



CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES

In Focus

New Delhi

CAPS InFocus: 51/2022

26 July 2022

I2U2 Summit – A New Beginning

Aditya Hazarika

Copy Editor, Centre for Air Power Studies

Keywords: I2U2 Summit, West Asian Quad, UAE-Israel relations, Indo-US partnership.



Image Source: static.timesofisrael.com



Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Centre for Air Power Studies [CAPS]

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution – Non-Commercial – No Derivatives 4.0 International License.

India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United States of America (US), four unique pillars of world powers, have recently concluded the inaugural summit of a new grouping, the I2U2. The new forum is named by taking the initials of the respective countries in alphabetical order. The grouping might not have the most vibrant take on naming itself. However, its motivation and goals do stand by the urgency of the present world order.

On July 14, 2022, the heads of the governments of the four countries joined each other virtually to announce this new grouping. The grouping was first hinted at by a senior US official who mentioned that the heads of these four states would be connecting with each other during the official visit of US President Joe Biden to Israel.¹ According to the official joint statement on this summit, this new grouping is formed with the aim of focusing on “joint investments and new initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.”² The four associated countries are individually very capable and aware of the issues being focused on through I2U2. Thus, the coming together of these four pillars may lay the groundwork for the rest of the like-minded countries to follow suit.

The inaugural summit saw discussion and agreements on the issues of food security and clean energy. It was decided that the UAE would “invest 2 billion USD to develop a series of integrated food parks across India that will incorporate state-of-the-art climate-smart technologies to reduce food waste and spoilage, conserve fresh water, and employ renewable energy sources.”³ India would be providing adequate land and labour to implement the same. The US and Israel would contribute by lending their advanced technical know-how and helping improve the overall effectiveness of the initiative. The target for this would be to increase crop yields and help address food insecurities in South Asia and West Asia.⁴

India would also be the location for the setting up of a “hybrid renewable energy project... consisting of 300 megawatts (MW) of wind and solar capacity complemented by a battery energy storage system.” The state of Gujarat has been selected for the feasibility study headed by the US Trade and Development Agency. This project will prove to be crucial for India to achieve its goal of “500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.”⁵

Future Summits

The future summits would look into the aspects of water, transportation, space, and health. All the member countries stand to gain immensely in these sectors too. India has a distinct dominance in the health sector and thus can provide crucial leadership in its development. In the space sector,

the US has been a historical innovator while the Indian space sector has shown tremendous growth. The UAE and Israel have collaborative links with both NASA and ISRO, and with their technological strides, this sector will hope to see the biggest gains. Both the water and transportation sectors also play a crucial role in contemporary geopolitics. Therefore, it can be hoped that the I2U2 Summits in the future will blaze the right paths for wholesome growth for the global society to trade.

The dilemma of US involvement

Since the Cold War era, the US has had a track record of creating regional groupings with its own motives in sight. Some of such organisations have either failed to meet their desired goal or disintegrated without any real impact. With this in mind, one must be cautious if the US is pursuing its own interests masquerading as a progressive association or might be actually interested in solving such wide-ranging issues. It must be noted that the I2U2 has already been claimed as the 'West Asian Quad' by the Ambassador of the UAE to India, Mr. Ahmed Albanna.⁶ Such statements not only dilute the intention of the organisation but also project a cryptic purpose. Considering the outline of the I2U2 Summit, one should stay away from such commentary.

Potential of Israel and UAE

Israel and the UAE are major powers in West Asia. While Israel is a world leader in technology and innovation, the UAE has begun investing in issues concerning environmental and sustainable sectors. Thus, the I2U2 platform provides a fertile ground for both of them to come together and contribute. It is also significant that both these countries have come together in an international grouping after the conclusion of the 2020 Abraham Accord. In terms of tangible benefits for these nations from the summit, India could be a crucial partner for them in the sectors of health, food security, and space. Thus, it would be worthwhile to see the coming together of these erstwhile adversaries and set an example for the world to see.

Conclusion

The I2U2 agenda aims to address issues that cut across all of the various tensions that exist in the world. In such a situation, it would be unfruitful and dishonest for it to pursue any unwarranted and ulterior motive. These four countries are leaders in their own right and have the capacity to make a lasting impact on issues like food security, health, and water. The pursuance of these goals with the right devotion is crucial. I2U2 provides a pristine scope for major leaders to come together and solve global issues; consequently, it becomes crucial for it to succeed and show a divided world the impact of collaboration.

NOTES:

¹ Rishika Singh, “Explained: What is I2U2 that is holding its first-ever leader’s summit today?”, *Indian Express*, July 14, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/everyday-explainers/what-is-i2u2-holding-first-ever-leaders-summit-8027574/>. Accessed on July 19, 2022.

² “Joint Statement of the Leaders of India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and the United States (I2U2)”, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, July 14, 2022, <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/35492/Joint+Statement+of+the+Leaders+of+India+Israel+United+Arab+Emirates+and+the+United+States+I2U2>. Accessed on July 19, 2022.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Singh, n. 1.

