



India-United States Defense Cooperation: A New Chapter for the Global Industry

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Indian military spending is set to grow further in the coming years, consolidating the country as one of the main players in the global defense landscape. With a forecast to reach 90 billion dollars by 2025, India establishes itself as the third-largest arms buyer in the world, right after the United States and China. This significant increase in spending represents a strategic opportunity both for the United States, which aims to integrate India into its alliance system, and for Europe, which could see the Indian market as a new development ground for its own defense industries.

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Recently, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar visited the Pentagon to discuss deepening bilateral cooperation between India and the United States. The meeting aimed to strengthen defense ties through a decade-long agreement that includes interoperability, joint exercises, and increasing industrial involvement. This is part of the U.S. strategy to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region, with India representing a key element for this geopolitical balance.

The strategic alliance with the United States and the gradual replacement of Russia

Since 2008, India has been one of the main destinations for Russian military exports, with about 59% of arms imports coming from Moscow. However, over the years, India has begun a process of diversifying its suppliers, gradually reducing dependence on Russia and looking with increasing interest to the United States, France, and Israel. Between 2020 and 2024, the share of weapons from Russia fell to 36%, a figure that highlights the ongoing change in the Indian defense sector.

The United States has accelerated talks with India to further reduce this dependence on Russia, encouraging the acquisition of advanced technologies, such as the F-35s, which could replace Russian aircraft like the Sukhoi and MiG. In this context, bilateral talks between U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Minister Jaishankar, held in July 2025, laid the groundwork for future strengthening of industrial cooperation, including new contracts for the sale of U.S. armaments and collaborations for co-production.

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India has already integrated numerous U.S. systems into its armed forces, including transport aircraft, helicopters, and missile systems, while preparing to further strengthen this cooperation with new acquisitions, such as Stryker armored vehicles and Javelin anti-tank missiles. Despite these increasingly close relations, India has maintained a balance in its policies, choosing not to adhere to sanctions against Russia and maintaining a pragmatic approach to its defense needs.

The opportunity for Europe

As India moves towards increasing diversification of its supply sources, Europe faces an important opportunity to enter the Indian defense market. Although the United States remains the main supplier of advanced technology, there are opportunities for European companies to participate in the growing Indian demand, especially in sectors such as naval systems, cyber technologies, radars, and helicopters. Europe has the opportunity to position itself as a reliable supplier, also through co-production agreements that are now an essential requirement to operate in the Indian market.

Recent conversations between the Indian and U.S. governments, such as those between Hegseth and Jaishankar, have emphasized the need for increasing industrial integration and supply chain sharing. This implies that Europe, if it wants to compete with major global players, must move quickly to establish productive collaborations and long-term strategies. Industrial cooperation is crucial at a time when the Indian defense market is rapidly changing, with a growing demand for technologically advanced and high-quality equipment.

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The revival of Indian military spending offers a dual opportunity: on one hand, it represents a crucial card for the United States in containing China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region, and on the other, it constitutes an extraordinary industrial opportunity for Europe. The latter must act with pragmatism and speed not to fall behind in an increasingly competitive and strategically crucial market. In conclusion, the growth of Indian military spending and its commitment to greater diversification of arms suppliers not only pose a challenge but also an important opportunity for all major global players, and particularly for Europe, which has the chance to fully leverage its industrial potential in a rapidly evolving geopolitical context.

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