International Relations · GS - II

“What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India’s National self-esteem and ambitions” Explain with suitable examples.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

India–US relations; strategic autonomy; Indo-Pacific; defence cooperation; trade disputes; Russia relations; nuclear cooperation; technology partnerships; global governance; differing strategic priorities

Model Answer

Introduction

India and the United States have developed extensive cooperation in defence, technology, trade and the Indo-Pacific. Nevertheless, differences persist because the two countries do not always share identical strategic priorities, and India seeks recognition as an independent global power rather than as a subordinate partner.

Sources of Friction

1. Strategic Autonomy

India maintains an independent foreign policy and avoids formal alliance commitments. Its defence and energy ties with Russia, including its purchase of Russian military equipment and oil, have at times created tensions with

Washington.

2. Different Regional Priorities

The United States has often approached Asia through its broader global strategy, whereas India prioritises its immediate neighbourhood, continental security and maritime interests in the Indian Ocean.

3. Trade and Economic Disputes

Differences over tariffs, market access, agricultural products, digital regulation and intellectual-property protection have periodically strained relations.

4. Expectations in Defence Cooperation

Although defence exercises and technology cooperation have expanded, India seeks access to advanced technologies and a partnership based on mutual benefit and respect for its strategic choices.

5. Global Governance

India's demand for a greater role in international institutions, including permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council, reflects its ambition to gain recognition commensurate with its size and capabilities.

Areas of Convergence

Shared concerns about regional stability, resilient supply chains, advanced technology, counterterrorism and maritime security provide strong foundations for cooperation.

Conclusion

India–US friction arises partly from differing expectations about India's place in the international order. A durable partnership requires Washington to recognise India's strategic autonomy and global ambitions, while India continues to pursue practical cooperation where interests converge.

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