



RESEARCH PAPER

Understanding the Quad's Influence: US Assistance to India and its Effects on Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), an informal alliance, consists of the US, India, Japan and Australia. Keeping in view the alliances, the objective of this paper is to analyze the impact of the support provided by the US to India, including sanction waivers, diplomatic support, and membership support in the NSG. It also examines the consequences of the US and India's support system on Pakistan's security calculus. Qualitative research methodology is used, applying thematic analysis to explain the implications of the Indo-US nexus on Pakistan. The result of the paper has found that since the formation of the Quad, cooperation between the US and India has increased significantly, and India is playing an effective role in maligning and spreading propaganda against Pakistan. In the end, the paper concludes by mentioning the way forward for Pakistan in such situations.

KEYWORDS Defense Agreements, Indo-Pacific, Foundational Agreements, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Indo-US Nexus

Introduction

The QUAD is a multilateral platform that aims to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific (Gale, 2018) and protect their interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Though the states have mostly diverged interests from each other, they all want to contain China's rise in Asia and increase their cooperation. With the growing Chinese economy and reducing American traditional role in Asia, the four democracies formed an informal alliance for the "soft containment" of China (Yaseen, et. al 2016; Campbell et al., 2011). It started with maritime cooperation during the Indian tsunami in 2004 and it now works on far broader issues including security, economy, and health (Smith, 2021). The Quad members claim that this platform is not a security pact rather it is to promote cooperation and collaboration. However, the annual naval exercises, transfer of military technology, and sales of military hardware don't follow their claims. Moreover, the Quad members have expanded their ambit under the rubric of the Quad Plus and included other powerful countries like Israel and Brazil which could be a potential front against China. While Pakistan once the most allied ally of the US is now nowhere in this great power politics. To stay relevant in international politics and balance its power against India, Pakistan is deepening its ties with China.

Literature Review

Special treatment to India by the United States

The United States has been extending special treatment to India to bring it into its alliance to counter the rise of China. The US is drawn towards India's economic growth, population, ideology, and geography, which have increased India's importance

in the US's foreign policy. Even the COVID-19 pandemic did not hinder their progress. Instead, the Quad members started working on new areas such as vaccine development, climate change, public health, and emerging technologies (Ba, 2023). The US has also supported India on multiple occasions, such as purchasing the S-400 missile system from Russia (Peri, 2023), despite previously sanctioning Turkey's Defense industry for buying the same missile system (Hacaoglu, 2024). The US has also lobbied for the inclusion of India in the NSG Group and vetoed votes against India in the UNSC. Moreover, India enjoyed discounted oil from Russia, despite US sanctions on the purchase, as the US gave India a special waiver for the purchase (Sharma, 2023).

To further strengthen the relationship with India, the US has signed four foundational agreements covering security, logistics, communication, and cooperation between the two states (Jain, 2018). Along with these agreements, both states have inter-service military exercises involving their air force, army, and navy. They have also collaborated on joint production of defense weapons and research on advanced jet engines and aircraft carrier technology (Shah, 2021). The US-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), of which the iCET is an upgraded version, has simplified and reduced the transfer of defense technology (Chaudhuri, 2023).

Implications for Pakistan

India and Pakistan have a significant difference in military spending and defense budgets. As per the SIPRI report of April 2022, India ranks 3rd in the world in military expenditure and ranks first in the world in terms of arms import from 2013 to 2021 (SIPRI, 2024). India is also working on upgrading its defense capabilities with 93 new projects worth USD 18.4 billion (Pandit, 2022). On the other hand, Pakistan ranks 8th globally in terms of arms import and contributes 3.7% of the global share (SIPRI, 2023 P. 11). The Pakistani government has allocated over 1.08 trillion rupees in the annual budget of 2023-24, which is approximately 1.7% of the total GDP (Federal Budget, 2023 P. 07) and an increase of 15.5% in defense expenditure from the previous budget (Ansari, 2023). While Pakistan has increased its defense spending, India's defense expenditure is higher in numerical value.

India has been actively involved in damaging Pakistan's reputation on national and international platforms by using its state resources to spread false information and isolate Pakistan diplomatically. In December 2020, the European Union DisinfoLab published a report that exposed the massive scale of India's propaganda campaign to undermine Pakistan (Alexandre (Machado et al., 2021). Additionally, India has been actively working to harm Pakistan's interests in the FATF grey listing, despite Pakistan completing 26 out of 27 conditions (Express Tribune, 2021). The Indian External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, has publicly acknowledged India's role in keeping Pakistan in the FATF grey list, stating that "Due to us, Pakistan is under the lens of FATEF, and it was kept in the grey list" (The Times of India, 2021).

The US's Special Treatment to India

Sanction Waiver

Under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), the US imposes sanctions on North Korea, Iran, and Russia and the president may put sanctions against persons and activities such as purchasing military equipment from the above countries, etc., that violate the CAATSA (Business Standard, n.d). As the US considers India a vital strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific, it gave a special waiver to

India for purchasing the S-400, a mobile surface-to-air missile system from Russia at the cost of USD 5.43 billion (Peri, 2023). Previously the US sanctioned Turkey's defence industry for buying the same S-400 technology from Russia and held the deal of F-35 fighter jets (Hacaoglu, 2024). The S-400 air defense system has the capability to hit cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and aircraft within its range. It has its own radar system which could be used for surveillance and engagement. Moreover, it has four types of missiles with different ranges from 40km to 400km and this new development gives India a multilayer air defense system along with its own air defense system: "Prithvi Air Defence" and "Advanced Air Defence System". So, the deployment of S-400 compromises Pakistan's security. Among the five, delivery of the three regiments have been completed in March 2023 and only two regiments are remaining in the pipeline (Reuters, 2023). The remaining two regiments were delayed due to a delay in the payment method. Initially in October 2018, it was decided to conduct the transactions in US dollars but after the Russian-Ukraine war, the Western countries removed Russia from the SWIFT, a global payment system. Now India is initiating the payments through a rupee-ruble swap (Moazzam, 2023).

Diplomatic Support

The US has been supporting India at international forums like the United Nations Security Council by vetoing decisions against India, and at the NSG Group through lobbying for its inclusion. To counter China the US sees India as a strategic ally and an integral part of the policies in South Asia. During the Balakot incident, the US support to India confirmed that the US could not be a neutral state in South Asian politics. In the Balakot incident, the US called the attack a "counterterrorism action" and argued in favor of India (Noor, 2020).

In August 2019 Modi government unilaterally abolished the special status of the Indian-occupied Kashmir under Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution. The move was condemned by the democrats in India and other countries. Pakistan vehemently criticized the abolition of the articles and the subsequent lockdown in the Kashmir valley and raised the issue of constitutional change at the United Nations Security Council but later the move was blocked by the US and France on India's behalf (Chaudhuri, 2019).

Supporting Inclusion in Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

NSG is a group of nuclear-armed countries that seek to control the proliferation of nuclear materials, equipment, and technology. It also barred the nuclear countries from exporting nuclear materials to non-nuclear countries (Varadarajan, 1970). The dominant form of the NSG to prevent the proliferation of fissile material is the NPT. After signing the NPT, the states will get the "inalienable rights" to benefit from the other nuclear states (Stewart and Sultan, 2019). India and Pakistan both are non-signatory to NPT and NSG. Despite the non-signatory of both agreements, the US gave a waiver to India in 2008 for civil nuclear cooperation (Yaseen et. al 2022; Hussain & Sargana, 2018). India applied for NSG membership in May 2016 and has been striving to become a permanent member of the group. In 2010 during US President Barack Obama's visit to India, he extended support for India's "full membership" of the group (The Whitehouse, 2010). Moreover, in 2011, the US circulated a paper; "Food for Thought" ahead of the NSG Consultative Group and Plenary Meeting to gather support for the inclusion of India in the group (Bano, 2014). In 2014, Indian PM Narendra Modi on his visit to the US, both heads of the states released a joint declaration that India is "ready for the

membership” of the group (Souza and Cony, 2014). The membership will give India the global recognition that India wanted for a long time (Hussain and Sargana, 2018).

Pakistan also applied for the NSG just a week after the Indian application to the NSG in May 2016 (Baabar, 2016). It has been adhering to the protocols of the group and wanted to become a part of the group. The US and the Western states wanted to include India in the group, but it was blocked by China on the pretext that if India got membership Pakistan should also be considered as equal. Therefore, due to China’s objection, India’s dream of becoming a member of the NSG has been unfulfilled despite the US and Western states’ support.

Discounted Oil

The US’s special treatment of India has become conspicuous in the last few years. During the Russian-Ukraine war, the US and its allies condemned Russia for the war, slapped sanctions on her, and provided arms, ammunition, and economic aid to Ukraine. The US allies promptly followed the lead, but India neither condemned Russia nor cut its trade rather India enjoyed the bargained price of oil. In December 2022 India purchased 1.2 million barrels of crude oil from Russia which is 33 times more than the previous year (Sharma, 2023). Before the invasion of Ukraine, India’s oil import from Russia was only 0.2% and that increased to 28% in January 2023 (Dutta, 2023). After 11 abstentions at the UN motion to criticize Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi half-heartedly opened his mouth about the Russia-Ukraine war at the G-20 Summit in Bali in 2020 and said, “Today’s era is not an era of war” (Parashar, 2022). The US and its Western allies praised PM Modi for his statement. The Economist Magazine explained the situation as “non of his (Modi’s) predecessors would have been praised for so pathetically little” (The Economist, 2022).

Selling the latest Military Equipment

The US and India have deepened their defense ties. They conducted their first inter-service military exercise under the name of Tiger Triumph in 2019. In this exercise, the air force, army, and navy of both states participated and initiated joint military cooperation which would focus on maritime security, a joint production of advanced defense weapons, and research on advanced jet engine and aircraft carrier technology (Shah, 2021). The US has also provided the Indian Navy with six Lockheed Martin MH-60R Seahawk anti-submarine and anti-surface helicopters in November 2022. These helicopters are part of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) deal through which India will buy 24 helicopters for USD 2.6 billion and the delivery is expected to be completed by 2025 (Kadidal, 2022). India has nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines while Pakistan does not have either of them. The nuclear submarines undermine the balance of power and affect Pakistan’s power. In the past, India used submarines to blockade Pakistan during the 1971 war (Mian, Ramana et al., 2019). In April 2020 the US approved the sale of 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air-launched anti-ship missiles, 16 MK 54 All Up Round lightweight torpedoes, and 3 MK 54 Exercise torpedoes to India and it will increase Indian deterrence (The Economic Times, 2020). Thus, it will have dire security consequences for Pakistan. The Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles are the world’s premier missiles and have the features of autonomous, all-weather, and over-the-horizon capability (Boeing, n.d.).

The Trump Administration provided India with the MQ-9 drones for surveillance during the border clashes between India and China (Moriyasu, 2023). The MQ-9 drone is an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) manufactured by The General

Atomics for the US Air Force (Peterson, 2009). India leased two of the drones to use against China's military. The process of leasing the drones was very complicated but the Trump Administration made it possible.

Theoretical Framework

For a better understanding and analysis of the given topic, the theory of neo-classical realism and security dilemma are used. These two theories will provide a framework that will help deconstruct the complex phenomena of International Politics. According to neoclassical realists, it is both the domestic and international actors that affect the foreign policy of a country. It argues that states respond to the opportunities and constraints of the international system while conducting their foreign policy. However, their policies are shaped by domestic factors such as their political system, strategic culture, and perception of the leader (Ripsman, 2011).

The proponent of the security dilemma Robert Jervis argues that there is no higher authority or institution to implement the rule of law and policies of cooperation for the betterment of all (Jervis, 1978). Such situations will bring the war of every man against every man (Flathman & Johnston, 1998). Each state will try to maximize its security through armament. Thus, the armament of one state will disrupt the status quo and make the other states insecure. Consequently, the other states build up their military capability and the cycle keeps on going. This theory further explains that cooperation is beneficial for all but due to anarchy in the international system, it is not possible to trust each other, and as a result, each state strives to increase its security. States do not cooperate unless they are sure of cooperation from the other side and there is no higher authority to ensure observance of the law so anarchy will persist in the international system (Jervis, 1978).

Growing Indo-US Defence Relations

The Four Foundational Agreements:

The US support for India over the past few decades has increased consistently. The US has declared India a major defense partner and it has signed the four foundational agreements which the US signs with its defence partners (Jain, 2018). The four foundational agreements are as follows:

- a) General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)
- b) Logistic Support Agreement (LSA)
- c) Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and
- d) Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA) (Philip, 2020).

General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)

The US and India signed this agreement in 2002 ensuring military intelligence sharing and protection of classified information between the two states. This agreement also ensures cooperation between the Ministry of Defence of India and the Pentagon (Journals of India, 2021).

Logistic Support Agreement (LSA)

The adapted version of the LSA i.e., the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed in August 2016 between the two states. This agreement allowed each state to use each other's air bases, ports, and land facilities to replenish and access spare parts, supplies, and services. All the used materials will be reimbursed later (The Hindu, 2021). Though the US had used the Indian ports during the first Gulf War in 1991 and after the war on terror for refueling, this agreement has institutionalized the phenomenon and made it easier for both states (Journals of India, 2021).

Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA)

The Indian-specific version of CISMOA is the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), which was signed between the two states in September 2018 during the two-plus-two dialogue in Delhi (Pubby, 2018). Through this agreement, the US will provide an encrypted communications system to India so that both states can secure lines of communication in case of need. This will also help the military commanders, aircraft, and ships in using secure and encrypted lines of communication. It will further facilitate the "interoperability" between the forces and reduce the barriers to transferring required communication equipment (Journals of India, 2021).

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA)

The last of the four foundational agreements, BECA, was signed on October 27, 2020, during the third round of 2 + 2 dialogue in which the defense and foreign ministers of both states agreed to share intelligence information, sensitive geospatial, topographical, nautical and aeronautical data, and products and services (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). This agreement will allow India to access real-time American geospatial data and help in enhancing the accuracy of Indian drones and missiles. It will also allow India to access topographical and aeronautical data which will enhance their navigation and targeting capability (Journals of India, 2021).

Sharing Advanced Technologies under the iCET initiative:

Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) between the US and India is a partnership that is designed to deepen its ties and integrate its systems. Some Indian defense experts were of the view that the iCET is an upgraded version of the US-India Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) (Chaudhuri, 2023). The DTTI aims to reduce and simplify the transfer of defense technology and collaborate and cooperate on related issues. It also aims to explore new avenues for collaboration and cooperation. In July 2016 during the meeting of DTTI, it was decided to expand the range to five more areas by setting up five new Joint Working Groups including Air System, Naval System, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Chemical and Biological Protection, and Other Systems. The same year during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US, the US recognized India as a "Major Defence Partner" (Ministry of External Affairs, n.d.).

The Implications of the Indo-US Nexus on Pakistan:

Growing Conventional Disparity between Pakistan and India:

There is a huge gap between Pakistan and India in terms of military expenditure and defense budget. According to the SIPRI report of April 2022 India ranked 3rd in terms of military spending in the world and ranked number one in the world in terms of arms

import from 2013 to 2021 (SIPRI, n.d). India is working to upgrade its defense capability with 93 new upgrade projects. These new upgrade projects, worth USD 18.4 billion, are under process. Part of the projects deals with longer-range weapons, multi-purpose drones, night-fighting capabilities, disruptive technologies, and early warning and detection systems (Pandit, 2022). The Indian Army Chief General Manoj Pande on January 12, 2022, said, "As of now, 45 per cent of our equipment is vintage, 41 per cent of the equipment is of current technology and some 12-15 per cent of the equipment is state-of-the-art." He further stated that the target of the Indian forces is to have 45 per cent of equipment in the state-of-the-art category and 35 per cent of current technology by 2030 (Banerjee, 2023). It will give the Indian forces a clear edge over Pakistan and will disrupt the balance of power.

Pakistan, on the other hand, ranks 8th in terms of global arms import and contributes 3.7% of the global share while India tops the list and shares 11% of the global import (SIPRI, 2023 P.11). Moreover, the US is selling advanced drones, missiles, helicopters, and other military equipment to India further widening the conventional disparity between the two states. This growing disparity is a growing concern for Pakistan as India has used its capability against it in the past. During the 1971 war, India played a major role in the separation of East Pakistan. They blocked the Pakistani naval forces and limited them to Karachi Port. The former DG of Arms Control and Disarmament, Brigadier Feroz H. Khan, said that the fall of Dhaka was a "Never Again" moment for Pakistan and it forced Pakistan to take measures to make sure that such disasters never happen again (Khan, 2012).

Propaganda against Pakistan

India has not unturned any stone in maligning Pakistan at national and international forums. India has used its state resources to spread disinformation and isolate Pakistan diplomatically. The European Union DisinfoLab revealed the scale of the Indian malicious campaign in its report in December 2020. After the preliminary report in 2019, the EU lab published the whole report in December 2020 under the name of "Indian Chronicles". This report revealed that India has resurrected dead media, think tanks, NGOs, and even dead people to malign Pakistan (Machado et al., 2021). The Indian state used the identities of dead people to "defame" Pakistan and promote pro-Indian narratives. Dr. Louis B. Sohn, former chairman of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace (CSOP) and a Harvard professor of International Humanitarian Law, who died in 2006, surprisingly joined the UN Human Rights Council meeting in 2007 and had also attended an event organized by "Friends of Gilgit-Baltistan" regarding Baloch separatist activism in Washington DC in 2011 (The News International, 2020). The campaign was running for the last 15 years and its primary focus was to undermine Pakistan at international organizations like the UN and EU-related organizations. The report termed the campaign as the "largest network" of disinformation that the organization has exposed so far. The campaign was running in 65 countries with 265 pro-Indian sites primarily undermining Pakistan. The report mentions, "The coverage... have helped reproduce negative iterations about Pakistan or China" (Kuchay, 2020).

FATF Grey list

India's growing influence in international organizations would certainly isolate Pakistan and would create many problems for Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan has opposed the elevation of India in international Forums like the United Nations Security Council (Almeida, 2015). A recent example is India's role in keeping Pakistan on the Financial Assistance Task Force (FATF), a body that oversees terror financing and money

laundering. Despite completing 26 of the 27 conditions, India ensured that Pakistan remains on the grey list of FATF (The Express Tribune, 2021). The Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said “Due to us, Pakistan is under the lens of FATF, and it was kept in the grey list” (The Times of India, 2021).

Conclusion

The US has extended its support to India through technology transfer, military sales, agreements, sanction waivers, and diplomatic support but India is reluctant to choose between China and the US. India is getting all the support from the US and building its capability but has shown no interest in forming any formal military alliance with any member of the Quad. The informal Quad alliance has benefited India economically, diplomatically, and militarily. India has used these benefits to further isolate, malign, and damage the reputation of Pakistan.

Recommendations

- Pakistan should not choose any side between the US and China, because the US is our defense and main export partner and China is our neighbor and major investor. Pakistan should try to get maximum benefit from both states without compromising its sovereignty.
- Pakistan should also focus on middle-income economies instead of merely focusing on major powers like the US and China. It should find new avenues like the Central Asian Nations and the Middle East to attract investments.
- However, it is difficult to maintain a balanced relationship with the US and China, Pakistan should accelerate its joint ventures with China while maintaining its defense ties with the US.
- For an independent foreign policy, Pakistan first needs to improve its economy and attract foreign direct investment. And for that Pakistan needs long-term sustainable policies which require political stability. So, Pakistan needs to focus on its political system to have some diplomatic clout.

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