



Coverage of the Third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

26 – 31 October 2020

The third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue conducted in October this year, is playing a catalytic role in steering the bilateral relations. By the signing of a bunch of defense pacts including Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) and Maritime Information Sharing Technical Arrangement (MISTA) in the 2+2 talks, India and the U.S are expanding their defence cooperation into newer areas of geo-spatial intelligence and maritime information sharing. The partnership is expanding to every other domain, including energy, education and trade. This ONW reflects upon the major developments in the recently conducted India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue.

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
<p>With China, India Has Revealed a Blind Faith in Diplomacy By Ashok K. Mehta The Wire October 31, 2020</p>	<p>Despite India’s continuing faith in dialogue, diplomacy and existing protocols with China for resolving the LAC standoff, it is clear that other than the cosmetic disengagement from friction points that has materialised, nothing more can be expected as New Delhi has failed to create any ‘pressure points’ to force Beijing into implementing restoration of status quo ante. India has rejected a Chinese proposal to prioritise de-escalation over disengagement. This week, the U.S. foreign and defence policy duo of Mike Pompeo and Mark Esper were in New Delhi for the third 2+2 dialogue just days before the U.S. presidential election. Both have targeted China, the world’s number two military and economic power and particularly the Communist Party of China, for bullying, aggression and bad behaviour – characteristics alien to civilised nations and civilisational states.</p>
<p>BECA — and the importance of 3 foundational pacts of India-U.S. defence cooperation The Indian Express October 30, 2020</p>	<p>India and the United States on Tuesday (October 27) signed the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), which, along with the two agreements signed earlier — the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) — completes a troika of “foundational pacts” for deep military cooperation between the two countries. The strengthening of the mechanisms of cooperation between the two militaries must be seen in the context of an increasingly aggressive China, which threatens a large number of countries in its neighbourhood and beyond.</p>

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<p>India-U.S. partnership has grown in every domain: MEA ANI October 29, 2020</p>	<p>Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava on Thursday, 29th October, stated that there was a sense of satisfaction that the partnership between India and the United States had grown in every domain during the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. The MEA spokesperson mentioned that the format of the dialogue was reflective of a comprehensive strategic global partnership India had with the U.S., under which a range of foreign policy issues, including regional and global issues of mutual interest, were discussed.</p>
<p>Excessive optimism over a pact with election-bound U.S. is premature <i>By Vivek Katju</i> The Indian Express October 29, 2020</p>	<p>What is more likely is the Modi government's assessment that there is bipartisan support in the U.S. for higher and positive bilateral ties. There is merit in this view, with the caveat that, while the overall framework and direction of the relationship is conducive, it cannot be entirely insulated from extraneous factors. In India-U.S. ties, the leading outside consideration is China.</p>
<p>India Resists U.S. Pressure to Buy Armed Drones as Trump Looks for Foreign Policy 'Wins' U.S. News October 29, 2020</p>	<p>The U.S. pressured India to purchase sophisticated armed drones during a high-level meeting between top officials this week but was not successful, officials confirm to U.S. News, robbing President Donald Trump of a sought-after foreign policy "win" in the waning days of his reelection bid. The sale, like many weapons deals the president has previously touted, would have served as a sterling example of the domestic and foreign policy doctrine Trump has espoused. It would enable another country to carry out a White House foreign policy goal.</p>
<p>U.S. stirring up confrontation among groups, says irked China after 2+2 talks The New Indian Express October 29, 2020</p>	<p>In a statement the Chinese Embassy accused U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo repeating old lies and violating the norms of international relations. "The boundary question is a bilateral matter between China and India. The two sides have been discussing disengagement and de-escalation in the border areas through diplomatic and military channels. China and India have the wisdom and ability to handle their differences properly. There's no space for a third party to intervene," the statement said.</p>
<p>2+2 ministerial dialogue brought 'unprecedented cooperation' between India, U.S.: Lawmakers The New Indian Express October 29, 2020</p>	<p>"The U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue has brought unprecedented cooperation between our two countries, pushing our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership to new heights," said Congressman Michael T McCaul, Republican Leader of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Congressman Brad Sherman, in a tweet, welcomed the successful conclusion of the 2+2 ministerial. "Great to see India & the U.S. conclude another successful 2+2 Ministerial to further expand the U.S.-India relationship," he said.</p>

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<p>Two together: On India-U.S. ties and China The Hindu October 29, 2020</p>	<p>The India-U.S. Foreign and Defence Ministers meet for the “2+2” mechanism just a week before the U.S. elections is proof that bilateral ties between the two countries are on a firm footing. Ostensibly, the purpose was to conduct an annual review of ties and to wrap up the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for Geo-spatial Cooperation, the last of the three enabling agreements which will facilitate easier interoperability between the Indian and American defence forces. However, the timing and the tenor of the American pronouncements prior to the visit made it clear that the larger import of the visit for the Trump administration was about dealing with China.</p>
<p>2+2 meeting: Eye on China, India-U.S. raise defence cooperation The Indian Express October 28, 2020</p>	<p>In his statement after the dialogue, the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that “we shared assessment of the security situation across the Indo Pacific” and “reaffirmed our commitment to peace, stability and prosperity of all countries in this region”. Singh said, “We also agreed that upholding the rules-based international order, respecting the rule of law and freedom of navigation in the international seas, and upholding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states are essential. Our defence cooperation is intended to further these objectives.”</p>
<p>With eyes on China, India & the U.S. focus on Taiwan and Afghanistan Financial Express October 28, 2020</p>	<p>“An equally important and significant aspect of the discussions between two sides were the exchanges on the evolving situation in Iran and a stalemate in Afghanistan and uncertainty for peace in Afghanistan,” says an Indian Army veteran Brig NK Bhatia. “The 2+2 meeting Indo-U.S. ministerial meeting which concluded on Tuesday, 27th October, assumes significance for several reasons: it happened at a time when India and China are engaged in a prolonged military standoff; Washington is actively pursuing its regional powers to curb the influence of China in the Indo-Pacific; India is at the centre of Washington’s Indo-Pacific strategy; and, the signing of BECA and other military agreements will elevate the relationship a few notches,” opines Prof. Rajan Kumar, School of International Studies, JNU.</p>
<p>BECA: The deal that will make Indian missiles deadlier has finally been signed The Economic Times October 28, 2020</p>	<p>The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation or BECA, long time in the making, has finally been signed by India and the United States. The agreement will give India access to extremely accurate geo-spatial data, which will have major implications for a range of military aspects, such as giving Indian missiles a killer edge.</p>
<p>Incentives to advance India-U.S. partnership are stronger than ever before <i>By C. Raja Mohan</i> The Indian Express October 27, 2020</p>	<p>Coming amidst China’s continuing aggression on the Ladakh frontier, the 2+2 dialogue between the defence and foreign ministers of India and the United States in Delhi this week marks an important moment in bilateral relations. It also takes place amidst a profound structural shift in great power politics as well as turbulence in the international economic order intensified by the coronavirus pandemic.</p>

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<p>U.S. to support India’s defence of territory The Hindu October 27, 2020</p>	<p>The United States will support India to defend its territorial sovereignty and liberty, U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said on Tuesday, 27th October. Addressing the media at the end of the 3rd India-US 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi, Mr. Pompeo also said that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is “no friend to democracy”. The observations about the threats to Indian sovereignty came as New Delhi announced the signing of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on geospatial cooperation (BECA) with the U.S.</p>
<p>With eye on China, India and U.S. sign accord to deepen military ties The Washington Post October 27, 2020</p>	<p>India and the United States signed a pact Tuesday, 27th October, to share geospatial intelligence, paving the way for deeper military cooperation between the two countries as they confront an increasingly assertive China. The agreement will give India’s armed forces access to a wealth of data from U.S. military satellites to aid in targeting and navigation. The agreement is the latest example of how India and the United States — the world’s two largest democracies — are drawing closer together to respond to the challenge of China’s rise.</p>
<p>Talk ties mindfully, do not squander options <i>By Manish Tewari</i> Deccan Chronicle October 27, 2020</p>	<p>With the People’s Liberation Army of China menacing India’s northern borders it is quite natural for India to look for military allies. The U.S. by far remains the most powerful outside power balancer even today in every part of the world. The quad is also anchored by the U.S. for all intents and purposes. However, defence relationships define a country’s foreign and strategic policies in the global arena. It would have implications qua Russia and even the other mid-sized powers around the world.</p>
<p>U.S. Warns of Threat Posed by China, Signs Military Pact With India U.S. News October 27, 2020</p>	<p>The annual U.S.-India strategic dialogue comes at a time of heightened tension in the region, with Indian troops confronting Chinese forces on their disputed Himalayan border. "Our leaders, and our citizens, see with increasing clarity that the Chinese Communist Party is no friend to democracy, the rule of law, transparency, nor to freedom of navigation, the foundation of a free and open, prosperous Indo-Pacific," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.</p>
<p>Third India-U.S. 2+2 dialogue: Breaking the mould on post-war model of bilateral ties <i>By Kashish Parpiani and Angad Singh</i> Observer Research Foundation October 26, 2020</p>	<p>Speaking in New Delhi early this month, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun underscored a different approach for partnerships. In context of the Indo-Pacific region, while Biegun acknowledged the criticality of the United States’ post-World War II treaty alliances in underwriting peace and prosperity for about seven decades, the U.S. diplomat expressed the need for recalibrating partnerships to better “reflect the geopolitical realities of today and tomorrow.” Although Biegun noted some alliances (as with Japan and Australia) to have already evolved to a degree, he noted the redundancy of following “the model of the last century of mutual defence treaties with a heavy in-country U.S. troop presence.”</p>
