



President Trump's speech on Afghanistan and its implications for US-India Security Cooperation

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1. President Trump's speech on Afghanistan has come as a shot in the arm for greater and stronger US-India Security Cooperation in a number of ways.
2. First, India's historic and longstanding concerns relating to the presence of anti-Indian, anti-US, and anti-Afghan terrorist sanctuaries in India's immediate vicinity have found a decisive voice in the President's speech.
3. Second, in a notable departure from the previous US administration's posture where the focus was on an Af-Pak solution to the Afghanistan issue, India has been included as part of a regional strategy to help the US resolve the security imbroglio that sadly plagues Afghanistan.
4. Third, India's timely and timeless economic development and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan have been duly recognized and are expected to contribute substantively towards the success of the newly minted regional approach towards that country.
5. Fourth, the President has reiterated his commitment towards greater US-India defense and security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Theater against common maritime challenges facing the two countries in addition to their close cooperation in ensuring the security of Afghanistan and the larger South Asia region.



6. Lastly, contrary to the opinion of a number of experts that has been aired over the last few days, India's pronounced role in the US strategy towards Afghanistan is neither aimed at flaring up the already tense India-Pakistan relationship nor does it create a competition amongst these two countries in maintaining strategic depth in Afghanistan at each other's expense. The US clearly sees a certain closeness in interests and perceptions with India insofar as peace, security, and stability in South Asia are concerned. And these perceptions and commonality in interests are the bedrock of an ever stronger US-India security partnership, in South Asia and beyond.