

Nikki Haley Urges Stronger U.S.-India Ties

August 24, 2025

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Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has emphasized the importance of strengthening ties with India, arguing that the United States must rely on New Delhi as a critical partner in confronting China. Her comments come amid tensions over tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump and India's continued purchase of Russian oil.

Haley said that while disagreements over trade and energy must be addressed, Washington should not lose sight of the bigger picture. She stressed that the world's two largest

democracies share decades of goodwill that should not be undermined by short-term disputes.

“India must take the U.S. point over Russian oil seriously, and work with the White House to find a solution. The sooner the better,” Haley wrote on X. “Decades of friendship and goodwill between the world’s two largest democracies provide a solid basis to move past the current turbulence.”

Her comments reflect the U.S. administration’s stance that India’s continued purchase of Russian oil undermines efforts to restrict Moscow’s economic lifelines. At the same time, Trump has sought to press New Delhi on trade matters, imposing tariffs on certain Indian goods as part of his broader “America First” policy.

Haley underscored that cooperation between the United States and India is essential in addressing the challenge posed by Beijing. She argued that both nations must prioritize their strategic partnership to maintain stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

“Navigating issues like trade disagreements and Russian oil imports demands hard dialogue,” Haley said. “But we should not lose sight of what matters most: our shared goals. To face China, the United States must have a friend in India.”

Her remarks highlight the Republican view that China remains the top strategic competitor to the United States. Strengthening alliances in Asia, particularly with India, has become a central part of the party’s foreign policy vision.

Tariffs on Indian goods and pressure for India to reduce Russian energy imports have created friction, but Haley suggested that these disputes can be resolved through strong diplomacy. Analysts note that India, a major buyer of Russian oil, has sought to balance its relations with both Washington and Moscow while pursuing its own energy security needs.

Despite this, Haley made clear that alignment with the United States is crucial for India’s long-term interests. By backing Trump’s harder stance on Russia and calling for compromise on trade, she signaled that Republican leadership views India as too important to alienate.

The United States and India have steadily expanded defense cooperation in recent years, with joint military exercises and technology sharing. Trade, however, has been a recurring

source of friction. Trump has argued that India's policies disadvantage American businesses, while Indian officials have pushed back against U.S. restrictions.

Haley's remarks suggest that while tensions remain, Republican leaders believe the broader U.S.–India relationship is strong enough to withstand temporary setbacks. By focusing on shared concerns over China, both governments may find a path forward that benefits security, trade, and diplomatic stability.

As the debate continues over Russian oil and tariffs, Haley's message signals that Washington must keep its eyes on the strategic prize: building a durable partnership with India to secure American interests in an increasingly competitive global environment.