

India-U.S. Ties Amid New Realities: RSTV- Big Picture

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Participants:

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Context:

A recent meeting took place between S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington where a host of bilateral issues like Vaccine Procurement, QUAD, Climate change, Indo-China situation were discussed.

He also met top US administration officials — Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, the US Trade Representative, Director of National Intelligence, top American lawmakers from both the Democratic and Republican parties, and also top American business leaders.

Background:

Maitri initiative: As a part of its vaccine diplomacy and benevolent humanitarian efforts, India is exporting vaccines (Covaxin and Covishield) to countries in need.

Significance of the visit:

- India and the USA have become important allies in recent times. A visit at such a crucial time is a marker of a thriving relationship.
- It will cater to the high vaccine shortage in India. (80 million doses are awaiting clearances from US authorities).
 - More than 3 lakh people have died in India.
 - There have been instances of bodies floating in the Ganga.
- Increased production will also cater to the global vaccine demand and promote vaccine equity.
 - Export to COVAX Facility
 - Countries of South Asia like Bangladesh have been requesting vaccines from India
- It is an opportunity for **QUAD** to stand up to the global challenges and elevate from the tag of a mere talk shop.
 - QUAD's Roadmap:
 - USA and Japan – research
 - Australia – logistics
 - India – cheap manufacturing (India – Pharmacy of the world)
- It'll also enhance the stature of India which was already being accelerated by its vaccine diplomacy.
- Such a convergence would have a multiplier effect over the other strands of the Indo-US partnership. (Climate change, Strategic agreements – **LEMOA**, COMCASA, BECA, STA-1 status, Shared vision for Indo-Pacific, etc.)

- It's an opportunity for the USA to regain its global leader stature especially after Donald Trump's reign of cheque book diplomacy.

Challenges:

- Private players are still reluctant to let go of their profits.
- The approach of the US isn't proactive and it has to be pursued to coordinate with India.

The way forward:

- A joint production of vaccines can enhance the manufacturing capacity of India, thereby countering the current economic downfall.
- Such joint ventures may open up newer avenues in the Indo-US relationship because patent-related issues (USTR-Priority watch list) have always been a bone of contention between India and the US.
- The global supply chains need to be diversified and made more resilient so that the whims of any single country don't halt economic processes.
- This pandemic is an opportunity to set up precedents in [TRIPS](#) (WTO) to streamline operational processes in the face of any future pandemics.
- Multilateral institutions like WHO need to be reformed, made more accountable and proactive.

Conclusion:

The coordination between India and the US is a win-win situation for all stakeholders. It's a positive endeavour to reach herd immunity and the ultimate eradication of the pandemic.