methodologies have been utilized, in which primary and secondary data sources are considered. The most critical secondary data source was the availability of research papers from reputable journals, reports from authentic organizations, and articles from well-known newspapers, all of which are cited multiple times throughout this paper. On the other hand, for primary data, this paper incorporates official statements from concerned authorities and tweets from those authorities, all of which are also cited in this research. The analysis of this paper is conducted through the discourse analysis method. Furthermore, to analyze this ambiguous behavior of India in the Indo-Pacific region, the concept of Hedging is used in this paper. Lastly, data collection sources are frequently cited in the paper to ensure this research's credibility.

Theoretical Framework

Hedging is a post-Cold War notion that has garnered scholarly interest in recent years. This phrase is commonly used in the field of international relations to analyze and clarify the complex ties between countries in the Asia Pacific region. Different scholars have analyzed this term according to their understanding. Typically, it denotes the national security or strategic strategy used by one state towards another, comprising both collaborative and antagonistic features. It is also considered a strategic tactic used by countries to preserve balance between competing powers and minimize risks in a complex global environment. Additionally, it



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necessitates engaging with several parties and maintaining a certain degree of ambiguity in alliances and partnerships. Hedging enables states to mitigate overdependence on a singular dominant power, preserve their strategic autonomy, and optimize their decision-making processes.

India has implemented a deliberate approach in handling its diplomatic ties with the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific area. The notion of Hedging provides a valuable foundation for understanding this behavior. India seeks to strengthen its partnership with the United States to effectively tackle security concerns. Nevertheless, it persists in upholding its swiftly growing commercial and business ties with China. Acquiring knowledge about the concept of Hedging can aid in understanding the implications for the United States. India's ambiguous behavior may lead to doubts about its commitment to forging a closer alliance with the United States. The United States should acknowledge India's approach of Hedging and strategic autonomy and make efforts to foster trust, enhance economic ties, and synchronize shared goals in the Indo-Pacific region. This comprehension can assist both nations in managing their concerns and collaborating toward a more coordinated strategy to tackle regional challenges.

Nature of Indian Engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region

The Indo-Pacific region is crucial to India due to its multi-faceted interests with regional states. The nature of New Delhi's engagement is, therefore, ambiguous. It eyes on Washington for its strategic interests and simultaneously puts efforts into the betterment of its economic ties with Beijing despite border issues.

Indian Strategic Engagement with the US

On the one hand, India is an active member of US-led regional forums, conducting regular military exercises with like-minded states, including the US, Japan, and Australia, signing defense deals, and participating in security dialogues. In 2017, India and the US launched their new bilateral strategic partnership forum, the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF). The primary objective of this partnership is to enhance commercial relations and strategic collaboration between the two countries. As mentioned earlier, the action within the expert community is perceived as a strategic maneuver by the United States to mitigate India's economic reliance on China and gain support from India in countering China's growing influence and maintaining its strategic supremacy. However, India has maintained a reactive approach to countering China in the region. In recent years, India, given the border confrontation with China, banned 232 Chinese apps, including the famous entertainment app TikTok, which had millions of Indian users, and other websites linked to China. This protectionism among scholars is a short-term and reactive approach, which does not necessarily signify that India aims to contain China.

Furthermore, India participates in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, also called QUAD, which the United States purportedly influences. QUAD's primary objective for Washington is to curb China's influence. However, New Delhi has publicly refuted this notion. During his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi underscored that India's strategy towards the Indo-Pacific was not



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targeted towards any particular nation and that India aspires to a region that is free, open, and inclusive. During the sixth edition of COPE India, the Indian Air Force and US Air Force engaged in a series of joint exercises for two weeks at various air stations in India, including Kalaikunda, Panagarh, and Agra. This collaboration took place in 2023. The objective of these exercises is to provide training to the Indian Air Force and to secure Indian backing in the Indo-Pacific region.

India-China Economic ties

India and China, two rapidly emerging economies of the world, have a complex nature of engagement with each other. Notwithstanding the existing geopolitical rivalry and competition, it is noteworthy that the economic relations between the two nations are remarkable. A long and intricate history of economic interactions exists between the two nations. The diplomatic and commercial ties between the two countries were initiated during the 1950s; however, the war of 1962 cast a dark cloud over their interactions. The bilateral trade relations between New Delhi and Beijing improved in the 1980s with the latter's adoption of outward-oriented reform policies. Following the improvisation in economic relations, the two nations signed a trade agreement in 1984 to enhance their economic relations. Four years later, the Joint Economic Group (JEG) was established by both nations to foster economic collaboration. In the 1990s, various concrete efforts were made between the two countries to resolve border relations and enhance bilateral trade.

Likewise, in the 21st century, the rapid bilateral trade growth between India and China has been witnessed. By 2008, China emerged as the largest trading partner for goods, a position that China continues to hold today. Despite disagreements and clashes on the border, there has been a significant increase in bilateral trade between the two nations, exhibiting exponential growth in the last decade. Between 2015 and 2022, there was a notable increase of 90.14% in the bilateral trade between India and China, with an average annual growth rate of 12.87%. The year 2022 witnessed a notable surge in aggregate trade with China, exhibiting an 8.47% yearly increase and leading up to USD 136.26 billion. This achievement marks the second consecutive example of crossing the USD 100 billion threshold. India's trade deficit amounted to USD 101.28 billion, with a notable surge in imports from China by 118.77% to USD 118.77 billion. In contrast, India's exports to China declined by 37.59% year on year, reaching USD 17.49 billion, a decrease from the previous year's net exports of USD 28.03 billion.

India, BRICS, and SCO

Beyond that, India is a participating member of institutions arguably dominated by China due to its economic robustness. India is among the founding members of the BRICS alliance, an acronym that represents the countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The establishment of this forum resulted from a sequence of high-level discussions among the nations mentioned above. On June 16, 2009, the inaugural summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia. The primary objective of this organization was to create a fairer, democratic, and multipolar world order. Furthermore, India is a member of another critical international organization, namely the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is also



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alleged to be under the influence of China. New Delhi became a full member of SCO in 2017 by considering its geopolitical and economic objectives.

India's Goals in Indo-Pacific Region

The Indo-Pacific region is significant to India due to its diverse and multi-faceted interests and challenges. India's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region can be categorized into three main areas: strategic, economic, and diplomatic goals. The objectives are driven by India's desire to safeguard its national interests, maintain regional stability, and enhance its status as a significant participant in the Indo-Pacific region.

Traditionally, New Delhi has mainly on continental dangers and has shown less interest in maritime obstacles. Nevertheless, there has been an observed change in Indian policies. India is actively engaging in naval exercises in collaboration with its Quad allies. This indicates that New Delhi is transitioning from facing issues related to the continental region to facing challenges related to the maritime region. India's primary strategic goal in the Indo-Pacific region is to ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains in a condition of being unrestricted, accessible, and accommodating to all. The Indo-Pacific area is characterized by a dynamic and thriving environment for trade and commerce. According to data conducted by The Wire, this region accounts for more than 60% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and approximately half of the world's trade passes through these marine routes. India is a dominant economic power in this region. India engages in trade along these marine routes with its major allies, such as Japan, the United States, Australia, and ASEAN. Furthermore, India enjoys a strategically favorable location in the Indo-Pacific Ocean. As a result, its security is in jeopardy. The development of China and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) poses a danger to New Delhi's interests in the area. Furthermore, India has security challenges in the region, including piracy, terrorism, and other non-traditional security issues. India has been working together with neighboring states to reduce these threats. In the same manner, New Delhi also has a keen interest in the connectivity and economic cooperation within the area. It has adopted numerous efforts to improve regional connectivity and foster economic cooperation. The "Act East Policy" is an endeavor focused on enhancing ties with Southeast Asian nations and enhancing connectivity by executing various infrastructure projects, including road networks, ports, and air links. Furthermore, India has actively advocated for regional economic integration by actively engaging in various initiatives such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). The forums serve as a means to foster dialogue and collaboration among member nations on diverse topics related to economy, trade, and development. India's involvement in infrastructure development initiatives, such as the Chabahar Port in Iran, aims to improve communication and trade between India, Iran, and Afghanistan, while circumventing Pakistan. The actions described above exemplify India's endeavors to promote enhanced connectivity and economic collaboration in the area.

Furthermore, India has actively participated in several regional conferences and initiatives to promote multilateralism and encourage collaborative engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.



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India participates in international collaboration through forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit to tackle regional security issues and promote economic cooperation. India's involvement in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia, highlights India's dedication to promoting cooperation and tackling mutual security concerns. India's multilateral strategy is demonstrated by the Quad's efforts to strengthen maritime security, uphold an international order based on established standards, and address shared issues. India's Act East Policy prioritizes the development of stronger partnerships with ASEAN and other regions, hence enhancing its position. India aims to promote regional connectivity and economic cooperation through several initiatives, including Project Mausam and the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, which have been collaboratively established with Japan. Furthermore, India's aim in the Indo-Pacific region is to ensure the attainment of enduring and environmentally responsible progress. Currently, India holds the position of the fifth-largest economy in the world, and its trade primarily moves through this specific region. Therefore, it strives to ensure a peaceful, accessible, and comprehensive Indo-Pacific region. India also aims to maintain the balance of power in the region. The rising might of China presents a substantial threat to Indian interests in the region. Consequently, the latter is actively encouraging cooperation with like-minded states in the region to uphold a balance of power and protect their interests in these waterways.

Implications for the US

India's mysterious behavior has important implications for US interests in the Indo-Pacific region. India is a prominent and vigorous democracy, being one of the largest in the world, and seeing fast economic growth. Its strategic location is crucial for protecting US interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, the mysterious behavior and actions of New Delhi have substantial consequences in the United States. India's ambiguous actions might potentially have a significant influence on the security cooperation between India and the United States. India and the United States have endeavored to strengthen their defense relations and participate in collaborative military exercises. However, their perspectives on addressing regional security issues may not consistently coincide. India has been cautious in its involvement in military alliances or collaborations that may be seen as specifically directed towards China. There may be constraints on the security cooperation and coordination between India and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, the Quad, consisting of the United States, India, Japan, and Australia, has a vital role in strengthening regional security and promoting collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region. India's ambiguous behavior has the potential to weaken the effectiveness of the Quad as a strategic platform. India has actively participated in Quad meetings and initiatives while also maintaining its engagement with other regional stakeholders, particularly China. This achievement has been accomplished by active participation in forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS group. The United States may have challenges in maintaining a unified strategy inside the Quad.

Furthermore, the United States has been actively cultivating a network of regional alliances and partnerships to counterbalance China's hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. India's equivocal



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acts may hinder efforts to unite neighboring countries in a cohesive front against China's aggressive behavior. India has chosen a prudent stance in endorsing initiatives such as the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, spearheaded by the United States. India has adopted a comprehensive approach that considers the concerns and preferences of many regional stakeholders. Creating a cohesive alliance in the area is a crucial strategic priority for the United States, and any obstacles to achieving this goal must be addressed. Likewise, the United States has placed great importance on the Indo-Pacific region as a focal point for its efforts to promote economic integration and commerce, with the aim of offsetting China's dominant economic influence. India's enigmatic demeanor could have repercussions on the economic involvement in the area.

India's choice to refrain from joining the RCEP trade agreement, which includes various states in the Indo-Pacific region, including China, has sparked concerns about its dedication to regional economic integration. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to construct infrastructure, has sparked concerns regarding its strategic influence and the possibility of engaging in debt-trap diplomacy in the region. The United States has been advocating for alternative investments as a strategy to offset China's infrastructure aspirations. India's unpredictable actions can influence the effectiveness of such efforts. India's involvement in specific projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), has raised concerns about the entire BRI framework. The United States may face difficulties in formulating a unified approach due to China's ambitious infrastructure plans. India's strategic autonomy and commitment to non-alignment principles strongly shape its approach to regional issues. Due to its historical importance, the United States may face diplomatic challenges while trying to align its strategic objectives with India's policies and actions. India's diplomatic connections with countries such as Iran and Russia may necessitate endeavors to cultivate mutual comprehension and handle any prospective disparities, even if they do not necessarily coincide with the goals of the United States. When it comes to handling the relationship between China and India, the United States may face difficulties in determining the appropriate course of action due to India's ambiguous stance towards China. India has been involved in territorial disputes and political conflicts with China, but it also aims to sustain commercial relations and collaborative interactions with its neighboring countries. The United States may have to carefully manage sensitivities and potential differences between its strategic approach to China and India's own assessments of its relationship with its northern neighbor. The United States often utilizes the tactic of building consensus to promote cooperation with Indo-Pacific nations that face similar challenges. India's intricate actions may pose challenges in these undertakings as it engages with various local actors and pursues its own strategic objectives. To foster agreement and harmony among the nations in the area, including India, the US might have to allocate diplomatic resources towards consensus-building and bridging gaps.

Findings

From the above discussion and analyses, the following are some key findings of this paper;

1. India is trying to maintain its strategic autonomy in its foreign policy
2. India's ambiguous behavior is due to its comparatively weak position vis-à-vis China.
3. India has not abandoned its long-standing policy of non-alignment in its foreign affairs.
4. India's ambiguous behavior has questioned the future of QUAD and its effectiveness.



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5. India will likely balance between two superpowers, China and the US, and will avoid joining any bloc openly.
6. India is unlikely to abandon China and may further increase economic cooperation.

Recommendations

1. Enhanced Interaction and Understanding: The United States must engage in general and open discussion with India to better understand its strategic priorities and apprehensions. Fostering a deeper understanding of each other's perspectives, building trust, and clarifying expectations can be achieved through this approach. Enhance the effectiveness of bilateral and multilateral communication channels, such as TTC and QUAD.
2. Strengthening Strategic Ties: The United States must continue strengthening its ties with India. The process may include improving defense collaboration, conducting joint military drills, exchanging intelligence, and transferring technology. The United States can foster closer alignment with its Indo-Pacific vision and mutual security objectives by enhancing strategic ties with India.
3. Increasing Economic Ties: The United States must improve economic ties and trade engagement with India. Facilitating mutually beneficial trade deals, tackling market entry barriers, and encouraging investment inflows are some ways to achieve this. Facilitating economic integration in the Indo-Pacific region can be accomplished by harmonizing economic interests and identifying shared objectives, potentially aiding the United States in mitigating Indian uncertainty.
4. Effective Communication: The United States should thoroughly assess Indian policy in the Indo-Pacific region and clearly convey its expectations to India.

Conclusion

India's ambiguous behavior in the Indo-Pacific region has a direct influence on the United States and its interests. India's handling of its relationships with key nations like the United States and China, its many defense alliances, simultaneous regional involvements, and economic stakes have given rise to an image of ambiguity on India's part. The United States faces multiple ramifications, such as the task of achieving strategic congruence, combating China, fostering economic collaboration, delineating the regional framework, and ensuring trustworthiness and reliability. In order to successfully resolve the uncertainty, it is crucial to have a profound comprehension of India's historical and strategic elements. A highly effective approach to tackle this issue may entail the United States giving top priority to improving communication and understanding with India, expanding strategic involvement, fostering economic collaboration, embracing multilateralism, and promoting long-lasting engagement. Efficient communication and transparency may establish confidence and clarify goals, while strengthening partnerships and financial connections helps synchronize objectives and reduce ambiguity. In order to successfully handle the consequences of India's uncertain stance and strive for a more robust partnership in the Indo-Pacific region, the United States should acknowledge India's aspiration for strategic independence and its endeavors to maintain equilibrium among various interests. Through the implementation of this approach, the United States can bolster regional stability, tackle common obstacles, and promote its broad goals in the Indo-Pacific area.



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