

AIR Spotlight - India-US Virtual Summit

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the India - US virtual summit and the 2+2 dialogue is discussed.

Participants:

1. Sushant Sarin, Strategic Analyst.
2. Simran Sodhi, Journalist.

Context:

The article discussed the agendas and important key points of the virtual summit held between India and the US.

Background:

- On April 11, President Joe Biden met India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a virtual summit.
- Later in the day, the U.S. and India held their fourth "2+2" dialogue, which saw Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin meet their counterparts, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defense Minister Rajnath Singh.
- The focus was not only on the free and open Indo-Pacific Region but on food and energy security too.

Agenda of the summit:

Following were the areas of discussion:

- The ongoing bilateral cooperation and exchange of views on recent developments in South Asia, the Indo-Pacific region, and global issues of mutual interest,
- Cooperation on ending the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Climate change and global economy,
- Upholding a free, open, rules-based international order to bolster security, democracy, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, as well as developing the "Indo-Pacific Economic Framework" on infrastructure.

Significance of the summit:

- Both countries are now being considered close strategic partners and the bilateral relationship between the two is almost 75 years. The discussion will bring about some positive outcomes on the ongoing issues.
- India is now seen as one of the global leaders across the world. It has strengthened its position in the international arena. Having this virtual summit with the U.S will help in boosting the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Important takeaways:**Russia-Ukraine War:**

- PM Modi and President Biden talked about the [Russia-Ukraine crisis](#) and Beijing and Moscow coming closer and its implications.
- PM Modi called the situation in Ukraine "very worrisome" and hoped that the ongoing dialogue between Moscow and Kyiv will lead to peace.
- Modi said the recent reports of killings of innocent civilians in Bucha city were very concerning and that India immediately condemned it and demanded a fair investigation.
- US President Joe Biden talked about the strong India-US defense partnership, stressing that both the countries are going to "continue our close consultation on how to manage the destabilizing effects of this Russian war".
- Biden welcomed India's humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine.

Defense cooperation:

- PM Modi and Biden also talked about defense cooperation and trade between their nations.

Other issues:

- The two leaders had an extensive exchange of views on several regional and global issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic recovery, climate action, recent developments in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region, and the situation in Ukraine.

India's stand on Russia-Ukraine War:

- Unlike its [Quad](#) partner countries, India has not yet condemned the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#) and it abstained from the votes at the UN platforms on the Russian aggression.
- India has been pressing for an immediate cessation of violence in Ukraine and seeking a resolution of the crisis through diplomacy and dialogue.
- PM Modi has held phone conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin. He had also spoken to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy twice.

- In a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on April 1, Modi conveyed that India stands ready to contribute in any way to the peace efforts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine.

India-US-Russia:

- On the one hand, India shares democratic values with the U.S. On the other hand, India doesn't always trust the West.
- India has a colonial past, it was nonaligned during the [Cold War](#), and it wants to make its own decisions. And it also buys a lot of weapons, fertilizer, and oil from Russia.
- India is not violating any sanctions by importing oil from Russia and it is also a fact that Europe buys more Russian oil and gas than India does.
- The US officials say that the U.S. is not asking India to cut off Russian oil completely, just not to increase its reliance on it.
- India wants to maintain a balance between its relationship with the US and Russia. Referring to the 75th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, PM Modi said he is confident that India-US friendship will be an integral part of India's development journey for the next 25 years.

Conclusion:

- The US has raised concerns over the consequences of Russia being close to China and its impacts. India is aware of this fact but it wants to stay neutral.
 - The U.S and India will meet in Tokyo in May 2020 with leaders from Japan and Australia to talk about countering China.
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