

## US-India Strategic Partnership: Pompeo Hinted at a Big “Surprise”. Contain both Russia and China

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Region: [South Asia](#)

Theme: [History](#)

*The Secretary of State told the audience at the US-India Business Council meeting earlier this week that he “didn’t want to spoil the surprise” by spilling all the details of what he plans to talk about during his upcoming trip to India on 24 June, but what he did reveal strongly hints that the “surprise” will probably be a three-part package deal solidifying the American-Indian Strategic Partnership at Russia’s complete expense.*

Secretary of State Pompeo is prepared to compete with Russia on all front when it comes to “poaching” India as a strategic ally, at least judging by what he strongly hinted at during his [speech](#) at the US-India Business Council earlier this week. Speaking to the audience, he described how American-Indian relations have greatly improved since the time of the Old Cold War and after the implementation of India’s free market reforms, which have resulted in the US becoming the South Asian state’s second-largest trading partner at \$142 billion worth of transactions last year alone.

This economic groundwork laid the basis for expanding their ties in the military and strategic domains, with India recently becoming the US’ first and only “Major Defense Partner” and a crucial component of the so-called Quad, which have in turn made it one of America’s [priority partners](#) for its so-called “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” vision. Pompeo emphasized that the his country and India have “overlapping interests” in the defense, energy, and space domains and that “it’s only natural that the world’s most populous democracy should partner with the world’s oldest democracy”.

With an eye on the future, he even suggested that the sale of F-21 and F/A-18 fighter jets “could give India the capabilities it needs to become a full-fledged security provider throughout the Indo-Pacific”, implying that the US wants to see India expand its military-strategic presence from Africa all the way to Japan in becoming its “[Lead From Behind](#)” proxy for jointly “contain” China. On top of that, Pompeo also spoke very excitedly about the US’ plans to build six nuclear reactors in India and export more crude and LNG to it too, as well as intensify their growing cooperation in space.

Nevertheless, he stopped himself from spilling all the details of his upcoming talks by telling everyone that he “doesn’t want to spoil the surprise”, which immediately piqued the world’s curiosity about what exactly he has in mind. Judging from what he already revealed during his speech, the US probably intends to formally offer India a three-part package deal comprised of a series of energy, trade, and military deals for solidifying the American-Indian Strategic Partnership, all of which would ultimately come at Russia’s complete expense given the zero-sum competitive dynamics involved.

Modi will more than likely [bow down](#) to Trump's trade demands even though the two sides are presently trying to get a [better deal](#) from one another with through their GSP and [tariff](#) games. Moreover, the US [successfully pressured](#) India to discontinue importing Iranian oil despite its [previous promise](#) to only respect UNSC sanctions and not unilaterally imposed ones, thereby naturally opening up the opportunity for American resources to eventually fill the void. It's the military aspect of this probable three-part deal, however, that poses the most serious risk to Russia's interests if the US gets India to pull out of its S-400 deal in exchange for THAADs.

The Indian Ambassador to the US [strongly hinted](#) last month that his country was prepared for a full-on military pivot towards his host country, and with his homeland being so closely tied to America on the economic front (unlike the comparatively measly [\\$9 billion](#) in bilateral trade that it conducts with Russia each year mostly through the military-industrial complex), there's a certain logic to New Delhi ditching Moscow in order to avoid CAATSA sanctions so long as the Pentagon can replace the abandoned wares and satisfy its security needs. Should that happen, then it would be disastrous for the Russian budget and offset its [two systemic transitions](#).

Largely ignored by most of the world, Russia is presently experiencing political and socio-economic transitions as Putin prepares to pick a successor before he retires in 2024 (Post-Putin 2024, or PP24 for short) at the same time as he seeks to invest \$400 billion in modernizing his country's hard and soft infrastructure through the so-called "Great Society" (also known as the "National Development Projects"). Russia's budget is still largely dependent on resource and arms exports, with India being an important partner for both, so it would be disastrous if American businesses quickly replace it in the energy, military, and even space domains.

Although Russia is rapidly trying to diversify its erstwhile regional dependence on India through its ["Return to South Asia"](#) and attendant [strategic partnership](#) with the [global pivot state](#) of Pakistan, it might not be able to do so quickly enough to avoid enormous budgetary losses before 2024, the time when both systemic transitions are supposed to be completed. This could make the country much more vulnerable to American pressure in agreeing to a lopsided ["New Detente"](#), which is presumably one of the main factors driving the US' comprehensive strategic outreach to India at Russia's budgetary expense.

It's with this motivation in mind why it's very likely that the "surprise" that Pompeo plans to reveal during his upcoming trip to India is a three-part package deal for solidifying the American-Indian Strategic Partnership, which would satisfy the dual proposes of inflicting inordinate pain on the Russian budget while simultaneously serving to "contain" China. Should this scenario come to pass as expected, then Russia's only sensible recourse would be to strengthen the [Multipolar Trilateral](#) between itself, China, and Pakistan as it seeks to build the [Golden Ring of Multipolar Great Powers](#) in response.

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