

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (PSIR)

VALUE ADDED MATERIAL

PAPER 2 SECTION B MAINS 2025

Key Features:

- Crisp coverage of Key Concepts
- Curated Scholarly Quotes and Analysis
- Contemporary Interlinkages
- Equipped with Model Introductions and Conclusions for Answer Writing



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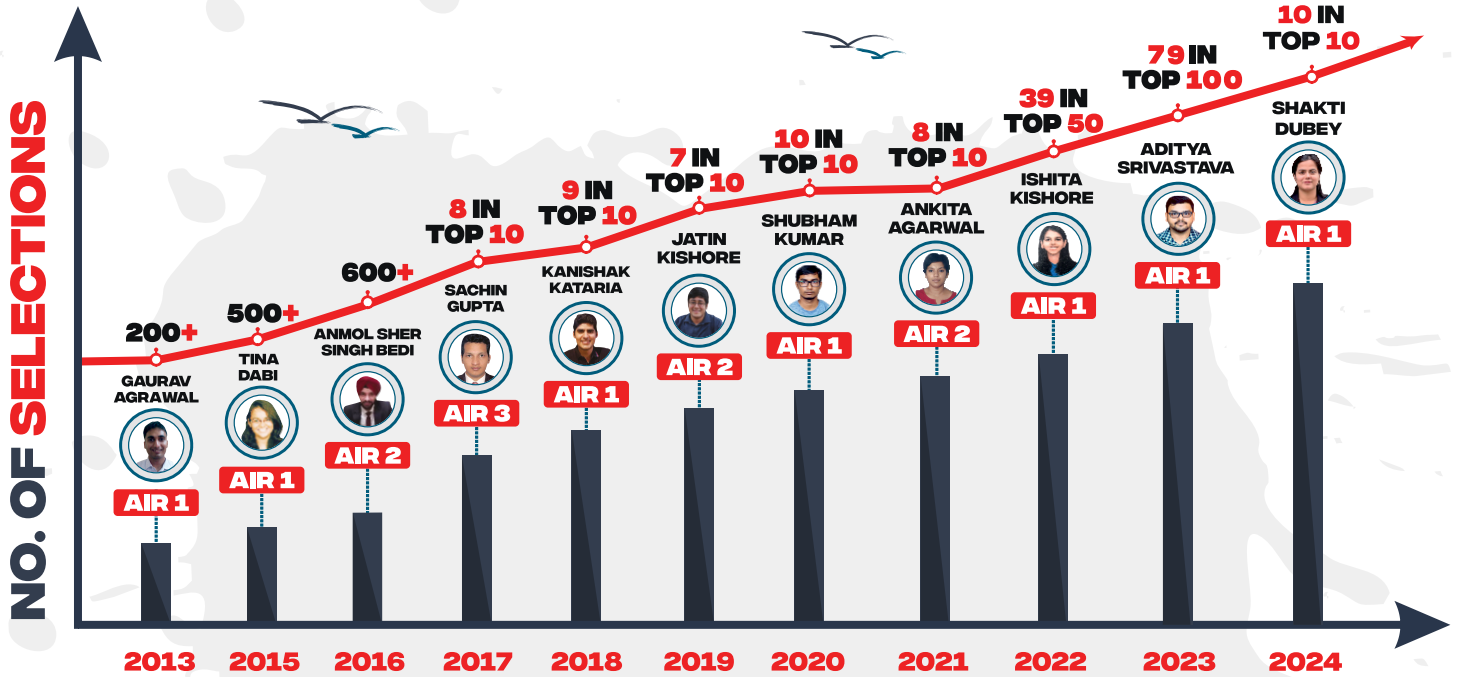


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Unit 1- Indian Foreign Policy

Syllabus: Determinants of foreign policy, The institutions of policy-making, Continuity and Change

- Rawls

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

Determinants of Foreign Policy

- ⊕ Explain the major features of India's Foreign Policy in the 21st century. (2023)
- ⊕ What are the external determinants of the Foreign Policy of a State? (2023)
- ⊕ Peaceful co-existence remains the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. Comment. (2022)
- ⊕ Discuss the role of public diplomacy in the enhancement of India's global standing. (2022)
- ⊕ Explain the philosophical foundations of India's foreign policy. (2021)
- ⊕ How do the constituent states influence the foreign policy making process in India? (2021)
- ⊕ Examine the role of 'parliamentary diplomacy' in India's foreign policy. (2019)
- ⊕ Examine the increasing significance of maritime security in India's foreign policy. (2019)
- ⊕ Do you agree with the view that the Indian Foreign Policy is increasingly being shaped by the Neoliberal outlook? Elaborate. (2018)
- ⊕ Examine the Indian National Movement and geographical location of India as determinants of India's foreign policy. (2017)
- ⊕ Which determinant factors play an important role in making India's foreign policy? Illustrate with examples. (2016)
- ⊕ The social structure of a country influences its foreign policy-making. How does the social structure of India impact the course and direction of its foreign policy? (2015)
- ⊕ 'Economic interest has emerged as the main component of India's foreign policy'. Discuss the statement in the light of India's initiatives to improve relations with China, Japan and the Central Asian republics. (2015)
- ⊕ "Federal units are critical in the making of India's foreign policy." Examine this statement with reference to the role of West Bengal vis-à-vis Bangladesh. (2014)
- ⊕ What have been the main challenges to India's foreign policy in the last two decades? Are these essentially 'concerns' with domestic politics or 'strategic' issues? (2012)
- ⊕ Comment on the essential elements of India's foreign policy that are required to secure energy and security in the Indian Ocean region. (2012)
- ⊕ Explain the impact of coalition politics on India's Foreign Policy since late 1990s. (2011)
- ⊕ "Domestic problems and Historic legacies, apart from other factors, constitute major strains on Indian foreign policy." Discuss this statement with suitable examples. (2009)

The Institutions of Policy-Making

- ⊕ How do the constituent states influence the foreign policy making process in India? (2021)
- ⊕ Describe the structure and function of the National Security Council of India. What role does it play in the formulation of Indian foreign policy? (2020)
- ⊕ Discuss the role of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in promoting India's soft power abroad. (2018)
- ⊕ How does the Parliament determine and influence the making of India's foreign policy? (2015)
- ⊕ The Ministry of External Affairs is losing its importance in the making of India's foreign policy with the parallel rise of the P.M.O. Explain. (2014)
- ⊕ Assess the scope and importance of setting up the Public Diplomacy Division in the Ministry of External Affairs in strengthening India's Foreign Policy. (2012)
- ⊕ Explain the role of the Parliament in the shaping of 123 Agreement between India and the US on Civil-nuclear Cooperation. (2011)

Continuity and Change

- ⊕ Would you concur with the view that of late, India's foreign policy has been in a transition mode from Nehruvian to Neo-liberalism? Support your answer with the help of suitable examples. (2024)
- ⊕ Critically examine the major factors responsible for a turnaround in the trajectory of India's foreign policy in the post-cold period. (2022)
- ⊕ "India's current foreign policy marks significant qualitative shifts from that of the previous regimes." Discuss. (2018)
- ⊕ Discuss the shift of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan in the light of the Pathankot incident. (2016)
- ⊕ Vision of a new world order has emerged as the major objective of India's foreign policy. Discuss the policy initiative taken by India in this regard and challenges faced by it. (2015)
- ⊕ Discuss the realistic foreign policy initiatives taken by India to balance its relations between Israel and the Arab world. (2015)
- ⊕ "Some of the major changes that occurred in India's foreign policy after the Sino – India war in 1962 were within the larger framework of continuity." Discuss. (2014)
- ⊕ Identify the elements of change in India's foreign policy. (2013)
- ⊕ To what extent is multi-lateralism a reality with regard to India's constructive strategic partnership with Central Asian states? (2011)
- ⊕ "India's policy in post-Cold War era is tilted towards pragmatism and wisdom. Elucidate. (2011)

PYQs trend Analysis

Based on the **trend analysis of UPSC questions** from Paper 2, Unit I of PSIR (Indian Foreign Policy), it is evident that the **focus is both conceptual and contemporary**, testing aspirants' ability to link theoretical underpinnings with practical developments.

Thematically, three dominant trends emerge:

- ▶ First, questions related to the **determinants of foreign policy**—whether external (e.g., 2023), internal, historical, or structural—are asked consistently. These include references to **India's national movement, geographical location, economic interests, coalition politics, and social structure**. Recurrent questions from 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2023 confirm the importance of understanding **multi-layered determinants**, beyond simplistic cause-effect models.
- ▶ Second, there is strong emphasis on the **institutions and actors involved in foreign policy-making**, such as the **Parliament, federal states, the National Security Council, ICCR, MEA, and PMO**. The repeated appearance of questions on **Parliament (2011, 2015, 2019)** and **federal units (2014, 2021)** shows that aspirants must prepare with a federal and institutional lens. Questions on **public diplomacy (2022, 2012)** and the **Public Diplomacy Division** also reflect interest in **non-traditional institutions and soft power mechanisms**.
- ▶ Third, there is a pattern of questions related to **continuity and change** in India's foreign policy, particularly the **transition from Nehruvianism to Neoliberalism**, and the **pragmatic turn in the post-Cold War period**. Questions from 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2022, and 2024 demonstrate UPSC's consistent attention to how India's foreign policy has **evolved in its orientation, approach, and objectives**, especially vis-à-vis **multilateralism, strategic autonomy**, and relations with **China, the US, Central Asia, Israel-Arab world**.

Moreover, aspirants should note the increasing appearance of themes around **maritime security, energy diplomacy**, and **India's strategic engagements in the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region**, suggesting that a strong grasp of **geostrategic trends and regional architecture** is critical.

In summary, aspirants should focus on (1) **theoretical and structural determinants** of India's foreign policy, (2) **institutional and federal dynamics** of foreign policy-making, and (3) **the evolving strategic and ideological shifts**, particularly in the **post-Cold War and 21st-century context**. A recurring emphasis on **soft power, economic diplomacy, strategic autonomy, and multilateralism** underlines the need for an integrated and analytical understanding of India's foreign policy trajectory.

Understanding Foreign Policy

- ▶ Foreign policy refers to a government's strategy in dealing with other nations. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including diplomacy, trade negotiations, military alliances, and international aid. The primary goal of foreign policy is to safeguard a nation's interests, security, and prosperity on the global stage.
- ▶ **Hans Morgenthau**, defined foreign policy in terms of national interest and power. In his seminal work, "Politics Among Nations," Morgenthau argued that the primary objective of foreign policy is the protection and enhancement of national interests, which he believed are rooted in power dynamics.

Objectives of Indian Foreign Policy

Indian foreign policy, characterized by continuity and consistency, is rooted in several key principles and objectives.

- ▶ **Ensuring Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty:** India's primary concern is safeguarding its borders and maintaining control over its territories to protect national interests and security.
 - ▶ **For Example:** During India's chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all member countries.
- ▶ **Pursuit of International Peace and Security:** India advocates for peaceful coexistence among nations, supporting non-alignment and non-interference in internal affairs. Further, India actively participates in international efforts to prevent conflicts, resolve disputes peacefully, and promote dialogue among nations.
 - ▶ **For Example:-** India's significant contribution to UN peacekeeping forces underscores its commitment to global stability and peace.
- ▶ **Promoting Internal Development and Well-Being:** India's foreign policy focuses on fostering economic growth, social progress, and inclusive development.
 - ▶ **For Example:** Trade agreements like the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Singapore, the India-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, and the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aim to promote trade, investment, and economic cooperation.
- ▶ **Enhancing Security:** India strengthens its security capabilities through strategic partnerships, regional stability initiatives, counterterrorism efforts, and addressing non-traditional security threats.
 - ▶ **For Example:** The government imposed restrictions on bidders from countries sharing a land border with India, primarily to curb Chinese influence.
- ▶ **Advancing Global Standing:** Indian foreign policy aims to enhance India's global influence by actively engaging in shaping international norms, rules, and institutions.
 - ▶ **For Example:** India's presidency of the G-20, SCO, and its invitation by Japan to the G-7 reflect its enhanced global standing.
- ▶ **Protecting Indian Diaspora:** India values its diaspora and works to strengthen ties, provide support, and protect the rights and interests of overseas Indians.
 - ▶ **For Example:** India has the largest diaspora, with 17.5 million people of Indian origin worldwide, according to the Global Migration Report 2020. For Example: Operations like Devi Shakti (evacuation from Afghanistan), Ganga (evacuation from Ukraine), and the recent evacuation from Sudan highlight India's commitment to protecting its diaspora.

Objectives Outlined by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar

- ▶ **Addressing Global Challenges:** India aims to address key global challenges through extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, participating actively in international forums, building partnerships, and collaborating with various countries.
- ▶ **Managing Global Contradictions:** Indian foreign policy seeks to effectively manage and leverage global contradictions, navigating complex international dynamics, balancing competing interests, and seizing emerging opportunities.
- ▶ **Advancing Interests in a Multipolar World:** India is committed to advancing its interests in the evolving multipolar world, contributing to the global good, and shaping global norms, rules, and institutions to reflect changing realities and the aspirations of emerging powers.

By adhering to these principles and objectives, India aims to secure its national interests while contributing to global stability, prosperity, and peace.

Challenges of Indian Foreign Policy

Indian foreign policy faces multiple challenges, both traditional and non-traditional, which require nuanced and strategic approaches to navigate effectively.

- ▶ **Regional Security Challenges:** India's regional security is frequently threatened by cross-border terrorism and territorial disputes, especially from neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan.
 - ▶ **For Example:** Instances like the recent **Pahalgam** attacks, 2008 **Mumbai** attacks, originating from Pakistan, underscore the persistent threat to India's security.
- ▶ **Power Dynamics with China:** Managing the rising power dynamics with China is a significant challenge, requiring a balance of relations while safeguarding national interests.
 - ▶ **For Example:** Border tensions, such as the Doklam standoff in 2017 and the clashes in the Galwan Valley in 2020, highlight the challenges in managing territorial disputes and assertive behaviour from China. C. Raja Mohan discusses the implications of China's rise and stresses the importance of engaging in constructive dialogue while protecting India's national interests.
- ▶ **Combating Terrorism and Extremism:** Addressing terrorism and extremism, both domestically and internationally, necessitates coordination and intelligence-sharing with other nations. For Example: India faces insurgencies and acts of violence in regions like Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern states, driven by various extremist groups.
- ▶ **Economic Interests and Trade Challenges:** India's economic interests are impacted by trade barriers, protectionism, and global economic uncertainties.
 - ▶ **For Example:** The imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminium by the US affected India's steel exports, and protectionist measures in the agricultural sector, such as import restrictions, also pose challenges. Raghuram Rajan discusses the need for proactive diplomacy and negotiation to safeguard India's economic interests in the face of global economic uncertainties.
- ▶ **Non-Traditional Security Threats:** Addressing non-traditional security threats like climate change, cybersecurity, and pandemics requires international cooperation. For Example: India collaborates with countries like the US and Israel on cybersecurity, engaging in information sharing, capacity building, and joint cyber exercises. Shivashankar Menon highlights the importance of international collaboration in tackling these non-traditional security threats, emphasizing India's role as a responsible global actor.
- ▶ **US Relations and Strategic Autonomy:** Balancing relations with the US while maintaining strategic autonomy, especially regarding China, is a delicate task. For Example: India's preference for negotiations with China over direct confrontation contrasts with US expectations for a more combative stance, leading to perceptions of unreliability from US think tanks.
- ▶ **China's Aggressiveness:** The ongoing border disputes with China remain a significant concern, with India opting for negotiations over military action to ensure bilateral trade continues.
 - ▶ **For Example:** Despite aggressive actions by China, India focuses on diplomatic negotiations to manage the border standoff.
- ▶ **Russia-Ukraine War:** India's neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine conflict has been contentious, particularly with the US, which views Russia as a primary adversary.
 - ▶ **For Example:** India maintains and expands its ties with Russia, focusing on defense and nuclear energy cooperation, despite US objections.
- ▶ **Regional Tensions:** Shifts in regional politics, such as the change in the Maldivian government to a pro-Chinese leadership, pose strategic challenges for India.
 - ▶ **For Example:** India's cautious engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan reflects its nuanced approach to balancing security and diplomatic needs amidst routine tensions with Pakistan.
- ▶ **Middle East Dynamics:** Balancing relations in the Middle East, especially concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict and relations with Iran, impacts India's standing in the region.
 - ▶ **For Example:** India's position in the Israel-Gaza conflict requires careful balancing of relations with both Israel and the Palestinians.

By addressing these challenges through strategic diplomacy, international cooperation, and a focus on safeguarding national interests, India aims to navigate its complex foreign policy landscape effectively.

Determinants of Foreign Policy

India's foreign policy is shaped by a complex interplay of various factors that contribute to both continuity and change in its policies and principles.

- ▶ **Geographic Factors-** Geography plays a pivotal role in shaping India's foreign policy due to its strategic location in Asia and dominance over the Indian Ocean.
 - ▶ **Strategic Location:** India's proximity to vital sea lines of communication and control over the Indian Ocean significantly influence its engagements with other nations.
 - ▶ **Challenges:** Geography also presents challenges such as artificial political borders and regional issues like terrorism and piracy.
 - ▶ **Changing Focus:** Historically, India focused more on continental matters (Panipat Syndrome), but under the Modi Doctrine, initiatives like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), and Project Mausam emphasize maritime interests.
 - ▶ Former Prime Minister Vajpayee remarked, "We can change our history but not our geography," highlighting the enduring influence of geographical realities.
- ▶ **Historical and Strategic Culture-** India's history and strategic culture profoundly impact its foreign policy.
 - ▶ **Principles and Ideologies:** Influences from Kautilya's Realpolitik and the idealism and pacifism of Buddha and Gandhi shape India's approach.
 - ▶ **Colonial Legacy:** India's experience of colonialism and imperialism has led to policies of non-alignment, anti-colonialism, disarmament, and peace-making.
 - ▶ **Nehru's View:** "A country's foreign policy ultimately emerges from its own traditions," said Nehru, emphasizing the role of historical experiences.
- ▶ **National Requirements and Goals-** India's foreign policy is driven by its national requirements and goals.
 - ▶ **Primary Objectives:** Ensuring national security, territorial integrity, and a peaceful external environment.
 - ▶ **Economic Interests:** Economic development, trade promotion, energy security, and the well-being of Indian citizens abroad.
 - ▶ **Economic Liberalization:** Increased economic liberalization has enhanced the role of businesses and entrepreneurs in shaping foreign affairs.
 - ▶ **Trade and Energy Agreements:** India has pursued trade agreements with countries like the United States, European Union, ASEAN, and African nations. Additionally, energy cooperation agreements with countries like Russia and Middle Eastern nations ensure oil and gas supplies.
- ▶ **Global and Regional Challenges-** Global and regional challenges also influence India's foreign policy decisions.
 - ▶ **Regional Relations:** Relations with neighbouring countries like Pakistan and China, Cold War geopolitics, and balancing interests in the Middle East are significant factors.

VALUE ADDITION

India's foreign policy reflects a blend of economic and strategic interests, influenced by historical ties and its leadership role in the Global South. While economic interests are increasingly important, they remain closely linked to broader strategic goals.

Key aspects include:

- ▶ **Strategic autonomy through economic sovereignty:** India balances trade relationships, diversifies energy sources, and secures strategic resources to reduce dependence on any single nation.
- ▶ **Selective participation in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF),** excluding trade, as a strategic move to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ **Use of development cooperation as soft power,** with initiatives like the ITEC programme and concessional lines of credit to build goodwill among developing countries.
- ▶ **Bilateral agreements such as the India-Australia ECTA and the Chabahar Port deal with Iran,** which carry both economic and strategic importance.

Though **economic diplomacy is vital**, it does not entirely overshadow other key drivers, reflecting the complex nature of India's foreign policy.

VALUE ADDITION

Para-diplomacy, introduced by John Kincaid in 1990, involves regional governments engaging in international relations through formal and informal contacts.

- ▶ While foreign affairs remain a union subject in India, emerging trends like cross-border trade and foreign collaborations (like sister cities Kyoto- Varanasi etc.) highlight its growing relevance.
- ▶ Para-diplomacy strengthens federalism, boosts regional competitiveness, and globalizes local issues.
- ▶ However, challenges like policy incoherence, limited state finances, and lack of participation data persist.
- ▶ To enhance para-diplomacy, balancing central and state roles, strengthening institutional mechanisms, and fostering state-level consulates are essential.

- ▶ **Adaptability:** India adapts its foreign policy to changing global and regional dynamics while protecting national interests.
- ▶ **Middle East Policy:** India maintains strong ties with Middle Eastern countries, balancing engagements with various stakeholders and avoiding regional conflicts.
- ▶ **Social and Cultural Factors-** Social and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping India's foreign policy.
 - ▶ **Ethnicity and Culture:** Shared ethnicity, culture, religion, and race can foster cooperation or give rise to conflicts.
 - ▶ **Partition Legacy:** The partition of the subcontinent and lack of consolidated nationalism have led to ethnic conflicts within and between states.
 - ▶ **Cultural Exchange Programs:** India has launched cultural exchange programs with countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka to strengthen ties and promote cultural understanding.
- ▶ **Domestic Social Structure-** The domestic social structure significantly influences international relations, both in terms of cooperation and conflict.
- ▶ **Identity Crises and Conflicts:** The artificial partition during colonial times has led to identity crises and ethnic conflicts within and between states.
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - The Madhesi issue in Nepal revolves around ethnic identity and representation, affecting its relationship with India.
 - The Tamil issue in Sri Lanka has led to tensions with India.
- ▶ **Para Diplomacy-** Para diplomacy, involving the active participation of sub-national actors like state governments in international affairs, is a growing trend in India's foreign policy.
- ▶ **Regional Involvement:** States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal actively pursue foreign policy objectives, organize investor summits, attract foreign investments, and address state-specific concerns internationally.
- ▶ **Example:** States like Maharashtra and Karnataka have hosted international business summits and established direct trade links with foreign countries, highlighting the increasing role of regional actors in shaping India's foreign policy.

These factors collectively shape India's foreign policy, contributing to its evolving approach to global engagement and strategic interests.

VALUE ADDITION

Disaster Diplomacy: India's Expanding Global Role

- ▶ Recently, the 6th International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) in India highlighted the nation's growing role in global crisis response.
- ▶ Disaster diplomacy involves aiding nations affected by disasters, enhancing India's soft power, geopolitical reach, and bilateral ties.
- ▶ India's approach includes rapid disaster response, capacity building, and post-conflict relief.
- ▶ Despite challenges like technological limitations and geopolitical tensions, India aims to strengthen its disaster diplomacy through capacity building, budget enhancement, and global partnerships like the Quad.

Interlinkages Determinants with IR Theories

▶ External Determinants

- ▶ The Realist theory emphasizes that the anarchic international system forces states to prioritize security and power. External threats, alliances, and power balances directly shape foreign policy decisions to ensure survival and strategic advantage.

▶ Economic Determinants

- ▶ Liberal Institutionalism highlights economic interdependence and global markets as key influences. States pursue trade and development cooperation to promote national prosperity, integrating economic goals within foreign policy frameworks.

▶ Leader's Personality

- ▶ Leaders' beliefs and traits impact decision-making, aligning with the Psychological Approach in IR. Personality differences explain why states with similar circumstances pursue divergent policies due to individual biases or perceptions.

Scholarly Statements on Determinants of Indian Foreign Policy

▶ Shivshankar Menon

- ▶ In his book “Choices: Inside the Making of India’s Foreign Policy” (2016), Menon argues that strategic autonomy and national interest, rather than ideology, have consistently guided India’s foreign policy. He notes: **Neera Chandhoke**, in her deliberations on **civil society and democracy**, interprets duties as a **tool of democratic consolidation**, particularly in societies undergoing democratic deepening. She cautions against using duties as a means of **state disciplining**, a concern that **Ashis Nandy** also echoes when warning against **moral authoritarianism** in the garb of constitutional duty.
 - “The real determinant of our foreign policy is strategic autonomy – our ability to retain freedom of action and choice.”

▶ C. Raja Mohan

- ▶ A leading strategic affairs analyst, Raja Mohan highlights the role of **geopolitical compulsions**. In “Modi’s World: Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence”, he emphasizes:
 - “Geography, economy, and strategic constraints shape India’s policy more than moral posturing or historical legacies.”
 - He also stresses **domestic politics** and **diaspora diplomacy** as growing determinants.

▶ Harsh V. Pant

- ▶ Pant, in his ORF papers and his book “Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview”, discusses the growing salience of **economic interests**, **energy security**, and **defence modernization**:
 - “Today, the quest for **economic growth** and **energy access** trumps the earlier obsession with non-alignment.”

▶ Shyam Saran

- ▶ Pant, in his ORF papers and his book “Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview”, discusses the growing salience of **economic interests**, **energy security**, and **defence modernization**:
 - “Today, the quest for **economic growth** and **energy access** trumps the earlier obsession with non-alignment.”

▶ S. Jaishankar

- ▶ Current EAM, in “The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World” (2020), notes:
 - “India’s foreign policy today is driven by a new mindset of **strategic clarity, realistic assessment, and global ambition**.”
 He also emphasizes multi-alignment, shifting from older non-alignment frameworks.

▶ Suhasini Haidar (The Hindu)

- ▶ In her editorials, she brings attention to **media diplomacy**, **public opinion**, and **domestic coalitions**, especially in sensitive regions like Sri Lanka and Palestine, reflecting the **internal-political determinants**

▶ Prof. Rajesh Rajagopalan

- ▶ A realist scholar, he argues that **material capabilities** and **security threats**, especially from China and Pakistan, are enduring drivers:
 - “India’s foreign policy is constrained by its **security environment** and limited ability to project power.”

▶ Arvind Gupta (Vivekananda International Foundation)

- ▶ He brings in **technological and cyber-security considerations** as newer determinants of Indian diplomacy in the digital age.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

Richard Snyder, H.W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin describe the decision-making approach to foreign policy. It describes that foreign policy is shaped by a number of factors like domestic factors, a leader’s personality, institutions, and external influences independence.

Model Conclusion 1:

The determinants of foreign policy reflect a nation’s **unique priorities and challenges**. While diverse factors influence decisions, the ability to **align them with national goals** and **evolving international contexts** determines policy effectiveness. India’s experience shows that **understanding and integrating these determinants** is key to maintaining its **global standing and strategic autonomy**.

Model Introduction 2:

Hans Morgenthau defines foreign policy as the strategy through which a country protects its national interests and asserts its power in the international system.

Model Conclusion 2:

Foreign policy is shaped by **multiple, sometimes conflicting, determinants** such as **domestic interests, leadership, institutions, and external pressures**. Successfully balancing these factors to produce a **coherent and adaptive policy** is a complex task. India's foreign policy demonstrates resilience in managing these challenges amid a dynamic global environment.

Institutions of Foreign Policy Making

Foreign policy is shaped by the decisions of various important institutions in a nation. These institutions interact in complex ways to formulate and implement foreign policy.

1. Parliament

Parliament plays a crucial role in shaping India's foreign policy through its legislative and oversight functions. It has the power to legislate on foreign affairs and can seek information and clarification from the government on policies and issues. Parliament's deliberative chamber provides a platform for elected representatives to debate foreign policy decisions and bring public attention to them.

► Examples:

- **Rafale Deal:** Heated discussions and debates over the purchase of Rafale fighter jets from France.
- **RCEP Negotiations:** Deliberations on India's stance and decision to opt out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.
- **Civil Nuclear Deal with the USA:** Extensive debates and discussions on the implications and benefits of the deal.
- **Galwan Clash:** Parliamentary discussions following the violent clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley.

Scholarly Views, Thinkers Commentary

► Shivshankar Menon

- In "*Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy*", Menon clearly points out:
 - "Foreign policy in India is largely an **executive prerogative**, with Parliament providing only limited oversight." Menon critiques the absence of robust institutional mechanisms in Parliament to debate or shape foreign policy beyond crisis moments.

► Shashi Tharoor

- has repeatedly stressed in parliamentary debates and his book "Pax Indica"
 - "The Indian Parliament has **immense potential** to contribute to foreign policy deliberation, but remains **underutilized**, due to executive dominance and lack of institutional reforms."

► C. Raja Mohan

- In multiple ORF and The Indian Express commentaries, Raja Mohan identifies Parliament as a **neglected site of strategic discourse**, stating:
 - "Strategic silence in Parliament has ceded space to bureaucratic discretion and reactive diplomacy."

► Manoj Joshi

- Argues that "**foreign policy elites**" dominate the decision-making space, sidelining Parliament:
 - "India's foreign policy operates within a **narrow strategic community**, with limited parliamentary accountability."

► Bharat Karnad

- criticizes the lack of strategic culture, partly due to Parliament's minimal involvement:
 - "A weak institutional culture in Parliament on external affairs has stunted the evolution of a coherent, long-term strategy."

► Ramesh Thakur

- Argues that greater parliamentary involvement is essential in democracies like India to maintain the **democratic legitimacy** of foreign policy decisions, especially military interventions or treaty ratifications.

Think Tank Contributions

- ▶ IDSA Briefs (2020) on “Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight of Foreign Policy” suggest the creation of a Standing Committee on External Affairs with real powers, similar to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
- ▶ PRS Legislative Research critiques how key foreign treaties are rarely debated in the Lok Sabha, e.g., the India-US Civil Nuclear Deal.

2. Ministry of External Affairs

- ▶ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) **is responsible for planning, formulating, and managing India’s external relations to protect and promote national interests.**
- ▶ It acts as the foreign policy secretariat, analyzing various policy options and implementing decisions taken by the Cabinet.
- ▶ MEA’s divisions, such as Economic Diplomacy and Development Partnership Administration, strengthen economic and developmental cooperation with other countries.

Recent Initiatives:

- ▶ **Indo-Pacific Division:** Created to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region and to cater to India’s interests in the area.
- ▶ **NEST Division:** Focuses on New Emerging and Strategic Technologies to bolster India’s technological capabilities and partnerships.
- ▶ **Cultural Diplomacy:** MEA organizes cultural festivals and events in foreign countries to enhance mutual understanding and strengthen cultural ties.

3. Ministry of Defence

- ▶ The Ministry of Defence (MoD) provides its views and expertise on defence policy and national security matters.
- ▶ The Defence Minister and MoD officials are members of key decision-making bodies like the Cabinet Committee on Security and the National Security Council.
- ▶ The MoD collaborates with the Ministry of External Affairs on planning and international cooperation tasks, and its input is vital for formulating defence-related aspects of foreign policy.

▶ Examples:

- ▶ **Acquisition of the S-400 Missile System:** The MoD played a key role in deciding to acquire the S-400 missile system from Russia, a move made in response to the growing threat from China. This decision significantly impacted India’s relations with both Russia and the United States.
- ▶ **Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) Operation in Sri Lanka:** The MoD was responsible for planning and executing this operation in the 1980s, showcasing its role in military operations abroad.

4. Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI)

The Department of Commerce, in coordination with the MEA and the Ministry of Finance, conducts India’s economic diplomacy. It formulates policies related to trade, bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, investment, and taxation, playing a crucial role in promoting India’s economic interests globally.

▶ Examples:

- ▶ **India-ASEAN FTA:** Negotiated the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement.
- ▶ **Investment Promotion Agencies:** Set up agencies to assist foreign investors interested in investing in India.

5. Cabinet and Cabinet Committees

The Cabinet, as the highest decision-making body of the government, plays a pivotal role in determining India’s external relations. Cabinet Ministers assist in major foreign policy issues and provide necessary directions. Specialized committees like the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) contribute to policy formulation

▶ Examples:

- ▶ **CCS Decisions:** Responsible for making significant decisions, such as conducting surgical strikes against terrorist camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

6. National Security Council (NSC)

- ▶ Chaired by the Prime Minister, the **NSC plays a critical role in protecting India’s security and strategic interests. It includes the Ministers of External Affairs, Defence, Home, Finance, along with the National Security Advisor (NSA) and the Deputy Chairman of NITI Aayog.**

▶ The NSC is organized into three tiers: the Strategic Planning Group (SPG), the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

▶ **Examples:**

- ▶ **Rafale Fighter Jets and Apache Helicopters:** Involved in negotiations with France and the United States for these acquisitions.
- ▶ **Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs:** Played a key role in the development of India's nuclear capabilities.

7. Think Tanks

▶ Think tanks provide research and analysis to inform and influence public policies, particularly in international affairs and defence.

▶ Notable think tanks in India include the School of International Studies at JNU, the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

▶ **Examples:**

- ▶ **IDSA:** Provides research and analysis on defence and security issues.

Value Addition

Role of Think Tanks in Indian Foreign Policy – Expert-Based

The evolving role of **think tanks** in Indian foreign policy marks a significant transformation in the traditional architecture of policy-making, historically dominated by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** and the strategic elite.

Over the past two decades, India's increasing global engagement has necessitated **diverse knowledge platforms**, enabling **policy innovation**, **strategic forecasting**, and **norm-building** a space where think tanks have become increasingly relevant.

Scholars like **C. Raja Mohan** argue that institutions such as **ORF**, **IDSA**, and **Carnegie India** are no longer peripheral actors but **"bridging agents"** between statecraft and public discourse. Writing in The Indian Express and ORF policy briefs, he notes that **India's strategic community has expanded beyond South Block**, with think tanks acting as key sites of **agenda-setting and track-two diplomacy**.

Former NSA and diplomat **Shivshankar Menon**, in Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy (2016), acknowledges the supporting but growing function of think tanks, describing them as facilitators that help government actors **"prepare the intellectual and strategic groundwork"** for long-term decisions. While recognizing their contributions, he points out the absence of institutionalized channels for their integration into **formal decision-making processes**, which still largely remain **executive-centric**.

Similarly, **Shyam Saran**, in How India Sees the World (2017), appreciates the **analytical support** offered by think tanks but critiques the lack of a robust strategic culture in India that would otherwise allow these institutions to flourish as genuine **policy influencers**.

However, newer scholars like **Harsh V. Pant** view this conservatism as diminishing. In his writings and ORF publications, Pant asserts that Indian think tanks are playing an increasing role in norm entrepreneurship, particularly in the **Indo-Pacific** narrative, **cyber diplomacy**, and **maritime security**.

According to him, **"Think tanks today are essential in constructing strategic narratives that echo both domestically and internationally."** This is visible in India's growing use of soft power diplomacy through platforms like the **Raisina Dialogue**, organized by ORF in collaboration with the MEA, which serves not only as a symbolic showcase of India's global aspirations but also a **space of intellectual diplomacy**, where national and international stakeholders converge on shared challenges.

Foreign scholars too have taken note. Ashley J. Tellis, writing for Carnegie Endowment, emphasizes the role of Indian think tanks in transforming India from a "norm-taking" to a "norm-making" power, particularly in the digital and security domains. Tanvi Madan of the Brookings Institution recognizes that Indian think tanks have provided critical feedback loops in the India-US strategic partnership, helping refine domestic sensitivities and translate them for global audiences. These observations underline how think tanks serve not merely as echo chambers but as strategic translators—internalizing global discourses and projecting India's calibrated responses.

This analytical contribution has become particularly prominent in times of diplomatic crisis and strategic realignment. During the India-China standoff in Galwan (2020), think tanks like IDSA, Takshashila, and Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) provided public and classified analyses on border dynamics, military posture, and China's strategic calculus, often shaping elite opinion and parliamentary briefings. Similarly, think tanks like Carnegie India and Gateway

House have helped articulate India's position on digital sovereignty, data localization, and AI governance, contributing to India's assertiveness in global technology summits like the G20 and Global Partnership on AI.

The climate diplomacy space has also witnessed active think tank engagement. Institutions like TERI have long influenced India's negotiating positions at UNFCCC and COP summits by providing data-backed frameworks that strengthen India's call for equity, climate justice, and the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR). In India's Africa policy, think tanks such as RIS (Research and Information System for Developing Countries) have informed outreach strategies, particularly during the India–Africa Forum Summit processes, underlining the role of think tanks in shaping South–South cooperation.

Moreover, the informal diplomacy carried out through track-two and track-one-and-a-half dialogues with countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Japan has allowed Indian think tanks to become de facto diplomatic agents, especially when formal channels are constrained. These dialogues often contribute to policy signaling, confidence-building, and even conflict de-escalation. This has been especially relevant in the Indo-Pacific, where India's vision of free, open, and inclusive regional architecture has been consistently articulated and reinforced in think tank-led conferences, reports, and strategic communiqués.

In conclusion, while Indian think tanks may not yet possess the direct legislative influence seen in Western democracies, their contribution to strategic culture, norm creation, and foreign policy ecosystem is undeniable. As India's foreign policy becomes more complex and multidimensional, these institutions are assuming the role of strategic laboratories—shaping policy imagination, offering timely critiques, and enhancing India's ability to engage with a rapidly transforming global order.

8. Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

The PMO has played a dominant role in foreign policy since independence, as India has often lacked a powerful and independent Foreign Minister. This has resulted in the Prime Minister being the primary architect of foreign policy.

► Examples:

- **Indira Gandhi's Peace and Friendship with Russia (1971):** Established a strategic alliance with Russia.
- **Vajpayee's Nuclear Weapon Program:** Initiated and developed India's nuclear weapons program.
- **Gujral Doctrine:** Focused on improving relations with India's neighbors.
- **Current Modi Doctrine:**

9. Pressure Groups

These non-governmental organizations and associations advocate for specific causes and represent the interests of various sections of society. They contribute to the policy-making process through lobbying, advocacy, and public mobilization.

► Examples:

- **NASSCOM:** Advocates for India's interests in the global IT and ITeS industry.
- **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII):** Advocates for India's interests in the global business community.

10. Media

► The media plays a crucial part in foreign policy-making by acting as both a source of information and an agenda setter. It exerts pressure on decision-makers and influences their responses.

► It also serves as a platform for governments to communicate their objectives, motives, and intentions on an international scale.

Value Addition

Role of Media in Indian Foreign Policy

The role of **media as an informal but increasingly influential actor** in India's foreign policy landscape has expanded substantially in the post-liberalization era.

As **C. Raja Mohan** observes in his ORF and *Indian Express* writings, media in India functions not only as a reflector of state positions but also as an **agenda-setter** and **pressure-building institution**, especially in times of diplomatic crisis. He argues that Indian foreign policy has entered the **"age of strategic publicity,"** where narrative management is as crucial as negotiation, and media outlets play a central role in shaping the strategic discourse both domestically and globally.

This transformation is evident in how high-stakes issues such as **cross-border terrorism**, **border skirmishes with China**, and **India–Pakistan tensions** are covered with extensive primetime debates and reportage.

Suhasini Haidar, diplomatic editor of *The Hindu*, has noted that media increasingly acts as both a **participant and an observer**, with real-time reporting often influencing the diplomatic tempo. For instance, during the **Pahalgam and aftermath**, and the **Galwan Valley clash (2020)**, the Indian media not only amplified government narratives but also generated public opinion that arguably constrained diplomatic backchanneling in the immediate aftermath.

In this context, **Shivshankar Menon**, in *Choices* (2016), critically observes that media hyper-nationalism, if unchecked, may narrow the **strategic autonomy** of policymakers by **conflating public sentiment with national interest**.

Academic perspectives, such as those offered by **Prof. Harsh V. Pant**, emphasize that the media now functions as a **soft power multiplier** for Indian diplomacy.

In his commentary through ORF and *The Diplomat*, he highlights that platforms like *WION*, *DD India*, and even social media handles of MEA officials contribute to the **projection of India's global image**—whether on vaccine diplomacy, India's G20 presidency, or Indo-Pacific strategy. He also notes that international coverage of events like the **Raisina Dialogue** or **India's participation in the Quad** has been amplified through both Indian and global media, creating a feedback loop that reinforces diplomatic positions.

However, this evolving role is not without criticism. Scholars like **Rajesh Rajagopalan** argue that the “**mediatization of foreign policy**” can sometimes lead to **reactive policymaking**, especially when diplomacy gets overshadowed by performative nationalism.

This is visible in incidents like the **India–Maldives diplomatic row (2024)**, where media sensationalism escalated a manageable dispute into a strategic standoff, drawing reactions from top leadership and affecting people-to-people diplomacy. Further, the **Twitter diplomacy** of leaders and diplomats has blurred the line between **public diplomacy and strategic signaling**, making media platforms tools of both engagement and provocation.

On the constructive side, media has been instrumental in popularizing strategic issues that were once confined to elite circles. Coverage of India's **Indo-Pacific vision**, **counter-terror diplomacy**, and **Africa outreach** has sensitized public opinion and created a **strategic consciousness** in a democratic polity. Platforms like *The Print*, *India Today*, and *The Hindu's In Focus* podcast series have brought foreign policy into the mainstream, aligning with **IR theory's constructivist view** that **ideas and narratives shape state behaviour**.

At the global level, **foreign media platforms** such as *The New York Times*, *Al Jazeera*, and *The Washington Post* have also played a role in influencing perceptions of Indian foreign policy, especially on contentious issues like **India's stance on the Russia–Ukraine conflict** and **human rights diplomacy**. The Indian government has often responded by deploying strategic communication and rebuttals, indicating the rising importance of **media management in diplomacy**.

Thus, the media in India today is not a passive reporter of foreign affairs but a **dynamic player in the strategic ecosystem**—amplifying state narratives, shaping public expectations, and often acting as an informal stakeholder in the **foreign policy formulation process**. While this offers opportunities for **democratizing foreign policy discourse**, it also imposes challenges related to **credibility, restraint, and long-term vision**, especially in an era of **24/7 news cycles and digital virality**. As India aspires to be a leading power, the synergy and tension between **media logic and strategic logic** will remain a critical determinant of its foreign policy trajectory.

11. The Diaspora

- ▶ The diaspora, comprising Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), plays a growing role in Indian foreign policy.
- ▶ The government sees the diaspora as an asset in promoting India's priorities globally and seeks to leverage their networks, resources, and expertise for mutual benefit.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ Institutions in foreign policy-making reflect the **Bureaucratic Politics Model** (Graham Allison), where multiple agencies and actors negotiate policy outcomes. This challenges the unitary state assumption in Realism, highlighting internal complexities shaping international behavior.
- ▶ The **Organizational Process Model** (Graham Allison) explains how institutional routines and standard operating procedures shape foreign policy, limiting flexibility but ensuring consistency. This theory highlights the role of institutional culture and bureaucracy in decision-making.

- **Constructivism** (Alexander Wendt) views institutions as arenas where state identities and interests are constructed and reshaped through interaction, influencing foreign policy beyond material power considerations.

Scholars Statements

- Hans Morgenthau acknowledged that while states pursue national interest, the internal organization of government institutions critically affects how foreign policy goals are defined and executed.
- Margaret Hermann's research stresses that institutional structures and leadership styles together shape foreign policy outcomes, underscoring the combined influence of bureaucratic politics and individual agency.
- Richard Snyder, H.W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin emphasized that foreign policy is shaped by a **complex decision-making process** involving institutions, personalities, and external factors. Their work highlights the importance of institutional dynamics in understanding state actions internationally.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Model Introduction 1:</p> <p>Foreign policy is shaped by various institutions that work together to make decisions. These bodies influence and implement policies to protect national interests and respond to global challenges effectively.</p> | <p>Model Conclusion 1:</p> <p>The complex interaction of multiple institutions ensures India's foreign policy is well-rounded and responsive. Effective coordination among these bodies is essential to address evolving global and domestic demands.</p> |
| <p>Model Introduction 2:</p> <p>India's foreign policy depends on many key institutions like Parliament, MEA, NSC, and the PMO. Their roles are crucial in framing, guiding, and executing India's international relations</p> | <p>Model Conclusion 2:</p> <p>India's foreign policy-making is strengthened by the active roles of diverse institutions. Together, they help maintain strategic coherence and safeguard India's interests in a changing world.</p> |

Continuity and Change in Indian Foreign Policy

Indian foreign policy, rooted in long-term national interests, demonstrates both continuity and adaptability. This balance allows India to maintain a consistent approach while adjusting to changing global dynamics.

Continuity in Indian Foreign Policy

Continuity in foreign policy underscores India's enduring interests, values, and objectives, ensuring a stable and coherent engagement with the international community. Key elements include: Preservation of Territorial Integrity and Independence, Promotion of International Peace and Security and Economic Development.

► Core Continuing Values Guiding Indian Foreign Policy:

- **Non-Alignment:** A longstanding principle, non-alignment allows India to maintain its independence and avoid military blocs or alliances. This approach enables a balanced stance on global issues.
 - **Example:** India's abstention from voting on resolutions in the United Nations Security Council during the Cold War and the recent Russia-Ukraine crisis.
- **Multilateralism:** India actively participates in multilateral forums to promote global cooperation and address common challenges, supporting international law, multilateral decision-making, and collective action.
 - **Example:** India's membership in organizations like the G20, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** India strives for independent decision-making in international affairs, protecting its national interests and pursuing partnerships based on mutual benefit.
 - **Example:** India's refusal to join military alliances like NATO or the Five Eyes and its balanced relations with both Russia and the USA during the Russia-Ukraine crisis.
- **Democratic Principles:** Democracy is a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy. India promotes democratic values,

institutions, and practices domestically and internationally, emphasizing their importance for stability and progress.

○ **Example:** India's engagement with fellow democracies through the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and partnerships with countries like the United States and Japan.

▶ **Development Cooperation:** India extends development cooperation to countries in the global South, providing technical assistance, capacity building, and financial support to address development challenges and promote sustainable growth.

○ **Example:** The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program, which offers training and capacity building to professionals from partner countries.

While maintaining these core values and principles, India's foreign policy adapts to the evolving global environment. This adaptability is crucial for responding to new challenges and opportunities, ensuring that India's foreign policy remains relevant and effective in a rapidly changing world.

By balancing continuity with change, India can pursue its long-term interests while remaining flexible and responsive to international development.

Changes in Indian Foreign Policy

India's foreign policy has evolved through six distinct phases, each shaping the country's approach to international relations and its engagement with the global community

1. Optimistic Non-Alignment (1947-1962) In the initial phase after independence, India embraced an optimistic non-aligned stance in a bipolar world dominated by the United States and the USSR. The primary objectives were:

- ▶ Resisting the dilution of sovereignty
- ▶ Rebuilding the economy
- ▶ Consolidating national integrity

India played a crucial role in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement and emphasized principles of peaceful coexistence.

2. Realism and Recovery (1962-1971) The second phase, marked by the aftermath of the 1962 war with China, was characterized by realism and recovery. India made pragmatic choices in response to security and political challenges:

- ▶ The liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 through the use of hard power
- ▶ Complex dynamics with the US, China, and Pakistan, threatening India's regional power prospects
- ▶ Strengthening its position with the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in 1971
- ▶ Facing economic sanctions from the US and its allies after the Pokhran I nuclear test in 1974

3. Regional Assertion (1971-1991)

- ▶ During this phase, India asserted itself more regionally, marked by:
 - The liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 through the use of hard power
 - Complex dynamics with the US, China, and Pakistan, threatening India's regional power prospects
 - Strengthening its position with the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in 1971
 - Facing economic sanctions from the US and its allies after the Pokhran I nuclear test in 1974

4. Safeguarding Strategic Autonomy (1991-1998) In a unipolar world dominated by the US, India re-evaluated its approach to global affairs:

- ▶ Securing its nuclear weapons capability
- ▶ Engaging with the US, Israel, and ASEAN
- ▶ Pursuing the Gujral Doctrine, which emphasized non-interference and peaceful bilateral negotiations

5. Emergence as a Balancing Power (1998-2013) This phase saw India addressing its energy security concerns and balancing the rise of China:

- ▶ The India-US nuclear deal (123 Agreement)
- ▶ Active participation in forums like BRICS
- ▶ Forging stronger ties with Russia
- ▶ Focusing on common causes with China, such as climate change

6. Energetic Global Engagement (2013-Present) In the current phase, India has shown energetic engagement on multiple fronts due to a transitioning geopolitical landscape:

- ▶ Reassessing its policy of non-alignment
- ▶ Prioritizing an integrated neighbourhood through the “Neighbourhood First” policy
- ▶ Seeking greater global influence, including a bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council
- ▶ Implementing initiatives like the Act East policy and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)

These phases illustrate the evolution of India’s foreign policy, highlighting its adaptability, pragmatism, and aspiration for a prominent global role.

Strategic Culture in Indian Foreign Policy

- ▶ The concept of strategic culture emphasizes the role of culture, attitudes, and norms in shaping a country’s security strategies and behaviours, going beyond the traditional rational actor model.
- ▶ **Introduced by Jack Snyder, strategic culture evolved as a response to the realization that different countries react differently to security concerns** and have distinct approaches to their security objectives and means.

Indian Strategic Culture: Perspectives and Debates

▶ Critics of India’s Strategic Culture

- ▶ **George Tanham:** Tanham’s study initiated the questioning of India’s strategic culture. He concluded that India lacked a coherent strategic culture, attributing this absence to India’s history, culture, geography, and the influence of British rule. He argued that India did not understand the strategic perspective and failed to maximize its resources in international events, highlighting India’s focus on land forces and its late recognition of the importance of naval power.

▶ Proponents of India’s Strategic Culture

- ▶ **Indian Scholars:** Scholars like Kanti Bajpai, Amitabh Mattoo, Shyam Saran, and S. Jaishankar refuted Tanham’s argument. They pointed to ancient treatises like Kautilya’s Arthashastra as evidence of India’s strategic culture and highlighted the existence of strategic cultures in different Indian kingdoms, such as the naval power of the Cholas and the strategic thinking of the Marathas.

▶ Examples of Strategic Culture in India

- ▶ **Arthashastra or Realist Tradition:** The Arthashastra, an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft and governance written by Kautilya (also known as Chanakya), reflects a strategic culture rooted in realism.
- ▶ **Buddhism or Pacifist Tradition:** Buddhism, originating in ancient India, promotes principles of non-violence, compassion, and peace. It significantly impacts India’s strategic culture, advocating for peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution through dialogue and non-violent means.

These examples highlight the diverse strands of India’s strategic culture, encompassing both realist and pacifist traditions.

India’s strategic culture is a blend of various historical, cultural, and philosophical influences. Despite criticisms, there is substantial evidence supporting the existence of a coherent and multifaceted strategic culture in India, rooted in both ancient treatises and historical practices. This strategic culture continues to shape India’s foreign policy, balancing realist and pacifist traditions to navigate the complex global landscape.

Foreign Policy under PM Modi

Foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi marks a decisive shift from traditional Indian foreign policy, characterized by a more proactive and assertive stance.

▶ **Arul Louis**, an Indian diplomat and writer, identifies key characteristics of the Modi Doctrine:

- ▶ **Open Dialogue and Engagements:** There is a move away from Cold War tactics, emphasizing more transparent and direct dialogues with other nations.
- ▶ **Emphasis on Indian Traditions and Culture:** The current foreign policy places greater importance on India’s cultural heritage and traditions, distancing itself from colonial legacies.

▶ **Harsh V Pant**, an Indian strategic affairs expert, notes significant shifts in Indian foreign policy under the Modi Doctrine:

- ▶ **Proactive Engagement:** India has adopted a more proactive stance in its international engagements, seeking to shape global discourse and influence international norms actively.
- ▶ **Strategic Autonomy:** The emphasis on strategic autonomy has become more pronounced, with India balancing its relations with major powers like the US, China, and Russia while asserting its independent stance on global issues.
- ▶ **Economic Diplomacy:** There is a strong focus on economic diplomacy, with efforts to attract foreign investment, enhance trade relations, and foster economic cooperation with various countries.
- ▶ **Security and Defence:** The Modi Doctrine underscores the importance of strengthening security and defence capabilities through strategic partnerships, military modernization, and robust counterterrorism measures.

These shifts reflect a broader vision of India as a confident and assertive global player, actively shaping its destiny and contributing to global peace and stability.

S Jaishankar's Observations on Policy Shifts in the Modi Era

- ▶ **Emphasis on building strong partnerships with like-minded countries**, pursuing alignments based on specific issues rather than broad ideological stances. This approach allows for more flexible and effective cooperation on global challenges.
- ▶ **Managing great power relationships** is another crucial aspect of this era, with India expanding its regional outreach and increasing its global footprint. This includes balancing relations with major powers like the US, China, and Russia while seeking to assert its interests and influence in regional and global arenas.
- ▶ **Pragmatism** has become a cornerstone of policy decisions, with a focus on risk-benefit calculations to guide actions. This practical approach extends to utilizing unpredictability as a diplomatic tool, enhancing India's leverage in negotiations.
- ▶ **Willingness to use military power when necessary**, integrating defence policies as an essential component of diplomacy. This strategic integration underscores the importance of security and defence in safeguarding national interests.
- ▶ **Economic considerations have gained prominence**, with business and investment becoming central components of diplomacy. Strengthening the implementation of policies and initiatives ensures that economic engagements translate into tangible benefits for the country.
- ▶ **Soft power** plays a crucial role in enhancing India's influence and reputation on the global stage. Cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and other soft power tools are leveraged to project a positive image of India worldwide.
- ▶ **Effective engagement with the diaspora community** is recognized as a strategic asset. By fostering strong connections with Indians abroad, India enhances its global network and influence, tapping into the economic and cultural contributions of its diaspora.

These shifts reflect a dynamic and assertive approach to foreign policy, aiming to position India as a significant and influential player in the international system.

Examples of India's Proactive engagement

- ▶ **Proactive Approach to Terrorism- For example**, Cross-Border Surgical Strikes (2019): This bold move demonstrated India's willingness to adopt a more proactive stance in addressing terrorism.
- ▶ **Strengthened Defence Cooperation:** India signed several defence agreements with the United States, enabling the sharing of sensitive military technology. This marked a notable shift from India's traditional policy of non-alignment, reflecting a strategic partnership aimed at countering the growing threat from China.
- ▶ **Normalization of Ties with Israel:** Under the Modi Doctrine, India has fostered a more normalized relationship with Israel. In 2017, Prime Minister Modi became the first Indian leader to visit Israel, and the two countries have since signed multiple agreements on trade, defence, and technology.
- ▶ **Active Role in the Indo-Pacific Region:** India launched the "Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor" initiative to promote economic cooperation between India and countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This initiative exemplifies India's more active and strategic engagement in this crucial region.
- ▶ **Increased Influence in International Institutions:** Key Role in the G20: India has played a pivotal role in the G20, actively voicing its stance against protectionism and addressing other global challenges. India's engagement in the G20 is seen as a strategic effort to enhance its influence in global affairs and shape international norms.

Linkages to the theories of IR

▶ Realism

- ▶ India's emphasis on **strategic autonomy** and balancing powers reflects Realist principles. Realism focuses on survival in an anarchic world, where states prioritize security and power, as seen in India's evolving defence and diplomatic engagements.

▶ Constructivism

- ▶ India's foreign policy continuity in **non-alignment** and cultural diplomacy aligns with Constructivism, emphasizing how **identity, norms, and historical experiences** shape state behaviour beyond mere material interests.

▶ Liberal Institutionalism

- ▶ India's active role in **multilateralism** and global governance forums (G20, BRICS) exemplifies Liberal Institutionalism, highlighting cooperation through international institutions to address collective challenges.

▶ Strategic Culture

- ▶ The concept of India's **strategic culture**—balancing pacifist and realist traditions—illustrates how historical values and cultural norms influence its foreign policy choices, consistent with the Strategic Culture approach

Scholars Statements

▶ Hans Morgenthau

- ▶ Morgenthau stressed that states pursue power and national interest, but domestic factors and culture also influence foreign policy. India's mix of realism and strategic autonomy embodies this balance between power politics and internal determinants.

▶ Alexander Wendt

- ▶ Wendt argues that state behaviour is shaped by shared ideas and identities. India's adherence to non-alignment and its evolving global role illustrate how identity influences foreign policy beyond material factors.

▶ Kanti Bajpai

- ▶ Bajpai highlights India's strategic culture as rooted in historical experiences and philosophical traditions. This blend of realism and pacifism informs India's nuanced approach to security and diplomacy.

▶ Arul Louis

- ▶ Louis identifies the **Modi Doctrine** as a shift toward assertive, proactive diplomacy, reflecting India's confidence and desire to reshape its global role while maintaining continuity in core national interests.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

India's foreign policy exhibits a balance between continuity and change, preserving core values like non-alignment while adapting to evolving global dynamics. This balance ensures India's stable yet flexible international engagement.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's foreign policy demonstrates resilience and pragmatism by balancing enduring principles with necessary adaptation. This approach enables India to safeguard its interests and remain relevant amid changing international challenges.

Model Introduction 2:

Continuity in India's foreign policy reflects deep-rooted national interests, while its adaptive shifts respond to geopolitical realities. This dynamic interplay shapes India's evolving global strategy and diplomatic posture.

Model Conclusion 2:

By blending **historical continuity with strategic change**, India maintains a coherent foreign policy that responds effectively to new opportunities and threats, reinforcing its emergence as a significant global actor.

UNIT 2: INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, DIFFERENT PHASES, CURRENT ROLE

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

- ⊕ India has of late chosen to debunk non-alignment in its pursuit of multi-alignment. Comment. (2024)
- ⊕ "Non-alignment was little more than a rational strategy on the part of a materially weak India to maximize its interests with a bipolar distribution of global power." Comment. (2021)
- ⊕ Compare and contrast Non-alignment 1.0 with Non-alignment 2.0. (2019)
- ⊕ Comment on India's contribution to Non-Alignment Movement and its contemporary relevance. (2016)
- ⊕ 'Non-alignment' has been the basic principle of India's foreign policy since independence. Discuss its relevance in the contemporary context. (2015)
- ⊕ "India's policy of non-alignment has been guided by the genius of the Indian people and their interests." (2014)
- ⊕ "India's policy of non-alignment was based on both idealist and realist calculations." (2011)

Insights from PYQs

A close examination of UPSC PSIR Paper 2, Unit 2 previous year questions reveals a persistent focus on the **evolution, relevance, and transformation of India's Non-Alignment policy**, making it one of the most frequently tested themes in this unit.

The trend from **2011 to 2024** clearly indicates that the Commission is not just interested in historical exposition but in a **critical engagement with the changing contours** of India's external alignments.

Questions such as "India's policy of non-alignment was based on both idealist and realist calculations" (2011) and "India's policy of non-alignment has been guided by the genius of the Indian people and their interests" (2014) require aspirants to explore the **foundational rationale of non-alignment**, blending **Nehruvian idealism** with **realpolitik considerations** especially in the context of a bipolar Cold War world.

In more recent years, the trend shifts towards **re-evaluating non-alignment in the post-Cold War and 21st-century context**.

Questions such as "Non-alignment was little more than a rational strategy..." (2021) and "India has of late chosen to debunk non-alignment in its pursuit of multi-alignment" (2024) suggest that aspirants must focus on how India's foreign policy **narrative has shifted from ideological non-alignment to pragmatic multi-alignment**, especially in the backdrop of **great power competition, strategic autonomy, and Indo-Pacific dynamics**.

This demands a nuanced understanding of how **India balances relations with the US, Russia, China, and regional actors** under a framework of **strategic hedging** rather than strict non-alignment.

Furthermore, the **compare-and-contrast framing** in the **Non-alignment 1.0 vs. 2.0 (2019)** question demonstrates that aspirants are expected to not only know the content but also **critically examine policy evolution**, drawing from documents like the **Non-alignment 2.0 report** and other strategic literature.

The **2015 and 2016** questions assess the **contemporary relevance of NAM**, requiring engagement with India's position within the Non-Aligned Movement post-Cold War, especially when major powers are increasingly assertive and multilateralism is under stress.

Therefore, aspirants must prioritize (1) a **conceptual understanding of non-alignment's ideological and strategic roots**, (2) its **transformation into multi-alignment and strategic autonomy**, and (3) the **relevance of NAM in contemporary geopolitics**, particularly in the context of a multipolar world and India's evolving global ambitions. Key focus areas should include **Nehruvian foreign policy, strategic autonomy, hedging strategies, Indo-Pacific policy**, and India's **balancing act** between the **US, China, and Russia**, all of which are central to understanding the changing discourse around non-alignment.

India has played a **pivotal role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) since its inception**. As one of the founding members, India has significantly contributed to the movement's principles and objectives.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, **India promoted peaceful coexistence, mutual respect for sovereignty, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states**. India's commitment to NAM emphasized the importance of solidarity among developing countries, fostering cooperation, and advocating for a more balanced and equitable international order.

Reason for India's adoption of non-alignment as a principle of Foreign Policy

India's adoption of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) **was shaped by a blend of idealism, realism, pragmatism, and Indian exceptionalism**.

- ▶ **Commitment to Avoid Military Alliances-** At its core, India's decision to embrace non-alignment was driven by a commitment to avoid military alliances and instead promote collective security and international law. **This approach reflected India's belief that its national interests were best served by steering clear of Cold War blocs**, which could potentially expose it to aggression and conflict.
- ▶ **Realism and Security Considerations-** Realism played a crucial role as well, as India recognized its limitations in terms of military capabilities. Joining either the Western or Eastern bloc could have posed security risks without adequate means of defence. Therefore, **non-alignment was seen as a prudent strategy to safeguard India's sovereignty and security** amidst global power dynamics.
- ▶ **Pragmatism in Foreign Policy-** Pragmatism, exemplified by leaders like Nehru, underscored the **need to balance idealistic aspirations with practical considerations**. Nehru understood that while India aimed to uphold principles of peace and neutrality, it also needed to protect its national security.
- ▶ **Indian Exceptionalism and Cultural Identity-** It aimed not only to avoid entanglements in superpower conflicts but also to project its **unique cultural and civilizational identity on the global stage**. Nehru viewed India's non-alignment as a significant contribution to global peace, symbolizing its commitment to independence and diplomacy.

Therefore, India's adoption of NAM reflected a strategic blend of idealism, realism, pragmatism, and a sense of exceptionalism. This approach aimed to protect India's national interests, prevent conflicts, and promote global harmony while asserting its distinct identity in international relations.

Scholar's View on India's Adoption of NAM

- ▶ **Henry Kissinger:** He viewed India's choice of NAM as pragmatic, acknowledging that while it may have been frustrating for the United States, it was the most appropriate path for India.
- ▶ **Aparna Pandey:** According to Pandey, Given India's limited military and economic strength at the time, NAM represented the best strategic option to assert influence and maintain autonomy in international affairs.
- ▶ **K Natwar Singh:** Singh emphasized that India's approach to NAM was not rigidly ideological but rather guided by a coherent doctrine. This approach enabled India to retain its independence, avoid alliances that could compromise its sovereignty, and assert its voice on global issues without being drawn into the conflicts of the Cold War era.
- ▶ **K Subramanian:** Subramanian viewed India's adoption of NAM as a calculated move in the realm of realpolitik. He argued that in a world dominated by superpowers, NAM allowed India to balance its foreign policy effectively. By not aligning with either bloc, India maintained flexibility, preserved its strategic autonomy, and positioned itself to influence global affairs based on its own national interests.

Chronological understanding of India in NAM

India's Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) policy has undergone significant transformations over the decades, reflecting both international shifts and internal dynamics.

These phases can be understood through key historical perspectives:

- ▶ **Early Idealism (Until 1962):** Initially, India pursued NAM with idealistic fervour, **leveraging its stance to garner economic and military support** from both superpowers while gaining prominence among developing nations.

- ▶ However, **events like the Sino-Indian war and challenges at the United Nations revealed the practical limitations and divergent interests within NAM.**
- ▶ This phase, **as Shashi Tharoor noted, provided India with diplomatic flexibility** and global influence disproportionate to its actual capabilities.
- ▶ **Realism and Strategic Shifts (1962-1990):** The period from 1962 to 1990 marked a shift towards realism in India's foreign policy.
 - ▶ The **Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 exemplified this transition, emphasizing mutual security guarantees and signalling a departure from strict non-alignment.**
 - ▶ India **became increasingly critical of US policies perceived as neo-colonial, while managing its relations with the Soviet Union,** leading some to view NAM as primarily anti-American in the West.

▶ **Post-Cold War Challenge**

Therefore, India's journey with NAM has been marked by evolving strategies shaped by global changes and domestic dynamics. From idealism to realism, and now towards strategic autonomy, India continues to navigate its position in the global arena, balancing alliances while asserting its unique geopolitical identity.

India's Role in NAM

India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was very significant, driven by its commitment to global peace, sovereignty, and equality among nations.

Here are the key aspects of India's contributions to NAM:

1. **Maintaining the Integrity of NAM:** India worked actively to ensure that NAM remained independent and not dominated by any single country's agenda. **Despite global events like the Camp David Accords and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which challenged NAM's relevance, India upheld the importance of the movement in global affairs.**
2. **Support for Newly Liberated Nations:** India provided crucial support to newly independent countries in Africa and Asia, focusing on political stability and economic viability. **It opposed external interventions and advocated for the New International Economic Order (NIEO) to address economic disparities,** thereby assisting these nations in their nation-building efforts.
3. **Fight against Colonialism and Imperialism:** India **staunchly opposed colonial rule and fought against hegemony by foreign powers.** NAM played a critical role in decolonizing many countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East during the 1960s and 1970s, inspired by India's own struggle for independence.
4. **Efforts towards Disarmament:** India **actively participated in global disarmament efforts through NAM.** It supported initiatives like the Moscow Test Ban Treaty and raised concerns about the discriminatory nature of nuclear proliferation regimes. **NAM's declaration of the 1970s as the "Decade of Disarmament" underscored its commitment to global peace and reducing the nuclear threat.**
5. **Advocacy for the New International Economic Order (NIEO):** India advocated for economic independence alongside political freedom within NAM. It played a significant role in promoting self-reliance and economic cooperation among member states, aiming to address economic disparities and safeguard the sovereignty of developing nations.

Scholar's views

- ▶ **C. Raja Mohan** acknowledges India's role in shaping NAM, emphasizing its significance in global diplomacy.
- ▶ **Sabyasachi Bhattacharya** highlights India's contributions across ideological, diplomatic, and humanitarian fronts within NAM.
- ▶ **Shyam Saran** acknowledges that while NAM's relevance may have diminished, the principles of non-alignment continue to influence India's foreign policy decisions.

To Summarise , we can argue that India's active engagement in NAM was driven by principles of non-alignment, advocacy for global peace, and support for the rights of developing nations. Its leadership within NAM underscored its commitment to sovereignty, equality, and the promotion of a just international order.

“India’s Strategic Imperative: Enhancing Relevance and Leadership through Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)”

India’s engagement with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) **remains significant despite evolving global dynamics.**

Why India should continue to value NAM?

1. **Platform for Developing Countries:** NAM serves as the largest platform for developing countries outside the UN General Assembly. India’s active participation allows for collaboration with diverse nations, fostering solidarity and cooperation on global issues.
2. **Relevance to India’s Characteristics:** Despite India’s membership in elite groups like G-20 and BRICS, it shares many developmental challenges with other NAM countries, such as poverty and socio-economic disparities. NAM provides a framework to collectively address these issues.
3. **Leadership and Influence:** India’s historical role and status as a prominent developing country within NAM afford it natural leadership. This platform enables India to shape agendas, advocate for global reforms like UN Security Council expansion, and maintain influence in the global South.
4. **Soft Power Utilization:** India’s soft power attributes, such as cultural influence and democratic values, can enhance its leadership role within NAM. Initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and Yoga Day demonstrate India’s capability to promote cooperation and solidarity among member states.
5. **South-South Cooperation:** NAM facilitates South-South cooperation, crucial for economic collaboration, technology transfer, and capacity-building among developing nations. India’s active participation in NAM’s working groups underscores its commitment to these cooperative efforts.
6. **Functional Approach:** Scholars advocate for a functionalist approach within NAM, focusing on achieving tangible outcomes in contemporary global challenges. Issues like climate change, sustainable development, and global governance reforms are areas where India can lead within NAM, enhancing its relevance.
7. **Strategic Autonomy:** India’s commitment to strategic autonomy, as highlighted by recent statements in international forums, aligns with NAM’s principles of sovereignty, peace, and solidarity. This stance allows India to engage with the international community on its own terms while navigating global geopolitical shifts.

Government stand on NAM

- ▶ India’s government stance on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reflects a commitment to strategic autonomy and engagement on its own terms, as emphasized in recent statements by Prime Minister Modi.
- ▶ This approach underscores India’s aim to preserve its independence and decision-making capabilities while interacting with other nations.
- ▶ Hamid Ansari, leading India’s delegation to the 17th NAM Summit in 2016, articulated three foundational principles: respect for sovereignty, peaceful dispute resolution, and international cooperation.
- ▶ These principles resonate with India’s core values and align closely with NAM’s principle of “Peace, sovereignty, and solidarity for development.”

Therefore, Despite evolving global dynamics and India’s participation in forums like the G-20, where it promotes the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), India recognizes areas of mutual interest within NAM. This pragmatic approach suggests that while India may not fully adhere to traditional non-alignment doctrines, it sees value in engaging with NAM to advance shared goals of peace, sovereignty, and development on the global stage.

Therefore, India’s continued engagement with NAM offers strategic advantages in fostering solidarity among developing countries, addressing common challenges, and advancing its global influence. By leveraging its leadership role, promoting South-South cooperation, and adopting a functional approach, India can enhance NAM’s relevance and contribute to a more equitable global order.

NAM 2.0: Charting India’s Foreign and Strategic Policy in the 21st Century

NAM 2.0 represents a strategic initiative outlining India’s foreign and strategic policy for the next decade, drawing inspiration from Nehruvian principles while adapting to contemporary global dynamics.

The initiative aims to achieve three main objectives:

1. **Highlighting Opportunities and Challenges:** It identifies the opportunities available to India in the international arena

while acknowledging the diverse challenges and threats it may encounter.

2. **Enhancing Strategic Autonomy:** NAM 2.0 underscores the critical importance of strategic autonomy in India's global engagements. It emphasizes the need to uphold liberal values while navigating an unpredictable global environment.
3. **Comprehensive Strategic Framework:** The document offers a comprehensive perspective on foreign policy issues, advocating for a balanced approach that leverages India's enhanced economic and security capabilities.

Support and Criticism

- ▶ Supporters of NAM 2.0, like **Chinmay Ghare Khan**, appreciate its comprehensive view of foreign policy and its alignment with Nehruvian ideals of liberal outlook. It is seen as a guiding framework to steer India's global role effectively.
- ▶ However, critics such as **Bharat Karnad** argue that NAM 2.0 represents a regressive foreign policy roadmap. They critique its overemphasis on ideational and moral influence, suggesting that material power dynamics play a more significant role in shaping international relations. Critics also question the revival of non-alignment principles, arguing its potential limitations in advancing India's interests in today's rapidly changing global landscape.

NAVIGATING COMPLEX GLOBAL COALITIONS

Despite these criticisms, **NAM 2.0 acknowledges the necessity for India to manage complex coalitions and seize opportunities in an unsettled global environment.** It recognizes India's enhanced economic and security capabilities, positioning it to play a pivotal role as a front-ranking power contributing to global public goods

Analyzing NAM in Post-Cold War Era

The relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the post-Cold War era has sparked significant debate among scholars and analysts:

1. **Irrelevance in a Post-Cold War World:** Critics argue that NAM's founding principles, initially shaped by Cold War dynamics, **have lost relevance with the end of this geopolitical rivalry.**
 - ▶ **C. Rajamohan** suggests that NAM's impact waned even before the Cold War concluded, failing to significantly influence global affairs.
2. **Challenges in Adapting to the Changing Global Order:** Critics contend that NAM has struggled to adapt to the multipolar world order and complex interdependencies that characterize today's global landscape.
 - ▶ **T.P. Sreenivasan** points out the need for NAM to rejuvenate itself, particularly in light of India's evolving alignments with major powers like the United States amid strained relations with China.
3. **Economic Weaknesses:** Critics highlight economic challenges among NAM member states, limiting their ability to exert influence effectively.
 - ▶ **T.P. Sreenivasan** argues that NAM's diminishing influence in the post-Cold War era has hindered its capacity to address economic disparities among its members.
4. **Lack of Leadership and Radicalization:** Critics observe a lack of strong leadership within NAM and increasing radicalization among some member states.
 - ▶ **Harsh V. Pant** criticizes NAM for clinging to outdated principles and lacking new goals necessary to address contemporary challenges effectively.
5. **Ineffectiveness in Addressing Contemporary Issues:** Critics argue that NAM has failed to effectively tackle new global challenges such as globalization, terrorism, and climate change.
 - ▶ **G. Parthasarthy** suggests that NAM's loose structure and lack of cohesive agenda hinder its ability to address these pressing issues.

Therefore, while NAM continues to have its advocates, critics argue that its relevance has diminished in the post-Cold War era due to its historical baggage, economic limitations, leadership deficits, and inability to adapt to contemporary global challenges. The call for NAM to evolve, pursue new goals, and adapt to the current geopolitical realities remains a prominent theme among scholars and analysts assessing its future role.

Supporters of Continued relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in today's global context, as argued by scholars and analysts:

1. **Guiding Indian Foreign Policy:** Non-alignment continues to shape India's foreign policy, ensuring autonomy and pragmatism in international relations. **Shyam Saran** highlights India's strategic partnerships while maintaining non-alignment principles, such as its relationship with Russia.
2. **Adaptation to Global Dynamics:** Reviving NAM is crucial amidst shifting global power dynamics, **including India's**

alignment with the United States through initiatives like the Quad and challenges with China. NAM offers a platform for India to assert strategic autonomy and manage complex relationships.

3. **Increased Membership and Influence:** NAM's expansion from 25 states in 1961 to 118 member states underscores its ongoing relevance. **M.K. Narayanan** underscores its significance for smaller states, providing a collective voice and addressing global concerns effectively.
4. **Contributions to Global Diplomacy:** NAM's historical role, such as facilitating China's UN Security Council accession, highlights its impact on global affairs. Its participation in global negotiations, like within the WTO, showcases its role in shaping international norms.
5. **Unity on Global Issues:** NAM's unity on major global issues, rooted in principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and anti-racism, reinforces its ideological cohesion. This collective stance enhances its relevance in addressing contemporary challenges.
6. **Addressing Contemporary Challenges:** NAM remains adaptable in tackling modern challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and globalization's impacts. Its flexibility and collective approach strengthen its ability to address global issues effectively.

Way forward for NAM

In today's interconnected world, challenges like climate change, terrorism, and poverty require collaborative global efforts.

- ▶ **NAM should focus on cross-sectoral challenges** without aligning strictly with any ideology, **emphasizing issues like counter-terrorism, global governance reform, sustainable development, and South-South cooperation.**
- ▶ **A democratic, effective, transparent, and representative NAM** is essential for the 21st-century world order, capable of addressing contemporary global challenges with credibility and flexibility.

In conclusion, while critics debate NAM's relevance post-Cold War, proponents argue its ongoing importance in providing a collective voice for developing nations and addressing shared global challenges effectively.

Reinventing NAM for the 21ST Century: Embracing Multipolarity and Global Challenges

In redefining its role and relevance, the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** can draw upon several strategic imperatives:

1. **Shifting Global Economic Dynamics:** Recognizing the rise of the Indo-Pacific region and other emerging economic powers, **NAM should realign its agenda to amplify the voices of developing nations like China and India on the global stage.**
2. **Embracing a Multipolar World:** NAM can leverage the concept of a multipolar world to advocate for the interests of the Global South. By uniting with emerging powers, NAM aims to foster a more equitable global order.
3. **Post-Colonial Autonomy:** Safeguarding the autonomy of post-colonial societies remains paramount. **NAM should address the unique challenges these nations face and advocate for their rights and self-determination.**
4. **Addressing Contemporary Challenges:** NAM must incorporate pressing global issues such as **terrorism, pandemics, and climate change into its agenda.** This proactive stance showcases NAM's relevance and effectiveness in tackling modern global threats.
5. **Promoting Interdependence:** Rather than viewing regional organizations as adversaries, NAM should seek to cooperate and coordinate with them. This approach fosters mutual understanding and facilitates collective action on global issues.
6. **Protecting Member Nations:** NAM should shield its member nations from the adverse impacts of neoliberal globalization. **Adopting a critical perspective can help address economic inequality, promote social justice, and protect human rights.**
7. **Need for a New Charter:** Scholars like **Vijay Prasad** suggest that NAM should develop a new charter akin to the New International Economic Order (NIEO). Such a charter would redefine NAM's purpose and equip it to effectively address contemporary global challenges.

Havana Declaration of 2006: This landmark document restructured NAM's agenda for the 21st century with key objectives focusing on international peace, disarmament, South-South cooperation, human rights, sustainable development, and multilateralism.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Realism** explains NAM as a strategy by weaker states like India to preserve **sovereignty** and avoid domination by superpowers. It reflects a pragmatic effort to balance power without formal alliances in an anarchic international system. **Constructivism** highlights how NAM embodies shared **ideas, identities, and norms** among developing nations. It shaped a collective identity of non-alignment and solidarity beyond mere material interests or power calculations.
- ▶ The concept of **strategic autonomy** in political science links closely with NAM. It stresses a country's right to make independent foreign policy decisions without external control, a core principle India upheld through NAM.
- ▶ **Kautilya's Arthashastra** offers an ancient precedent for NAM's pragmatic diplomacy, emphasizing balance of power, avoiding entanglements, and preserving sovereignty—ideas reflected in India's non-aligned foreign policy approach.
- ▶ The **Balance of Power** theory complements NAM by showing how non-alignment served as a means for states to maintain equilibrium between the US and USSR blocs without joining either side.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

As C. Raja Mohan notes, "Non-alignment was never about staying away from global politics; it was about staying above it." India's foreign policy post-independence reflected a synthesis of **Nehruvian idealism** and **realist statecraft**, rooted in **strategic autonomy** within a **bipolar global order**. Situated between classical **realism** and **liberal institutionalism**, non-alignment was India's normative response to power politics and remains a conceptual anchor even amidst contemporary shifts toward **multi-alignment**.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's foreign policy, as observed by C. Raja Mohan, is "no longer about choosing sides, but about maximizing options." From **non-alignment's strategic detachment** to **multi-alignment's strategic engagement**, the core pursuit of **autonomy in decision-making** remains intact. Rooted in **neoclassical realism**, India's external engagement today reflects a balance of national interests, global aspirations, and normative commitments—proving that the grammar may change, but the principle endures.

Model Introduction 2:

"Non-alignment was not a dogma but a strategy," argued Shyam Saran, underlining its pragmatic essence. In a bipolar world, India crafted a foreign policy rooted in **strategic autonomy** and moral leadership, balancing realism with idealism. Drawing from **liberal institutionalism** and **constructivist values**, non-alignment reflected India's civilizational ethos and desire for an equitable world order—principles that continue to shape its evolving posture amidst shifting geopolitical alignments.

Model Conclusion 2:

As former diplomat Rakesh Sood suggests, India's shift from non-alignment to multi-alignment is "not an abandonment, but a reinterpretation." In an era defined by **fluid alliances** and **asymmetric multipolarity**, India seeks **strategic flexibility** while maintaining its normative foundations. Viewed through the lens of **hedging strategy** in IR, India's evolving foreign policy pragmatically reconciles its traditional values with contemporary imperatives—ensuring it remains both autonomous and globally relevant.

UNIT 3: INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

South Asia

- ▶ Despite deep ties, India's relations with Sri Lanka have seen strains due to China's growing influence in Sri Lanka through investments and economic dominance. Analyse. (2024)
- ▶ Bhutan has historically been an ally of India, but the China-Bhutan border related issues have become a security issue for India. Discuss.(2024)
- ▶ "The Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between India and Bhutan needs to be revised with more pragmatic, realistic obligations and responsibilities." Comment. (2017)
- ▶ Examine India's role in strategic terms with regard to the land-locked countries in South Asia. With regard to Nepal , to what extent has the involvement of major powers such as China , the US and the EU impacted India 's strategic interests. (2009)

Regional Cooperation: SAARC-past performance and future prospects

- ▶ Discuss the future of SAARC in the light of increased focus on other regional groupings like ASEAN and BIMSTEC. **2024/20M**
- ▶ " What are the reasons for lack of 'regionness' in South Asia? (2023)
- ▶ Outline the reasons for the low volume of trade in the SAARC region. (2020)
- ▶ Identify the constraints / challenges to regional cooperation in South Asia. (2015)

South Asia as a Free Trade Area

- ▶ Discuss the ways and means to realise greater economic co-operation among the Member States of South Asia. (2022)
- ▶ Why is South Asia considered as the world's politically and economically least integrated region? Explain. (2021)
- ▶ What are the impediments in the development of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA)? (2017)

India's "Look East" policy

- ▶ What are the implications of the 'Look-East' Policy on the north-eastern region of India? (2022)
- ▶ Discuss the strategic implications of India's 'Look East Policy' transforming into 'Act East Policy'. (2021)
- ▶ Analyse the significance of India's Look East Policy in the light of concerns of the indigenous peoples of North-east India.(2018)
- ▶ What are the hopes and aspirations of the 'Look East Policy of India? Explain. (2016)
- ▶ "Despite the potentialities, India's 'Look East Policy' requires a major course correction". Discuss. (2012)
- ▶ Explain the major flaws in India's 'Look East Policy' Is it possible to steer and implement the policy successfully in view of China's emergence as a high-tech power in Asia-Pacific? (2011)
- ▶ Do you think that India's ' Look East' policy would help a common Asian market , unlike European common market. (2009).

Impediments to regional cooperation: River water disputes; illegal cross-border migration; Ethnic conflicts and insurgencies; Border disputes

- ▶ Discuss the implications of the scrapping of the Free Movement Regime with Myanmar by the Indian-Government on the dynamics of the north-eastern region. **2024/15M**
- ▶ Why do ethnic conflicts and insurgencies continue to remain major impediments to regional cooperation in South Asia? (2023)
- ▶ Discuss the steps required to realise 'hydro-co-operation' between India and Bangladesh. (2022).

- ▶ Write a brief analysis of the ethnic conflicts and cross-border migrations along India-Myanmar and India-Bangladesh borders. (2021).
- ▶ Analyze the impact of hydro politics on Indo-Bangladesh relations. (2020)
- ▶ Discuss the future prospects of Indo-Nepal relations in the context of the recent publication of a new Nepalese map wrongly claiming Indian territory. (2020)
- ▶ How does cross-border terrorism impede the achievements of peace and security in South Asia? (2020)
- ▶ Explain the defence and foreign policy options of India to address the challenges emerging out of the current India-China standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). (2020)
- ▶ What are the current issues in Brahmaputra River water sharing between India and China? (2019)
- ▶ Evaluate India's stand on the recent Rohingya refugee issue. (2018)
- ▶ "Despite the differences between India and Pakistan on various issues, the Indus Water Treaty has stood the test of time." In the light of this statement, discuss the recent developments over this issue. (2017)
- ▶ Ethnic conflicts and insurgencies in North-East India can be better managed by improving relations with the neighbouring countries. Substantiate the statement with suitable examples. (2015)
- ▶ River water disputes are emerging as a major source of irritation between India and its neighbours. Identify the sources of conflicts and suggest remedial measures. (2015)
- ▶ Illustrate the issue of illegal cross-border migration in South Asia and its impact on regional alliances and bilateral relations. (2012)
- ▶ Do you think that India should sign a treaty with China on water-sharing of Brahmaputra River, similar to what she did with Nepal and other neighboring states? (2011)
- ▶ Discuss the implications of ethnicity and nation-building in South Asia, and their impact in the relations of states within South Asia. (2011)
- ▶ Assess the problems being faced by India on account of illegal migration into the country. (2010)
- ▶ Analyze the basic causes of insurgency and terrorism in two major areas that are affected in the country. In this regard, to what extent have state policies to counter terrorism been effective in these areas? (2009)

Insights from PYQs

The trend of UPSC questions from **PSIR Paper 2, Unit 2 (South Asia)** highlights a consistent and multidimensional focus on **India's bilateral and regional engagements in South Asia**, with evolving emphasis on both **traditional and non-traditional security concerns**.

A recurring theme is **India's neighbourhood policy**, particularly relations with **Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal**, examined through the lens of **China's strategic encroachments**, economic influence, and border issues. The questions often underscore **regional power dynamics**, requiring aspirants to adopt an analytical perspective integrating **realist geopolitics and regional interdependence**.

There is a discernible continuity in questions on **SAARC and South Asian regionalism**, reflecting UPSC's interest in India's efforts (or lack thereof) in promoting **regional cooperation**.

The consistent reference to **low trade volumes, lack of regionness**, and **structural impediments in SAFTA** point toward UPSC's preference for critical assessments of India's role in **regional economic integration**. Aspirants must be well-versed with scholarly analyses on the **failure of SAARC** and India's shift in focus to **BIMSTEC and ASEAN**, illustrating an increasing preference for **sub-regional and trans-regional cooperation**.

The **Look East/Act East Policy** is another high-frequency theme, particularly in relation to its **strategic impact on Northeast India** and how it recalibrates India's engagement with **ASEAN and East Asia**. Aspirants should prepare with an emphasis on both **geo-economic aspirations** and **security-driven logic**, particularly in the context of **China's maritime rise** and India's **Indo-Pacific strategy**.

Questions on **non-traditional threats** such as **illegal cross-border migration, ethnic insurgencies, river water disputes, and hydropolitics** further reflect a trend toward analyzing how **internal vulnerabilities** intersect with **regional foreign policy challenges**. The **Indo-Bangladesh, Indo-Nepal, and India-Myanmar** relationships are assessed not just diplomatically but through issues of **border management, refugees, and ethnic identity conflicts**, indicating that aspirants must adopt an **interdisciplinary approach** combining **security studies, IR theory, and regional politics**.

In essence, aspirants should focus on four core themes:

1. India's bilateral ties in South Asia in the context of China's presence
2. Failure and reconfiguration of regional cooperation (SAARC to BIMSTEC)
3. India's Look East/Act East Policy and its regional consequences
4. Non-traditional issues like migration, ethnic conflict, and water-sharing, while incorporating conceptual insights from realism, regionalism theory, and complex interdependence to craft nuanced and contemporary answers.

Introduction—India's Neighbourhood Policy

In the **ancient text of Kautilya**, it is suggested that immediate neighbours are natural enemies. However, in today's era of complex interdependence, maintaining relations with our neighbours has become increasingly important.

- ▶ **Muchkund Dubey** aptly noted that a country's foreign policy can be judged by its relations with its neighbours, highlighting the significance of these relationships in shaping a nation's diplomatic stance.
- ▶ **Shyam Saran**, in his book *"How India Sees the World: From Kautilya to the 21st Century,"* emphasizes the unrelenting logic of geography. He argues that fostering friendly relations with neighbouring countries can significantly reduce India's security dilemmas, suggesting a pragmatic approach to regional diplomacy.
- ▶ **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, recognizing the immutable nature of geography, famously stated, "We cannot change history, but we cannot change geography either."

This underscores the critical importance of cultivating positive relationships with our neighbouring countries. By acknowledging the strategic necessity of good neighbourly relations, India can better navigate the complexities of regional and global politics.

Neighbourhood First Policy (NFP) is a dynamic policy that came around 2008.

It aims To forge strong neighbourhood relations based on a consultative, non-reciprocal, and outcome oriented approach and deliver benefits like greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, security, etc.

Significance of NFP

- ▶ **Strategic imperative:** Enhanced regional integration in South Asia to counter China and promote India's vision.
 - ▶ Also, cooperation is critical as India aspires to be the voice of the Global South and reform Global Governance system. E.g., UNSC, IMF, etc.
- ▶ **Strengthen multilateralism:** Through regional/ sub-regional organizations. E.g., SAARC, BIMSTEC, etc.
- ▶ **Soft Power:** Leveraging India's cultural and historical ties to promote soft power influence in the region.
- ▶ **Regional stability and security:** Improved trust and cooperation builds capacity to address security threats. E.g., anti-terrorism efforts, counter-insurgency operations, transnational organized crimes, etc.
- ▶ **Economic:** Facilitates increased regional trade, investment, and cross-border infrastructure
 - ▶ Ensure India's energy security. E.g., Nepal and Bhutan's hydro-power potential.
 - ▶ Address developmental deficit in India's Northeast. E.g., Kaladan, Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link, etc.

Principles of India's Neighborhood policy

- ▶ India's Neighborhood Policy has always been central to its foreign relations, gaining fresh momentum after 2014 under Prime Minister Modi, though its roots go back much earlier. Guided by both historic and modern thought, it rests on five key principles.
- ▶ **Samman (Respect)** means treating all neighbours as equal partners, regardless of size or power. This reflects the Gujral Doctrine of non-reciprocity—India offers help without expecting immediate returns, showing generosity as a big neighbour.
- ▶ **Samvad (Dialogue)** stresses constant communication. As Shyam Saran reminds us, being close geographically is not enough; sustained talks, summits, and people-level meetings are essential to solve issues.
- ▶ **Shanti (Peace)** focuses on ensuring regional stability, tackling threats like terrorism, and managing borders effectively. Without peace, no country or region can grow.
- ▶ **Samriddhi (Prosperity)** highlights economic cooperation—through trade, aid, and connectivity—to uplift the region and

strengthen India's role while countering external influence.

- ▶ Sanskriti (Culture & People-to-people contact) builds on shared heritage, languages, and traditions to deepen trust and goodwill.

Together, these principles shape a friendly yet pragmatic approach, balancing power with partnership. As Kautilya advised, India seeks influence through cooperation, not coercion—aiming for lasting peace and shared growth in South Asia.

Concerns with Respect to India's Neighbourhood

1. **Domestic Instability in Neighbouring Nations:** Instances of domestic turmoil in countries like Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Nepal affect regional dynamics and India's security.
 - ▶ **Nitin Pai observes** that these nations often use their internal challenges to gain bargaining power with India.
2. **Ignoring Neighbouring Countries' Aspirations:** India is often criticised for neglecting its neighbours' needs and maintaining a 'big brother' attitude, which allows major powers like China to exploit the strategic gap.
3. **Historical Narrative and National Identity:** **S.D. Muni** explains that the historical narrative of the Indian subcontinent fosters a non-Indian identity among neighbours, leading to anti-India sentiments.
4. **Strategic Unpredictability:** India's ad-hoc decisions and unpredictable defence strategies damage its regional image. For this reason, **Suhasini Haider** compares this to Nixon's 'Madman Theory.'
5. **Focus on Regional Issues Amidst rising Chinese Influence:** **Happymon Jacob** notes India's focus on regional matters, while China extends its influence through infrastructure projects and military power. China's involvement in regional matters diminishes India's strategic space.
 - ▶ Suhasini Haider calls India's approach "equidistance," and Zorawar Daulat Singh suggests a "dual-track foreign policy."
6. **Security-Centric Policy:** P. Stobdan argues that India's security-centric 'zero-sum game' approach benefits China, leading to the securitization of terrorism.
7. **Limited Engagement Capacity:** Ambassador Shyam Saran points out India's lack of sustained, multi-level engagement with its neighbours.
8. **Global Power Focus and neglect of Domestic Issues:** **Shashi Tharoor** contends that India's focus on global powers like the US and China, along with its preoccupation with Pakistan, diverts attention from other neighbours. Domestic issues, such as those in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, also affect these relations.
9. **India-Pakistan Stalemate and Connectivity Issues:** Poor connectivity hampers trade and people-to-people interactions. Lack of political will to resolve the India-Pakistan issue further strains regional dynamics.

These concerns highlight the complexity of India's relationships with its neighbours and the need for a nuanced and proactive foreign policy approach.

Strategies for Strengthening India's Relations with Neighbours

1. **Fostering Regional Integration:** **C. Rajamohan** advocates for increased attention to bilateral, sub-regional, and trans-regional groupings like BIMSTEC and SASEC to enhance regional cooperation and integration.
2. **Top-Down Approach to Regional Complexities:** P. Stobdan suggests a top-down approach similar to China and Russia to address regional complexities effectively.
3. **Promoting Social and Cultural Engagement:** Shift from a zero-sum mentality to engaging neighbors through geography, history, culture, people-to-people ties, and economic collaboration.
4. **Revitalizing SAARC and Leveraging Soft Power:** Suhasini Haider recommends regaining prominence in SAARC and playing a constructive role without interfering in domestic politics.
5. **Strategic Shaping of Relationships:** Zorawar Daulat Singh emphasizes the need to strategically shape relationships with neighbours and define clear redlines to assert India's interests.
6. **Comprehensive Neighborhood Doctrine:** Vivek Katzu suggests developing a comprehensive neighbourhood doctrine with strategic redlines to guide interactions with neighboring countries.
7. **Economic Collaboration and Development Projects:** Ambassador Sharat Sabharwal highlights the importance of leveraging India's economic growth to share prosperity with neighbors. **Further, there is a need to** Engage Indian states bordering neighboring countries, fulfill commitments, and expedite project implementation.

8. **Strategic Partnerships for Effective Implementation:** Prमित Pal Chaudhary advocates for partnering with countries like Japan, known for their effective project implementation records.
9. **Utilizing Digital Capabilities:** Enhance engagement through digital initiatives, drawing inspiration from China's Digital Silk Road.
10. **Balancing Reciprocity and Broader Engagements:** Harsh V. Pant emphasizes addressing neighbors' grievances to foster reciprocity and respect. **Further India needs to** Expand engagements beyond South Asia to include a broader Indo-Pacific approach
11. **Learning from China's ASEAN Approach:** S.D. Muni recommends assessing China's approach to ASEAN before considering India's role in SAARC.

Implementing these strategies will require a nuanced and multifaceted approach, balancing economic, cultural, and political considerations to foster stronger and more cooperative relations with India's neighbors.

Other Suggestions by Scholars

1. Embracing Geography and Building Friendly Relations

► Logic of Geography (Shyam Saran):

- Recognizing the geographical imperatives, India's friendly relations with neighbours are essential to mitigate its security challenges.
- The Indian subcontinent forms a cohesive geopolitical and ecological space, marked by shared history, strong cultural bonds, and intricate economic interdependencies.

2. Managing Complex Interdependence

► Strategic Vision (C. Rajamohan):

- India's challenge is not to compete with China in South Asia but to effectively manage its complex interdependence with neighbours.
- A strategic vision combined with tactical finesse is crucial to navigate these intricate relationships.

3. Tailored Approaches for Diverse neighbours

► Nuanced Strategies (Rajiv Sikri):

- A 'one-size-fits-all' approach is inappropriate for India's diverse neighbours.
- Small Vulnerable neighbours (e.g., Bhutan, Maldives): Extra care is needed to respect their sensitivities and reduce dependence while maintaining friendship.
- Middle-Sized neighbours (e.g., Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Afghanistan, Myanmar): A subtle and sophisticated approach is required, offering respect as sovereign nations and fostering economic ties without expecting reciprocity.
- Distinct Dynamics with Pakistan and China: Unique historical and geopolitical complexities necessitate a tailored approach.

4. Projecting a Responsible Global Role

► Regional Harmony and Global Aspirations:

- India should project itself as a responsible global player while fulfilling regional harmony goals.
- Achieving this requires a long-term strategy that proactively addresses longstanding issues with neighbouring countries.
- A peaceful neighbourhood is crucial for India to concentrate fully on its global ascension as a significant power.

India-Nepal Relations

Introduction- India and Nepal share a profound and long standing relationship, deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and socio-economic ties. Their geographical proximity has fostered centuries of interaction, shaping a bond characterized by both cooperation and challenges.

Here are the key aspects of India-Nepal relations

1. **Historical and Cultural Connections:** The historical ties between India and Nepal are strengthened by shared cultural

affinities and traditions. These connections are evident in their shared festivals, religious practices, and languages.

2. **People-to-People Ties:** The open border between the two countries has facilitated frequent exchanges and interactions. This has allowed for the free movement of people, contributing to strong personal and familial connections across the border.
3. **Socio-Economic Relations:** Over the years, India and Nepal have developed a robust socio-economic relationship. This includes trade, investment, and collaborative development projects, which have been crucial in fostering economic growth and mutual prosperity.
4. **Geographical Proximity:** The geographical closeness of India and Nepal has been a significant factor in their relationship. This proximity has not only enhanced connectivity but also led to shared interests and concerns, especially in areas such as security, water resources, and environmental conservation.
5. **Evolving Relationship:** The relationship between India and Nepal has evolved over time, marked by both cooperation and challenges. While they have worked together on numerous fronts, there have also been periods of tension and disagreement. Despite these challenges, the overall relationship remains strong and resilient.

Various Dimensions of relationship

1. **Strategic Dimension-** India and Nepal share a multifaceted geo-strategic relationship, marked by significant cooperation and shared challenges.
 - ▶ **Security Cooperation:** Bilateral military exercises, such as **Surya Kiran**, play a crucial role in enhancing security cooperation and building mutual trust between the two nations. Additionally, the **service of Nepalese Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army's** Gorkha regiment further strengthens these security ties, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and camaraderie.
 - ▶ **Energy Collaboration and Connectivity:** The Power Trade Agreement (PTA) exemplifies the energy cooperation between India and Nepal, promoting cross-border electricity trade and contributing to regional energy security. **Joint hydroelectric projects, including Arun III and Pancheshwar**, are pivotal in this collaboration, enhancing energy security and fostering regional integration through sustainable energy initiatives.
 - ▶ **Territorial Concerns and External Influences:** Nepal's territorial claims and the involvement of external powers add layers of complexity to regional stability. Navigating these competing interests and managing the influence of external actors are critical for maintaining geo-strategic stability.
2. **Political Dimension-** India and Nepal's geo-political relationship is shaped by several critical factors, including territorial disputes, political dynamics, and external influences.
 - ▶ **Territorial Disputes and Borders:** Nepal **shares borders with five Indian states**, which facilitates trade and promotes people-to-people interactions. However, territorial disputes, particularly those highlighted in Nepal's new map, have strained bilateral relations, creating tensions that require diplomatic resolution to maintain harmony.
 - ▶ **Political Instability and Anti-Indian Sentiments:** Political instability in Nepal, coupled with anti-Indian rhetoric in Nepalese politics, complicates efforts to establish stable and cohesive relations between the two countries. These sentiments pose significant challenges, making it difficult to foster a consistent and collaborative partnership.
 - ▶ **Chinese Influence and Annexation:** China's growing influence in Nepal, including instances of territorial annexation, significantly impacts regional dynamics. The increasing Chinese investments and FDI commitments in Nepal have broader geopolitical implications, altering the balance of power and necessitating strategic responses from both India and Nepal to manage this influence effectively.
3. **Economic Dimension-** India and Nepal's geo-economic relationship is robust, characterized by extensive trade, investment, energy collaboration, and humanitarian aid.
4. **Trade and Economic Ties:** Bilateral trade **between India and Nepal reached \$8.27 billion in 2018-19**, with India serving as Nepal's primary trade partner. The Bilateral Free Trade Agreement further promotes economic collaboration and facilitates smoother trade flows, enhancing mutual economic benefits.
5. **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** India is the largest source of FDI for Nepal, reflecting strong economic linkages between the two countries. These inflows of FDI play a crucial role in Nepal's economic development, contributing to shared prosperity and fostering closer economic ties.
 - ▶ **Humanitarian Aid and Vaccine Diplomacy:** India's assistance to Nepal during crises, such as **the 2015 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic**, has bolstered the bilateral relationship. These humanitarian efforts underscore the solidarity and support that define the partnership between the two nations, reinforcing their close ties in times of need.

Current Issues - Increasing Influence of China in Nepal

China's growing influence in Nepal manifests across several dimensions, encompassing economic dominance, trade connectivity, cultural exchanges, geopolitical shifts, and strategic interests.

- ▶ **Economic Dominance:** China's substantial foreign direct investment in Nepal now surpasses India's commitments, bolstering China's economic leverage. **Funding for mega projects further enhances this dominance**, providing China with significant economic clout in the region.
- ▶ **Trade and Connectivity:** Trade and transit agreements between **Nepal and China have significantly improved connectivity**. Infrastructure projects, such as dams and the Pokhara Airport, highlight China's contributions to Nepal's development, facilitating greater trade and movement between the two nations.
- ▶ **Educational and Cultural Ties:** Chinese universities are increasingly attracting Nepali students, fostering educational and cultural exchanges. This increased interaction deepens people-to-people ties, strengthening the cultural connection between China and Nepal.
- ▶ **Geopolitical Shift:** Nepal's engagement in initiatives like the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) reflects a geopolitical realignment**. The development of strategic transport links signals Nepal's expanding connections beyond India, indicating a shift in its traditional alignments.
- ▶ **Strategic Interests:** China's political and **strategic investments in Nepal create a substantial presence in the country**. These investments necessitate vigilance from India, considering the intricate regional dynamics and the potential impact on India's strategic interests.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Functionalism** emphasizes **cooperation** in India-Nepal relations, where shared needs like trade, security, and energy have led to sustained collaboration.
- ▶ **Sociological Liberalism** supports the **people-to-people ties** between India and Nepal, underscoring how mutual social and cultural bonds strengthen diplomatic relations.
- ▶ **Realism** explains Nepal's **territorial disputes** and the pursuit of **national interests**, highlighting how security concerns shape its ties with India and external powers like China.

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **Kanak Mani Dixit** suggested India must move beyond its role as a **"big brother"** and emphasize being **big and a brother**, fostering a more balanced relationship with Nepal.
- ▶ **Former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj** referred to the **"roti beti ka rishta"** between India and Nepal, highlighting their **shared historical, cultural, and familial connections**.
- ▶ **M.K. Narayanan**, former NSA, stated that **India's soft power** in Nepal must be **reinvigorated**, acknowledging Nepal's sovereignty while recognizing their **strategic interdependence**.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

As **Shivshankar Menon** notes, *"India's relations with Nepal are shaped as much by geography as by history and sentiment."* Situated within the **realist framework**, the India-Nepal equation reflects overlapping security imperatives, cultural affinity, and economic interdependence. Yet, historical asymmetry and evolving strategic alignments—especially with China—make this relationship both uniquely intimate and increasingly complex in the 21st-century regional order

Model Conclusion 1:

Echoing C. Raja Mohan's view that *"India must act with empathy, not just power, in its periphery,"* New Delhi's Nepal policy must blend **realist prudence** with **constructivist engagement**. Prioritizing connectivity, mutual respect, and regional autonomy, India should foster a **rules-based subregional framework** that recognizes Nepal's aspirations while countering undue external influence through sustained strategic and economic outreach.

Model Introduction 2:

In line with the **balance of influence theory**, Nepal's foreign policy reflects small-state hedging amidst rising Sino-Indian competition. As Prof. S.D. Muni observes, *"Nepal often plays the China card to bargain better terms with India."* India–Nepal ties today are tested by **territorial sensitivities**, **federal shifts in Kathmandu**, and **external balancing**, warranting recalibrated diplomacy that respects sovereignty while safeguarding strategic depth.

Model Conclusion 2:

As Shyam Saran affirms, *"Nepal is not just a neighbour but a natural ally."* A **neo-functionalist** approach emphasizing cross-border infrastructure, hydropower cooperation, and cultural diplomacy can transform India–Nepal ties. While resolving disputes like Kalapani is crucial, the broader imperative is to move from a relationship of **dependence and distrust** to one of **shared growth and strategic convergence** in the Himalayan arc.

India-Bhutan Relations

India and Bhutan share one of the closest and most trusted relationships in South Asia, often referred to as a **"model bilateral relationship."** Their ties are built on strategic, economic, and cultural convergence, making it one of the most enduring and significant partnerships in the region.

Foundations of the Relationship

The relationship between India and Bhutan is rooted in the **Treaty of Friendship** signed in 1949, which was updated in 2007. This agreement institutionalized the deep ties between the two nations, ensuring Bhutan's **genuine autonomy** while aligning it with India's **security** and regional interests. Scholars such as S.D. Muni describe this partnership as one where Bhutan retains its independence, while cooperating closely with India on key issues.

Areas of Convergence

► Strategic Collaboration

- ▶ Bhutan's geostrategic location makes it crucial for India's national security. Serving as a **buffer** between India and China, Bhutan helps safeguard India's **northeastern flank** and the **Siliguri Corridor** (also known as the **"chicken's neck"**). India's involvement in Bhutan's security, particularly through military exchanges and training under the **IMTRAT mission**, highlights the importance of this strategic collaboration. The **Doklam standoff** of 2017 underscored Bhutan's role in maintaining regional stability.

► Economic Interdependence

- ▶ Economically, India is Bhutan's largest trade partner and its main development partner. India supports Bhutan through financial aid and access to its vast market. The **hydropower sector** is a major area of cooperation, with Bhutan exporting most of its electricity to India. As noted by Stobdan (2014), these economic ties are vital for Bhutan's growth and are also integral to India's energy needs. Bilateral cooperation also extends to **infrastructure, health, and education**.

► Cultural and Societal Ties

- ▶ India and Bhutan share a rich cultural heritage, particularly through their **Buddhist traditions**. Figures like **Guru Rinpoche** are revered in both countries, symbolizing a deep-rooted connection between the two societies. **People-to-people** links are strengthened by regular **high-level visits** and cultural exchanges that foster mutual trust and understanding.

Importance of Bhutan for India

► Security Buffer

- ▶ Bhutan's strategic importance lies in its ability to act as a **security buffer**, preventing hostile nations like China from gaining access to sensitive areas, particularly the **Siliguri Corridor**. This geographical positioning is vital for India's border management and national defense.

► Regional Influence

- ▶ Bhutan plays an essential role in advancing India's **neighborhood-first policy**. Bhutan's support amplifies India's voice in regional forums like **SAARC** and **BIMSTEC**, and its stable relationship with India strengthens India's influence in the northern **Himalayan geopolitics**.

▶ Environmental Diplomacy

- ▶ Bhutan's environmental leadership, being **carbon-negative**, offers India a unique opportunity for **environmental diplomacy**. This environmental stance aligns with India's broader sustainability goals and fosters deeper cooperation on climate issues.

Challenges in the Relationship

▶ Chinese Engagement

- ▶ One of the major concerns for India is China's increasing engagement with Bhutan. This includes boundary negotiations and infrastructure development near sensitive tri-junction areas, which create strategic uncertainties for India. Scholars like Samaranayake (2019) warn that any shift in Bhutan's alignment could expose India to potential vulnerabilities.

▶ Hydropower Dependency

- ▶ Despite the strong economic ties, there is growing Bhutanese concern about over-dependence on Indian markets for hydropower exports. Additionally, there are issues related to delays in hydropower projects and tariff disagreements, which may strain the economic relationship in the future.

▶ Economic Diversification

- ▶ Bhutan is keen on reducing its dependency on India for trade and seeks to diversify its economic partnerships, particularly with countries like Bangladesh. This diversification is part of Bhutan's strategy to create a more balanced and resilient economy.

▶ People-to-People Frictions

- ▶ Occasional tensions arise due to issues like demonetization or cross-border trade regulations. These short-term frictions can impact the overall warmth of the relationship, though they are generally resolved through diplomatic engagement.

Way Forward

▶ Strategic Dialogue

- ▶ To address growing strategic uncertainties, India should consider initiating **trilateral dialogues** with Bhutan and China. This could help ease border tensions and strengthen mutual understanding on security concerns.

▶ Economic Diversification

- ▶ India must actively encourage Bhutan to diversify its economy beyond hydropower, focusing on sectors like **fintech, space, and pharmaceuticals**. Timely completion of hydropower projects and equitable trade agreements are also crucial for sustaining a healthy economic partnership.

▶ Balanced Partnership

- ▶ A **balanced partnership** must be at the core of India's engagement with Bhutan. As suggested by Suhasini Haidar, India must ensure an **equal and sensitive approach**, addressing Bhutan's aspirations for sovereignty and modernization while protecting India's security interests.

▶ Cultural and Societal Engagement

- ▶ Deepening **cultural ties** through **Buddhist diplomacy, education exchanges, and tourism** will further strengthen the relationship at the societal level. Such initiatives can build long-term trust and goodwill.

▶ Responsive to Bhutan's Needs

- ▶ India must remain responsive to Bhutan's **developmental priorities**. The recent financial support of ₹10,000 crore is a step in this direction, aligning India's strategies with Bhutan's **Gross National Happiness** philosophy.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Realism** explains India-Bhutan relations in terms of **strategic security** and **territorial integrity**, where India seeks to protect its interests in the region.
- ▶ **Sociological Liberalism** reflects the **people-to-people ties** between India and Bhutan, showcasing how **cultural exchange** and **shared values** enhance cooperation.
- ▶ **Functionalism** emphasizes the **cooperation** between India and Bhutan in **economic and developmental sectors**, highlighting how mutual benefits promote regional stability.

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **PM Modi** stated, “**No two countries in the world understand each other so well or share so much as India and Bhutan,**” reinforcing the **strong historical** and **cultural ties**.
- ▶ **Kanak Mani Dixit** emphasized that India and Bhutan share a relationship based on **mutual respect**, not dominance, highlighting **sovereignty** and **fair trade**.
- ▶ **Scholars like K.P. S. Nair** asserts that India has played a **key role** in Bhutan’s **security** and **economic development**, demonstrating **soft power** in the region.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

| | |
|---|---|
| Model Introduction 1: India-Bhutan relations are a shining example of how two neighboring countries can build a relationship based on deep mutual trust and shared values , fostering peaceful cooperation in the South Asian region. | Model Conclusion 1: Bhutan’s relationship with India serves as an example of how India can respect the sovereignty of smaller nations while promoting fair trade, aid, and connectivity , providing a model for its neighbors |
| Model Introduction 2: The long-standing relationship between India and Bhutan is rooted in historical, cultural, and strategic bonds , with India playing a significant role in Bhutan’s growth and security . | Model Conclusion 2: As a small nation in South Asia, Bhutan is a key partner for India, demonstrating India’s ability to foster respect for sovereignty while engaging in constructive cooperation . |
| Model Introduction 3: India and Bhutan’s ties reflect a unique partnership where mutual respect, sovereignty, and developmental cooperation form the foundation of their diplomatic engagement. | Model Conclusion 3: India-Bhutan relations set a benchmark for how India can strengthen regional ties , offering diplomatic support, economic aid, and infrastructure development while respecting Bhutan’s independence . |

India - Bangladesh relations

The relationship between India and Bangladesh is uniquely rooted in shared history and geographical proximity, making it a crucial aspect of both nations’ foreign policies. **Despite its significance, this relationship is marked by inherent uncertainties and complex dynamics.**

- ▶ **According to Sheikh Hasina, the relationship is like a flowing river, full of generosity.**
- ▶ **S. Jaishankar describes the current state of affairs as a fraternal friendship.** It is often said that for this relationship to thrive, India should let go of historical grievances while Bangladesh should consider the geographical realities.

Dimensions of Relationship

1. Strategic Dimension

- ▶ **Managing External Threats:** Bangladesh’s proximity to China presents both opportunities and challenges for India. As China seeks to expand its influence in the region, maintaining stable relations with Bangladesh is crucial for India to mitigate undue Chinese influence in its neighbourhood.
- ▶ **Tackling Internal Security Challenges:** The porous borders between India and Bangladesh have led to security issues, including illegal migration. With an estimated 30 million illegal migrants, addressing border security is essential. Cooperation between the two nations is necessary to counter potential threats arising from these security challenges.
- ▶ **Countering Terrorism:** Bangladesh has faced internal security issues, including terrorist attacks linked to groups like ISIS. Collaborative counter-terrorism efforts between India and Bangladesh are vital for maintaining regional stability and security.

2. Economic dimension

- ▶ **Resource Potential:** Bangladesh has significant oil and gas resources that can enhance regional energy security.

Collaborative exploration and development of these resources can drive economic growth and stability for both countries.

- ▶ **Expansive Market:** With its large population, Bangladesh offers a substantial market for goods and services. This presents numerous opportunities for trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the two nations.
- ▶ **Trade Relations:** Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia. Initiatives such as Border Haats and trade agreements have facilitated cross-border trade, contributing to the economic prosperity of both countries.

3. Political Dimension

- ▶ **Advocating Regional Integration:** Bangladesh actively participates in regional platforms such as SAARC, BIMSTEC, and BBIN, demonstrating its commitment to fostering regional integration and cooperation. These initiatives contribute to regional stability and shared growth.
- ▶ **Addressing Climate Change:** Due to its vulnerability to climate change and rising sea levels, Bangladesh plays a leading role in climate change discussions. Collaborative efforts with India and other regional players are essential for mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- ▶ **Ensuring North East Security:** Bangladesh shares borders with several Indian states in the North East. Maintaining friendly relations with Bangladesh is crucial for the security and stability of India's North East region.

Current Developments in India-Bangladesh Relations

1. **Friendship and Cooperation:** India-Bangladesh relations are currently marked by a robust sense of camaraderie, as highlighted by India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar. This fraternal friendship is reinforced through various cooperative efforts and agreements that cover infrastructure, connectivity, energy, and counter-terrorism.

2. Infrastructure and Connectivity Enhancements:

- ▶ **Bangladesh India Friendship Pipeline:** The inauguration of this pipeline has bolstered energy cooperation by facilitating the supply of diesel to Bangladesh, supporting infrastructure development.
- ▶ **Port Agreements:** The agreement to utilize Chittagong and Mongla seaports for transportation to India's north-eastern states underscores a significant boost in connectivity and trade.
- ▶ **BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement:** The agreement among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal enhances regional connectivity and transit to India's North East.

3. Energy and Connectivity Initiatives:

- ▶ **Rooppur Atomic Energy Project:** This Indo-Russian collaboration in Bangladesh represents a significant cooperation in the energy sector.
- ▶ **Electricity Exports:** India's export of 660 MW of electricity to Bangladesh contributes to the latter's energy security.

4. Counter-Terrorism Cooperation:

- ▶ **Extradition of ULFA Terrorists:** India's successful extradition of ULFA terrorists highlights a strong commitment to counter-terrorism and regional security.

5. High-Level Exchanges and Economic Cooperation:

- ▶ **Regular Leadership Visits:** Frequent high-level exchanges reflect the depth of the bilateral relationship.
- ▶ **Line of Credit:** India's substantial line of credit to Bangladesh demonstrates support for developmental projects and economic growth.

6. Shared Commemorations:

- ▶ **Joint Celebrations:** Both countries have agreed to commemorate significant milestones, including Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary, and the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's War of Liberation. These shared events highlight the deep historical and cultural ties between India and Bangladesh.

Therefore, the relationship between India and Bangladesh has reached new heights through strategic agreements, economic cooperation, infrastructure development, and shared commemorations. This evolving partnership, characterized by a deep sense of friendship and strategic alignment, is expected to continue fostering regional stability and prosperity.

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **David Brewster (Geopolitics Scholar):** Brewster argues that Bangladesh serves as a crucial buffer between India's north-eastern states and the rest of Asia. An alliance with China could provide China with direct access to India's troubled northeast, altering regional dynamics.
- ▶ **Rajiv Bhatia (Foreign Policy Expert):** Bhatia emphasizes Bangladesh's critical role in India's Act East policy, acting as a bridge between India's mainland and its north-eastern region.

Challenges in India-Bangladesh Relations

1. Illegal Migration: A Complex Challenge in India-Bangladesh Relations

► Scope of the Issue:

- **Extensive Border:** India and Bangladesh share the world's longest land border, approximately 3,700 kilometers in length.
- **Magnitude of Migration:** The issue of illegal migration is significant, with estimates suggesting 30 to 40 million Bangladeshis are in India illegally. This has led to notable demographic changes in regions like Tripura.

► Causes of Illegal Migration:

- **Lack of Recognition:** Bangladesh's government has not fully acknowledged the extent of the illegal migration problem, contributing to its persistence.
- **Poor Border Management:** Ineffective border control has facilitated unauthorized crossings.
- **Push Factors:** Factors such as environmental disasters (e.g., floods), poverty, and historical conflicts (notably the 1971 war) drive migration from Bangladesh.
- **Pull Factors:** India's porous borders, corruption among law enforcement, and political motives for electoral support further encourage illegal migration.

► Challenges:

► Strategic Implications:

- **Security Risks:** Porous borders contribute to the trafficking of drugs, humans, and cattle. The presence of fake voter ID cards, obtained through illegal means, threatens India's democratic processes.
- **Communal Tensions:** Demographic shifts caused by illegal migration have led to communal violence, affecting the secular nature of society.

► Economic Impact:

- **Resource Strain:** The influx of illegal immigrants places significant pressure on India's resources, including infrastructure, healthcare, and education systems.

► Potential Solutions:

- **Enhanced Border Management:** Strengthening border security with measures such as electrified fences can help deter illegal crossings. However, these measures must align with regional security dynamics.
- **Addressing Corruption:** Reducing corruption among law enforcement agencies is crucial to preventing illegal migration.
- **Gujral Doctrine:** The Gujral Doctrine emphasizes cooperation with Bangladesh to address underlying issues such as poverty and unemployment, which drive migration.
- **Effective Data Management:** Updating and maintaining the National Population Register can aid in identifying and managing illegal immigrants.
- **Work Permits:** Introducing a work permit system could reduce corruption, maintain accurate records of immigrants, foster goodwill, combat organized crime, and protect migrants from exploitation.

Therefore, addressing the issue of illegal migration between India and Bangladesh requires a multifaceted approach. Solutions should include improved border management, addressing corruption, and implementing effective data management systems, while also considering humanitarian aspects and regional dynamics. Collaborative efforts and clear policies are essential to ensure stability and well-being for both nations.

2. The Teesta River Water Dispute

► **Importance of the Teesta River:** Prime Minister Modi has highlighted that the Teesta River is crucial for both India and Bangladesh, and resolving its water-sharing issues is essential for maintaining strong bilateral relations.

► **Impact on Bangladesh:** For Bangladesh, the Teesta water dispute represents a prolonged issue stemming from India's water management policies, affecting regional harmony.

► Emotional and Regional Implications:

► **Emotive Issue:** Tariq Karim, former Bangladesh High Commissioner in Delhi, has pointed out that despite advancements in other areas of the relationship, the Teesta dispute remains a major concern for many Bangladeshis. This emotional factor exacerbates the tensions in bilateral relations.

► **Regional Effects:** Failure to resolve the dispute could undermine opportunities for "Blue Water Partnerships" in the Indian Ocean and impact broader strategic collaborations. Analysts like Jaideep Majumdar warn that unresolved issues with

the Teesta might weaken India's position on other water-related disputes, such as those involving the Brahmaputra with China.

► **Complexities of Water Allocation:**

- **Shared Rivers:** India and Bangladesh share approximately 54 rivers, yet only two have formal agreements—the Ganga and the Teesta.
- **Historical Negotiations:** The allocation of Teesta's waters has been under discussion since 1972. Currently, only 25% of the river's waters are shared, with the remaining 75% unevenly divided between the two nations. Bangladesh seeks a 25% share, whereas the current allocation favors India (39%) over Bangladesh (36%).

► **Past Attempts and Challenges:**

- **Framework Agreement:** During the Manmohan Singh government, progress was made with a framework agreement, but it faced obstacles due to coalition politics and objections from West Bengal, along with complications from India's water agreements with Pakistan.
- **Implementation Issues:** Concerns about disproportionate sharing and domestic political challenges have hindered the implementation of a fair deal.

► **Potential Solutions and Pragmatic Approaches:**

- **Gujral Doctrine:** The Gujral Doctrine, which emphasizes maintaining good neighbourly relations, could serve as a basis for resolving the Teesta dispute.
- **Equitable Agreement:** A resolution should balance India's national interests with addressing West Bengal's water deficit. Prof. S.D. Muni suggests that broader strategic interests should not be impeded by narrow domestic concerns.
- **Reviving Negotiations:** Reinstating the Joint River Commission, which has been inactive since 2011, might provide a platform for renewed discussions and potential solutions.
- **Comprehensive Cooperation:** Linking water-sharing negotiations with other agreements, such as transit arrangements, could foster a more holistic approach to bilateral cooperation.

Therefore, resolving the Teesta River water dispute is crucial for enhancing India-Bangladesh relations. An equitable agreement would not only address the immediate concerns of water allocation but also pave the way for stronger regional cooperation and strategic partnerships.

Future Recommendations for Strengthening India-Bangladesh Relations

To enhance the relationship between India and Bangladesh, experts and scholars suggest several strategic recommendations

1. **Sensitivity and Understanding: Harsh V. Pant's Perspective:** India should demonstrate sensitivity to Bangladesh's needs and concerns, actively addressing and understanding their perspectives to build a stronger rapport.
2. **Leveraging Soft Power: C. Rajamohan's Approach:** Utilizing soft power and fostering people-to-people connections can help bridge trust gaps and create a more cooperative environment between the two nations.
3. **Quality-Advantage Branding:** India should emphasize the superior quality of its assistance compared to other countries, such as China, and align its support with Bangladesh's developmental needs.
4. **Increasing Investments and Development:** Boosting investments in Bangladesh and accelerating its development will contribute to mutual economic growth and prosperity.
5. **Fulfilling Developmental Promises:** India must ensure that its developmental promises are implemented effectively and address any issues related to Line-of-Credit agreements.
6. **Reviving SAARC:** Revitalizing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can enhance regional collaboration and foster better understanding among member states.
7. **Creating a Security Community:** The creation of a security community in the Indian Ocean region, as suggested by Pinak Ranjan Chakraborty, could promote stability and cooperation in maritime affairs.
8. **Strategic Integration and Exploration:** Increasing strategic integration with Bangladesh and exploring new areas such as cyber capabilities and energy exploration can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.

Therefore, strengthening India-Bangladesh relations involves a combination of sensitivity, leveraging soft power, emphasizing the quality of assistance, increasing investments, fulfilling promises, reviving regional cooperation through SAARC, creating a security community, and exploring new strategic avenues. Implementing these recommendations can lead to enhanced bilateral cooperation and mutual growth.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Liberalism** emphasizes **cooperation** and **institutional frameworks** between India and Bangladesh, where both nations engage in bilateral agreements and regional platforms (SAARC, BIMSTEC) to promote **peace** and **shared prosperity**.
- ▶ **Dependency Theory** can explain the **historical and economic dynamics** between India and Bangladesh, where Bangladesh's developmental challenges are influenced by **structural inequalities** within the global system, leading to greater reliance on India for resources and development.
- ▶ **Neorealism** highlights the **security concerns** in India-Bangladesh relations, particularly the shared border and the challenges posed by **external actors** like China, which could influence **regional power dynamics** and stability in South Asia

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **Harsh Vardhan Shringla** called India-Bangladesh relations a **"role model"** for international affairs, emphasizing the **cooperative** and **mutually beneficial** nature of their bilateral ties.
- ▶ **S.D. Muni**, a prominent scholar, notes that India and Bangladesh's **strategic collaboration** is essential for **regional security**, especially concerning **terrorism** and **border issues**.
- ▶ **Ayesha Siddiqa**, a South Asian scholar, highlights the **strategic importance** of India-Bangladesh cooperation, particularly in light of the growing **Chinese influence** in South Asia, which requires India to maintain strong relations with its eastern neighbor.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

As Prof. Sreeradha Datta argues, *"India-Bangladesh relations reflect the complex legacy of partition, liberation, and regional geopolitics."* From a **constructivist lens**, shared linguistic, cultural, and historical ties define the emotional core of the relationship, yet pragmatic concerns over migration, water sharing, and Chinese engagement in Bangladesh have introduced **realist tensions** in what should otherwise be a natural partnership in South Asia.

Model Conclusion 1:

As C. Raja Mohan contends, *"Managing the neighbourhood demands not dominance, but diplomacy."* For India, adopting a **cooperative regionalism approach** anchored in empathy, mutual respect, and asymmetrical generosity is vital. Deepening economic integration, finalizing water-sharing agreements, and collaborating on security can make the India-Bangladesh partnership a model for **functional subregionalism** amid intensifying strategic competition in South Asia.

Model Introduction 2:

"Geography has made us neighbors, history has made us friends," observed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—a sentiment central to India-Bangladesh ties. However, viewed through the **complex interdependence theory**, both nations must navigate **trans-boundary issues** such as the Teesta dispute, border management, and trade imbalances while enhancing connectivity through platforms like BBIN and BIMSTEC to realise their mutual developmental and security aspirations.

Model Conclusion 2:

India-Bangladesh ties are a test case for **liberal institutionalism** in South Asia. As former diplomat Shyam Saran states, *"India must ensure that goodwill is not transactional, but transformative."* Progress on trade, transit, energy, and people-to-people ties must be sustained with political will and sensitivity. A stable, prosperous, and cooperative Bangladesh is not only in India's interest but essential for regional peace and development.

India- Sri Lanka Relations

The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is deeply intertwined through their shared historical and cultural connections. This bond is characterized by a long history of mutual influences and cultural exchanges.

However, recent domestic political changes in both countries have impacted their relationship. While China has adopted a strategic approach towards Sri Lanka, India's policy towards the island nation has been described as navigating between

two paths. This reflects the challenge India faces in balancing its regional interests with its domestic political considerations

Areas of Cooperation and Convergence

The relationship between India and Sri Lanka has been marked by significant cooperation across various domains.

- ▶ **Financial Assistance-** In response to Sri Lanka's economic crisis in 2022, India provided over \$3.5 billion in financial assistance, including a \$500 million oil line of credit to address fuel shortages and a \$1 billion credit line for essential commodities and food.
- ▶ **Humanitarian efforts** by India included sending essential medicines worth around \$6 million and shipping nearly 40,000 tonnes of vital goods such as rice, milk powder, and kerosene oil.
- ▶ **Bilateral Trade-** Economically, bilateral trade reached \$5.1 billion in the fiscal year 2021-22, with Sri Lankan exports to India surpassing \$1 billion. India's investments in Sri Lanka, particularly in energy, manufacturing, and infrastructure, exceeded \$1.5 billion, and around 75% of the Colombo port's transshipment business was linked to India.
- ▶ **Tourism,** India was the top source of foreign visitors to Sri Lanka in 2022, with nearly 200,000 Indian tourists. Infrastructure development efforts included joint projects like the Trincomalee oil tank farms and Palaly airport.
- ▶ **Military cooperation** was also notable, with India gifting a Dornier maritime surveillance aircraft and participating in joint and trilateral coast guard exercises with Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Despite these extensive cooperative efforts, India faces the strategic challenge of countering China's growing influence in Sri Lanka.

Challenges in the relationship

1. Fishing issue-

The fishing dispute between India and Sri Lanka remains a significant challenge in their bilateral relations. **This issue centres on illegal fishing by Indian fishermen within Sri Lanka's territorial waters and vice versa, particularly involving bottom trawling, a practice deemed unsustainable and damaging to marine ecosystems.**

Concerns- Sri Lanka has repeatedly raised concerns about these intrusions, as bottom trawling is illegal within its waters and **harms local marine life.**

Historical claims by some Indian fishermen regarding traditional fishing rights complicate the matter, and the **1974 maritime agreement that transferred Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka did not explicitly address fishing rights.** This has occasionally led to severe incidents, including the Sri Lankan navy firing on Indian fishermen, which contravenes the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

▶ Measures Undertaken-

- ▶ Both governments have undertaken measures to address the situation, such as establishing a Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries and a direct communication hotline between the coast guards to prevent violence and ensure safety.
- ▶ Additionally, efforts have been made to release detained fishermen and their boats on humanitarian grounds, and India is working to develop deep-sea fishing skills among its fishermen to reduce reliance on traditional fishing grounds.

Potential solutions include negotiating a formal lease arrangement for **Katchatheevu Island** to secure fishing rights for Indian fishermen or exploring other cooperative approaches to sustainable resource management.

Resolving this issue is essential for maintaining stable relations and protecting marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of fishermen from both countries.

2. Economic Issues in Sri-Lanka and Impact on India Sri-Lanka Relations

▶ Extent and Implications of the economic crisis

- ▶ Sri Lanka, with a population of 22 million, **is currently experiencing an unprecedented economic crisis that jeopardizes the progress made since the end of its civil war in 2009.** This crisis has resulted in severe inflation, widespread power shortages, and shortages of essential goods, compounded by a political crisis marked by violent clashes, resignations, emergency declarations, and restrictions on social media.
- ▶ The economic troubles, although aggravated by the **pandemic's impact on tourism and foreign exchange reserves, have deeper roots. From 2009 to 2018, Sri Lanka's trade deficit grew from \$5 billion to \$12 billion.** Policy decisions, such as tax cuts, interest rate changes, and a ban on fertilizer and pesticide imports, further exacerbated the situation. Additionally, a downgrade in credit ratings has impeded Sri Lanka's access to international credit markets,

worsening its debt repayment difficulties.

► Implications for India

- China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, due to India's relative neglect in fostering trade and development ties, poses significant implications for India. Sri Lanka's trade with China surpasses its trade with India, impacting Indian trade interests.
- Furthermore, China's investments in Sri Lanka have been criticized for their lack of transparency and strategic consequences. Disruptions at the Colombo Port could affect India's container traffic and exports, while India's investments in Sri Lankan real estate, manufacturing, and petroleum refining could be negatively impacted.
- Additionally, the crisis might lead to a refugee influx into India, raising security and political concerns.

► India's Role in mitigating the crisis

India's role is crucial in addressing this crisis due to its geographical proximity and trade interests.

- **As one of Sri Lanka's major creditors**, India has the opportunity to provide debt relief or restructuring. Offering a debt repayment moratorium or restructuring could help Sri Lanka address immediate needs and mitigate Chinese influence.
- **Strengthening bilateral trade through agreements** like the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement could promote economic stability. In the long term, India should assist Sri Lanka in reducing its dependency on China and better integrating into the global economy. Renegotiating trade agreements and preventing further escalation of the crisis are essential to ensuring regional stability and security.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- **Realism** emphasizes the **security concerns** in India-Sri Lanka relations, where India seeks to safeguard its **strategic interests** in the Indian Ocean, particularly regarding **China's growing presence**.
- **Liberalism** highlights **cooperative engagement** between India and Sri Lanka, focusing on **economic interdependence**, **trade relations**, and **multilateral cooperation** for mutual benefit.
- **Constructivism** suggests that the **historical and cultural ties** between India and Sri Lanka play a crucial role in shaping their diplomatic **identity** and **perceptions** toward each other.

Key Scholars and Statements

- **S. Jaishankar** described India-Sri Lanka relations as a **"fraternal friendship"**, underscoring the deep **cooperation** and **mutual understanding** between the two nations.
- **SS Menon**, in his book *Choices*, referred to Sri Lanka as an **"aircraft carrier"** in the Indian Ocean, highlighting its **strategic significance** to India's maritime security and regional influence.
- **Mahinda Rajapaksa**, former Sri Lankan President, famously said that **"every other nation is a friend to Sri Lanka, but India is a relative"**, emphasizing the **unique and familial bond** between the two countries.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

- The **India-Sri Lanka relationship** is deeply embedded in **shared history, culture, and strategic interests**, with both nations relying on **cooperation** for regional stability and growth in the Indian Ocean region.

Model Conclusion 1:

- As **Rajapaksa** stated, India is Sri Lanka's **"relative"**, and despite challenges, the **mutual dependence** on **economic ties** and **strategic cooperation** ensures that the relationship will continue to thrive in the long term.

Model Introduction 2:

- India and Sri Lanka share a long-standing **fraternal relationship** with deep **historical, cultural, and geographical ties**, making their **partnership** essential for regional peace and prosperity.

Model Conclusion 2:

- India's **proximity, historical ties, and economic support** make it Sri Lanka's most important partner, and their **cooperative relationship** offers a **model** for **regional collaboration**.

Model Introduction 3:

- ▶ With Sri Lanka's **strategic location** in the Indian Ocean, its relationship with India holds critical importance for **security, economic growth, and regional integration**.

Model Conclusion 3:

- ▶ The relationship between India and Sri Lanka, characterized by **shared interests and historical bonds**, must continue to evolve to address **economic challenges and regional security concerns** while respecting **Sri Lanka's sovereignty**.

India-Maldives Relations

India and the **Maldives** share a dynamic and evolving partnership that has deepened across **strategic, economic, and cultural** dimensions, reflecting the changing geopolitical realities of the region.

Areas of Convergence

▶ Strategic and Security Cooperation

- ▶ India has always been the **Maldives' primary security provider**, as evidenced by past interventions such as **Operation Cactus** (1988) and the development of the **Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF)** naval base. This collaboration strengthens the maritime security of the Indian Ocean, aligning with India's **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision. Ongoing **defence exercises**, the **supply of naval assets**, and joint surveillance efforts highlight the robust security framework India has established with the Maldives.

▶ Development and Economic Partnership

- ▶ India plays a key role in the Maldives' **development**, contributing significantly to infrastructure projects like airports, ports, and social housing. The **Lines of Credit** provided by India, including a recent USD 565 million package, support projects in **connectivity and urban development**. The two countries have also built strong **digital partnerships**, with initiatives like **UPI integration** and joint efforts in health, education, and disaster relief, reinforcing their shared prosperity.

▶ Cultural and People-to-People Ties

- ▶ The cultural and societal links between the two nations are strong, shaped by shared **civilizational ties**, linguistic similarities, and **religious heritage**. Around 25,000 **Indians** live in the Maldives, playing a key role in sectors such as health and education. Meanwhile, Maldivian students and patients regularly visit India for **education and medical treatment**, further strengthening people-to-people connections.

Importance of the Maldives for India

▶ Geostrategic Location

- ▶ The **Maldives** holds immense strategic importance for India, lying at a critical point in the **Indian Ocean**. Its location is vital for securing India's sea lanes, through which 50% of its trade and 80% of its energy imports pass. As **C. Raja Mohan** notes, the Maldives' proximity to India's **Lakshadweep Islands** and major **SLOCs** (Sea Lines of Communication) makes it a crucial **"toll gate"** in the region. Any instability here could undermine India's **regional influence** and energy security.

▶ Countering China

- ▶ Maldives' potential alignment with **China** through the **Belt and Road Initiative** or **military logistics** hubs poses a challenge to India's ambitions in the region. The growing Chinese influence threatens to encircle India in the form of the "String of Pearls", undermining India's position as the dominant security provider in the Indian Ocean.

Key Challenges

- ▶ **China's Expanding Footprint**- China's investments in infrastructure and increased **diplomatic engagement** with the Maldives challenge India's influence in the region. As **B.R. Deepak** points out, this is part of a broader **sphere-of-influence** struggle in South Asia, especially when Maldivian leadership shifts towards China, as seen during President **Yameen's** tenure.

- ▶ **Domestic Political Instability**- The **"India Out" campaign** and rising **ultra-nationalism** in the Maldives have caused

tensions, particularly over India's military presence. Public perceptions of India have been impacted by such issues, affecting sectors like tourism and diplomatic relations.

- ▶ **Radicalization and Security Risks-** The rise of **religious extremism** and **radicalization** in the Maldives poses a security threat, with potential cross-border terrorism concerns. As scholars like **Harsh Pant** and **C. Raja Mohan** have warned, these developments require vigilant monitoring and cooperation to ensure stability.
- ▶ **Climate Change Vulnerability-** Both countries face the existential threat of **rising sea levels**. This shared **climate vulnerability** calls for joint efforts on **mitigation** and **adaptation**, making climate diplomacy an essential aspect of their partnership.

Key Challenges

- ▶ **Deeper Engagement with Political Sensitivity-** India must engage with the Maldives carefully, acknowledging sovereignty concerns and minimizing nationalist backlash. As suggested by **Dunya Maumoon** and **Shyam Saran**, outreach to all **Maldivian stakeholders** should be done with sensitivity.
- ▶ **Diversify Cooperation-** India should expand cooperation into new areas such as **fintech**, **green technologies**, **cultural exchanges**, and **educational initiatives** to meet the evolving aspirations of the Maldives.
- ▶ **Balanced Approach to Regional Competition-** India must remain vigilant against external encroachments while maintaining a pragmatic and non-partisan stance in regional politics. Constructive engagement with the Maldives, without being overly intrusive, will help preserve its influence in the region.
- ▶ **Climate and Health Diplomacy-** Joint initiatives in **climate resilience** and **healthcare**, like **Aarogya Maitri** and **joint research**, will further cement a long-lasting partnership. These initiatives align with the well-being of both societies, making their cooperation even more vital.
- ▶ **People-Centric Outreach-** Building trust through **tourism**, **student exchanges**, and **employment** initiatives can help strengthen people-to-people ties, insulating the relationship from political fluctuations.

As **C. Raja Mohan** aptly notes, India's success in the Maldives will depend on its ability to be "**an indispensable partner**," sensitive to local realities while safeguarding its own **national interests**. By balancing **security**, **development**, and **regional leadership**, India can strengthen its role in the **Indian Ocean** in the twenty-first century.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Realism** highlights **power dynamics** and **security concerns** in India-Maldives relations, where India seeks to maintain regional stability and secure maritime routes in the **Indian Ocean**, especially in the context of increasing Chinese influence in the region.
- ▶ **Liberalism** emphasizes the **cooperation-based relationship** between India and the Maldives, which is based on **shared economic interests** and the pursuit of **regional prosperity**. The two countries cooperate in areas like **trade**, **energy security**, and **infrastructure development**, fostering a mutually beneficial partnership.
- ▶ **Constructivism** explores the **cultural and identity-based ties** that bind India and the Maldives. Shared **religious values**, **ethnic connections**, and **historical exchanges** shape their mutual perceptions, fostering a relationship grounded in **trust**, **solidarity**, and **regional cooperation**.

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **S. Jaishankar**, India's Foreign Minister, emphasized that **India's relationship** with the Maldives is an integral part of its '**Neighbourhood First**' policy, highlighting the **geostrategic importance** of the island nation in India's **regional vision**.
- ▶ **C. Raja Mohan**, an expert on South Asian geopolitics, argued that India's **diplomatic strategy** towards the Maldives underscores the importance of **securing maritime routes** and reinforcing **regional alliances** in the **Indian Ocean** to counter external influences.
- ▶ **Fazlur Rahman**, a Maldivian scholar, noted that India's engagement with the Maldives transcends **security concerns** to include **economic development**, with India playing a **crucial role** in supporting Maldives' **infrastructure** and **energy** needs.

| Model Introductions and Conclusions | |
|--|--|
| Model Introduction 1: India-Maldives relations are rooted in shared history, culture, and strategic interests , where India's role as a key partner for regional security and economic development plays a pivotal role in stabilizing the Indian Ocean | Model Conclusion 1: The waves that reach both India and the Maldives symbolize the deep bond of trust, friendship, and peace , illustrating a relationship that plays a central role in regional stability and cooperation . |
| Model Introduction 2: The relationship between India and the Maldives is built on strong cultural ties, historical connections, and geopolitical collaboration , making the island nation a critical part of India's security architecture and its ' Neighbourhood First ' policy. | Model Conclusion 2: India-Maldives relations are characterized by mutual respect and a shared commitment to regional prosperity . This partnership must continue to grow , addressing security concerns, economic needs, and maritime cooperation for a secure Indian Ocean region . |
| Model Introduction 3: India and the Maldives are bound by shared cultural heritage, geographical proximity, and strategic interests . Their bilateral relations are crucial for maritime security, economic collaboration, and regional integration in South Asia. | Model Conclusion 3: India-Maldives relations are marked by deep historical and strategic ties . The relationship, described as a " golden partnership ", is based on shared prosperity, security cooperation, and mutual respect , ensuring stability in the Indian Ocean region . |

India-Myanmar Relations

- ▶ Myanmar serves as a **vital land bridge between India and Southeast Asia**, with a relationship steeped in a rich heritage of civilization, religion, culture, and economic interactions. This deep-rooted historical connection offers significant potential to strengthen the burgeoning relationship between the two nations.
- ▶ Myanmar has **the potential to become a central element of India's Act East Policy (AEP)**. By leveraging this strategic gateway, India can enhance regional connectivity, economic cooperation, and diplomatic relations with Southeast Asia.

Areas of Cooperation and Recent Developments in India-Myanmar Relations

1. Economic Relations:

- ▶ **Bilateral Trade:** The trade volume between India and Myanmar stands at \$1.5 billion, highlighting robust economic interactions.
- ▶ **ASEAN Free Trade Agreement:** India's Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN bolsters trade relations and supports regional economic integration.
- ▶ **Border Haats:** Initiatives such as Border Haats promote economic development in border areas and the Northeast region of India.
- ▶ **Line of Credit and Infrastructure:** India provides support through a Line of Credit for Myanmar's railway, data link, and telecommunication projects. Connectivity projects like the IMT trilateral highway and the Kaladan project further enhance cross-border infrastructure.
- ▶ **Energy Sector Investment:** India has made substantial investments in Myanmar's energy sector, strengthening economic ties between the two nations.

2. Strategic and Security Relations:

- ▶ **Sittwe Port Development:** The development of Sittwe Port in Myanmar offers a strategic alternative to China's Coco Island, supporting India's regional interests.
- ▶ **Southeast Asian Ties:** Myanmar is a crucial component of India's Act East Policy, serving as a gateway to Southeast Asian countries.
- ▶ **Joint Exercises and Stability:** Security cooperation is reinforced through joint military exercises such as IMNEX and IMBEX. Initiatives like Operation Sunshine aim to maintain stability in India's Northeast by addressing extremism along the Indo-Myanmar border.

3. Cultural Relations:

- ▶ **Free Movement Regime:** This regime facilitates cross-border travel, fostering cultural exchange between the two countries.
- ▶ **Tourism and Friendship Projects:** Cultural exchanges include visits by Buddhist monks to India. The India-Myanmar Friendship Project, which provides fabricated houses to refugees in Myanmar's Rakhine state, and the 2018 Land Border Crossing Agreement, simplify travel and promote mutual understanding.

4. Multilateral Engagements:

- ▶ **Participation in Forums:** India and Myanmar engage in various multilateral forums such as SASEC, BIMSTEC, the East Asia Summit, IMT, the India-ASEAN Summit, and Mekong Ganga Cooperation, demonstrating the depth of their multilateral cooperation.

Challenges in India-Myanmar Relations

- 1. Border Security and Insurgency:** Insurgent groups like the NSCN-K along the India-Myanmar border present significant security challenges, affecting stability in India's Northeast. The activities of these groups raise concerns about sovereignty and security in the region.
- 2. Rohingya Crisis and Migration:** The Rohingya refugee crisis strains bilateral relations due to India's position on repatriation and its potential impact on regional stability. Myanmar's management of the crisis has drawn criticism for human rights issues, complicating diplomatic relations with India.
- 3. China's Dominance and Influence:** Myanmar's close ties with China, particularly through projects like the Kyaukpyu port and the Belt and Road Initiative, pose a challenge to India's efforts to enhance its regional influence and connectivity. These developments could impact India's strategic interests in the region.
- 4. Infrastructure and Connectivity Constraints:** Limited infrastructure and connectivity between India and Myanmar impede the effective implementation of projects and trade. Delays in completing the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway highlight the difficulties in improving regional connectivity.
- 5. Economic Constraints and Political Transitions:** Myanmar's economic challenges and political transitions can affect the pace and depth of bilateral economic cooperation. Changes in Myanmar's political landscape may disrupt ongoing projects and investment plans.
- 6. Ethnic and Religious Divisions:** Internal ethnic and religious tensions within Myanmar, such as clashes between Buddhists and Muslims, can impact India's interests and investments. These divisions present potential challenges to maintaining stable bilateral relations.
- 7. Lack of People-to-People Ties:** Historical disconnections between India and Myanmar have resulted in limited people-to-people exchanges, hindering cultural understanding. Strengthening academic and cultural exchanges could help bridge this gap.
- 8. Environmental Concerns and Local Protests:** Projects like the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project may lead to environmental and social issues, including local protests. Addressing these concerns is essential for sustaining positive bilateral relations.

Rohingya Crisis

- ▶ **Who are Rohingyas:** The Rohingyas are a significant Muslim ethnic minority residing mainly in Myanmar's Rakhine state. They are denied citizenship by the Myanmar government, which considers them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.
- ▶ **The Rohingya crisis** is considered the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis, characterized by a rapid increase in refugee numbers. Myanmar's military claims its operations target Rohingya militants, but it denies accusations of targeting civilians.

India's Stand:

- ▶ **India views the Rohingya crisis as an internal matter for Myanmar.**
- ▶ **Not being a signatory to the Refugee Convention, India has shown reluctance in offering refuge to Rohingyas** and abstained from international declarations on violence in Rakhine state.

United Nations' Perspective:

- ▶ The UN has termed the military offensive in Rakhine as **"ethnic cleansing"** and described the Rohingya situation as the **"world's fastest-growing refugee crisis."** Amnesty International's investigations have reported instances of violence, including rape.

Rohingya Issue:

The United Nations regards the Rohingyas as the **“most persecuted minority group in the world.”**

- ▶ Their statelessness is a result of the 1974 Emergency Immigration Act and the 1982 Citizenship Act. Even Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has remained silent on the issue.
- ▶ The Advisory Commission led by Kofi Annan sought a lasting resolution, while Human Rights Watch and the UN's Human Rights Office have raised concerns about ethnic cleansing and potential crimes against humanity.
- ▶ **Prof. Baladas Ghoshal** argues that Rohingyas are migrants rather than an ethnic group, suggesting that recognizing them as such would imply recognizing Rakhine state as an ethnic entity

Issues and Challenges in the India-Myanmar Relationship

1. **Rohingya Crisis and Insurgent Safe Haven:** The Rohingya crisis strains bilateral ties due to India's stance on repatriation and affects regional stability. Myanmar's internal instability impacts India's Northeast security and counterinsurgency efforts. The presence of insurgents in Myanmar complicates India's diplomatic and security efforts.
2. **Connectivity and Implementation:** Criticism by **C. Rajamohan** highlights the lack of effective connectivity and slow implementation of projects between India and Myanmar. This hinders progress in trade, infrastructure, and regional connectivity.
3. **Competition and China's Influence:** Myanmar's growing global significance has led to competition among nations seeking closer ties. China's extensive engagement in Myanmar, through strategic partnerships and investments, challenges India's efforts to strengthen its influence and connectivity in the region.
4. **Trade Potential:** Despite its potential, bilateral trade between India and Myanmar remains relatively modest at \$2.178 billion, indicating that trade relations have not yet achieved desired levels.
5. **China's Role and India's Democracy Obsession:** China's substantial presence in Myanmar contrasts with India's more complex geographical and diplomatic engagement. **Scholars like C. Rajamohan and Harsh V. Pant argue that India's emphasis on democratic values may have contributed to a slower and less comprehensive engagement compared to China's pragmatic approach.**
6. **Balanced Foreign Policy:** Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhyaya notes that while China's involvement in Myanmar is seen as largely extractive and growing unpopular, India must balance its strategic interests with its stance on democratic values and human rights

Recent Developments

1. **Border Security Initiatives:** India has proposed fencing the entire border with Myanmar to control illegal migration and enhance security, addressing concerns related to ongoing conflicts in Myanmar.
2. **Humanitarian Response to Refugee Influx:** With the conflict in Myanmar causing an influx of refugees into Indian states like Mizoram, the Indian government and local authorities have been actively providing humanitarian assistance while balancing security concerns.
3. **Economic and Infrastructure Projects:** Despite challenges, India continues to engage with Myanmar on key projects like the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, which aims to connect Mizoram with the **Sittwe port** in Myanmar. This project is essential for regional connectivity and India's "Act East" policy, although it has faced delays due to local conflicts and security issues.
4. **Diplomatic Engagements:** India remains engaged in diplomatic discussions with Myanmar, striving to foster stability and cooperation amidst the complex political landscape following the military coup. These engagements are crucial for balancing India's strategic interests with its commitment to democratic values and human rights.

Military Coup in Myanmar and India's Response

- ▶ As Myanmar marks two years since the **military coup on February 1, 2021, India faces complex challenges in its approach to the country.**
- ▶ The coup, which interrupted the inauguration of newly-elected Members of Parliament from the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, was justified by the military on grounds of alleged electoral malpractice, aiming to consolidate its power.

Shifting Dynamics in Myanmar:

- ▶ **Instability in Government:** The current military junta, led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, struggles to maintain

control amid significant opposition from civilian resistance **groups and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs)**. These pro-democracy groups and **EAOs have emerged as strong challengers to the junta's authority, while the National Unity Government operates in exile**, seeking global recognition. In response, the junta has employed military force.

Foreign Policy Dilemmas for India:

- ▶ Historically, **India has employed a "dual-track policy," engaging with the military while also supporting pro-democracy forces**. This approach was driven by strategic interests, including securing India's North-eastern borders and countering China's influence in the region.
- ▶ **Harsh V. Pant** notes that the coup presented India with an ideological dilemma, balancing support for democracy with realpolitik considerations.

Evolution of India's Approach:

- ▶ India has adjusted its dual-track policy in response to the shifting political landscape in Myanmar. The junta's failure to establish control and the escalating internal conflict complicate India's strategy. The resistance by pro-democracy forces further challenges India's approach.

Challenges and Key Considerations:

1. **Security Implications:** The conflict's spill over into Indian states like Mizoram raises security concerns.
2. **Cross-Border Influence:** Activities of ethnic armed groups and pro-democracy forces impact regional connectivity projects such as the trilateral highway.
3. **Insurgent Groups:** The junta's recruitment of Indian insurgent groups poses security threats to India.
4. **Rohingya Crisis:** The ongoing Rohingya crisis continues to destabilize the region.
5. **Global Perception:** India's policy towards Myanmar contrasts with its aspiration to uphold democratic values.

Options for India:

- ▶ **Direct Communication:** Establish direct channels with Myanmar's democratic forces and ethnic groups.
- ▶ **Regional Engagement:** Strengthen ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and pursue military-to-military dialogue with the junta.
- ▶ **People-to-People Ties:** Enhance interactions and offer educational opportunities to Myanmar students

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **Sinderpal Singh:** India should realign its Myanmar policy to support democratic voices and ethnic groups while mitigating the impact of refugee spillover on its Northeast region.
- ▶ **Mahendra P. Lama:** India should leverage its cooperation with the Myanmar military to encourage democratic reforms and use its soft power to build pro-democracy narratives countering China's state-led messaging.
- ▶ **Rajiv Bhatia:** India should mobilize bilateral, regional, and international institutions such as BIMSTEC, ASEAN, and the UN to pressure the Myanmar military to restore the elected government and release political prisoners.

As Myanmar commemorates the coup's second anniversary, India faces a delicate balancing act, considering its strategic interests, security concerns, and the evolving regional dynamics.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ Neorealism emphasizes the strategic calculations of both India and Myanmar, where India's security interests in the Northeast and Myanmar's geopolitical importance in the Indian Ocean are key to their bilateral cooperation, especially concerning counterbalancing China.
- ▶ Constructivism underscores the role of identity and culture in shaping India-Myanmar relations, where historical ties, shared religious practices, and ethnic affinities define their cooperation, fostering mutual trust despite external pressures.
- ▶ **Economic Structuralism** links **India-Myanmar economic engagement to developmental interdependence**. Through initiatives like the **Kaladan Project** and **trade agreements**, India seeks to reduce Myanmar's reliance on **external powers** (especially China) by fostering **regional economic integration**.

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **Harsh V. Pant** suggests India must **navigate its Myanmar policy** by balancing **strategic imperatives** with **support for democratic processes**, in line with India's broader **regional security** and **foreign policy goals**.
- ▶ **Sinderpal Singh** advises India to **refine its approach** by supporting **democratic factions** in Myanmar, recognizing the

strategic significance of **ethnic groups** and **pro-democracy forces** in enhancing India's influence in the region.

- **Rajiv Bhatia** advocates for a **multilateral** approach, urging India to collaborate with **regional** and **global actors** like **ASEAN** and the **UN** to address Myanmar's **political instability** while securing **India's security and economic interests**.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

| | |
|---|---|
| Model Introduction 1: India and Myanmar share a long-standing relationship , shaped by cultural, economic, and security concerns, with Myanmar serving as a crucial partner in India's ' Act East Policy ', facilitating better connectivity and regional integration . | Model Conclusion 1: India must manage its relationship with Myanmar through a delicate balance of strategic cooperation, economic engagement, and support for democratic processes , ensuring a stable and mutually beneficial partnership despite challenges. |
| Model Introduction 2: The bilateral ties between India and Myanmar are marked by a strategic partnership that balances security interests, economic cooperation, and cultural ties , making Myanmar an integral part of India's approach to South-East Asia . | Model Conclusion 2: The India-Myanmar relationship is an example of how two neighboring countries can collaborate on security and development , with regional integration initiatives and strategic projects laying the foundation for long-term cooperation. |
| Model Introduction 3: India and Myanmar's relationship is deeply rooted in shared historical, ethnic, and geopolitical ties , where India's influence in Myanmar is increasingly significant for regional security, economic growth, and counterbalancing external powers . | Model Conclusion 3: As Myanmar undergoes political turmoil , India's role in the region must evolve, balancing economic interests with democratic values , ensuring that its engagement with Myanmar contributes to regional stability and sustainable development . |

India Pakistan relations

The relationship between **India and Pakistan** has been shaped by a **complex mix of historical, political, cultural, and territorial factors**. Since their partition in 1947, following the end of British colonial rule, both nations have experienced a cycle of conflict, diplomacy, and attempts at cooperation.

2025 India-Pakistan Conflict

The **2025 India-Pakistan war** was triggered by a terrorist attack in **Pahalgam**, Jammu & Kashmir, attributed to Pakistan-based groups. In response, India launched **Operation Sindoor**, striking deep into **Pakistan-occupied Kashmir** and **Punjab**, targeting terror camps. The military action used **advanced technology**, including **drones** and **precision strikes**, marking a shift in modern warfare tactics. Pakistan retaliated with **missile attacks** and drones on Indian military targets, leading to **blackouts** and widespread distress.

Despite intense fighting, both sides avoided targeting civilians directly or escalating to full-scale war. **India** emphasized the action was in response to **terrorism**, not war against Pakistan, aiming to manage international perceptions and maintain strategic restraint. The **nuclear dimension** loomed over the conflict but never escalated. **Crisis management** and **military-to-military communication** played key roles in de-escalating tensions.

Looking ahead, the conflict highlights the growing **technological sophistication** in warfare, making future conflicts faster and potentially more devastating. While **deterrence** works to an extent, the **underlying causes**—especially Pakistan's support for terrorism—remain unresolved. Both nations must prioritize **diplomatic channels, restraint, and long-term political solutions** to prevent future crises and **ensure regional stability**.

- **C. Raja Mohan** highlights that structural constraints, such as religious nationalism, disputed territories, and Pakistan's use of militant groups as strategic assets, contribute to a persistent cycle of crises and reconciliation between the two countries.

- ▶ **Former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran** adds that the deep-rooted estrangement established at partition continues to influence their relationship. Overcoming the **psychological and ideological divides** that have developed over decades will necessitate visionary and strategic statecraft.

Government of India's Policy towards Pakistan: An Analytical Overview

- ▶ **Nehru's Era:** Initially, Jawaharlal Nehru regarded Pakistan as a non-threatening neighbour, underestimating its ambitions and capabilities.
- ▶ His foreign policy focus was on **strengthening ties with China and addressing water-sharing issues through the Indus Water Treaty.**
 - ▶ Nehru also believed that Pakistan, **sharing a common historical background with India, would naturally gravitate towards India.**
 - ▶ Embracing a **policy of non-alignment and self-sufficiency, Nehru faced economic and political isolation** and struggled to secure reliable allies, as Pakistan aligned more closely with the USA and China.
- ▶ **Subsequent Periods:** As time progressed, **India's approach evolved towards a more realist stance.**
- ▶ The focus shifted to pragmatic diplomacy, with **Indira Gandhi pursuing territorial division of Pakistan**, while the **Gujral Doctrine** sought to enhance bilateral relations.
 - ▶ Efforts by **Vajpayee, such as bus diplomacy, and Manmohan Singh's peace initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts but were tempered by caution regarding asymmetrical warfare due to nuclear implications.**
- ▶ **Modi's Policy – Complex Interdependence:** Under Narendra Modi, the **"Neighbourhood First" approach emphasized improving relations with neighbouring countries** and adopted a more assertive diplomatic stance.
- ▶ Modi **expanded India's foreign relations beyond the context of Pakistan, fostering stronger ties with West Asian nations like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar.**
 - ▶ The **India-Qatar Defence Agreement, for instance, showcased a strategic shift towards military alliances and regional cooperation.**
 - ▶ Modi's policies, including **"Act West," "Act East," and "Act South," were designed to counterbalance the influence of the China-Pakistan axis.**
 - ▶ His administration **employed a "Cooperation Defection Cycle," blending cooperation with strategic defection** to align with India's interests while maintaining a responsible international image.
 - ▶ Additionally, **the "Blame and Shame" strategy aimed to isolate Pakistan diplomatically.** Notably, the Balakot strikes marked a shift from previous strategic restraint, reflecting a more assertive posture. The backing of Pakistan by China's military establishments further complicates the regional dynamics and impacts India's strategic calculations.

Current Doval Doctrine and Way Forward for India

Key Elements of the Doval Doctrine

The **Doval Doctrine** presents a strategic approach towards **Pakistan**, centered around three main principles. First, it **rejects** engaging in **peace talks**, considering them **impractical** given the **inherent dynamics** between the two countries. Second, it emphasizes leveraging **India's superior position** to **exploit Pakistan's vulnerabilities** in order to counter security threats effectively. Third, the doctrine advocates for a **three-fold strategy: intelligence-driven operations** to pre-empt threats, **strategic weaponization** to disrupt **terrorist infrastructure**, and **high-tech intelligence** to strengthen **information gathering** and **strategic actions.**

Looking ahead, the **way forward for India** involves working towards **normalization** or at least **stabilization** of relations with **Pakistan**. Achieving this requires **innovative diplomacy** and **creative statecraft** to address **Pakistan's multifaceted challenges**. India's strategy must include effective **coalition-building**, balancing **alliances**, and managing **regional dynamics**, all while striving for long-term peace and stability.

Causes of Conflict between India and Pakistan: Scholarly Perspectives

Sumit Ganguly's Security Dilemma: Sumit Ganguly explores the **"Deadly Impasse"** between India and Pakistan, arguing that **traditional deterrence models and the security dilemma are inadequate for resolving the conflict.**

- ▶ He suggests that **both nations' persistent insecurity obstructs the possibility of rapprochement.**
- ▶ Ganguly **characterizes Pakistan as having revisionist ambitions and an irredentist approach, driven by a parochial mindset within its military establishment rather than a comprehensive national interest.**

Insecurity Dilemma Perspective: The insecurity dilemma perspective **focuses on the pathological obsession and paranoia within the elites of both nations.**

- ▶ It argues that **India-Pakistan relations are shaped by a reductive form of nationalism and an overwhelming fixation**

on animosity.

- ▶ In Pakistan, **discourse is predominantly consumed by hostility towards India, with minimal focus on national pride.**
- ▶ Additionally, **the influence of the well-funded Pakistani military establishment is noted, as it amplifies conflict through its disproportionate impact on national policy and discourse.**

Perspectives on Dealing with Pakistan

Navigating the complex challenges posed by Pakistan demands a nuanced approach.

- ▶ **C. Rajamohan and Happymon Jacob** emphasize the importance of **engaging directly with Pakistan's military leadership in Rawalpindi, rather than solely focusing on the civilian government in Islamabad.**
- ▶ **Brahma Chellaney** advocates for caution when dealing with Pakistan's civil government to avoid provoking the influential military, and **suggests reevaluating the Indus Water Treaty due to its unfavourable terms for India as an upper riparian state.**
- ▶ **Shashi Tharoor** recommends **leveraging back-channel diplomacy through influential countries like the US and Saudi Arabia, concluding the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT),** enhancing internal security, and strengthening communal harmony.
- ▶ **Harsh Pant** call for **escalating stakes and targeting Pakistan's vulnerabilities, criticizing the perceived inconsistency in India's response.**
- ▶ **Pratap Bhanu Mehta** advises **against a tit-for-tat approach, urging a strategic perspective that considers the multifaceted nature of the conflict.**

Responses to Terror Attacks: Experts offer varied insights on addressing terror attacks from Pakistan.

- ▶ **MK Narayanan** advocates for **restrained actions to maintain India's image as a mature and responsible nation,** suggesting cyber warfare over direct military retaliation.
- ▶ **Happymon Jacob** calls for **creative statecraft and out-of-the-box diplomacy,** disputing the efficacy of military options and highlighting the irrational nature of war.
- ▶ **Suhasini Haider** compares dealing with Pakistan to a **strategic chess game, advising against predictable responses and urging tailored strategies.**

The path forward for India involves strategic restraint, innovative diplomacy, and a clear understanding that the conflict with Pakistan is a complex and evolving strategic challenge.

Areas of Dispute between India and Pakistan

1. India-Pakistan Water Dispute: The Indus Water Treaty

▶ Provisions and Challenges:

- ▶ The treaty **permits India to use 20% of the water from the western rivers for non-consumptive purposes.**
- ▶ A Permanent Indus Water Commission (PIWC) was established to address disputes, with provisions for neutral expert determination and Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) referrals if disagreements arise.

However, the **treaty has been contentious, particularly concerning the construction of dams and other projects.**

▶ Options and Considerations:

- ▶ **Renegotiation:** **Brahma Chellany** advocates for renegotiating the treaty to reflect changing geopolitical realities and address emerging challenges.
- ▶ **Using the Treaty as a Leverage:**
 - **Suspend PIWC Meetings:** India could halt meetings to prevent Pakistan from escalating disputes.
 - **Maximize Water Use:** India might increase its utilization of the allocated water share.
 - **Consider Treaty Withdrawal:** Some argue that India could contemplate withdrawing from the treaty, especially in response to China's dam constructions on the Indus.
- ▶ **Risks and Arguments Against Treaty Manipulation:**
 - **International Image:** Altering the treaty could damage India's reputation as a responsible global actor.

About Indus water Treaty

The Indus Water Treaty, **brokered by the World Bank in 1960, governs the water resources of the Indus River system between India and Pakistan.**

The **treaty allocated the eastern rivers (Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi) to India and the western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum, and Indus) to Pakistan.**

- **Moral High Ground:** Exiting the treaty might undermine India's moral authority.
- **Nuclear Implications:** Though Pakistan has suggested using water as a strategic weapon, India's substantial retaliatory capability mitigates this threat.
- ▶ **Climate Change and Future Scenarios:**
 - **UNDP Report:** The UNDP's call for India to share the water deficit from the western rivers during lean seasons could challenge the treaty's current framework.
 - **Future Negotiations:** Former Ambassador **TCA Raghvan** proposes the possibility of future negotiations, which could include establishing a joint river basin authority to benefit both nations.

The **Indus Water Treaty** remains a crucial but contentious agreement, with various options and considerations shaping its future amidst evolving geopolitical and environmental dynamics.

Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty

On **23 April 2025**, India **suspended** the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)**, marking a **major shift** in its approach towards Pakistan. The immediate trigger for this decision was the **Pahalgam attack**, attributed to **Pakistan-based militant groups**, which led to India's frustration with Pakistan's continued support for cross-border terrorism. The suspension reflects India's long-standing grievances over Pakistan's obstruction of India's rights under the treaty and is a response to internal demands for utilizing water resources in **Jammu & Kashmir** for **hydropower development**.

▶ Key Points of the Suspension

- ▶ **Strategic Shift:** India invoked **Article 62** of the **Vienna Convention**, justifying the suspension as a response to Pakistan's **support for terrorism**, which undermined the treaty's spirit and India's **security concerns**. India argued that the **fundamental change of circumstances** due to **terrorism** had made it difficult to maintain cooperative relations under the treaty.
- ▶ **Water Security Leverage:** India's decision to suspend the treaty places significant **leverage** over Pakistan, potentially pressuring it to **curb terrorism**. The move also opens the door for India to **utilize untapped hydropower potential** from the western rivers (**Indus, Jhelum, Chenab**), with an estimated capacity of **18,000 MW**, contributing to **energy needs** and **economic development** in **Jammu & Kashmir**.
- ▶ **Suspension, Not Revocation:** India's action is a **temporary suspension**, not a complete termination, allowing for **continued diplomatic engagement** and the **possibility of future renegotiation**. This gives India the flexibility to halt **data-sharing** and **pause dispute mechanisms** while exploring infrastructure projects on the western rivers without outright abrogation.

▶ Immediate Implications

- ▶ **Pakistan's Response:** The suspension threatens **Pakistan's water security**, particularly in its **Punjab** and **Sindh** regions, where agriculture depends on the Indus River. This may lead to a **worsening economic crisis** and **political instability** within Pakistan.
- ▶ **Diplomatic Risks:** India risks **international backlash** for suspending the treaty, which could tarnish its **reputation** as a reliable partner in **transboundary water agreements**. This move may also create a **precedent** for future disputes, complicating negotiations over shared water resources in the region.
- ▶ **Environmental and Technical Challenges:** The **environmental impact** of diverting the western rivers could affect **Pakistan's ecosystem** and disrupt **sediment flow** in India. Furthermore, India faces **geological challenges** in building infrastructure in the **seismic-prone** Himalayan region, which will require substantial **investment** and **time**.

India's **suspension of the IWT** represents a **strategic recalibration** in its approach to **Pakistan**. While the suspension offers **short-term strategic leverage** and addresses **Jammu & Kashmir's needs**, it also carries **long-term risks**. India must balance its **economic objectives** with the potential for **regional instability** and **environmental concerns**. **Diplomatic negotiations** to modernize the treaty and address **humanitarian impacts** will be crucial for managing the consequences of this bold decision.

2. Pulwama Attack and Balakot Strike: Analysis and Impact

The 2019 Pulwama attack, orchestrated by the Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed, significantly influenced India's strategic approach and international relations.

Zorawar Daulat Singh's analysis highlights the outcomes and challenges of India's response, known as the Balakot Strike.

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|---|---|
| Gains from the Balakot Strike: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preemptive Self-Defense: India's action underscored its right to pre-emptive self-defence, aligning with principles often associated with Western powers and marking a shift from previous restraint. 2. Challenging Proxy Warfare: By addressing the Pulwama attack, India sought to increase the cost of Pakistan's long standing strategy of proxy warfare, making such tactics less cost-free. 3. Active Defence: The strike represented a shift to an active defence policy, demonstrating a proactive stance against terrorism originating from Pakistan. 4. Global Recognition: The international community recognized Pakistan's support for terrorism, validating India's long-held stance on Pakistan's role in fostering terror. | Concerns: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk of Escalation: There is a potential risk of escalating tensions into armed conflict, which could lead to significant loss of lives and resources. 2. Strategic Restraint: The aggressive approach could undermine India's policy of strategic restraint, which aims to avoid unnecessary escalation. 3. Pivot State Dynamics: Pakistan's strategic relationships with countries like the USA and Saudi Arabia might limit the extent of their support for India, affecting global alignment. 4. Internationalization of the Issue: Aggressive actions could internationalize the conflict, potentially inviting external involvement and complicating India's long-term interests. 5. China's Role: China's reluctance to sanction figures like Masood Azhar could hinder efforts to isolate Pakistan globally. |
|---|---|

► Recent Developments:

- **Bilateral Talks:** Efforts to normalize relations continued in 2024, with discussions addressing trade, visa policies, and people-to-people contact, though substantial breakthroughs remain limited due to ongoing tensions.
- **Military Dynamics:** High tensions persist, with frequent ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) and significant military preparations on both sides, reflecting an ongoing security dilemma.
- **Economic Interactions:** Economic ties have shown slight improvement with discussions on trade protocols, but overall trade volume remains low due to political tensions and mutual distrust.
- **Cultural Exchanges:** Positive developments in cultural exchanges and visa facilitations for pilgrims and elderly tourists have been noted as confidence-building measures.
- **International Alignments:** Geopolitical alignments with global powers like the USA and China add complexity to the bilateral relationship, with Pakistan's growing reliance on China contrasting with India's strategic partnerships and involvement in groupings like the Quad.
- **Environmental and Water Issues:** Water-sharing disputes, particularly over the Indus Water Treaty, and environmental issues continue to be contentious, reflecting mutual dependence on shared resources.

Therefore, the Pulwama attack catalysed a shift in India's strategy towards pre-emptive self-defence and active engagement. While India achieved global recognition for its stance and challenged Pakistan's proxy warfare, careful consideration of risks such as escalation, strategic restraint, and the influence of external powers is essential in shaping India's future responses.

3. India-Pakistan Border Disputes

The border disputes between India and Pakistan encompass several complex issues:

- **Siachen Glacier Dispute:** Known as the world's highest battleground, **the Siachen Glacier has been a source of contention between the two countries.**
 - As **Stephen P. Cohen** noted, this conflict over the glacier is like **"two bald persons fighting for a comb."** Despite its seemingly minor strategic value, Siachen holds importance due to its location relative to China-Pakistan access and as a crucial water source.
 - The lack of clear demarcation beyond a certain point and differing perceptions of the Line of Control (LoC) further complicate the dispute.
- **Sir Creek Dispute:** This maritime dispute **involves the 96-kilometer-long estuary in the Arabian Sea, where the boundary remains unsettled due to conflicting claims.**
 - The unresolved nature of this dispute hampers the exploitation of marine resources and poses humanitarian issues for local fishermen.
 - The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) deadline for resolution has passed, raising the possibility of international intervention.
- **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC):** The CPEC, a major element of **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, **passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)**, heightening concerns for India.

The corridor represents a strategic partnership between China and Pakistan that challenges India's sovereignty and impacts its strategic and economic policies.

► CPEC Consequences:

- **Geostrategic Impacts:** The CPEC challenges India's strategies to counter China's influence, effectively transforming China's Malacca Dilemma into India's Gwadar Dilemma.
- **Geo-economic Impacts:** The corridor undermines India's principled stance towards Pakistan, shifts Pakistan's focus away from South Asian integration, and diminishes the relevance of India's policy to isolate Pakistan economically.

► Way Forward:

- **Economic Interdependence:** Manoj Joshi and P.S. Raghavan suggest that India could consider participating in regional trade if Pakistan and China open cross-South Asian trade routes.
- **Realist View:** Hardeep S. Puri advocates maintaining resistance against the CPEC to safeguard Indian sovereignty and resist compromises.

Navigating these disputes requires balancing economic, strategic, and geopolitical considerations to address both immediate and long-term challenges in the India-Pakistan relationship.

Balochistan issue and impact on India-Pakistan relations

Balochistan, situated in the **southwest of Pakistan**, constitutes about half of the country's territory and is rich in resources like gas, gold, copper, oil, and uranium.

Despite its resource wealth, it remains one of Pakistan's poorest regions. The strategic importance of Balochistan is highlighted by the Gwadar port, a critical asset for Pakistan's national interests.

► Historical and Current Issues:

- **Unresolved Autonomy:** Balochistan's history reflects ongoing tensions between the central government and the province's demands for greater autonomy. The incorporation of Balochistan, including the formerly independent Kalat, into Pakistan has led to persistent grievances.
- **Human Rights Abuses:** Reports of torture and arbitrary arrests have fuelled a sense of injustice among the Baloch people, exacerbating regional discontent.
- **Economic Exploitation:** Despite its abundant resources, Balochistan's local population has not benefitted from development projects, leading to economic alienation.
- **Ethnic Nationalism:** The Baloch people, with their distinct history, language, and culture, often feel marginalized by the dominant Punjabi population, fostering a strong sense of ethnic nationalism.
- **External Factors:** Pakistan accuses India of supporting Baloch nationalist activities and terrorism in the region, while Baloch nationalists seek greater autonomy or even independence.

► India's Approach and International Implications:

- India **generally maintains a non-interventionist stance** but has occasionally highlighted Balochistan's plight.
- According to **Suhasini Haider**, mentioning Balochistan serves dual purposes: it pressures both China and Pakistan, especially since the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) relies on secure access through Gwadar.
- **Sadanand Dhume** notes that India's reference to Balochistan reflects scepticism about achieving productive dialogue with Pakistan under the current circumstances.

Therefore, Balochistan remains a region fraught with historical, economic, ethnic, and political complexities. Its situation affects not only Pakistan's internal stability but also its relations with neighboring countries, including India. The unresolved issues and grievances of Balochistan's people continue to influence regional dynamics and impact Pakistan's domestic and international policies.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- **Functionalism** emphasizes that despite deep-rooted conflicts, **cooperation** in areas like **water-sharing, trade**, and **terrorism** could be fostered by promoting **mutual interests**, focusing on **shared economic and security benefits** for both nations.
- **Sociological Liberalism** highlights the role of **societal ties** and **people-to-people interactions** in bridging gaps. Increasing **cross-border cultural exchanges, education programs**, and **civil society initiatives** could help **normalize** the relationship by building trust and reducing the influence of **nationalist rhetoric**.
- **Social Constructivism** explains that the **conflict** is not only rooted in **material factors** like territory and military power, but is also shaped by **perceptions, historical narratives**, and **misunderstandings**. This theory suggests that **trust-building** and **reframing** mutual perceptions are key to resolving tensions.

Key Scholars and Statements

- ▶ **Sumit Ganguly** highlights the **conflict of identity** between **Islamist Pakistan** and **secular India**, emphasizing that despite attempts at reconciliation, **deep-rooted identity struggles** continue to drive the conflict and prevent meaningful peace.
- ▶ **Dilip Hiro** argues that the **India-Pakistan relationship** is a result of **misconceptions** and **paranoia** among the elites, as their mutual **antagonisms** have created a **security dilemma** where both sides view each other as existential threats.
- ▶ **Hussain Haqqani** states that the conflict cannot be solved merely by **symbolic gestures**. A major **shift in attitudes** from both countries is required, given the **historical grievances** and **reductive nationalism** that continue to dominate **Pakistani ideology**.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

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| Model Introduction 1: India and Pakistan , separated at the time of partition in 1947, have been locked in a continuous cycle of conflict , diplomacy , and tensions , with both nations viewing each other as existential threats while attempting to normalize relations through strategic and diplomatic efforts | Model Conclusion 1: To resolve the India-Pakistan conflict , both sides must address the ideological divides and adopt constructivist strategies that focus on trust-building , cultural exchanges , and people-to-people interactions, paving the way for a more cooperative future . |
| Model Introduction 2: The relationship between India and Pakistan has been marred by a complex blend of historical grievances , religious nationalism , and territorial disputes. Yet, strategic statecraft and constructivist approaches focused on trust-building offer a potential path to peace. | Model Conclusion 2: The path to peace and stability in the region depends on a strategic shift in both countries' approaches —moving beyond military posturing to a more constructive relationship that acknowledges both nations' historical grievances and security concerns . |
| Model Introduction 3: India-Pakistan relations have been defined by decades of hostility and war , but new diplomatic frameworks grounded in cooperative security and regional integration offer hope for managing geopolitical tensions and fostering mutual prosperity. | Model Conclusion 3: Given the deep-rooted mistrust and strategic vulnerabilities , India and Pakistan must overcome their historical differences and work towards a mutually beneficial relationship that balances national interests , regional stability , and cooperative security . |

UNIT 4 – INDIA AND GLOBAL SOUTH

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

Global South

- ▶ What diplomatic steps has India taken to articulate the interests of the Global South in International Politics? (2023)
- ▶ Explain the concept of the North-South divide and suggest how structural inequalities between the high wage, high-investment industrial North and low-wage, low-investment predominantly rural South can be reduced. (2016)

Relations with Africa and Latin America

- ▶ Discuss the major drivers of India's interests in Africa. (2023)
- ▶ Identify the drivers of India's new interest in Africa. (2021)
- ▶ How do the guiding principles of India-Africa relations seek to enhance harmony and mutual cooperation between India and Africa? (2020)
- ▶ How is India pursuing her foreign policy objectives through the IBSA Dialogue Forum (India, Brazil and South Africa)? (2019)
- ▶ "India's capacity building programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) has earned much goodwill for it in Africa." Discuss. (2018)
- ▶ Suggest measures so that India's partnership with Africa becomes a true symbol of South-South Cooperation, delivering clear-cut economic and political dividends to both sides of the equation. (2017)
- ▶ Discuss the factors for the decline of India's presence in Latin America. (2015)

Does the perspective of Dependencies Theory offer a robust critique on the nature of mainstream development processes taking place in Africa and Latin America? (2012)

Leadership role in the demand for NIEO

- ▶ Discuss the relevance of the demand for New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the present era of globalization. (2022)

"India's Research and Information System for Developing Countries" (RIS) is a major initiative in the area of South-South Cooperation. Discuss. (2018)

WTO negotiations

- ▶ Why is the compromise reached at WTO regarding the Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing not a Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver? (2023)
- ▶ Explain India's position on the waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines in WTO. (2021)
- ▶ India's coalitional diplomacy within the WTO has earned it wide appreciation. What accounts for the success of India's coalitional diplomacy? (2018)
- ▶ Analyse the stalled progress of Doha Round of WTO negotiations over the differences between the developed and the developing countries. (2017)
- ▶ Sketch the leadership role of India in WTO negotiations. (2013)

Insights from PYQs

The questions related to **India and the Global South** highlight a clear emphasis on **India's diplomatic engagement**, particularly in **Africa** and **Latin America**, and its leadership role in promoting **South-South cooperation**.

- ▶ A recurring theme is India's role in articulating the interests of the **Global South**, with several questions probing India's efforts in **global diplomacy** and **coalitional diplomacy** within **international forums** such as the **WTO** and the **IBSA Dialogue Forum**. This shows India's focus on asserting the interests of **developing countries** on the global stage, often through **coalitions** with like-minded nations like **Brazil** and **South Africa**.
- ▶ Another significant theme is the concept of the **North-South divide** and how structural inequalities between the **industrialized North** and the **rural South** can be addressed.

- ▶ Aspirants should focus on understanding the **principles of South-South cooperation**, such as **capacity building programs** like ITEC, and how these initiatives contribute to **mutual cooperation** and **goodwill**, especially in **Africa**.
- ▶ Additionally, the relevance of historical demands like the **New International Economic Order (NIEO)** in the current era of **globalization** is frequently discussed. Another important area is India's diplomatic maneuvers within the **WTO**, particularly its stance on **trade-related issues** such as the **COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing** and **intellectual property rights**.

Given the repeated references to **Africa's development**, **Latin America**, and **India's international economic engagements**, aspirants should focus on India's evolving **foreign policy**, **South-South partnerships**, and **economic diplomacy**.

Analyzing India's initiatives like the **Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)** is also critical to understanding India's strategy to further its leadership in **global South cooperation**.

India's engagement with the Global South, **particularly with Africa and Latin America**, is a **significant aspect of its foreign policy aimed at fostering South-South cooperation**. India's relations with these regions are rooted in shared historical experiences of colonialism, common developmental challenges, and a mutual interest in establishing a more equitable global order.

Understanding South-South Cooperation

- ▶ **South-South Cooperation refers to collaboration among developing countries across various fields, especially economic development.**
- ▶ This cooperation is driven by shared histories of colonialism and economic exploitation, as well as the need to address common challenges like inadequate infrastructure, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and lack of technology.

Importance of South-South Cooperation

1. **Unified Strategy-** Developing countries work together to address common challenges and achieve shared goals. **The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an example, uniting developing countries against colonialism and advocating for their collective interests.** Post-colonial scholars, such as **Frantz Fanon**, emphasize the necessity of a collective approach to counter colonial legacies and neo-colonial influences.
2. **Mutual Understanding—Similar** historical experiences and economic challenges foster understanding and trust, facilitating collaboration. For instance, **India's initiatives like the India-Africa Forum Summit promote cooperation with African countries.** Edward Said's concept of "contrapuntal thinking" supports the idea that **South-South Cooperation transcends the traditional North-South divide.**
3. **Addressing Historical Injustices—South-South** Cooperation aims to counter historical injustices and promote economic empowerment and sovereignty. The G77 group, established in 1964, advocates for a more just global economic order and fairer trade practices.
4. **Goal of Collective Self-Reliance:** By collaborating on trade, investment, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing, developing countries enhance their economic and social development collectively. **The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) exemplifies efforts to boost intra-regional trade and reduce dependence on external markets.**

India's Role in South-South Cooperation

India has been a key player in promoting South-South Cooperation

1. **India participates** in various South-South Cooperation programs, such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program, which offers technical assistance and training to professionals from developing nations.
2. **Development Support** India provides development assistance in the form of grants, concessional loans, and project support to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in areas such as agriculture, healthcare, education, and infrastructure. C. Rajamohan acknowledges India's significant efforts in this regard.
3. **Financial Aid** India extends lines of credit to developing countries for critical development projects on favorable terms and at low-interest rates.
4. **Collaborative Platforms** India collaborates with other developing nations through platforms like IBSA, BRICS, SAARC, and BIMSTEC, fostering cooperation and solidarity.

India's engagement in South-South Cooperation underscores its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development among developing nations

Further, Developing countries view South-South Cooperation as a self-reliant alternative to traditional aid from developed nations, fostering mutual growth and independence.

Challenges to South-South Cooperation

- 1. Neo-Colonial Influence—Developed** countries continue to exert neo-colonial control over developing nations through economic dominance and unequal trade relations. This undermines the autonomy and sovereignty of developing countries in pursuing their development goals.
▶ Scholars like **P. Stobdan** highlight the persistent neo-colonial influence as a major obstacle.
- 2. Impact of Globalization—** The increasing influence of globalization has diluted the economic agenda of South-South Cooperation. As developing countries integrate into the global economy, their priorities and policies may shift, impacting the focus on regional cooperation. **Happymon Jacob** notes this shift in priorities as a significant challenge.
- 3. Decline of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** The Non-Aligned Movement, once a pivotal force advocating for collective self-reliance among developing countries, has faced challenges in recent times, reducing its effectiveness in promoting South-South Cooperation.
- 4. Dominance of Global Financial Institutions—International** financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are often dominated by developed countries. **This dominance can hinder the interests and priorities of developing countries in South-South Cooperation initiatives.**
- 5. Regulation of Multinational Corporations (MNCs)—Developing** countries often struggle to regulate and control multinational corporations operating within their borders, leading to exploitation and unfair benefits. C. Raja Mohan points out the difficulties faced by developing nations in managing the influence of MNCs.
- 6. Economic Disparities from Globalization—While** globalization has created opportunities for some developing countries, it has also widened the economic gap between countries, further challenging the goal of equitable South-South Cooperation.

Therefore, South-South Cooperation faces various challenges, particularly from the forces of globalization, which present both obstacles and opportunities for developing nations. Traditional approaches have encountered difficulties, but mechanisms like IBSA offer promising prospects for collective growth and development.

As some countries in the Global South achieve success in economic growth and technological advancement, they can share their experiences with others for mutual benefit. Additionally, as developing countries diversify their economic activities, new areas of cooperation emerge, paving the way for a revitalized and impactful South-South Cooperation in addressing shared developmental challenges.

India and Latin America

- ▶ Latin America has traditionally been viewed as the last frontier in India's foreign policy, often remaining relatively neglected and overlooked.
- ▶ Some analysts suggest that **this neglect is more psychological than geographical. Despite these barriers, the region holds significant untapped potential for enhancing India's engagement and partnerships.**

Importance of Latin America for India

Latin America holds substantial importance for India in both geopolitical and geo-economic spheres:

Geopolitical Significance

- ▶ **Reforming Global Governance:** India and Latin American countries share a mutual interest in reforming global governance structures, including expanding the United Nations and the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- ▶ **Support for India's Global Aspirations:** Latin American nations have supported India's bid for a UNSC seat and played a key role in securing the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) waiver for India.

Geo-economic Importance

- ▶ **Expanding Market Access:** Latin America represents a vast market of approximately 630 million people with a combined GDP of about \$4.9 trillion. Three Latin American countries are part of the G20, underscoring the region's economic significance.

- ▶ **Rising Trade Relations:** Trade between India and Latin America has been growing at an annual rate of around 30% from 2000 to 2014, indicating strengthening economic ties.
- ▶ **Resource Wealth:** The region is rich in natural resources, including iron and lithium, which are crucial for India's manufacturing and technological industries.
- ▶ **Energy Security:** Latin America, particularly Venezuela with its substantial oil reserves, contributes significantly to India's energy security. The region's clean energy matrices further enhance this aspect.
- ▶ **Food Security:** With its vast fertile lands and relatively small population, Latin America offers opportunities for India to enhance its food security. Brazil, as an agricultural powerhouse, presents attractive prospects for cooperation.
- ▶ **Economic Complementarity:** There is significant complementarity between India and Latin America in sectors such as energy, natural resources, services, and pharmaceuticals, opening up avenues for mutually beneficial partnerships.

Evolution of India-Latin America Relations

Cold War Era—During the Cold War, **India's engagement with Latin America was limited due to its inward-looking and protectionist approach, focusing primarily on its immediate neighborhood, including Pakistan and China.** The significant influence of the US in Latin America and India's closed economy and geographical distance further constrained political and economic interactions.

Post-Cold War Re-engagement—After the Cold War, India's private sector began to re-engage with Latin America, particularly in the Information Technology (IT) and Pharmaceuticals sectors, leading to increased interactions between the two regions. **India's participation in groupings such as BASIC, IBSA, and BRICS also facilitated greater cooperation with Latin American countries.**

Recent Developments

- ▶ **Institutionalized Dialogue:** In 2012, the first Pan LAC (Latin American and Caribbean States) summit was held in New Delhi, formalizing dialogue between India and CELAC.
 - ▶ **Trade Enhancements:** India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with MERCOSUR, boosting trade relations.
 - ▶ **Attracting Investments:** Latin American countries view India as a promising market for trade and investment in sectors like IT, agro-business, pharmaceuticals, and entertainment, leading to job creation.
 - ▶ **Technological Cooperation:** Collaboration has been established in areas such as tele-medicine, tele-education, e-governance, and space capabilities.
 - ▶ **Diversification of Trade Partners:** Both India and Latin America aim to diversify their trade partners and access new markets amid increasing protectionist policies in the West.
 - ▶ **Energy Markets:** Latin America seeks alternative energy markets following the US shale gas reserves boom.
 - ▶ **Alternative to China:** India's rise as a potential alternative to China is appreciated by Latin American countries, which have concerns about China's extractive policies, high-interest rates, and lack of local employment in Chinese projects.
- Overall, India and Latin America have significantly strengthened their relations, seeking to enhance economic ties, explore new opportunities, and diversify their partnerships to address evolving global challenges.

Challenges in India-Latin America Relations

1. **Limited High-Level Engagement**- Successive government has shown limited interest in engaging with Latin America, resulting in a lack of high-level visits and diplomatic interactions, which is perceived as neglect.
2. **Trade Imbalance and High Tariffs** Trade between India and Latin America has marginally declined, with India's **trade volume at \$42 billion compared to China's \$264 billion. High tariff rates in India (65% vs. China's 12.5%) create significant trade barriers.**
3. **Insufficient Indian Investment**- While India has invested \$12 billion in Latin America, further improvement is needed to strengthen economic cooperation and investment.
4. **Absence of a Comprehensive Policy**- The lack of a well-defined policy document hampers clarity and direction in India's approach to Latin America, involving all stakeholders.
5. **Infrastructural Deficiencies**- Limited consulate presence, absence of direct flights, and lack of shipping services between India and Latin America hinder efficient cooperation.
6. **Competition with China**- China's significant presence in Latin America creates competition for India, with China having a tenfold higher trade volume, challenging India's efforts to strengthen its foothold in the region.

Way Forward to Strengthen India-Latin America Relations

- ▶ **Encourage Academic and Cultural Exchange**-Promote Latin American studies in Indian universities and facilitate student exchange programs to foster cultural understanding and academic cooperation.
- ▶ **Leverage Bollywood as Soft Power**-Utilize the popularity of Bollywood to enhance India's soft power in Latin America, as it has a significant fan base in the region.
- ▶ **Support Private Sector Engagement**- Provide support and incentives to Indian private companies seeking to invest and explore business opportunities in Latin America.
- ▶ **Maintain Institutionalized Dialogue**- Sustain and strengthen the momentum of institutionalized dialogue between India and Latin American nations to address mutual concerns and explore areas of collaboration.
- ▶ **Increase High-Level Diplomatic Visits**- Facilitate more high-level diplomatic visits between India and Latin American countries to bolster political ties and deepen cooperation in various sectors.
- ▶ **Pursue Trade Agreements**- Work towards negotiating Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with countries like Mexico and Colombia to enhance economic integration and trade opportunities.
- ▶ **Promote Trade and Investment**- Actively promote trade and investment opportunities through trade fairs, exhibitions, and economic missions to tap into the vast potential of the Latin American market.

By addressing these challenges and implementing these measures, India can forge stronger and more sustainable partnerships with Latin American nations, enhancing economic, cultural, and strategic cooperation for mutual benefit.

Key Scholars and Statements

Scholars' Suggestions to Strengthen India-Latin America Relations

- ▶ **Decisive Actions and Deeper Engagement** **Manish Chand** emphasizes the need for India to take decisive actions to strengthen its relationship with Latin America through deeper engagement, collaboration, and mutual growth.
- ▶ **Expanding Beyond Economic Ties** **Ambassador Deepak Bhojwani** suggests that India should expand its ties with Latin America and the Caribbean beyond economic aspects, delving into political and strategic dimensions as well.
- ▶ **Exploring Opportunities Beyond Brazil**- **V. Shivkumar** advises India to explore opportunities in Latin American countries beyond Brazil, diversifying its engagement in the region.
- ▶ **Proposing an India-Latin America Summit** **Ambassador Shyam Saran** proposes organizing an India-Latin America summit, modeled after the successful India-Africa summit, to enhance bilateral relations.

Conclusion

Ambassador Deepak Bhojwani highlights that political ties between India and Latin America have significantly improved since the Cold War era. The democratization of Latin American countries and India's liberalization have fostered a deeper connection through the communication revolution and globalization. Bhojwani urges India to seize this opportunity to strengthen its relations with Latin America, leveraging the improved political climate and enhanced connectivity.

Recent Developments in India-Latin America Relations

In recent years, India's diplomatic relations with **Latin America** have gained significant momentum. High-level visits from leaders such as the **President of Chile, Paraguay**, and the **Prime Minister of Jamaica** in 2024–25 exemplify this growing connection. In turn, India reciprocated with visits to **Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina**, and **Brazil**. These exchanges underscore India's commitment to deepening its ties with the region.

▶ Expansion of Diplomatic Missions

India has strategically expanded its diplomatic footprint by opening **embassies** in **Bolivia** and **Paraguay**, while **Honduras** and **St. Kitts & Nevis** established diplomatic missions in **Delhi**. These steps not only reflect India's strengthened presence in Latin America but also demonstrate its focus on building deeper, bilateral partnerships in the region.

▶ Economic and Trade Relations

▶ Trade Growth

Bilateral trade between India and Latin America reached **\$35.7 billion** in 2023–24, with both sides aiming to reach **\$100 billion** by 2025. This economic cooperation highlights mutual interests, with India exporting **pharmaceuticals**, **IT services**, and **automobiles** to the region, while importing **crude oil** and **raw materials**, creating a complementary trade relationship.

▶ Strategic Energy Ties

Latin America plays a critical role in India's **energy security**, supplying nearly 20% of India's **crude oil** imports, with countries like **Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela** being key contributors. This partnership is central to India's energy strategy.

▶ Indian Companies in Latin America

India's growing presence in the region is also seen through its **IT firms**, which employ over **40,000** locals in Latin America, reflecting India's **soft power** and technological influence in the region.

Key Scholars and Statements

▶ Harsh V. Pant's Views on Strategic Engagement

- ▶ **Prof. Harsh V. Pant** from ORF emphasizes that India's growing engagement with Latin America provides a **buffer against global volatility**, which aligns with **Keohane and Nye's** concept of **complex interdependence**—highlighting the mutual benefits of reduced geopolitical frictions between the regions.

▶ Ambassador R. Viswanathan's Advocacy for a Standalone Policy

- ▶ According to **Ambassador R. Viswanathan**, the economic potential of Latin America is still underexploited by India. He advocates for the creation of a **standalone Latin America policy**, similar to China's focused approach, to maximize the relationship.

▶ C. Raja Mohan on Global Ambitions

- ▶ **C. Raja Mohan** highlights the need for India to engage more comprehensively with Latin America—not just for resources but also to **shape the global order** through forums like **BRICS** and **G20**, where Brazil and Argentina are essential partners.

▶ Dr. S. Jaishankar's Vision of India as a Democratic Alternative

- ▶ On his visit to Latin America in 2023, **Dr. S. Jaishankar**, India's External Affairs Minister, emphasized India's role as a **democratic alternative**, offering countries in the region a diversified partnership beyond traditional powers.

Linkages to the theories of IR

▶ South–South Cooperation

- ▶ The relationship between India and Latin America embodies the principles of **South–South Cooperation**, with both regions leveraging their **colonial legacies** to act as **partners**, not patrons. This collaboration spans issues like **food security, climate finance, and development funding**—areas where both regions share common goals.

▶ Active Non-Alignment

- ▶ Both India and many Latin American countries assert a **pragmatic middle path** in global geopolitics, as seen in their shared stance on the **Ukraine war**. This aligns with **Stephen Walt's** theory of "**balance of threat**", where both sides avoid being drawn into great power rivalries.

▶ Complex Interdependence

- ▶ The dense web of trade, technology, energy, and cultural ties reflects the **complex interdependence** model. Both regions are bound by a network of interactions that reduce the potential for **geopolitical conflicts**, fostering greater cooperation.

Key Areas of Cooperation

▶ Renewable Energy and Climate Change

- ▶ India and **Brazil** have strengthened their partnership in **biofuels** and **solar energy**. Through initiatives like the **International Solar Alliance**, both nations are driving shared goals on renewable energy, with a strong focus on **climate action**.

▶ Digital Public Infrastructure

- ▶ India's push for **digital infrastructure**, such as the **UPI** payment system and **vaccination databases**, has found resonance in Latin America, where governments are seeking similar solutions to modernize governance and improve public service delivery.

Challenges and Gaps

► Under-Representation of Smaller Nations

- While countries like **Brazil** and **Mexico** have benefited from enhanced trade and diplomatic ties, smaller Latin American nations still lag behind, facing challenges like **high tariff barriers** and insufficient facilitation.

► Political Will and Irregular Engagement

- Experts, including **Amb. Viswanathan**, argue that India's **lack of a specific Latin America policy** and the **irregularity of high-level visits** are significant factors limiting the full potential of the relationship. More consistent engagement and focused efforts are needed to truly harness the region's opportunities.

Conclusion

India's growing relationship with Latin America is strategically significant, not just for trade and energy but also for shaping the global geopolitical landscape. While progress has been made in diplomatic, economic, and strategic areas, challenges remain—particularly in terms of **smaller countries' engagement** and the need for a more **focused Latin America policy**. By overcoming these hurdles, India can fully leverage its role in **South-South cooperation** and solidify its standing as a **global player** in the 21st century.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

As **Immanuel Wallerstein** noted, "The world system is a world of unequal relations," and this perspective highlights India's expanding engagement with **Latin America**. Both regions, shaped by their **post-colonial** histories, are fostering a more **interdependent** global order through growing diplomatic and economic ties. This shift, driven by **South-South Cooperation** and shared interests in **energy** and **trade**, aligns with India's vision of a **multipolar world**.

Model Conclusion 1:

In line with **Kenneth Waltz's** theory of **neorealism**, which emphasizes the importance of state power and autonomy, India's growing engagement with **Latin America** reflects its strategy to balance against external threats while securing its interests. The **increased trade, energy security** focus, and **diplomatic outreach** signal India's intention to diversify alliances and promote regional stability within a **multipolar world**.

Model Introduction 2:

As **Joseph Nye** suggests, "Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction." India's engagement with **Latin America** builds on this idea, leveraging its **democratic values, economic ties**, and **renewable energy collaborations** to create a shared future. By prioritizing **strategic partnerships**, India strengthens its role in shaping a **more equitable, multipolar** world order.

Model Conclusion 2:

Echoing **Robert Keohane's** concept of **complex interdependence**, India's deepening ties with **Latin America** are a testament to the interwoven nature of global relations today. As both regions navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing world, their collaboration in **trade, energy**, and **technology** enhances their collective influence in global governance, ensuring a **balanced, cooperative** future.

IBSA and South-South Cooperation

- Origins and Objectives of IBSA-** The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum was established in 2003, with its inaugural summit held in Brazil.
 - The formation of IBSA was motivated by the dissatisfaction with the Doha Development Agenda's stagnation in 2001, prompting the three nations to seek a new platform for South-South cooperation.
 - India's involvement in IBSA aims to reassert its leadership among developing countries while avoiding the anti-Western stance characteristic of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
- Focus Areas and Initiatives-** IBSA is dedicated to advancing a democratic global order and advocating for reforms in global governance institutions to enhance the representation and influence of developing nations.
 - A key initiative of the forum is the IBSA Fund, with each member country contributing \$1 million annually to support small-scale projects in developing countries.
 - These projects span various sectors, including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation, underscoring the forum's commitment to practical and impactful results.

3. Significance - The forum has proven valuable for developing nations by adopting a bottom-up approach that emphasizes consultation, expertise sharing, and community involvement.

- ▶ The IBSA Fund's projects have had a tangible impact, earning recognition with the MDG Award in 2010 for their contributions to sustainable development.
- ▶ Through IBSA, India, Brazil, and South Africa have collectively addressed global challenges and demonstrated leadership in South-South cooperation.

4. Challenges- Despite its initial promise, IBSA has encountered challenges and is currently experiencing a period of inactivity.

- ▶ The summit scheduled for Delhi in 2012 was postponed indefinitely, raising concerns about the forum's future effectiveness.
- ▶ Analysts suggest that shifting national priorities, increased bilateral engagements, and evolving geopolitical dynamics may have contributed to the forum's diminished momentum.

5. Potential for Renewal- To reinvigorate IBSA, there must be renewed political will and commitment from India, Brazil, and South Africa.

- ▶ The forum can build on its past achievements and adapt to the evolving global landscape by focusing on areas such as sustainable development, climate change, technology transfer, and trade.
- ▶ Strengthening cooperation in these areas could enhance IBSA's relevance and impact on global affairs.

Scholarly Perspectives

- ▶ **Dr. Sachin Chaturvedi** views IBSA's success as stemming from "trilateral solidarity," which fosters democratic global institutions and amplifies the voice of developing countries.
- ▶ **Professor Renu Modi** highlights that the triangular cooperation model offers a more inclusive approach to development, leveraging the diverse expertise and resources of each member country.
- ▶ According to **Prof. Harsh V. Pant**, IBSA holds significant potential as an alternative to the diminishing relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Unlike NAM, which was a reactive stance during the Cold War, IBSA represents proactive cooperation among emerging economies, positioning itself to shape global agendas in a more dynamic and collaborative manner.

India's Leadership Role at the WTO for the Global South

- ▶ **Advancing a Development-Focused Agenda**- India emphasizes the need to address the **unique concerns and priorities of developing nations, advocating for trade policies and agreements that foster their economic growth and sustainable development.**
- ▶ **Advocacy for Special and Differential Treatment**- India has been a **staunch advocate for special and differential treatment for developing countries.** A notable achievement in this area is the **Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), where India, alongside other developing countries, secured provisions for a gradual implementation of the agreement, accommodating their capacity limitations.**
- ▶ **Addressing Agricultural Subsidies**- India has **actively raised concerns about agricultural subsidies provided by developed countries, which can distort international trade and adversely affect farmers in the Global South.** This includes challenging unfair subsidies at the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body, highlighting their detrimental impact on global trade and livelihoods.
- ▶ **Promoting Market Access and Reducing Tariffs**- India advocates for enhanced market access for goods and services from developing countries. The country calls for reductions in trade barriers, such as tariffs and non-tariff measures, to improve export opportunities for Global South nations.
- ▶ **Balancing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**- India has been **vocal in the WTO regarding Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). It strives to balance the protection of intellectual property with ensuring access to essential medicines, technology transfer, and agricultural innovations for developing countries.** For example, India has issued compulsory licenses for essential medicines, allowing the domestic production of affordable generics to address public health needs.
- ▶ **Emphasizing Trade Facilitation and Capacity Building**- India **stresses the importance of technical and financial support for capacity building and trade facilitation in the Global South.** By enhancing the capabilities of developing countries, India believes these nations will be better equipped to engage effectively in global trade and leverage international opportunities.

Therefore, India's leadership in advocating for the Global South at the WTO reflects its commitment to a more inclusive and equitable global trade system. By promoting development-focused policies and fair treatment for developing countries, India contributes to shaping an international trade environment that benefits all nations, regardless of their economic status.

India and Africa: A Deepening Relationship

- ▶ India-Africa relations have become central to India's foreign policy and reflect a "strong emotional link."
- ▶ According to **Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar**, **Africa is a key foreign policy priority for India, characterized by support without conditionality or hidden agendas.**
- ▶ The once **sombre view of Africa, epitomized by Tony Blair's description of the continent as a "scar on the conscience of humanity," has transformed.** Today, Africa is seen as a land of opportunity and potential, embracing avenues for growth and advancement.
- ▶ **India's engagement with Africa is anchored in a long history of cultural, kinship, and commercial ties. Both regions share a spirit of cosmopolitanism, mirrored in the philosophies of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam" (the world is one family) and "Ubuntu" (I am because we are).**

Key Imperatives for India-Africa Cooperation

Hamid Ansari outlines four crucial areas that underpin the cooperation between India and Africa:

- ▶ **Shared Historical and Cultural Ties-** Both India and Africa benefit from a rich history of cultural exchange and shared experiences, which form the foundation of their partnership.
- ▶ **Complementary Strengths and Capabilities-** The strengths and resources of India and Africa complement each other, providing a basis for effective collaboration and mutual benefit.
- ▶ **Unified Approach to Developmental Challenges-** India and Africa adopt a similar approach in addressing developmental issues, aligning their strategies to tackle common challenges.
- ▶ **Convergence on Global Issues-** Both regions share similar perspectives on global matters, which enhances their ability to work together on international platforms and address global challenges collaboratively.

Geo-Economic and Geo-Strategic Dimensions of India-Africa Relations

| | |
|---|---|
| Economic Opportunities and Resource Dynamics | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource Abundance- Africa, with its vast reserves of strategic minerals and natural resources, represents a crucial partner for countries like India, which seek access to these essential resources. 2. Rapid Economic Growth- Africa's impressive economic growth, recorded at 3.2% in 2019, and the presence of six of the world's fastest-growing economies make it a significant player in the global market.. 3. Diversifying Energy Sources- Strengthening ties with Africa helps India reduce its traditional reliance on the Gulf region for oil and gas, contributing to greater energy security. 4. Increasing Trade Volumes- India's trade with Africa has experienced substantial growth, escalating from \$4 billion in 2000 to \$80 billion in 2019. This expansion has established Africa as India's third-largest trade partner. 5. Agricultural Collaboration- Partnerships with African nations in agriculture enable India to secure essential food supplies and tackle food security challenges. |
| Strategic and Security Aspects | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maritime Security Cooperation- India collaborates with African countries, particularly those on the east coast, to address piracy and ensure maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. 2. Regional Stability and Security Provision- India plays a key role as a "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean, contributing to regional stability and effective crisis management. 3. Peacekeeping Contributions- India's extensive involvement in peacekeeping operations across Africa, including efforts to prevent mass genocide in South Sudan, highlights its commitment to maintaining regional stability and supporting humanitarian initiatives. 4. Defence and Security Support- This support enhances security cooperation and helps counterbalance China's growing military presence on the continent. 5. Global Cooperation and Advocacy- They jointly pursue reforms in global governance institutions, such as the UN Security Council and the WTO, to promote a more equitable international system. |

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme (1964)

Overview- The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, established in 1964, is a cornerstone of India's development cooperation efforts with other developing nations. Its primary goal is to foster capacity building and skill development by providing training and technical assistance to professionals and government officials from partner countries.

Key Features of the ITEC Programme

1. **Comprehensive Capacity Building-** across a wide range of sectors, ensuring that diverse developmental needs are addressed through targeted interventions.
2. **Support for Resource-Limited Countries-** offering valuable support to those that may not have extensive development infrastructure.
3. **Tailored Training Programs-** to meet the specific developmental requirements of partner countries, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.
4. **People-to-People Diplomacy-** The programme fosters mutual understanding and goodwill through people-to-people exchanges, strengthening ties between India and partner countries.
5. **Sustainable Impact-** ITEC aims for long-term impact by building sustainable skills and capacities that contribute to the ongoing development of recipient countries.
6. **Promotion of South-South Cooperation-** ITEC underscores India's commitment to South-South cooperation, reinforcing solidarity and collaborative development efforts among developing nations.
7. **Expansion and Diversification-** The programme continually expands and diversifies its training offerings to address emerging needs and opportunities in partner countries.

Impact on India-Africa Relations

ITEC has been instrumental in building strong and positive relations between India and African nations. Through its capacity-building initiatives, India has demonstrated a commitment to supporting African countries in their quest for self-reliance and sustainable development. The programme's success has significantly contributed to India's reputation as a trusted and valued partner in Africa's development journey.

Challenges in the India-Africa Relationship

1. **Lack of a Unified Africa Policy-** India lacks a comprehensive Africa policy, **unlike its targeted strategies for regions such as "Look West," "Act East," or "Central Asia Connect."** This absence of a unified policy framework impedes the strategic direction and effectiveness of India-Africa relations.
2. **Competition with China-** China's extensive presence in Africa, with investment levels significantly surpassing those of India, presents a major challenge. **China's involvement in defence and security forums, compared to India's limited focus on anti-piracy operations, highlights the disparity.**
3. **Investment Disparity-** India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa has not matched China's growth. **According to the UNCTAD World Investment Report 2018, India's FDI in Africa decreased from \$16 billion in 2011-12 to \$14 billion in 2016-17, whereas China's investment surged from \$16 billion to \$40 billion during the same period.**
4. **Trade Challenges-** India-Africa trade faces obstacles due to multilateral agreements like the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which affect trade dynamics and economic relations between the two regions.**
5. **Political Instability and Security Issues-** Political instability and the presence of failed states in Africa challenge the establishment of stable and enduring relationships. Additionally, radicalism, terrorism, and piracy pose threats to cooperation and security.
6. **Trade Imbalance-** Despite potential, bilateral trade between **India and Africa stands at \$72 billion, significantly lower than China's trade with Africa, which reaches \$200 billion.** This imbalance reflects underutilized trade opportunities.
7. **Perception Issues-** Recent attacks on African nationals in India have negatively impacted perceptions of India as a hospitable destination. Concerns about safety and discrimination have been raised, affecting the overall image of India in Africa.

Recent Developments in India-Africa Relations

1. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)- African nations have been key beneficiaries of the Indian Navy's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, demonstrating India's commitment to supporting the continent in times of need.

2. Military and Security Cooperation

- ▶ **AFINDEX-19:** The Africa-India Field Training Exercise 2019 (AFINDEX-19) marked a significant collaboration between the armed forces of India and African countries, enhancing joint operational capabilities and strategic ties.
- ▶ **India-Africa Defence Ministers Conclave (IADMC):** Held in 2020, this conclave resulted in the adoption of the Lucknow Declaration, which focuses on strengthening defence, military, and security cooperation between India and Africa.
- ▶ **UN Peacekeeping:** India has actively participated in various UN peacekeeping missions in African countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique, contributing to regional stability.
- ▶ **Bilateral Defence Mechanisms-** India has established several institutional frameworks for defence cooperation, including Joint Defence Cooperation Committees and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with key African countries, enhancing collaborative efforts in the defence sector.

Strategies for Deepening India-Africa Engagement

- 1. Engaging the African Diaspora-** Siddharth Varadarajan highlights the importance of involving the African diaspora at all levels. Strengthening connections with the diaspora can enhance people-to-people ties and promote cultural and economic exchanges.
- 2. Enhancing Diplomatic Presence-** This includes expanding consular services and diplomatic missions to better support and engage with African countries.
- 3. Establishing Standards for the Private Sector-** Setting clear guidelines and expectations for Indian companies operating in Africa is essential. This includes addressing concerns related to land acquisition and ensuring that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices positively impact local communities.
- 4. Building Reliability and Trust-** Mahesh Sachdev, former Indian Ambassador, stresses the need for India to bridge the "delivery deficit" by following through on its promises.
- 5. Leveraging Strengths and Proximity-** Harsh V. Pant suggests that India should capitalize on its strengths in sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and technology transfer. Rather than competing directly with China, India should use its geographical proximity and historical ties to modernize and strengthen its engagement with Africa.
- 6. Tailoring Approaches to Individual Needs-** Amb. Shiv Shankar Mukherjee emphasizes the importance of customizing India's approach based on the unique needs and priorities of each African country. A one-size-fits-all policy is inadequate; instead, tailored strategies should address specific national contexts and requirements.
- 7. Fostering Greater People-to-People Contact-** Sanjay Baru advocates for moving beyond stereotypes and enhancing people-to-people interactions between India and Africa.

New Developments In India-Africa Relations

India's engagement with **Africa** has reached new heights in recent years, marked by high-level visits and strategic milestones. In 2025, the **Indian Prime Minister's state visit to Ghana** emphasized a partnership grounded in **mutual priorities**, aligning with **Africa's Agenda 2063** for pan-African growth. India's leadership in making the **African Union** a permanent member of the **G20** during its presidency in 2023 showcased its commitment to amplifying the **Global South's** voice, advocating for Africa's representation in multilateral forums like the **UN Security Council**, in line with the **Ezulwini Consensus**.

India's **strategic security initiatives** also reflect its growing commitment to the African continent. The establishment of India's first overseas naval base in **Mauritius** in 2024 as part of the **"Necklace of Diamonds" strategy** ensures maritime security in the **Indian Ocean Region**, countering piracy and external influence. Furthermore, initiatives like the **India-Africa Army Chiefs Conclave (2023)** underscore India's expanding defense ties with African nations.

▶ Economic, Trade, and Developmental Ties

Trade and economic cooperation between India and Africa have surged. **Bilateral trade** reached nearly **\$100 billion** in 2024, with ambitious plans to double that figure to **\$200 billion** by 2030. India's total investment in Africa now exceeds **\$75–80 billion**, directed towards sectors such as **infrastructure, mining, agriculture, healthcare, and manufacturing**.

Africa's role in India's green energy transition is pivotal, as the continent provides access to **critical minerals** such as **cobalt, manganese, and copper**, which are essential for India's manufacturing and green transition goals. India's involvement in

over **200 major infrastructure projects** across Africa, valued at approximately **\$12–13 billion**, highlights its commitment to **sustainable development** through initiatives like the **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)**, a joint India-Japan initiative. India's **digital partnership** with Africa is another key area, with India offering expertise in **e-governance**, **digital payments**, and **telemedicine**, thus fostering innovation and enhancing Africa's developmental capacity.

Scholarly Perspectives

- ▶ **S. Jaishankar**, India's External Affairs Minister, underscores that **Africa's rise** is key to **global rebalancing**, positioning India as a partner for **capacity-building** rather than an extractive force. **C. Raja Mohan** highlights that India's growing presence in Africa allows it to demonstrate global leadership, particularly within the framework of **South-South cooperation**.
- ▶ However, **Shyam Saran** cautions that India should avoid the **extractive model** often associated with China, urging India to leverage its strengths in **human resource development**, **entrepreneurship**, and **digital connectivity**. According to **Shashi Tharoor**, while Africa admires China, many African nations aspire to India's democratic model, valuing its **inclusive** and **sustainable** approach to development.
- ▶ **Rajiv Bhatia**, former Indian Ambassador, notes the untapped potential of the Indian diaspora in Africa, which could play a significant role in fostering people-to-people linkages. Yet, he points out that challenges such as **timely project implementation** continue to hinder progress.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ India's relationship with Africa is rooted in **South-South Cooperation**, reflecting the **Bandung spirit** of solidarity and mutual development, countering traditional **North-South** dynamics. The partnership emphasizes **equitable development** and **solidarity**, especially in areas like **climate resilience**, **food security**, and **development funding**.
- ▶ The relationship also embodies the principles of **Complex Interdependence** (Keohane & Nye), as India and Africa's ties span multiple dimensions—**trade**, **security**, **technology**, and **culture**—minimizing the risk of single-issue confrontations. Moreover, India's focus on **soft power** and **constructivism** is evident in its emphasis on cultural exchanges, scholarships, and **people-centric diplomacy**.

Contemporary Challenges

Despite growing engagement, **China's infrastructure dominance** poses a challenge, with its aggressive Belt and Road investments contrasting India's **people-centric, partnership-driven model**. While India's approach is more sustainable and less extractive, challenges like **slow project implementation** and gaps in **top-level engagement** remain.

Additionally, **diplomatic and capacity constraints** have been evident, especially in the absence of a dedicated **India-Africa Forum Summit** since 2015. There are calls for more frequent dialogues and **multi-stakeholder engagement** to address the gaps in the current framework. Africa's **fragile state structures**, political instability, and **irregular coups** further complicate efforts to maintain stable economic and security cooperation.

Noteworthy Examples

India's involvement in the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and the **Global Biofuel Alliance** demonstrates its commitment to **renewable energy collaboration** and **climate resilience** across Africa. Similarly, India's expansion of **e-Visa** facilities to 33 African countries is enhancing **mobility** and fostering **cultural exchange**.

India is also promoting **Special Economic Zones** and **industrial corridors** across Africa, helping boost **mutual economic growth**. Over **37,000 Africans** have been trained under India's **ITEC** and **ICCR scholarship programs**, emphasizing the long-term, **people-centric nature** of India's engagement.

Conclusion

India's relationship with Africa is a dynamic and evolving partnership marked by deepening diplomatic, economic, and security ties. As India plays a pivotal role in Africa's growth trajectory, its commitment to **mutual priorities**, **capacity-building**, and **sustainable development** is clear. By moving away from extractive models and prioritizing **people-to-people linkages** and **democratic values**, India stands poised to help shape a **more equitable global order**. However, challenges like **China's infrastructure dominance**, **capacity constraints**, and **political instability** require ongoing attention. With continued focus and strategic engagement, India can play a leading role in Africa's rise, fostering a **multipolar world** driven by **South-South cooperation** and shared prosperity.

Model Introductions and Conclusions on India-Africa Relations

Model Introduction 1:

As **Immanuel Wallerstein** argued, “The world system is a world of unequal relations,” and this is evident in India’s evolving partnerships with **Africa**. India’s increasing engagement with Africa reflects a broader shift in global geopolitics, where the **Global South** is asserting its influence. Through strategic **economic, diplomatic, and security initiatives**, India is positioning itself as a key player in shaping a **multipolar world**.

Model Conclusion 1:

Joseph Nye’s concept of **soft power** is reflected in India’s engagement with Africa, where **democratic values, capacity-building, and people-to-people linkages** have become central to the partnership. Moving beyond traditional models of **extractivism**, India’s growing collaboration with Africa is paving the way for a more **equitable, sustainable** global order, reinforcing its leadership in the **Global South**.

Model Introduction 2:

As **Kenneth Waltz** emphasized, “States balance against threats, not powers,” and India’s growing engagement with **Africa** reflects its strategic response to global power shifts. By investing in **infrastructure, energy security, and digital partnerships**, India is not only securing its own interests but also enhancing its role in a **multipolar** and more **interdependent** world.

Model Conclusion 2:

Keohane and Nye’s theory of **complex interdependence** aptly captures India’s multifaceted relationship with **Africa**. By strengthening **economic ties, security cooperation, and cultural diplomacy**, India is promoting a balanced, **mutually beneficial** partnership. As global dynamics evolve, this relationship will continue to play a crucial role in fostering a **more inclusive and multipolar** world order.

India’s Role In WTO negotiations

India’s involvement in the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** is marked by a distinctive blend of **intellectual activism, coalition-building**, and a strong commitment to **developmental multilateralism**. India’s leadership in shaping WTO policies, particularly during critical moments like the **Covid-19 pandemic**, highlights its stance on **equitable access** and **vaccine justice**. In 2020, India, alongside **South Africa**, proposed a TRIPS waiver to facilitate broader manufacturing access for **Covid-19 medical products**—a move driven by a commitment to global **health** over corporate interests. Scholars like **Harsh V. Pant** and **S. Jaishankar** emphasize that this initiative was about **saving lives**, not simply negotiating trade terms. India’s position as a **leader of the Global South** resonates with the ideals of **South-South cooperation**, as discussed in **Baylis & Smith’s** work on **Global Politics**.

TRIPS Waiver Debate: Compromise and Critique

The final compromise reached at the WTO’s **12th Ministerial Conference** in 2022, while a step forward, left much to be desired. The decision relaxed IP rules only for **Covid-19 vaccines**, but not for critical diagnostics and therapeutics. **India’s critique** of the agreement, along with **C. Raja Mohan’s** observation, is that the compromise was insufficient, as it failed to address the **systemic issues** in technology transfer and pandemic preparedness. Scholars like **Shyam Saran** argue that the existing **IP rules** still hinder developing countries’ ability to **respond swiftly** to global health emergencies. The debate underscores India’s persistent push for structural reform within the WTO to ensure that **public goods** are prioritized over corporate profits.

Coalition Diplomacy: India as the “Voice of the Voiceless”

India’s role at the WTO is often described as a **coalition leader** and a voice for the **Global South**. Through forums like the **G20, G33, and IBSA**, India has successfully advocated for the interests of **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** and **developing nations**, particularly regarding **food security** and **public stockholding rights**. As **Amrita Narlikar** and **Rajesh Rajagopalan** point out, India has perfected the art of **coalitional diplomacy**, leveraging its alliances to punch above its weight in multilateral institutions. By aligning with other developing countries, India has not only advocated for **trade equity** but also reshaped the discourse around **global trade norms**. According to **Narlikar**, this diplomacy is a model for how smaller nations can exert significant influence in **multilateral negotiations**.

India's Leadership in the Doha Round and Beyond

The **Doha Development Agenda's** collapse is often attributed to deep **North-South divides**, with developed countries resisting reforms in **agriculture** and **public stockholding**, while India and other developing nations held firm on **livelihood security**. **Shyam Saran** notes that India's leadership throughout these negotiations consistently sought to bridge **North-South divides**, emphasizing **inclusive development** over commercial interests. India's role in the WTO has been a reflection of its broader commitment to **equitable multilateralism**, an approach underscored in **Baylis & Smith's** analysis of global political structures. India's leadership remains crucial in challenging protectionism and ensuring that trade policies promote **development** and **poverty reduction**.

Public Diplomacy and India's Agenda-Setting

India's ability to set the global agenda is further evident in its consistent emphasis on **public diplomacy**. Through articles in prominent publications like **The Hindu** and **Indian Express**, and through statements by trade negotiators like **Piyush Goyal** and **Rajiv Bhatia**, India has positioned itself as an advocate for **global fairness** in trade. The TRIPS waiver, the debate on **food security**, and the push for a **digital economy** agenda all reflect India's proactive role in shaping the global trade narrative. India's consistent **agenda-setting** is a testament to its evolving role as a global **norm entrepreneur** within the WTO framework.

Push for WTO Reforms (2025)

At the 2025 Paris Mini-Ministerial, India's Commerce Minister advocated strongly for "a modernized WTO" that addresses trade distortions, reforms the dispute settlement system, and protects the multilateral order. This aligns India with countries seeking to revitalize WTO's credibility amid rising unilateralism and plurilateral deals among major economies

Scholarly Perspectives: Linking Theory to Practice

India's strategic approach at the WTO is rooted in **constructivist** principles, reshaping global discourses on **public goods** and **equity**. As **Keohane & Nye's** theory of **complex interdependence** suggests, India's engagement with the WTO is increasingly multidimensional, addressing **trade, security, technology, and health** in an interconnected manner. Moreover, India's leadership in the **Doha Round** and its role in **South-South cooperation** reflect its developmental priorities and its commitment to **inclusive growth**, as theorized by scholars like **Suhasini Haidar** and **Rajiv Bhatia**.

Conclusion

India's engagement with the **World Trade Organization** reflects its broader foreign policy principles of **equitable multilateralism** and **South-South solidarity**. As **S. Jaishankar** has stated, "For India, fairness in global trade is not just policy, it is a principle," and this resonates throughout India's **TRIPS waiver** advocacy and **coalitional diplomacy**. India's leadership at the WTO continues to challenge existing power dynamics, advocating for the interests of **developing countries** and promoting a **more inclusive** global trading system. Through its role as the **voice of the voiceless**, India's diplomacy at the WTO remains a crucial component of its broader international **norm entrepreneurship** and commitment to **global development**.

Model Introductions and Conclusions on India and WTO negotiations

Model Introduction 1:

As **Joseph Nye** famously said, "Power is the ability to influence others," and India's role in the **WTO** exemplifies this through its **coalition-building** and **intellectual activism**. India's advocacy for a **TRIPS waiver** during the **Covid-19 pandemic** and its leadership in the **Global South** highlight its commitment to **developmental multilateralism**. India's WTO diplomacy is a prime example of **norm entrepreneurship** in reshaping global trade frameworks.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's diplomatic approach at the **WTO** echoes **Keohane and Nye's** theory of **complex interdependence**, where cooperation across multidimensional issues—**trade, health, and development**—is crucial. India's continued focus on **equitable multilateralism** and its strategic coalitions ensure that its role in shaping a fairer global trade system will remain pivotal in the evolving world order.

Model Introduction 2:

As **Amrita Narlikar** observes, "Developing countries can punch above their weight in multilateral institutions," and India's leadership at the **WTO** is a testament to this. Through **coalitional diplomacy**, especially on issues like **food security** and **public health**, India has emerged as a key voice for the **Global South**, advocating for policies that prioritize **inclusive growth** and **global justice** in trade.

Model Conclusion 2:

India's ongoing role at the **WTO** represents its commitment to **developmentalism** and **South-South solidarity**, as articulated by **Suhasini Haidar** and **Rajiv Bhatia**. By leveraging its influence in multilateral settings, India continues to reshape the global trade landscape, advocating for policies that are not only reflective of its **national interests** but also support **equitable development** for the **Global South**.

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UNIT 5- INDIA AND GLOBAL CENTERS OF POWER

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

USA

- ▶ Explain the significance of Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement (BECA) for Indo-US strategic relations. (2022)
- ▶ Discuss the significance of Indo-US strategic partnership and its implications for India's security and national defence. (2020)
- ▶ Discuss the role of Indian diaspora in promoting Indo-US relations. (2018)
- ▶ The natural behaviour of India and the United States is likely to serve each other's interests. Hence, a deliberate strategy of dovetailing their efforts will obviously benefit both. Elaborate. (2017)
- ▶ Comment on India's growing relationship with USA in the background of constrained relations between India and China. (2016)
- ▶ Before the year 2000, the indo-US relationship has been marked more with estrangement than cordiality. Why? (2015)
- ▶ Do you agree with the view that the USA is of late willing to treat India as a partner rather than merely a camp-follower? Give reasons for your answer. (2014)

EU

- ▶ Explain Britain's ouster from EU and bring out its consequences on world economy in general and India in particular. (2016)
- ▶ "EU – India relations have a long way to go before they can purposely be termed strategic." Discuss. (2014)

Japan

- ▶ What are the main drivers for India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership? (2022)
- ▶ What are the notable features of the recently concluded pact or the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between India and Japan? How is it likely to address the security concerns of India? (2020)
- ▶ Do you agree that the growing assertiveness of China is leading to multilayered Indo-Japan relations? Comment. (2018)
- ▶ Do you subscribe to the idea that in the new evolving Asian dynamics, Japan and India have not only moved closer in economic cooperation, but also in strategic partnership? (2017)
- ▶ Evaluate the recent changes in Indo – Japan relations. (2014)
- ▶ Examine the recent developments in India-Japan relationship. (2013)

China

- ▶ Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) performs an important role in India's strategic balancing act to withstand the dominance of China in Asia. Discuss. (2023)
- ▶ Examine the Geo-strategic points of contention in the bilateral relationship between India and China. (2021)
- ▶ Describe briefly China's 'One Belt One Road (OBOR)' Initiative and analyze India's major concerns. (2019)
- ▶ Critically examine India's position on South China Sea Dispute. (2019)
- ▶ Critically assess the evolving convergence of India and China in the areas of trade and environment. (2018)
- ▶ How is the 'Belt and Road Initiative' of China going to affect India-China relations? (2017)
- ▶ Is there any linkage between a shift in China's relations with Japan to a perceived shift in her relations with India? Examine in the light of China's so-called 'anti-encirclement struggle'. (2012)

Russia

- ▶ **Arms trade, economic ties and congruent geo-political interests are no longer the three pillars of India & Russia relationship in the emerging strategic context. Comment.(2023)**
- ▶ **Relations between India and Russia are rooted in history of mutual trust/and mutually beneficial cooperation.' Discuss. (2021)**
- ▶ **The recent differences between India and Russia are the result of misconceptions than facts. Elucidate. (2017)**
- ▶ **Analyse the drivers of Indo – Russian relations in the post-Cold-War era. (2014)**
- ▶ **Comment on the recent trends in Russia's foreign policy. (2010)**

Insights from PYQs

The questions on **recent developments in Indian foreign policy** reveal an emphasis on India's evolving relationships with major global powers, particularly the **USA, EU, Japan, China, and Russia**.

A recurring theme is **India's strategic partnerships**, with a significant focus on **Indo-US relations**.

- ▶ The **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** and its implications for **India's defense and security** are frequently discussed, along with the growing **strategic partnership** between the two nations, especially in the context of **China's assertiveness** in Asia.
- ▶ Aspirants should focus on understanding **India's national security concerns** and how its ties with the US are evolving in response to the broader **geopolitical competition** in the region.

The **EU and India's relations** have been a key focus in some years, with questions on the **Brexit** impact on the world economy and its ramifications for **India**.

- ▶ There is also an emphasis on the long-term potential of **EU-India strategic relations**, suggesting that aspirants should understand the **EU's role** in India's foreign policy and the complexities of **EU-India cooperation**.
- ▶ The **India-Japan** relationship is also highlighted, with questions focusing on the **strategic partnership** and the role of agreements like **ACSA** in addressing security concerns. These questions emphasize **economic and security cooperation**, particularly in the context of the **Indo-Pacific** and **China's rise**.

The **China-India** relationship is examined through multiple lenses,

- ▶ particularly the **geo-strategic points of contention**, the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, and **India's position** on the **South China Sea** dispute.
- ▶ These questions highlight the **security concerns** surrounding China's growing influence and the need for **strategic balancing**. The role of **QUAD** in countering **China's dominance** in Asia is another significant theme that aspirants should focus on.

Finally, the relationship between **India and Russia** is addressed, particularly in the context of the **post-Cold War era**, **strategic changes**, and **differences** that have emerged in recent years.

- ▶ Questions on **Russia's foreign policy** trends suggest that aspirants should understand **India-Russia ties**, their historical context, and the current challenges in their relationship.
- ▶ Overall, aspirants should focus on **India's strategic partnerships**, particularly with the **USA, Japan, and Russia**, and be prepared to discuss **security dynamics**, **regional cooperation**, and **geopolitical challenges**, especially concerning **China** and the **Indo-Pacific**. Understanding the **shifts in global power dynamics**, **regional security concerns**, and **India's role in multilateral forums** such as **QUAD** will be essential for addressing these questions effectively.

Indian and Global Centres of Power: An Evolving Landscape

The global power dynamics have undergone significant transformations in recent decades, reshaping the landscape of international relations. Traditionally dominated by a few key players, the global centres of power have expanded to include emerging economies and regional influencers. **India's role in this evolving structure reflects both its growing influence and the shifting allegiances and rivalries on the world stage.**

Changing Trends in Global Power Dynamics

In recent decades, global power has undergone a significant transformation, moving away from the West-centric order that historically dominated global affairs, particularly that of the United States and Europe. The post-Cold War era, combined with rapid advancements in **globalization**, has led to the emergence of a **multipolar world** where power is increasingly distributed across multiple regions.

Key features of this evolving global order include:

- ▶ **Multipolarity:** The international system is no longer shaped by a singular superpower. While the **U.S.** continues to play a central role, **China's economic expansion**, **Russia's assertive foreign policy**, and the growing strategic footprint of countries like **India**, **Brazil**, and **Turkey** have significantly diversified the centers of power. The **United States' global influence** is increasingly challenged, especially in the context of the **China-U.S. rivalry** and the shifting role of **regional powers in global governance**.
- ▶ **Economic Shifts:** The rise of emerging economies has profoundly altered the global economic balance. **India** is a key example, with its **growing economy**, expanding digital and industrial sectors, and large consumer base making it a key player in **global trade** and **investment flows**. The **BRICS countries**, which include Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, are increasingly asserting their influence in international finance and economic governance, seeking reforms in global institutions like the **World Bank** and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- ▶ **Geopolitical Realignments:** The global geopolitical landscape is undergoing rapid transformations. Traditional alliances such as **NATO** and the **EU** are being re-evaluated, with a more fractured **transatlantic relationship** and the **impact of Brexit** still unfolding. At the same time, new alliances are emerging, especially in **Asia** and the **Indo-Pacific**. For instance, the **Quad** (comprising the **U.S.**, **India**, **Japan**, and **Australia**) has gained prominence as a strategic counterweight to **China's expansionist policies** in the **South China Sea** and **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. In the Middle East, the **crisis in West Asia** has seen shifting alliances and rivalries, with countries like **Saudi Arabia**, **Iran**, and **Israel** recalibrating their foreign policies in response to changing global dynamics and regional threats, particularly following the **U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan** and the ongoing **conflict in Syria**.
- ▶ **Crisis and Conflict:** The ongoing **Ukraine war**, marked by Russia's invasion in 2022, has not only reignited Cold War-era tensions but has also highlighted the shifting dynamics in European and global security. The conflict has deepened **NATO's role** in Eastern Europe, while **Russia** seeks to reassert its influence, not only in Europe but also in **Central Asia** and the **Middle East**. Meanwhile, the ongoing instability in **West Asia**, with the **civil war in Syria**, the **Yemen conflict**, and the **Iran nuclear dispute**, continues to have far-reaching implications for global energy markets, security frameworks, and diplomatic efforts.
- ▶ **Technological and Environmental Factors:** The rise of **technological competition**, especially in areas such as **5G**, **artificial intelligence (AI)**, and **cybersecurity**, has become a key driver of global competition, particularly between the **U.S.** and **China**. Concurrently, the **climate crisis** and global environmental challenges are fostering new forms of cooperation and tension, with countries like **India** and **China** asserting their influence on **climate negotiations**. India's role in global environmental discussions has grown, particularly with its focus on **renewable energy** and **sustainable development**.

In conclusion, the global power dynamics are no longer dominated by a single bloc of nations, but are increasingly shaped by **multipolarity**, where **emerging economies** and **regional powers** are becoming critical players. The growing tensions between the **U.S.** and **China**, the **Ukraine crisis**, the shifting alliances in **West Asia**, and the **geopolitical role of India** highlight the new realities in international relations. Understanding these developments and their interconnectedness will be crucial in navigating the future of global politics.

India's Evolving Relations with Global Centres of Power

India's engagement with global centres of power has evolved considerably, reflecting its rising status and strategic interests:

- ▶ **With the United States:** According to Dr. Brahma Chellaney, India's relationship with the U.S. has grown from strategic partnership to a comprehensive global partnership.
 - ▶ This evolution includes cooperation in defence, trade, and technology, driven by shared democratic values and mutual interests in regional stability, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.
 - ▶ India's participation in forums like the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) underscores this growing alignment.
- ▶ **With China:** India's relationship with China has been marked by both competition and cooperation. As noted by Professor Harsh V. Pant, India and China have deep economic ties, but geopolitical tensions, particularly along their shared border, challenge this relationship. **India's strategic response involves balancing economic engagement with cautious defense**

posturing.

- ▶ **With the European Union,** India's relationship with the EU has focused on trade and investment. According to Dr. Shashi Tharoor, India views the EU as a critical partner in promoting global governance reforms and addressing global challenges such as climate change and terrorism.
- ▶ **With Russia:** Historically, India has maintained a strong relationship with Russia, characterized by defense cooperation and strategic alignment. Professor Sreeram Chaulia highlights that this relationship remains robust, with ongoing collaboration in areas like defense technology and energy, despite shifting global alignments.
- ▶ **With Emerging Economies:** India's interactions with other emerging powers, such as Brazil and South Africa, reflect a commitment to South-South cooperation. The IBSA Dialogue Forum, as discussed by Dr. Sachin Chaturvedi, illustrates India's strategy to build collective influence among developing countries to advocate for a more inclusive global order.

Therefore, India's role in the global system is increasingly significant, marked by a complex web of relationships with various centers of power. As the global landscape continues to evolve, India's strategic maneuvers will be crucial in shaping and responding to these dynamics. The country's ability to navigate these relationships effectively will determine its role and influence in the emerging multipolar world.

India-US relations

India-U.S. relations have undergone a remarkable transformation from their early days of cautious engagement to a robust and multifaceted partnership. **Historically characterized by limited interaction during the Cold War due to divergent strategic interests, the relationship has evolved significantly since the 1990s, reflecting a deepening alignment in economic, strategic, and diplomatic spheres.**

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| | |
|--|--|
| Post-Independence Period (1947-1960s) | After gaining independence in 1947, India's relationship with the United States was relatively lukewarm. India's non-alignment policy during the Cold War era, aimed at avoiding alignment with either the U.S. or the Soviet Union, led to a cautious engagement with both superpowers. |
| Tensions and Strains (1960s-1970s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Geopolitical Differences: During the 1960s, tensions arose due to disagreements over geopolitical issues, such as India's stance on the Vietnam War. The U.S. was concerned about India's close ties with the Soviet Union and its nuclear ambitions. ▶ Support for Pakistan: The U.S. support for Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-Pak War further strained relations with India, contributing to a period of discord |
| Improving Relations (1980s-1990s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Gradual Improvement: The 1980s marked the beginning of a gradual improvement in relations, driven by the end of the Cold War and a diminishing emphasis on non-alignment. ▶ Economic and Trade Growth: Economic and trade ties started to develop, with both countries seeking common ground on regional security issues. The 1990s saw a significant shift with India's economic reforms and the end of the Cold War, leading to a more positive engagement. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Strategic Partnership Development (2000s-2010s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Civil Nuclear Agreement: The 2008 U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement was a landmark development, facilitating nuclear trade and cooperation. This period saw a notable improvement in bilateral relations. ▶ Strategic Dialogues: The establishment of the Strategic Dialogue in 2009 and the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in 2018 strengthened high-level engagement and cooperation. |
| Enhanced Cooperation (Post-2010s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Major Defence Partner: In 2016, the U.S. designated India as a “Major Defence Partner,” marking an increase in defence cooperation and technology transfer. ▶ Military and Regional Cooperation: Both countries deepened military ties through joint exercises and defence partnerships. The Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), involving India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia, emerged as a significant forum for regional security cooperation. ▶ Global Collaboration: India and the U.S. have collaborated on various global issues, including climate change, counterterrorism, and healthcare. |
| Current Dynamics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Strategic Partnership: Today, the India-U.S. relationship is characterized by a strong strategic partnership, with regular diplomatic, economic, and defence dialogues. Shared concerns over China’s assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region have led to enhanced cooperation in maintaining regional stability. ▶ Challenges and Opportunities: While trade disputes and economic issues remain points of contention, both nations continue to work towards enhancing economic ties and addressing trade imbalances. |

Contemporary Areas of Cooperation between India and the U.S.

In recent years, **India and the United States have expanded their collaboration across several key areas, reflecting their deepening strategic partnership.**

Here’s a comprehensive overview of their recent cooperative efforts:

▶ Geo-Strategic Cooperation

- ▶ **Support for UNSC Reform:** The U.S. has reiterated its support for India’s bid to become a permanent member of a reformed **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, underscoring its commitment to a more inclusive global governance structure.
- ▶ **Nuclear Suppliers Group Membership:** The U.S. has pledged to assist India in gaining membership in the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**. This inclusion would allow India to participate in global nuclear trade, enhancing its strategic capabilities.
- ▶ **APEC Summit Invitation:** President Biden invited Prime Minister Modi to the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in San Francisco**, aiming to bolster economic cooperation between the two nations.
- ▶ **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue and Quad:** The establishment of the **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue among the Quad nations (India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia)** aims to strengthen strategic coordination and support a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative:** The U.S. has joined India’s “**Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative**,” supporting efforts to ensure safety, security, and sustainability in the maritime domain of the Indo-Pacific.
- ▶ **Blue Dot Network:** The U.S. supports the Blue Dot Network, which certifies infrastructure projects for sustainability and transparency, **providing an alternative to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- ▶ **Counter-Terrorism Cooperation:** Both nations have united in their condemnation of global terrorism and extremist groups, committing to enhance cooperation in combating terrorist activities.
- ▶ **Addressing Cross-Border Terrorism:** The U.S. and India have condemned cross-border terrorism and called for Pakistan to take decisive action against terrorist groups operating from its territory.

▶ Geo-Economic Cooperation

- ▶ **Trade Relations Target:** The U.S. and India are working towards enhancing bilateral trade relations, with a **goal of reaching \$500 billion in trade.**
- ▶ **Trade Surplus:** In the fiscal year 2022-23, India recorded a trade surplus **of \$28 billion with the U.S., reflecting robust economic interactions.**
- ▶ **Digital Tax Agreement:** Both countries have agreed on a transitional approach to the Equalization Levy (EL) or digital tax, facilitating smoother economic transactions.
- ▶ **Joint Production of Jet Engines:** The collaboration between General Electric (GE) and India on the production of F414 Jet Engines represents a significant advancement in defence technology cooperation.
- ▶ **Semiconductor Investment:** Micron Technology's planned investment in a semiconductor assembly and test facility in Gujarat aims to bolster India's semiconductor industry.
- ▶ **Mineral Supply Chains:** The U.S. and India have partnered in the Minerals Security Partnership to secure critical mineral supply chains, enhancing both nations' resource security.
- ▶ **AI Research in Healthcare:** Collaborative efforts between the U.S. National Cancer Institute and Indian scientists focus on AI-enabled research for cancer and diabetes, advancing healthcare technologies.

▶ Cultural and Technological Cooperation

- ▶ **Cultural Property Agreement:** Ongoing negotiations for a Cultural Property Agreement aim to prevent the illegal trafficking of cultural artifacts from India, enhancing cultural preservation and exchange.
- ▶ **Space Exploration:** India's signing of the Artemis Accords marks a commitment to collaborative space exploration, reflecting a shared vision for advancing space science and technology.

These **developments highlight the multifaceted nature of the India-U.S. relationship, encompassing strategic, economic, cultural, and technological dimensions.** The ongoing cooperation in these areas underscores the deepening partnership and mutual interests of the two nations on the global stage.

Potential Future Cooperation Areas Between India and the US

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Geo-Economic Cooperation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leveraging Demographic Dividend: India's significant demographic advantage presents an opportunity for mutual benefits in technology transfer, manufacturing, trade, and investment. This could facilitate enhanced collaboration between US and Indian enterprises. 2. De-risking Supply Chains: Collaborating on the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative with Australia and Japan can help diversify and de-risk supply chains, mitigating vulnerabilities and fostering stability in global supply networks. 3. Infrastructure Investment: The US could invest in Indian infrastructure, aligning with Japan's proposed Asia-African Growth Corridor. This partnership can bolster economic growth and infrastructure development in the region. 4. Space Governance: With shared concerns over Chinese space capabilities, both countries are likely to focus on establishing robust space governance frameworks, which will become a critical aspect of their bilateral relationship. 5. Joint Infrastructure Projects: Undertaking joint infrastructure development in Indian Ocean littoral states could counterbalance Chinese initiatives in the region and stimulate economic development. |
| Geo-Strategic Cooperation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free & Rule-Based Indo-Pacific: Ensuring a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific is essential for regional stability and prosperity. Collaborative efforts in this area will strengthen the strategic partnership between India and the US. 2. Maritime Cooperation: Enhanced cooperation in maritime domains, including the blue economy and maritime domain awareness, will further solidify the strategic ties between the two nations |

Technology Cooperation

1. **Trade and Investment:** Finalizing the Bilateral Investment Treaty could create a favourable environment for increased trade and investment. Both countries are aiming to reach a trade target of \$500 billion by 2025.
2. **Semiconductor and Critical Minerals:** Continued investment in semiconductor assembly and test facilities, along with strengthening critical mineral supply chains, will reinforce technological and economic ties.

Concerns and Challenges in India-US Relations

Geo-Economic Concerns

1. **Intellectual Property (IP) Issues:** India's inclusion on the US "Special 301" Priority Watch List reflects ongoing concerns regarding the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in India.
2. **WTO Disputes:** India, aligning with other developing nations, continues to push for developed countries to meet their commitments under the Doha Development Agenda, which sometimes leads to disagreements with the US.
3. **Regional Trade Agreements:** Both India and the US are absent from significant regional trade agreements such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which China is pursuing.

Geo-Strategic Concerns

1. **Russia's Arms Supply:** India's substantial defence procurement from Russia complicates the interoperability of Indian and American military systems, creating challenges for deeper defence cooperation.
2. **China Factor:** Mutual suspicions regarding each other's dealings with China complicate efforts to establish more comprehensive and long-term agreements between India and the US.
3. **Kashmir Issue:** Concerns voiced by some US politicians about human rights in Kashmir could strain bilateral relations and potentially internationalize the issue, affecting diplomatic interactions.
4. **Afghanistan Situation:** The aftermath of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan could influence regional stability and impact the Kashmir situation, adding another layer of complexity to the relationship.
5. **Iran's Ties with China:** The US's Maximum Pressure strategy on Iran has inadvertently strengthened Iran-China ties, impacting India's strategic interests and complicating its relations with both countries.
6. **Russia-Ukraine Conflict:** Differing stances on the Russia-Ukraine conflict have led to tensions, with the US imposing sanctions on Russia while India maintains a more neutral position.

Geo-Political Concerns

1. **Data Sovereignty:** Tensions over data sovereignty arise from concerns about the US's Cloud Act and data localization laws, which challenge India's approach to data governance.
2. **Osaka Track:** India's opposition to the Osaka Track, which promotes free data flow, stems from sovereignty concerns and has caused friction with the US.
3. **Trade Disputes and Tariffs:** Trade tensions are exacerbated by the removal of benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the imposition of tariffs on certain goods, affecting economic relations.

Recent Developments in Bilateral Relations

1. **Defence and Security Cooperation:** The US-India defence relationship has expanded with initiatives like INDUS-X, and significant foreign military sales, such as MQ-9B drones, highlighting a commitment to enhancing India's military capabilities.
2. **Economic and Trade Relations:** Economic interactions have improved, with the US being a major trade partner for India. Recent efforts have focused on resolving trade disputes and boosting bilateral trade.
3. **Technological Collaborations:** The two nations have collaborated on cutting-edge technologies, including AI and clean energy, supported by initiatives like the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership.
4. **Strategic Global Policies:** Joint statements from both countries have underscored a shared commitment to democracy, human rights, and addressing global conflicts, reflecting strategic alignment on various issues.
5. **Strategic Dialogues and Agreements:** India and Russia have continued to deepen their strategic partnership, focusing on economic, trade, and defence cooperation, despite challenges in the defence sector.
6. **Energy and Economic Ties:** Energy collaboration remains strong, with discussions aimed at enhancing ties in hydrocarbons, coking coal, and fertilizers, contributing to mutual growth.

Scholar Opinions

1. **Tanvi Madan** of the Brookings Institution notes that while convergence is improving, differences over India's stance on Russia, economic policies, and human rights continue to pose challenges to fully realizing the partnership's potential.
2. **Varun Sivaram** highlights that divergent approaches to climate change commitments and responsibilities add another layer of friction between the two nations.
3. **Mukesh Aghi** from the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum points out that the removal of GSP benefits and high visa rejection rates are significant concerns, impacting economic and people-to-people linkages between India and the US.

Linkages to the theories of IR

1. Realism

- ▶ **Key Linkage:** Realist theory, particularly **Mearsheimer's offensive realism**, emphasizes the role of **power** and **security concerns** in shaping international alliances. The **India-US relationship** fits this model, as both countries have aligned themselves in response to the growing **military threat** posed by **China**.
- ▶ **Application:** The **Indo-Pacific strategy** and increased **defense cooperation** between India and the U.S. illustrate **security maximization**, a core tenet of realism.
- ▶ **Quote:** "India and the United States' cooperation is fundamentally driven by the imperative of countering **China's rise**, a classical example of **balance-of-power politics**."

2. Liberalism

- ▶ **Key Linkage:** Liberalism highlights the importance of **international institutions**, **trade**, and **cooperation** in shaping relations between states. The **India-US relationship** has seen **significant growth in trade** and **multilateral cooperation** in areas such as **climate change**, **technology transfer**, and **global governance**.
- ▶ **Application:** Both countries are involved in multilateral forums like the **United Nations** and the **World Trade Organization**, with a growing focus on **global public goods** like health, education, and economic development.
- ▶ **Quote:** "The increasing interdependence between India and the U.S. in trade, technology, and climate change represents the core of **liberal internationalism**."

3. Constructivism

- ▶ **Key Linkage:** Constructivists argue that **ideas**, **identity**, and **norms** shape state behavior. The **India-US relationship** can be seen as evolving based on the changing **identities** of both nations. Historically, India viewed the U.S. with suspicion due to its alignment with Pakistan, but over time, India has embraced the idea of **strategic partnership** with the U.S., particularly after the **end of the Cold War**.
- ▶ **Application:** The shared **democratic values**, **human rights**, and **ideological alignment** have allowed India and the U.S. to move from adversaries to close partners, despite their previous political differences.
- ▶ **Quote:** "The India-US relationship is not just a function of strategic interests, but also a reflection of a **shared democratic identity** and mutual perceptions."

Key Scholars and Statements

1. Harsh V. Pant

- ▶ Harsh Pant has argued that **India-US relations** have evolved significantly from the Cold War period, where India maintained non-alignment, to the post-9/11 era, where strategic cooperation took center stage. He emphasizes that **economic diplomacy** and **security concerns** such as terrorism and China have been pivotal in this transformation.
- ▶ According to Pant, **India's growing role** in international security and economic systems made it a natural partner for the United States, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

2. C. Raja Mohan

- ▶ **Key Work:** *"Modi's World: Expanding India's Sphere of Influence"*
 - C. Raja Mohan has been vocal about how the **India-US relationship** has evolved under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. He argues that the relationship is no longer solely defined by the U.S.'s priorities but has become a **mutual partnership** based on shared concerns over **regional security**, especially regarding China and the Indo-Pacific.
 - Raja Mohan has also highlighted the significance of the **Indo-US nuclear deal** (2005), which he believes laid the groundwork for deeper **defense cooperation** and **trade relations** between the two countries.

3. Shivshankar Menon

► **Key Work:** *"Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy"*

- Menon, a former National Security Advisor, reflects on the **complexities** of **India-US relations**. He suggests that while both nations have become **strategic partners**, there are tensions due to **India's pursuit of strategic autonomy** and its stance on issues like the **U.S. military presence** in the region.
- Menon believes that India has successfully **leveraged its relationship** with the U.S. to ensure its own national interests, particularly in the realm of defense cooperation and counter-terrorism.

4. S. Jaishankar

► **Key Work:** *"The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World"*

- As the current **External Affairs Minister**, Jaishankar articulates a vision of India as a **strategic partner** for the U.S., but not a **subordinate ally**. His writings emphasize **India's independent foreign policy**, but also the importance of strong relations with the U.S. in addressing **global challenges** like climate change, terrorism, and economic instability.
- Jaishankar stresses the importance of **bilateral engagement** and **multilateral cooperation**, where India and the U.S. can find common ground despite their differences.
- **Quote:** "The India-US relationship is not about finding common ground on everything, but about **aligning strategic interests** and advancing shared goals."

5. Shyam Saran

► **Key Work:** *"How India Sees the World: Kautilya to the 21st Century"*

- Saran views the **India-US relationship** as a **strategic convergence** in areas such as **economic diplomacy** and **regional security**, especially in light of **China's rise**. He highlights how **India's soft power**, combined with U.S. **technological and military power**, can create a **synergistic partnership**.
- His writings argue that the **India-US nuclear deal** signified a turning point, allowing both countries to **manage their divergences** while working together on common interests.
- **Quote:** "The India-US partnership has been transformed from a **transactional relationship** to a more **strategic and enduring alliance**."

6. Rakesh Sood

► **Key Work:** *"The US-India Partnership: Time for Strategic Alignment"*

► **Statements & Insights:**

- Sood emphasizes that the **India-US relationship** has moved beyond the **nuclear deal** and **defense cooperation** to broader issues such as **trade, climate change, and cyber security**.
- He underscores that while the relationship remains essential for both nations, it is increasingly shaped by **China's assertiveness** and global security concerns, which bring India and the U.S. closer together in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Quote:** "The U.S. sees India as a crucial partner in the **Indo-Pacific**, not just for defense but for fostering **regional stability**."

Model Introductions and Conclusions on India-US relations

Model Introduction 1:

The India-US relationship has transformed into a **strategic alliance**, marked by cooperation in defense, trade, and counter-terrorism. As C. Raja Mohan suggests, this partnership has deepened especially in the context of rising **Chinese influence** and shared security concerns in the **Indo-Pacific** region. This shift from divergence to alignment reflects both **realist imperatives** for security and **liberal values** of democracy and cooperation.

Model Conclusion 1:

As S. Jaishankar aptly puts it, the relationship is not about total alignment but aligning **core interests**. Through the frameworks of **realism** and **liberalism**, the cooperation between India and the U.S. has contributed significantly to global security, economic stability, and regional peace, especially in the context of **Indo-Pacific geopolitics**.

Model Introduction 2:

The relationship between India and the United States has significantly strengthened, evolving from historical complexities to a **strategic partnership**. As noted by Harsh Pant, this dynamic relationship has been forged through common **strategic interests** like countering **terrorism**, ensuring **economic growth**, and promoting stability in the **Indo-Pacific**.

Model Conclusion 2:

As Shyam Saran points out, the cooperation is a **reflection of shared strategic goals** despite occasional differences. Through the lens of **constructivism** and **realism**, the partnership underscores the importance of both **security cooperation** and the collective promotion of **global public goods**, positioning both nations as key players in the evolving international order.

India-Russia Relations: A Time-Tested Alliance

India and Russia have **maintained a steadfast and robust relationship, characterized by a deep historical connection that dates back to the Cold War era**. This enduring partnership encompasses key areas such as defence, oil, nuclear energy, and space exploration.

Principles of India-Russia Relationship

According to Prime Minister Modi, the resilience of the India-Russia relationship is founded on **principles of equality, trust, and mutual benefit**. He asserts that despite the dynamic global landscape, the relationship between the two countries remains constant, underpinned by these core values.

Historical Context

- ▶ India views Russia as **a long-standing ally, with both nations sharing a rich history of cooperation**.
- ▶ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has frequently highlighted the depth of this relationship, stating, **"Every child in India knows that Russia is our best friend."** He emphasizes that Russia has been a crucial pillar of India's development and security over the decades.

Key Areas of Cooperation

1. **Defence:** The defence partnership between India and Russia has been a cornerstone of their relationship. Russia has been a major supplier of military hardware to India, and the two countries have collaborated on various defence projects, including joint production and technology transfer.
2. **Oil and Energy:** Energy cooperation is another significant aspect of the bilateral ties. Russia is a key supplier of oil and natural gas to India, contributing to India's energy security. **The two nations have also engaged in collaborations in nuclear energy, with Russia assisting in the construction of nuclear power plants in India.**
3. **Space Exploration:** The space sector is a notable area of cooperation. India and Russia have worked together on various space missions and satellite launches, benefiting from each other's expertise and technology in space exploration.
4. **Strategic and Diplomatic Relations:** India and Russia have maintained a strong strategic partnership, reflected in their joint stances on various global issues and their mutual support in international forums. This includes collaboration on matters of regional security and geopolitical stability.

Therefore India-Russia relationship stands out as a steadfast alliance in a rapidly evolving world. Rooted in mutual respect and a shared history of cooperation, it continues to thrive on principles of equality and trust. As both nations navigate contemporary global challenges, their enduring partnership remains a testament to their long-standing commitment to each other's growth and security.

Evolution of India-Russia Relations

1. **Post-Independence Era: Ideological Divergence-** In the years following India's independence, the relationship with Russia was initially shaped by ideological differences. During the **early post-independence period, under Soviet leadership, there was a significant ideological polarization, encapsulated by the notion that "those who are not with us are against us."** This period was marked by distinct ideological divides, which influenced India's external relations.
2. **Cold War Alignment: Strategic Partnership-** Throughout the Cold War, India's geopolitical alignment leaned towards the Soviet Union, though it did not formalize a traditional alliance. The 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship & Cooperation signified a quasi-alliance, reflecting a strong strategic and military partnership.
 - ▶ During this era, substantial cooperation included:
 - **Fundamental Industries:** Development of key industries in India with Soviet support.
 - **Defence Collaboration:** Extensive defence cooperation and procurement of military equipment.

- **Economic Aid:** Significant economic aid and trade in local currencies, reinforcing the bilateral economic relationship.

3. Post-Cold War Transformation: From Buyer-Seller to Strategic Partner- With the end of the Cold War, **India-Russia relations evolved significantly**. The relationship transitioned from a traditional buyer-seller dynamic to a more nuanced and strategic partnership characterized by mutual interests and benefits.

- ▶ Key developments during this period included:
 - **Russia-China-India Trilateral Framework:** Emergence of this framework, which emphasized multilateralism and a multipolar world order.
 - **Enhanced Cooperation:** Broadened cooperation in various fields, including defence, technology, and economic development.

4. Strategic Partnerships: Formalization and Elevation- The year **2000 marked a significant milestone with the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between India and Russia**. This move followed a similar accord with France in 1998 and was indicative of deepening bilateral cooperation. Noteworthy developments included:

- ▶ **2000:** Establishment of a Strategic Partnership, signifying enhanced cooperation across multiple sectors.
- ▶ **2010:** The relationship was further elevated to a “Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership,” reflecting the unique and robust nature of their ties.

Therefore, the **evolution of India-Russia relations reflects a journey from ideological divergence to a strategic and privileged partnership**. The relationship has transformed from Cold War-era alignment and substantial aid to a comprehensive and strategic collaboration, characterized by mutual interests and high-level cooperation. This evolution underscores the deepening of ties and the enduring significance of the partnership in the contemporary geopolitical landscape.

Areas of Cooperation between India and Russia

▶ Geo-Strategic Cooperation

- ▶ **Special and Privileged Partnership:** The relationship was elevated to a “**Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership**,” highlighted by the informal summit in Sochi in 2018, marking a significant enhancement in bilateral relations.
- ▶ **Inter-Governmental Commissions:** Both nations engage through multiple inter-governmental commissions covering trade, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, and military-technical cooperation.
- ▶ **Support for India’s Global Aspirations:** Russia supports India’s bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and its membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- ▶ **Multilateral Engagement:** Both countries actively collaborate within BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and participate in projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- ▶ **Counter-Terrorism and Regional Issues:** Cooperation extends to combating international terrorism, drug trafficking, and addressing issues related to Afghanistan.

▶ Geo-Political and Defence Cooperation

- ▶ **Defence Collaboration:** Joint development and production of advanced defence systems, including **S-400 air defence missile systems and the BrahMos cruise missile**. **Regular joint military exercises, such as ‘INDRA,’** underscore this partnership.
- ▶ **Military Programs:** Significant projects include the 5th Generation Fighter Jet and the Sukhoi Su-30MKI. Russia plays a key role in supporting India’s submarine programs and aircraft carrier operations.
- ▶ **Space and Nuclear Cooperation:** Russia’s involvement extends to India’s space program with joint satellite launches and navigation systems. The collaboration also includes peaceful nuclear energy projects and joint nuclear power initiatives.

▶ Geo-Economic Cooperation

- ▶ **Bilateral Trade:** Trade between India and Russia reached \$25 billion in 2022, with a notable increase in oil purchases from Russia.
- ▶ **Investment:** Bilateral investments stood at \$30 billion as of 2018. Russia remains a major arms supplier to India.
- ▶ **Economic and Technological Collaboration:** The countries work together in various fields including economic, scientific, technological, and cultural sectors, supported by their inter-governmental commissions.
- ▶ **Infrastructure Projects:** Participation in projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) highlights their economic cooperation.

► Science and Technology Cooperation

- **Research and Development:** Collaborative efforts span basic sciences and include the Russian-Indian Network of Universities. Joint research projects focus on Arctic and Antarctic studies.
- **Space Exploration:** Cooperation includes India's manned space mission "**Gaganyaan**" and joint satellite launches. Russia supports India's space program and navigation systems.

► Cultural Relations

- **Language and Education:** Indian languages such as Hindi, Tamil, and Marathi are taught in Russian institutions. About 20 Russian institutions offer Hindi courses, with around 1,500 Russian students learning the language.
- **Cultural Promotion:** Indian culture is promoted in Russia through dance, music, yoga, and Ayurveda. Initiatives like 'Namaste Russia' and exhibitions commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's 150th anniversary enhance cultural exchange.
- **Cultural Exchange Programs:** The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre and other programs facilitate cultural and educational exchanges, deepening bilateral ties.

Therefore, this comprehensive cooperation across strategic, geopolitical, economic, scientific, and cultural domains highlights the enduring and multi-faceted nature of the India-Russia relationship.

India's Stand on the Russia-Ukraine Crisis: Navigating Neutrality amidst Geopolitical Strain

- **Diplomatic Balancing-** India has **adopted a strategy of diplomatic balancing by engaging with both Russia and Ukraine. While maintaining a historical relationship with Russia, India has sought to strengthen bilateral relations with Ukraine.**
- External Affairs **Minister S. Jaishankar's** interactions with Ukrainian officials reflect India's dual approach, aiming to explore cooperative opportunities while preserving longstanding ties with Russia.
- **Economic and Energy Strategies-** India's **increased import of discounted Russian oil, in response to global sanctions on Russia, addresses its energy needs amid global supply disruptions.**
- This economic manoeuvre has created friction with Western countries, particularly the United States, which has criticized India's energy trade with Russia. Despite these tensions, India's focus remains on securing energy resources and managing economic impacts.
- **Defence and Strategic Considerations-** The Ukraine conflict has **highlighted India's reliance on Russian military supplies, affecting its defence modernization goals.** The ongoing war has implications for the availability of future defence technology and cooperation. Consequently, **India is exploring alternative partnerships to diversify its defence procurement and reduce dependence on Russian sources.**
- **Geopolitical Concerns and China's Influence-** India's **primary foreign policy challenge revolves around its border dispute and relationship with China.** Given the unresolved border issues and perceived Chinese encroachment, maintaining a balance with Russia is crucial to prevent further alignment with China. This geopolitical concern shapes India's approach, aiming to ensure that Russia does not drift closer to China's sphere of influence.

Scholarly Perspectives

Realism- Realist scholars interpret India's stance as driven by power dynamics and strategic interests. The focus on balancing regional stability and countering common rivals shapes the strategic partnership between India and Russia.

Alliance Theory- Alliance Theory examines the motivations behind India-Russia cooperation. Historical alliances and shared interests in military and defence matters underscore the continued collaboration between the two nations.

Multipolarity- In the context of a multipolar world order, scholars use this framework to analyse how India and Russia navigate their relationship amid the influence of other major powers, such as China and the USA.

India's approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict is shaped by a blend of historical connections, economic interests, security concerns, and regional dynamics. While diverging from Western criticism of Russia, India's stance reflects a pragmatic pursuit of strategic interests, including energy security, defence modernization, and balancing regional threats. Understanding India's multifaceted motivations provides insight into its role in the global geopolitical landscape.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

India-Russia relations, often described as a **time-tested partnership**, have been built on a foundation of **mutual trust**, **strategic alignment**, and shared historical experiences. As **Shyam Saran** notes, the relationship has been anchored in areas such as defense cooperation, energy, and economic ties.

Model Conclusion 1:

In conclusion, India-Russia relations continue to thrive due to shared **strategic priorities** and mutual respect for **sovereignty** and **autonomy**. As **C. Raja Mohan** observes, India's ties with Russia are defined by a rare combination of **realpolitik** and strategic partnership. Despite global shifts, these relations stand resilient, offering a counterbalance to other international influences, particularly in the realm of **defense cooperation** and **energy security**.

Model Introduction 2:

India and Russia share a **long-standing** and **multi-dimensional** relationship that has evolved to address global challenges in defense, trade, and diplomacy. According to **Harsh Pant**, Russia has been a key partner for India, especially in **military technology** and **energy security**.

Model Conclusion 2:

In conclusion, the **India-Russia partnership** remains a cornerstone of India's **foreign policy**, based on shared interests in **regional security** and **economic cooperation**. As **Shivshankar Menon** notes, the relationship has evolved through **mutual respect for strategic autonomy**, allowing both nations to pursue their interests in a complex global environment.

India and the European Union: Evolving Relationship and Strategic Synergies

India and the European Union (EU) share a foundation built on democratic values, the rule of law, a rules-based international order, and commitment to multilateralism. These shared principles form the bedrock of their multifaceted relationship, which spans various domains including trade, investment, climate change, science and technology, digital connectivity, and agriculture.

Strategic Significance and Emerging Synergies

- ▶ **Mutual Recognition of Strategic Importance-** Both India and the EU now recognize each other's strategic relevance. The EU aligns with India's goals in several key areas, including infrastructure investment, resilient supply chains, and emerging technologies.
 - ▶ In defence and security, the EU's ambition to bolster its naval presence in the Indian Ocean and enhance security cooperation underscores a growing alignment in their strategic outlook.
- ▶ **Enhanced Engagement and Diplomatic Focus-** There is an unprecedented level of engagement between India and the EU, reflecting a significant shift in India's diplomatic priorities.
 - ▶ The EU is increasingly central to India's international strategy, highlighting a mutual recognition of strategic complementarities and a shared vision for future cooperation.

Expert Perspectives on India-EU Relations

- ▶ **Rajiv Bhatia-** According to **Rajiv Bhatia**, the India-EU relationship is at a pivotal moment. With India's rising prominence in the Indo-Pacific region, both sides have a unique opportunity to influence a multipolar world order. *By leveraging their complementary strengths and addressing divergences, India and the EU have the potential to lead global efforts in development, peace, and human progress.*
- ▶ **Shada Islam-** **Shada Islam** highlights that the India-EU partnership has evolved beyond mere trade. It now encompasses a joint commitment to effective multilateralism, a rules-based international order, maritime security, sustainability, and technological innovation. This expanded focus underscores the depth and breadth of their growing collaboration

Areas of Cooperation Between India and the EU

1. Political Partnership and Geo-Political Cooperation

- ▶ **Historical Foundations and Institutional Framework-** The India-EU political relationship began with the Joint Political Statement in 1993, which initiated a structured dialogue. This was followed by the Cooperation Agreement in 1994, broadening the scope beyond economic matters. ***The institutional framework was further solidified with the establishment of the India-EU Summit in 2000, and the partnership was elevated to a 'Strategic Partnership' during the 5th India-EU Summit in 2004.*** The EU's 2018 strategy on India acknowledged India's significant global role, further emphasizing the partnership's importance.
- ▶ **Dialogue Mechanisms and Legislative Influence-** The relationship is supported by 31 dialogue mechanisms addressing a range of issues. Notably, the EU has influenced India's legislative processes, particularly regarding data security, reflecting a deepening of their political and strategic engagement.

2. Economic Ties and Investment Cooperation

- ▶ **Bilateral Trade and Investment-** The EU is India's third-largest trading partner, while India ranks as the EU's 10th largest trading partner. Trade encompasses diverse sectors, including engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, gems, and chemicals. Over 6,000 EU companies are operational in India, highlighting strong economic ties.
- ▶ **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Investment Facilitation-** EU FDI inflows to India have increased significantly, reaching 18%. **The establishment of the Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM) in 2017 aims to streamline investment processes.** Ongoing negotiations for a Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement seek to further enhance economic cooperation. **According to Garima Mohan** of the German Marshall Fund, addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers could significantly boost bilateral trade and investment.

3. Defence, Security, and Climate Cooperation

- ▶ **Security Mechanisms and Counter-Terrorism-** India and the EU collaborate on various security fronts, including counter-terrorism, maritime security, and non-proliferation.
- ▶ **Climate Change and Clean Energy Partnership-** Both partners are committed to the Paris Agreement and have established the India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. They collaborate on renewable energy projects and climate-friendly technologies, reinforcing their commitment to addressing climate change. *Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan from the Observer Research Foundation highlights that joint naval drills, counterterrorism partnerships, and defence industrial collaboration underscore the deepening strategic ties between India and the EU.*

4. Science, Research, and Maritime Collaboration

- ▶ **Scientific and Space Cooperation-** Annual meetings of the India-EU Science & Technology Steering Committee drive scientific collaboration. India's space agency, ISRO, contributes to the EU's Galileo satellite navigation system, and there is joint work on earth observation and space science.
- ▶ **Maritime Cooperation and Indo-Pacific Focus-** The Joint Action Plan of 2005 underscores the focus on maritime cooperation. Both India and the EU share interests in freedom of navigation and adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
 - The Indo-Pacific region is a key area for their maritime collaboration. **Anil Wadhwa, former Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, notes that synergies in fields like nanotechnology, biotechnology, AI, and 5G/6G can catalyse further technological partnerships.**

5. Data Protection, Regulation, and Digital Cooperation

- ▶ **Data Protection and Regulatory Convergence-** India and the EU have reached an agreement on data adequacy and cross-border data flows. They engage in dialogue on the ethical use of AI and 5G technologies, aiming to align regulatory frameworks and enhance digital cooperation. **Samir Saran from the Observer Research Foundation emphasizes that collaboration in AI, healthcare, smart cities, and 5G/6G could elevate the India-EU technology partnership to new heights.**

Therefore, India-EU relationship spans a diverse range of areas, from political and economic engagement to defence, climate cooperation, and technological innovation. Both partners are working to deepen their collaboration, aligning their strategic interests and addressing global challenges through a multifaceted partnership.

Challenges in India-EU Relations

1. Economic and Trade Barriers

- ▶ **Negotiation Deadlocks-** Negotiations for the Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) have stalled, preventing deeper economic integration between India and the EU.
- ▶ **Trade and Regulatory Issues-** Export barriers, regulatory challenges, and trade imbalances complicate balanced economic cooperation. Additionally, the EU's strong economic ties with China impact India's market access and trade opportunities, limiting the effectiveness of economic engagements.

2. Political and Diplomatic Differences

- ▶ **Sovereignty and Policy Disputes-** Differences in political decisions and sovereignty concerns strain bilateral relations. Issues such as India's policies on Jammu and Kashmir and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act have sparked diplomatic tensions.
- ▶ **Global Issue Expectations-** India's stance on global issues, including the Ukraine crisis, adds complexity to its relationship with the EU. Criticisms and divergent expectations over international policies further strain diplomatic interactions.

3. Geopolitical Realities and Strategic Divergence

- ▶ **Impact of Brexit-** Brexit has weakened the EU's unity and strategic influence, affecting its ability to project a cohesive global stance.
- ▶ **Divergent Strategic Outlooks-** Differences in global governance perspectives, multipolarity, and security strategies lead to strategic divergence. The EU's engagement with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) also challenges alignment with India's strategic interests.

4. Complex Security and Multilateral Dynamics

- ▶ **Emerging Threats-** Emerging threats such as cybersecurity and terrorism require enhanced security cooperation. However, the limited scope of cooperation beyond trade impacts the effectiveness of joint responses to global security challenges.
- ▶ **Navigating Security Priorities-** The evolving multipolar world presents challenges in aligning diverse security priorities and coordinating responses, complicating multilateral engagements.

5. Climate Goals and Multifaceted Engagement

- ▶ **Divergent Climate Goals-** Differences in climate goals and resource allocation between India and the EU hinder the progress of joint initiatives.
- ▶ **Complex Engagement Balancing-** Balancing participation in multiple international forums while managing diverse agendas remains challenging, impacting collaborative efforts on global issues.
- ▶ **Regulatory Framework Discrepancies-** Variations in data protection laws and regulatory frameworks affect digital cooperation, complicating efforts to harmonize standards and policies.

These challenges highlight the need for both India and the EU to navigate complex dynamics and work towards more effective and cohesive cooperation.

Recent Developments in India-EU Relations

1. 60th Anniversary Milestone- In 2022, the European Union (EU) and India celebrated the 60th anniversary of their bilateral relationship, marking one of the longest-standing partnerships between the EU and an Asian nation. As the world's two largest democracies, their relationship is built on a foundation of shared values, political exchanges, and common interests. The partnership spans a wide range of areas including socio-economic issues, effective multilateralism, rules-based order, and security cooperation.

2. Establishment of the Trade and Technology Council (TTC)

- ▶ **Formation and Focus Areas-** In 2023, the EU and India established the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) to enhance strategic engagement on trade and technology. The TTC is designed to address key issues of mutual strategic importance, such as trusted technology and security.
- ▶ **Working Groups and Negotiations-** The TTC will operate through three working groups focusing on:
 - Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance, and Digital Connectivity
 - Green and Clean Energy Technologies

○ Trade, Investment, and Resilient Value Chains

3. Renewed Negotiations and Agreements

- ▶ **Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Investment Protection-** In June 2022, the EU resumed negotiations with India for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and initiated discussions on an Investment Protection Agreement and an Agreement on Geographical Indications.
- ▶ **Objectives**
 - The FTA aims to eliminate trade barriers, facilitate exports, open service and public procurement markets, protect geographical indications, and address sustainable development commitments. The investment protection talks seek to ensure a predictable and secure investment environment for both parties.

4. Enhancing Research and Innovation Collaboration

- ▶ **High-Level Dialogue-** In July 2022, the 'India-EU High Level Dialogue on Research & Innovation Collaboration' was held to boost cooperation in frontier technologies. This dialogue aims to foster joint efforts in areas such as 5G, artificial intelligence (AI), and renewable energy.

Future Directions for relationship

- ▶ **Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation:** An ambitious FTA between India and the EU could significantly boost trade and investment. Partnerships in emerging technologies such as 5G, AI, biotech, and renewable energy have the potential to reinvigorate innovation and sustainability ties.
- ▶ **Christian Wagner, Senior Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs:** To fully realize the potential of India-EU relations, pragmatic solutions are needed to address economic differences, enhance mobility of talent, and ensure regular high-level political engagement.

India-EU Relations: Linkages with International Relations (IR) Theory

1. Realism: Power and Security

- ▶ Realism highlights **state interests** and **security concerns**. India-EU relations reflect **strategic autonomy** and **regional stability**, where both sides focus on **countering external threats** like **terrorism** and **regional instability**. The partnership aligns with **balance-of-power** principles, especially in their approach to **China** and **global security**.
- **Quote: Harsh Pant** notes, "India's foreign policy reflects **realist impulses**, ensuring it remains a key player in a **multipolar world**."

2. Liberalism: Interdependence and Institutions

- ▶ Liberalism emphasizes **cooperation** and **interdependence**. India and the EU strengthen their ties through **economic collaboration**, **trade agreements**, and **multilateral diplomacy** in institutions like the **WTO** and **UN**. Their cooperation on **climate change**, **human rights**, and **global governance** reflects a commitment to **global norms** and **peaceful cooperation**.
- **Quote: Shivshankar Menon** says, "India and the EU share **common values** and a focus on a **rules-based global order**."

3. Constructivism: Norms and Identity

- ▶ Constructivism focuses on **shared values** and **identity**. India and the EU, united by **democracy**, **rule of law**, and **human rights**, collaborate on **global challenges**. Their growing alignment on **normative issues** strengthens their partnership, with both using **soft power** to advocate for **multilateralism** and **global governance**.
- **Quote: C. Raja Mohan** argues, "The India-EU relationship reflects alignment in **normative values**, influencing global policies."

4. Dependency Theory: Evolving Power Dynamics

- ▶ Dependency theory critiques asymmetrical relationships. Traditionally, India was viewed as a **dependent partner**, but its **economic rise** challenges this view. India now plays a key role in **global supply chains** and **trade**, reducing **dependency** and shifting the relationship towards **mutual interdependence**.
- **Quote: S. Jaishankar** says, "India's evolving global role transforms the EU relationship into one of **equitable partnership**."

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

India-EU relations have matured into a dynamic **strategic partnership**, focused on shared priorities like **trade, climate change, security, and sustainable development**. As **Harsh Pant** points out, the relationship between India and the EU is increasingly defined by **economic cooperation** and **multilateral diplomacy**, especially on global challenges such as **globalization** and **regional stability**.

Model Conclusion 1:

In conclusion, the India-EU relationship continues to expand across multiple domains, driven by shared interests in **economic development** and **global governance**. As **Shivshankar Menon** observes, both India and the EU face common challenges in fostering **sustainable peace** and **prosperity**, and their cooperation is essential for addressing **global concerns** like climate change, terrorism, and trade. Through frameworks of **liberalism** and **multilateralism**, their partnership remains critical for both regional and global stability.

Model Introduction 2:

The India-EU partnership is marked by **complementary goals** in areas such as **trade, technology transfer, human rights, and sustainable development**. According to **C. Raja Mohan**, both India and the EU see each other as **key actors** in addressing **global challenges** like climate change and **global economic recovery**.

Model Conclusion 2:

In conclusion, India-EU relations are defined by a growing alignment of **strategic interests** in addressing **global crises** and advancing **multilateral agendas**. As **Shyam Saran** highlights, the partnership has transformed from economic ties to a broader **political and security** dialogue. Drawing from **constructivist theory**, this relationship demonstrates the impact of **shared norms** and values, enabling both sides to navigate an increasingly **interdependent** world with a focus on **global governance** and **peaceful cooperation**.

India-China Relations

- ▶ India and China, the **world's two most populous nations**, possess a relationship characterized by both profound **complexity and significant potential**.
- ▶ Their **historical interactions, which began over millennia through trade and cultural exchanges along the Silk Road**, have evolved into a multifaceted modern relationship marked by a mix of cooperation and contention.
- ▶ The post-colonial era introduced new dynamics to this relationship. The signing of the Panchsheel Agreement in 1954, which advocated for peaceful coexistence, initially signalled a cooperative phase.
- ▶ However, this optimism was soon overshadowed by the Sino-Indian War of 1962, which entrenched a legacy of mistrust and strategic competition.

Scholarly Perspectives on India-China Relations

1. **Manoj Joshi** highlights the **complexity of India-China relations through the lens of four distinct elements: conflict, competition, cooperation, and containment**.
 - ▶ This framework underscores the multifaceted nature of their interactions, reflecting both the historical and contemporary dynamics that define their relationship.
2. **Shyam Saran**, in his book *How India Sees the World: Kautilya to 21st Century*, **emphasizes a fundamental difference in worldview between India and China. He argues that India's perception of the world, shaped by a notion of Bharatvarsha with India as a central entity, contrasts sharply with China's self-image as the "Middle Kingdom," surrounded by less civilized nations.**
 - ▶ This divergence in self-perception and historical narrative has contributed to the complexities in their bilateral interactions and highlights the misunderstandings that often arise between the two nations.
3. **Samir Saran** provides insight into China's strategic ambitions, noting that China seeks to leverage its political and economic power to establish itself as the dominant continental force.
 - ▶ Saran contends that for China, the concept of multipolarity is applicable globally but not necessarily within Asia.
 - ▶ The Chinese adage, "One mountain cannot contain two tigers," encapsulates the notion of inevitable rivalry between the two emerging giants.

4. **Shashi Tharoor** observes that the relationship between India and China has never been particularly warm, **describing it as a “cold peace” that has recently turned even colder.**

- ▶ Tharoor’s assessment reflects the enduring tensions and sporadic conflicts that define their interactions, emphasizing the underlying discord despite periods of relative stability.

These scholarly perspectives collectively illustrate the nuanced and often contentious nature of India-China relations, shaped by historical grievances, differing worldviews, strategic ambitions, and evolving security concerns.

Areas of Cooperation Between India and China

India and China, despite their complex relationship, engage in significant cooperation across various domains.

▶ Geopolitical Coordination

- ▶ **BRICS:** India and China, as founding members of BRICS, work together on global issues through initiatives like the New Development Bank and Contingency Reserve Arrangement.
- ▶ **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):** Their participation in the SCO focuses on regional security, geopolitics, and economic cooperation.
- ▶ **Russia-India-China Trilateral (RIC):** The RIC platform allows the three countries to align on global challenges, counterterrorism, and regional issues.
- ▶ **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB):** Both nations are founding members of the AIIB, contributing to financing infrastructure projects across the region.
- ▶ **World Trade Organization (WTO):** Within the WTO framework, India and China collaborate on addressing trade and agricultural issues, reinforcing their commitment to global trade norms.
- ▶ **BASIC Group:** The BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) cooperate on environmental matters, particularly climate change, enhancing their collective impact on global environmental policies.

▶ Geo-Strategic Cooperation

- ▶ **Dialogue Mechanisms:** Regular dialogues on political, economic, and regional issues facilitate communication and conflict resolution between the two nations.
- ▶ **Diplomatic Relations:** Established in 1950, diplomatic ties between India and China form a foundation for ongoing engagement and collaboration.
- ▶ **High-Level Visits:** Exchanges of visits by top leaders, such as Prime Minister Modi’s visits, have strengthened diplomatic relations and mutual understanding.

▶ Geo-Economic Collaboration

- ▶ **Economic Potential:** With combined markets of over 2.7 billion people and substantial shares of global GDP, India and China hold significant potential for further economic collaboration.
- ▶ **Bilateral Trade:** Trade between the two countries has grown considerably, reaching approximately \$100 billion in 2022.
- ▶ **Investments:** There has been a notable increase in investments from both sides, particularly in sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and automobiles.

▶ Other Areas of Cooperation

- ▶ **Science and Technology:**
 - **Joint Research:** Collaborative workshops and projects promote innovation and technological advancement.
 - **IT Corridors:** Indian IT corridors in China facilitate high-tech exchanges and cooperation.
- ▶ **Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges:**
 - **Cultural Initiatives:** Long-standing cultural ties are maintained through various events and exchanges.
 - **Educational Cooperation:** Increasing numbers of Indian and Chinese students study in each other’s universities.
 - **People-to-People Mechanisms:** Initiatives in art, sports, tourism, and traditional medicine further strengthen

bilateral relations.

► **Defence Collaboration:**

- **Joint Military Exercises:** Exercises such as 'Hand in Hand' enhance mutual understanding and counterterrorism capabilities.

Through these diverse areas of cooperation, India and China contribute to regional stability and global collaboration, demonstrating their commitment to addressing shared challenges and opportunities.

Challenges in the India-China Relationship

The relationship between India and China is marked by a complex interplay of cooperation and contention. Several key challenges impact their bilateral ties:

| | |
|--|---|
| Border Disputes: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Territorial Claims: Unresolved border issues persist, notably in the Western sector (Aksai Chin) and Eastern sector (Arunachal Pradesh). These disputes have occasionally led to military standoffs and clashes, such as the Doklam standoff in 2017. |
| Competing National Interests: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Regional Dominance: Both nations seek to assert their regional influence, which often results in tensions as they compete for dominance in South Asia and beyond. ► Strategic Alliances: India's growing strategic alignment with the U.S. and its Indo-Pacific strategy conflict with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), creating areas of contention. |
| Economic Imbalances: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Trade Imbalance: India faces a significant trade deficit with China, exacerbated by barriers to Indian exports in the Chinese market and unequal trade volumes. ► Investment Concerns: Indian concerns over Chinese investments in sensitive sectors have raised issues related to economic dependency and national security. |
| Political Differences: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► One-China Policy: India's reluctance to explicitly endorse China's One-China policy regarding Taiwan and Tibet has led to diplomatic friction. ► UNSC Membership: China's opposition to India's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council remains a point of contention. |
| Regional and Global Competition: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Influence in South Asia: Both countries compete for influence in South Asia, leading to rival projects and power dynamics, such as China's growing presence in Sri Lanka and Pakistan's Gwadar port. ► Indo-Pacific Rivalry: Divergent interests in the Indo-Pacific region have intensified strategic tensions between India and China. |
| Cybersecurity and Technological Concerns: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Cyber Espionage: Accusations of cyberattacks and economic espionage have strained bilateral relations. ► 5G Technology: India's concerns over national security and reliance on Chinese telecom equipment providers like Huawei have added to the complexity of their relationship. |

Despite these challenges, India and China have a history of cooperation and a mutual interest in maintaining regional stability and advancing economic development. This shared interest provides a basis for dialogue and engagement aimed at overcoming obstacles and enhancing their bilateral relationship.

India-China Border Dispute: Key Sectors and Complexities

The border dispute between India and China is a multifaceted issue involving several contentious sectors. This long-standing dispute has been a source of tension and conflict between the two nations for decades.

Here's an overview of the primary sectors of contention along the India-China border:

1. Eastern Sector:

- **Arunachal Pradesh (AP):** China disputes India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh, claiming it as part of outer Tibet. The region, including the strategically significant area of Tawang, is claimed by China based on cultural and religious

ties, notably the birthplace of the Dalai Lama.

- ▶ **McMahon Line:** This line, which demarcates the eastern border, is contested by China. India maintains its control over Arunachal Pradesh, while China continues to challenge this assertion.

2. Middle Sector:

- ▶ **Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Sikkim:** This sector includes areas such as Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, where some disputed pockets remain. Sikkim, initially a contentious region, was officially recognized by China as Indian territory in 2003, leading to the reopening of the Nathula Pass for cross-border trade.

3. Western Sector:

- ▶ **Aksai Chin:** The primary area of dispute in the western sector is Aksai Chin, which India claims as part of its territory. India accuses China of occupying approximately 38,000 square miles of this area. The complexity of the dispute is further compounded by Pakistan's cession of the Shaksgam Valley to China.
- ▶ **Strategic Importance:** Aksai Chin is a cold desert region of about 50,000 square kilometres, with strategic significance due to China's all-weather road linking Xinjiang and Tibet. The area was occupied by China following the 1962 Sino-Indian War. While China views Aksai Chin as an extension of the Tibetan Plateau, India sees it as part of the Ladakh Plateau.

▶ Current Status (2023):

- ▶ **Tensions and Clashes:** In 2023, border tensions remained high, particularly in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh. Military escalations, including clashes that, while not fatal, underscored ongoing friction, were noted. Both nations have intensified their military presence and infrastructure development along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- ▶ **Strategic Developments:** India has invested significantly in road construction and strategic tunnels to enhance logistics and mobility for its armed forces, aiming to counter China's military advancements. Diplomatic efforts have largely been confined to multilateral forums, with limited bilateral engagement suggesting a resolution to the disputes.
- ▶ **Geopolitical Dynamics:** The broader geopolitical context, including India's strengthening ties with the United States and involvement in the Quad, has further complicated the relationship, as China perceives these developments as strategic countermeasures.

The India-China border dispute is a complex issue involving multiple sectors with distinct historical claims and strategic significance. Resolving this dispute is crucial for regional stability, economic cooperation, and maintaining global geopolitical balance. As both countries navigate these intricate territorial issues, addressing the core disputes remains essential to fostering a more stable and cooperative relationship.

India-China Relations: Linkages with International Relations (IR) Theory

1. Realism: Power, Security, and Rivalry

- ▶ Realism emphasizes the pursuit of **national security** and **power**. India-China relations are primarily driven by **strategic competition** and **security concerns**. Both nations view each other as major **regional rivals**, particularly over issues like **territorial disputes** and influence in the **Indo-Pacific**. The **balance of power** theory explains how both countries seek to **maximize power** through **military buildup** and **alliances** to counter each other's growing influence.
- **Quote:** Harsh Pant notes, "India and China's relationship is driven by **realpolitik**, as both countries vie for regional dominance."

2. Liberalism: Economic Interdependence

- ▶ Liberalism focuses on **interdependence** and the role of **international institutions**. Despite strategic rivalry, India and China share significant **economic ties** through **trade** and **investment**. Their engagement in global forums like the **WTO** and **BRICS** reflects the potential for **cooperation** on issues like **climate change** and **global trade**. However, their economic interdependence coexists with security tensions, as **economic growth** can be both a source of cooperation and competition.
- **Quote:** S. Jaishankar explains, "While **economic cooperation** is growing, India-China relations are simultaneously defined by **strategic rivalry**."

3. Constructivism: Identity and Perceptions

- ▶ Constructivism highlights the role of **ideas** and **identity** in shaping relations. India and China's interactions are shaped by differing **national identities**—India as a democratic, pluralistic society and China as an authoritarian

power. These **contrasting identities** influence their **diplomatic engagement** and perceptions, particularly regarding **territorial sovereignty** and **regional influence**.

- **Quote:** C. Raja Mohan argues, "India-China tensions are not just about **territorial disputes** but are shaped by **historical legacies** and **national identities**."

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

India-China relations are characterized by **strategic rivalry** and **economic interdependence**. As Harsh Pant points out, both nations are locked in a competition for **regional dominance**, particularly over **territorial disputes** and **influence in the Indo-Pacific**. While their economic ties are growing, the relationship is shaped by the underlying tensions of **realpolitik**, with both seeking to balance power through **military buildup** and **global influence**.

Model Conclusion 1:

In conclusion, India-China relations remain defined by a complex blend of **competition** and **cooperation**. As S. Jaishankar observes, despite economic interdependence, the **security rivalry** continues to shape their engagement. The relationship, analyzed through **realism**, reveals how both countries strive for **strategic advantage** in a **multipolar world**, where **economic** and **security concerns** constantly intersect.

Model Introduction 2:

The relationship between India and China is one of **strategic ambiguity**, influenced by both **historical narratives** and **competing national identities**. C. Raja Mohan notes that while both nations engage in **economic cooperation**, the **territorial disputes** and **regional power dynamics** fuel their **rivalry**. India's rise as a regional power contrasts with China's quest for global influence, making this relationship central to the geopolitics of **Asia**.

Model Conclusion 2:

In conclusion, India-China relations are shaped by the interplay of **strategic interests**, **economic interdependence**, and **contrasting identities**. As Shyam Saran notes, the relationship continues to evolve, balancing **cooperation** in areas like trade with **competition** in **regional security**. This duality, rooted in **constructivist** and **realist** frameworks, makes their relationship pivotal for **Asian geopolitics** and global stability.



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Performance and Progress Analysis

UNIT 6: INDIA AND UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

SYLLABUS- India and the UN System: Role in UN Peace-keeping; Demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

Role in India in UN Peace-keeping

- ▶ Discuss the importance of India's role in UN peacekeeping operations as a ground for its claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. (2023)
- ▶ Analyze the recent trends in India's role in the UN peacekeeping operations. (2019)
- ▶ "India has been the largest and consistent country contributing to the UN peacekeepers worldwide." Examine India's role in this perspective. (2017)
- ▶ Evaluate India's participation in United Nations peace-keeping operations over the years. (2014)
- ▶ Bring out the role played by Indian armed forces in UN peace-keeping efforts in various parts of the world. (2010)

India's Demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council

- ▶ India must strive to become a semi-permanent member of the UNSC, rather than a permanent member without the right to veto." Comment. (2024)
- ▶ Explain the factors which justify India's claim for a permanent seat at the UN security council. (2022)
- ▶ Explain the importance of India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. (2020)
- ▶ Discuss the various impediments in India's way to a permanent seat in the Security Council. (2018)
- ▶ 'Uniting for Consensus' also known as 'Coffee Club' has opposed the claims of India and other countries over permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Point out their major objections. (2017)
- ▶ Critically analyze China's role in international politics against India's demand for permanent seat in UN Security Council. (2016)
- ▶ Is India's quest for a permanent seat in the Security Council a possibility or just a pipedream? Elaborate with reasons. (2014)
- ▶ Bring out the objectives of India seeking permanent seat in Security Council. (2013)

Insights from PYQs

The questions on India's role in UN peacekeeping operations and its demand for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council reveal a clear trend towards understanding India's contributions to global governance, its diplomatic strategies, and the geopolitical challenges it faces in this arena.

1. India's Role in UN Peacekeeping Operations

A recurring theme in the questions on **UN peacekeeping** is India's **significant and consistent contribution** to global peacekeeping efforts.

- ▶ Multiple questions emphasize India's historical and ongoing role as a **major contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping missions**, acknowledging its importance in promoting **global peace and security**.
- ▶ The questions highlight India's commitment to **multilateralism, peacekeeping missions**, and the role of the **Indian armed forces** in providing humanitarian assistance in conflict zones.
- ▶ Aspirants should focus on India's **historical contributions** to peacekeeping missions, its current role in ongoing operations, and how these efforts are integral to its **foreign policy** objectives, particularly in the context of **global power dynamics and regional security**.

2. India's Claim for a Permanent Seat in the UN Security Council

The theme of **India's claim for a permanent seat in the UNSC** emerges consistently across multiple years, indicating the importance of this issue in India's **foreign policy** discourse.

- ▶ Key questions focus on justifying India's **claim for a permanent seat**, evaluating the **impediments** it faces, and examining the **geopolitical realities** that complicate this aspiration.
- ▶ A strong emphasis is placed on the **legitimacy** of India's claim based on its growing **global influence**, its role in **UN peacekeeping**, and its status as the world's **largest democracy**.
- ▶ However, the **impediments** to India's claim, particularly opposition from **China**, and the dynamics of the '**Uniting for Consensus**' group are also a recurring focus.
- ▶ Aspirants should analyze **India's diplomatic strategies** aimed at securing a permanent seat, including the arguments for **reforming the UNSC** to better reflect the contemporary geopolitical order. A nuanced understanding of the **geopolitical rivalries**, particularly **China's opposition**, is crucial to tackle these questions effectively.

3. Key Focus Areas for Aspirants

- ▶ **India's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:** Candidates must be familiar with the **historical context**, **current operations**, and the **impact** of India's participation in peacekeeping missions. They should also understand how India's contributions serve as a **diplomatic tool** for global influence.
- ▶ **Permanent Seat in UNSC:** Focus should be on the **justification** for India's claim, the **objectives** behind seeking a permanent seat, and the **opposing forces** such as **China** and the **Uniting for Consensus** group. A critical analysis of the **UNSC reform debate** and **India's foreign policy goals** will be essential.
- ▶ **Geopolitical Dynamics:** India's diplomatic challenges in its quest for UNSC reform, particularly with regard to **China's opposition** and the **regional security situation**, must be well-understood by candidates.
- ▶ **India's Global Influence:** Aspirants must assess India's rising global influence in areas like **trade**, **defense**, and **international diplomacy**, and how these aspects support its claim for a **permanent seat**.

Therefore, aspirants should focus on understanding the **historical role** of India in **UN peacekeeping**, its **justifications for seeking a permanent seat** in the UNSC, and the **global dynamics** influencing this issue. A solid grasp of **multilateral diplomacy**, **global governance structures**, and **regional security concerns** will be key to answering these questions comprehensively.

India, a founding member of the United Nations, plays a vital role in the organization by consistently advocating for multilateralism, global peace, and sustainable development. As one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, India underscores its commitment to international security. Additionally, India champions UN reforms, climate action, and equitable global governance, reflecting its vision for a more inclusive world order.

India's Role in UN Peacekeeping Operations

India has been a significant contributor to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, reflecting its commitment to global peace and security. Over seven decades, India's involvement in UN peacekeeping has become a cornerstone of its foreign policy, providing a strong basis for its claim to a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Historical Evolution of India-U.S. Relations

The trajectory of India-U.S. relations has seen a remarkable transformation from initial estrangement to a deep and strategic partnership.

David Malone aptly describes this evolution as a journey from being "estranged democracies" to "engaged strategic partners". Here's an overview of the key phases in their historical relationship:

Importance of India's Role in UN Peacekeeping for Its UNSC Claim

India's substantial contributions to UN peacekeeping missions serve as a compelling argument for its inclusion as a permanent member of the UNSC.

- ▶ **Global Responsibility:** India's participation in peacekeeping missions underscores its readiness to shoulder global responsibilities, aligning with the expectations of permanent UNSC members who are tasked with maintaining international peace and security.
- ▶ **Moral and Strategic Justification:** Scholars such as **C. Raja Mohan** have argued that India's role in peacekeeping demonstrates its moral authority and strategic capacity, which bolsters its case for a permanent seat on the UNSC. **Ramesh Thakur** in his works *"The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility*

to Protect,” discusses the role of emerging powers like India in peacekeeping and how these contributions bolster their case for a more significant role in global governance, including a permanent seat on the UNSC.

- ▶ **Advocacy for Reforms:** India's call for UNSC reform is supported by its extensive peacekeeping experience. In ***“Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century,”*** **Shashi Tharoor** emphasizes that India's active involvement in maintaining global peace and security reflects its readiness and capacity to take on greater responsibilities within the international system.

Recent Trends in India's Peacekeeping Role

India's approach to UN peacekeeping has evolved to address the complexities of modern conflicts.

- ▶ **Specialized Contributions:** India has increasingly provided specialized units, such as engineering corps, medical teams, and trainers, reflecting a shift from traditional military roles to more comprehensive support in peacekeeping operations. Lt. Gen. Nambiar emphasizes the importance of these contributions in enhancing the effectiveness of modern peacekeeping missions.
- ▶ **Complex Mission Engagement:** India remains committed to high-risk missions, particularly in Africa, where its troops have played critical roles in stabilizing regions like South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). **Gurmeet Kanwal** in ***“Indian Army: Vision 2020,”*** outlines that India's military strategy has adapted to meet the demands of complex UN missions.
- ▶ **Gender Inclusion:** India has been a leader in promoting women's participation in peacekeeping, demonstrated by its deployment of **all-female police** units. This initiative, supported by scholars like **Dyan Mazurana, Angela Raven-Roberts, and Jane Parpart** in their book ***“Gender, Conflict, and Peacekeeping”***. They highlight the importance of including women in peacekeeping for more effective and inclusive peace processes.

India as a Consistent Contributor to UN Peacekeeping

India's consistent and large-scale contributions to UN peacekeeping missions are unmatched.

- ▶ **Scale of Involvement:** India has deployed over 250,000 troops to more than 50 UN missions, making it one of the largest contributors in the history of UN peacekeeping. Scholar **Ramesh Thakur**, in ***“The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect,”*** argues that India's consistent involvement is critical to the operational success of these missions.
- ▶ **Diplomatic Influence:** India's continuous contributions have also enhanced its diplomatic influence within the UN, giving it a significant voice in shaping peacekeeping policies. This point is elaborated by **Arundhati Ghose** in ***“India's Role in the United Nations,”*** where she highlights that India's peacekeeping efforts have bolstered its standing in global diplomatic circles.

Role of Indian Armed Forces in UN Peacekeeping

The Indian Armed Forces have been central to the success of UN peacekeeping missions.

- ▶ **Leadership in Command:** Indian military officers have frequently held leadership roles in UN missions, commanding multinational forces in challenging environments. Their leadership has been crucial in ensuring mission success, a point emphasized by **Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar** in his book ***“For the Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping.”***
- ▶ **Operational Excellence:** Indian troops have been involved in critical operations such as monitoring ceasefires, protecting civilians, and disarming combatants. Their professionalism and dedication highlight the high standards set by Indian peacekeepers.
- ▶ **Humanitarian Impact:** Beyond military roles, Indian peacekeepers have significantly contributed to humanitarian efforts, including medical care and infrastructure rebuilding.

Challenges Faced by Indian Peacekeepers

- ▶ **Complex Operational Environments:** Indian peacekeepers often operate in extremely volatile environments, facing threats from militias, insurgent groups, and challenging terrains. Missions in Congo, Somalia, and South Sudan have been particularly difficult.
- ▶ **Under-Resourcing:** Many UN missions have been underfunded or poorly equipped, leading to significant challenges for peacekeepers, including Indian contingents, in effectively carrying out their mandates.
- ▶ **Casualties:** India has suffered the loss of over 170 peacekeepers in various missions, highlighting the high-risk nature of these operations and the sacrifices made by Indian troops in the pursuit of global peace.

India's Policy on Peacekeeping

- ▶ **Non-Alignment and Sovereignty:** India's approach to peacekeeping is deeply rooted in its policy of non-alignment and respect for the sovereignty of nations. Indian peacekeepers operate under the principle of impartiality, refraining from taking sides in internal conflicts.
- ▶ **Focus on Developing Nations:** India often focuses its peacekeeping efforts on developing nations, particularly in Africa, reflecting its broader foreign policy goals of South-South cooperation and solidarity with the Global South.

India's Advocacy for Peacekeeping Reform

- ▶ **Better Resourcing and Mandate Clarity:** India has been a strong advocate for better resourcing of UN peacekeeping missions and clearer mandates. It argues that peacekeepers should not be tasked with overly ambitious goals without adequate resources.
- ▶ **Inclusion in Decision-Making:** India has consistently called for greater inclusion of troop-contributing countries in the decision-making processes of UN peacekeeping missions. It has also advocated for a greater say in the planning and management of missions.
- ▶ **UN Security Council Reform:** India's call for a permanent seat on the UNSC is partly motivated by its desire to play a more significant role in shaping global peacekeeping policies. As one of the largest contributors to peacekeeping, India believes it should have a commensurate role in the UNSC.

Recognition and Global Impact

- ▶ **International Recognition:** Indian peacekeepers have received numerous UN awards and citations for their professionalism and effectiveness, reinforcing India's reputation as a responsible global actor committed to peace and stability.
- ▶ **Soft Power:** India's role in UN peacekeeping has enhanced its soft power, positioning it as a key player in international peace efforts, especially in Africa and Asia.
- ▶ **Contribution to Global Peace:** Through its consistent contributions, India has played a crucial role in maintaining peace in various conflict zones, thereby contributing to global stability.

India's role in UN peacekeeping has been extensive and multifaceted, demonstrating its commitment to global peace and security. Despite the challenges, India continues to play a crucial role, advocating for more effective peacekeeping operations and greater representation in global decision-making forums like the UN Security Council. This enduring commitment underscores India's broader foreign policy objectives of promoting peace, stability, and cooperation on the global stage.

India's Stance on UN Ineffectiveness in Geopolitical Crises

The United Nations' failure to resolve critical geopolitical crises, such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the prolonged West Asian conflicts (Iran, Israel-Palestine), has led to increased scrutiny of the institution's structural limitations and the responses of emerging powers like India. India's diplomatic approach, deeply influenced by its doctrine of strategic autonomy and non-alignment tradition, has been critically examined by scholars and policy experts.

Russia-Ukraine Crisis: Calibrated Neutrality and Strategic Autonomy

India's handling of the **Russia-Ukraine conflict** reflects its broader foreign policy philosophy. Despite strong Western pressure, India has consistently abstained from UN resolutions condemning Russia's actions, including those in the **Security Council, Human Rights Council, and General Assembly**. Several factors shape this stance.

- ▶ **Historical Ties and Defense Dependence:** According to **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar**, the **India-Russia relationship** is a consistent fixture in global politics, built on decades of defense cooperation and mutual diplomatic support. Scholars like **C. Raja Mohan** and **Harsh V. Pant** underscore India's significant reliance on Russian military hardware and the historical diplomatic backing Russia has extended on issues such as **Kashmir**, influencing India's reluctance to distance itself from Moscow.
- ▶ **Strategic Autonomy:** India's policy of **strategic neutrality** is an intentional choice to preserve its autonomy amid global polarization. Prime Minister **Modi's statement** to President **Putin**—"now is not an era of war"—captures India's preference for **dialogue** and **peaceful resolution** over becoming involved in bloc politics.
- ▶ **Balancing Global and Regional Interests:** India's stance is also influenced by the need to avoid a **Russia-China-Pakistan axis**, which could jeopardize its own security. India's abstentions, alongside calls for peace, aim to position it as a **bridge-builder** in global diplomacy rather than a **partisan actor**.

West Asian Crisis: Consistent Advocacy for Dialogue and Multilateralism

India's approach to the **Israel-Palestine conflict** and issues involving **Iran** reflects its broader **foreign policy strategy**, which is shaped by considerations of **energy security**, **diaspora concerns**, and its desire for a **multipolar world order**:

- ▶ **Israel-Palestine:** India maintains support for a **two-state solution**, advocating for direct negotiations and the **legitimate rights of Palestinians**, while simultaneously strengthening its **strategic ties** with **Israel**. This dual engagement aligns with what **Happyman Jacob** calls "**pragmatic idealism**," striking a balance between **moral commitments** and **realpolitik**.
- ▶ **Iran:** India's approach to **Iran**, especially concerning the **nuclear issue** and **sanctions**, has been one of cautious engagement. India has called for adherence to **international law** and peaceful dispute resolution, while also pursuing **economic and energy interests**, particularly through projects like the **Chabahar Port**.

India's diplomatic posture in response to the **Russia-Ukraine crisis** and **West Asian conflicts** underscores its commitment to **strategic autonomy** and its selective engagement with multilateral platforms like the **UN**. While the UN's structural

Scholarly and Institutional Critiques of UN Ineffectiveness

Indian scholars, such as **Shyam Saran** and **Suhasini Haidar**, have critiqued the **UN's paralysis**, particularly the **Security Council's** inability to act due to **veto politics**. They argue that India's calls for **UN reform** and a **greater voice for the Global South** stem from frustration with the institution's inability to address contemporary crises effectively. Think tanks like **ORF** and **IDSA** highlight India's advocacy for **multilateralism**, while noting its growing willingness to act **independently** when global governance structures falter.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Realism:** India's stance on the Russia-Ukraine crisis and its broader foreign policy reflect **realist** principles, emphasizing **national interest**, **security**, and **strategic partnerships** over ideological commitments or alliances.
- ▶ **Liberal Institutionalism:** While India supports **multilateralism** in principle, its skepticism towards the **UN's efficacy** leads to selective engagement and coalition-building outside the UN framework, as seen in its proactive involvement in initiatives like the **BRICS** and **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**.
- ▶ **Constructivism:** India's identity as a leader of the **Global South** and its historical legacy of **non-alignment** continue to shape its diplomatic decisions, influencing its stance on international issues and positioning itself as a promoter of **equitable international governance**.

limitations have led to frustration, India continues to advocate for **global reform** and the **empowerment of the Global South**, while balancing its national interests. The evolving nature of India's foreign policy, as seen through its response to these crises, is characterized by a blend of **realist strategy**, **multilateral advocacy**, and **pragmatic idealism**, as India seeks to carve out a more prominent role in global governance

India's Demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, yet its structure has remained largely unchanged since 1945. India, among other countries, calls for reform to address several key issues.

- ▶ **Representation and Equity:** The current permanent membership of the UNSC reflects the post-World War II power structure, which India argues is outdated. Modern global realities show that countries like India play a significant role in international affairs and should be represented accordingly.
- ▶ **Global South Representation:** Including India in the UNSC would address the underrepresentation of the Global South, fostering a more balanced and equitable international order.
- ▶ **Economic and Demographic Significance:** As one of the world's largest economies and the second-most populous country, India's economic and demographic stature warrants a more substantial role in global decision-making forums like the UNSC.
- ▶ **Peacekeeping Contributions:** India is a major contributor to UN peacekeeping missions. Its longstanding commitment to peacekeeping supports its claim for a greater role in the Council, where peacekeeping decisions are made.
- ▶ **Nuclear Power Status:** As a nuclear-armed state, India's participation in the UNSC would enhance the Council's credibility in addressing nuclear proliferation and disarmament issues.

- ▶ **Regional Stability:** India's inclusion would bring a balanced perspective to the Council's discussions on Asian issues, thereby contributing to regional stability.

G4 AND COFFEE CLUB: UNSC REFORM DEBATE

▶ G4 COUNTRIES' STANCE

- ▶ **Members:** Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan.
- ▶ **Goal:** Advocate for UN Security Council (UNSC) reform to secure permanent seats, reflecting 21st-century geopolitical realities.
- ▶ **Justification:** As significant economic and regional powers, they argue that their contributions to global affairs merit permanent membership.
- ▶ **Strategy:** Mutual support for each other's bids, representing diverse global regions.

▶ COFFEE CLUB'S OPPOSITION

- ▶ **Members:** Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, South Korea (Uniting for Consensus - UfC).
- ▶ **Argument:** Oppose adding permanent seats, citing concerns over increasing the democratic deficit within the UNSC.
- ▶ **Preference:** Support adding non-permanent seats to ensure wider accessibility and rotation.
- ▶ **Motivation:** Driven by regional rivalries (e.g., Pakistan opposing India's bid) and advocating for more equitable geographic representation and a democratic UNSC.

Arguments for India's Inclusion in The UNSC

1. **Democratic Credentials:** India's robust democratic system enhances its credibility as a responsible international actor. It is often viewed as a counterbalance to authoritarian regimes in Asia.
2. **Economic Growth and Potential:** With its rapidly expanding economy and significant role in international trade and investment, India is crucial to global economic stability and development.
3. **Active International Engagement:** India's involvement in international platforms like the G20, BRICS, and the Non-Aligned Movement demonstrates its commitment to multilateralism and active diplomacy.
4. **Diverse and Pluralistic Society:** As a nation with a diverse and pluralistic society, India is well-equipped to understand and address a wide range of global issues, acting as a microcosm of the world.
5. **Counter-Terrorism Expertise:** India's extensive experience with cross-border terrorism and its proactive counter-terrorism initiatives are valuable for the UNSC's efforts in addressing global security challenges.
6. **Global Support:** India has received support for its UNSC bid from numerous countries, including the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France, reflecting its respected global standing.

Experts on India's Case for UNSC

1. **Expansion of Permanent Membership:** Scholars like **C. Raja Mohan** argue for the inclusion of India as a permanent member of the UNSC due to its significant economic and strategic role in global affairs. India's extensive contributions to UN peacekeeping missions further justify its inclusion.
2. **Veto Power:** **Rajesh Rajagopalan** discusses the contentious nature of the veto power, advocating for its abolition or limitation to democratize the Council's decision-making process.
3. **Regional Representation:** **Hardeep Singh Puri**, a former diplomat and current scholar, emphasizes the need for better regional representation. This includes not only India but also other underrepresented regions like Africa and Latin America.
4. **Reform in Working Methods:** Experts like **Meena Singh Roy** call for more transparency and inclusivity in the UNSC's working methods, criticizing the Council for being opaque and dominated by a few major powers.
5. **Addressing Contemporary Challenges:** Scholars like **Happymon Jacob** highlight the need for the UNSC to evolve in addressing contemporary global challenges such as terrorism, cyber threats, and climate change, emphasizing the Council's need to adapt its scope and approach to remain relevant.
6. **Equitable Geopolitical Representation:** Experts like **S. Y. Quraishi** argue for a UNSC structure that reflects the current geopolitical landscape, accommodating the rise of new powers and the relative decline of some traditional powers.
7. **India's Role and Contributions:** Scholars like **Srinath Raghavan** highlight India's long history of contributions to the UN, arguing that this legacy justifies a greater role for India in the UNSC's decision-making processes, particularly given its consistent engagement with UN missions and initiatives.

The Veto Power Debate: Should India Accept a Permanent UNSC Seat Without It?

The debate over India's status in a reformed United Nations Security Council (UNSC) centers on whether it should accept a **permanent seat without veto power** or insist on full parity with existing permanent members. The **Uniting for Consensus (UfC)** group, led by countries including Italy and Pakistan, favors expanding **non-permanent membership** rather than creating new permanent members with or without veto. They argue this approach would make the UNSC more representative, but critics believe it fails to fix the core power imbalance.

Indian policymakers like **Natwar Singh** and **Ambassador Nirupam Sen** argue that new permanent members must have **veto rights** to avoid a two-tier system. Commodore **Uday Bhaskar** adds that India and other aspiring powers should refuse seats without veto, as it would maintain the dominance of the original five permanent members.

Experts like **Ashley Tellis** point out that reluctance to grant veto rights stems from concerns about India's independent foreign policy, which may not always align with Western interests.

Though India has shown some flexibility by agreeing to delay veto discussions, it firmly insists that **true UNSC reform** requires equal rights for new permanent members. Accepting a seat without veto is seen as an inadequate compromise that would perpetuate existing inequalities.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Realism** explains India's pursuit of a **permanent UNSC seat** as a quest for **power and influence** in a competitive international system. India's peacekeeping contributions bolster its security and status among great powers.
- ▶ **Liberal Institutionalism** highlights India's active role in the UN as an example of **cooperation through international institutions**. Peacekeeping and multilateralism reflect India's commitment to **global governance and rule-based order**.
- ▶ **Constructivism** stresses the importance of **identity and norms**; India's peacekeeping reflects its self-image as a **responsible global actor** committed to peace and sovereignty, influencing its diplomatic strategies.
- ▶ The concept of **Collective Security** underpins India's peacekeeping role, emphasizing the **shared responsibility** of states to maintain international peace and the legitimacy India gains through this participation.

Key scholars and Statements

- ▶ **C. Raja Mohan**
 - ▶ Mohan argues that India's substantial contributions to **UN peacekeeping** and its growing global influence justify its claim to a **permanent UNSC seat**, aligning with India's aspirations for greater responsibility in global governance.
- ▶ **Ramesh Thakur**
 - ▶ Thakur emphasizes India's role as a leading peacekeeper and advocate for **UNSC reform**, suggesting that India's consistent engagement enhances the **legitimacy and effectiveness** of the United Nations.
- ▶ **Shashi Tharoor**
 - ▶ Tharoor notes that India's active participation in UN peacekeeping exemplifies its commitment to **multilateralism and global peace**, strengthening its case for greater influence in international decision-making bodies.
- ▶ **Arundhati Ghose**
 - ▶ Ghose highlights India's diplomatic efforts within the UN, linking India's **peacekeeping contributions** with its broader foreign policy goals of promoting **equity, global stability, and a reformed international order**.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

According to **Professor Jeffrey Sachs**, the **United Nations** is the most important political innovation of the 20th century, providing a platform for **global cooperation and peace**. India's active role in the UN reflects its commitment to these ideals.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's long standing contributions to **UN peacekeeping** and advocacy for **Security Council reform** underscore its role as a responsible global actor. Its demand for a **permanent seat** reflects evolving global realities and India's growing international stature.

Model Introduction 2:

UN peacekeeping was established in 1948 and is the second largest military force deployed abroad after the US military. India has been a **consistent contributor**, making peacekeeping a key part of its foreign policy and claim for a permanent UNSC seat.

Model Conclusion 2:

While challenges remain in **UNSC reform** and peacekeeping effectiveness, India's active engagement demonstrates its readiness for **greater responsibility**. Its contributions enhance global peace and support its rightful place among leading powers in the UN system.

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UNIT 7: INDIA AND NUCLEAR QUESTION

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

- ▶ Critically examine India's persistent refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) despite being recognized as a de facto nuclear power. (2024)
- ▶ Discuss the reasons behind India's refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). (2022)
- ▶ Examine the evolution of India's role in the global nuclear order. (2021)
- ▶ Discuss the efficacy of India's 'no first use' policy (nuclear weapons) in the context of the evolving strategic challenges from its neighbours. (2020)
- ▶ Given the recent developments in the region, do you think that there is a need to change India's 'No First Use (NFU)' nuclear policy? (2019)
- ▶ The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has failed to achieve the ultimate objective of Global Nuclear Disarmament. Discuss the deficiency in the provision of NPT. (2017)
- ▶ Critically analyse India's nuclear policy. (2016)
- ▶ In 1998, India declared itself as a nuclear weapon state. India refuses to sign NPT and CTBT. What would be the implications for India's nuclear policy in case it signs both the treaties? (2015)
- ▶ Discuss the grounds for India's opposition to NPT. (2014)
- ▶ India's Nuclear policy is deeply influenced by its cultural beliefs and the pragmatic approach of its foreign policy. Discuss. (2013)
- ▶ Is India's Nuclear doctrine a viable one? (2013)
- ▶ While India opposes NPT as discriminatory, it opposes CTBT on the ground of ineffectiveness. Comment. (2011)
- ▶ In the context of developments on the nuclear weapons front in the neighbourhood, do you think that any change in India's defence strategy is indicated? (2009)

Insights from PYQs

The questions on India's nuclear policy over the years reveal a clear focus on the evolving nature of India's stance on **nuclear weapons**, its policies, and its relationship with the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** and the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**.

- ▶ There is a consistent emphasis on examining **India's refusal to sign NPT**, and this theme has appeared in multiple questions, particularly in relation to global nuclear disarmament, **discriminatory provisions of the NPT**, and the **implications** for India's nuclear policy if it were to sign these treaties.
- ▶ This suggests that candidates should focus on understanding the **reasons behind India's opposition to NPT**—including its desire for **strategic autonomy, equity**, and concerns about being treated as a **second-class nuclear power**.

The **evolution of India's nuclear role** is another recurring theme, particularly its shift from **being a non-nuclear power** to a **de facto nuclear state post-1998**, and how it navigates the **global nuclear order**.

- ▶ Questions also delve into the efficacy and viability of India's '**No First Use (NFU)**' policy, especially in light of the **strategic challenges** posed by neighboring countries like **Pakistan** and **China**, and whether this policy should evolve given the changing security dynamics in the region.
- ▶ Aspirants should therefore prepare by evaluating the **strengths and weaknesses of the NFU policy** in the context of **regional nuclear dynamics**.

Another prominent theme is India's **nuclear doctrine**, which includes **credible minimum deterrence (CMD)** and its strategic approach to balancing **nuclear deterrence** with **global disarmament**.

- ▶ Key focus areas here include the impact of **India's cultural beliefs** on its **nuclear policy** and the **pragmatic approach** reflected in its foreign policy decisions. Aspirants should look at **how India's strategic culture** has influenced its **nuclear posture** and its approach to **international nuclear treaties**.

- ▶ Finally, the UPSC has shown interest in evaluating the **implications of India's nuclear policy** in the context of the **neighborhood**—especially with regard to Pakistan's nuclear weapons and China's growing nuclear arsenal.
- ▶ Questions like **"change in India's defense strategy"** reflect the need to critically analyze how India's nuclear doctrine responds to **regional nuclear proliferation** and evolving strategic challenges.

Therefore, aspirants should focus on the **global nuclear order**, the **NPT/CTBT debate**, **India's nuclear doctrine**, and the **regional security context**—particularly the **China-Pakistan dynamic**—and how these factors shape India's **nuclear policy**. Keeping up-to-date with current developments and understanding theoretical perspectives on **nuclear deterrence** and **international relations** will be essential to effectively answering these questions.

Introduction

India's nuclear journey has been a complex interplay of strategic, geopolitical, and security considerations. It reflects a pragmatic approach to safeguarding national interests while navigating the volatile dynamics of regional and global power.

Evolution of India's Nuclear Programme

| | |
|--|--|
| Developing a Peaceful Nuclear Program (1947-1974) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Under the guidance of Homi Bhabha, India initiated its nuclear program for peaceful purposes. ▶ The focus was on producing inexpensive electricity and achieving self-reliance in energy. ▶ Developing a complete nuclear fuel cycle provided India with the capability for nuclear weapons. |
| Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNEs) in 1974 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ India conducted its first "Peaceful Nuclear Explosion" in 1974, known as PNE. ▶ This test faced international condemnation and led to the formation of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). |
| Slow Path Toward Weaponization (1974-1998) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ India did not immediately weaponize its nuclear capability post-1974. ▶ In the late 1980s, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi authorized weaponization. ▶ India supported nuclear disarmament efforts and submitted an Action Plan to the UN General Assembly in 1988. ▶ The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiations and the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) reignited domestic pressure for further tests. ▶ In 1998, India conducted nuclear tests and declared itself a nuclear-weapon state. |
| Emerging Nuclear Power (1998-2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In 2003, India released its Nuclear Doctrine. ▶ Negotiations for U.S.-India nuclear cooperation began in 2005. ▶ The Hyde Act passed in 2006 enabled the bilateral 123 nuclear cooperation agreement in 2007. ▶ In 2008, India received an NSG exemption, allowing it to engage in nuclear trade |
| Established Nuclear Power (2009-Present) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ India ratified the IAEA Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage in 2016. ▶ By 2019, 26 Indian reactors were under IAEA safeguards. ▶ India signed nuclear cooperation agreements with several countries, facilitating international nuclear trade. |

Nehru's Stance on Nuclear Defence

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, articulated a clear stance: if India were threatened, it would defend itself by all means available.

C. Raja Mohan's Perspective: C. Raja Mohan emphasizes that India's decision to pursue nuclear weapons was a calculated risk. This decision balanced the need for security in a volatile neighbourhood with the desire for strategic autonomy.

▶ According to him:

- ▶ India's nuclear program embodies a cautious and pragmatic approach, considering the complex geopolitical realities of the region and global power dynamics.

- ▶ The timing of India's nuclear weapon acquisition was strategic, aimed at safeguarding its national security interests while adhering to broader foreign policy objectives.

Evolution of India's Nuclear Programme

- 1. Minimalist Approach-** Advocated by K. Subrahmanyam and Ashley Tellis, this approach emphasizes a limited and modest nuclear arsenal sufficient to deter potential adversaries and maintain strategic stability.
- 2. Middle Path-** Supported by General K. Sundarji, this approach suggests maintaining an adequate nuclear force structure to ensure deterrence, balancing minimalistic and expansive approaches.
- 3. Maximalist Approach-** Promoted by Bharat Karnad, Jayant Prasad, and others, this view argues for a larger, more robust nuclear arsenal, including thermonuclear capabilities, to enhance India's status as a great power and counter threats from China and Pakistan.
- 4. Satish Chandra's Perspective-** Chandra proposes a flexible and open-ended nuclear arsenal based on threat perceptions, advocating for a capability to inflict "unacceptable damage" on both Pakistan and China.

Therefore, India's nuclear program reflects a blend of strategic foresight and pragmatic decision-making. Despite various challenges, India has successfully established itself as a nuclear power and continues to engage in international nuclear trade and cooperation, thereby solidifying its position on the global stage.

Reasons for India Acquiring Nuclear Weapons

- ▶ **Security Concerns vis-à-vis China-** India's primary motivation for developing nuclear weapons was its security concerns regarding China. China's nuclear capabilities and assertive regional behaviour created a sense of vulnerability for India, prompting the need for a credible deterrent.
- ▶ **Discontent with the Global Non-Proliferation Regime-** India's dissatisfaction with the global non-proliferation regime, particularly the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), played a significant role. India viewed the NPT as biased and discriminatory, perpetuating a division between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, which it found unacceptable.
- ▶ **Concerns About Pakistan's Nuclear Ambitions-** Intelligence reports and assessments indicating that Pakistan was developing nuclear weapons further exacerbated India's security concerns. The regional nuclear rivalry with Pakistan intensified India's resolve to develop its own nuclear capabilities.
- ▶ **Loss of the Soviet Nuclear Umbrella-** The disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in India losing the security assurances it had under the USSR's nuclear umbrella during the Cold War, heightening India's perceived security vulnerabilities.
- ▶ **Pressure from the United States to Sign the CTBT-** India faced significant international pressure, particularly from the United States, to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, India was reluctant to sign, viewing the treaty as an impediment to its nuclear development and sovereignty.
- ▶ **Confidence Boost from the New Economic Policy-** India's economic liberalization and globalization under the New Economic Policy in the early 1990s instilled newfound confidence in its economic and diplomatic capabilities. This bolstered India's belief that it could withstand international sanctions while pursuing its nuclear program.
- ▶ **Domestic Factors and Nationalistic Sentiments-** Domestic factors, including rightist ideology and nationalistic sentiments, also influenced India's decision. The desire for global recognition and prestige motivated Indian scientists and policymakers.

Criticism of India's Nuclear Weapons Program

- ▶ **Regional Arms Race-** India's decision to develop nuclear weapons triggered a nuclear arms race in South Asia, escalating tensions with Pakistan.
- ▶ **Undermining Global Non-Proliferation Efforts-** India's nuclearization was perceived as undermining global non-proliferation efforts and the NPT, challenging the existing international framework.
- ▶ **Proliferation Concerns-** India's move raised concerns about nuclear proliferation, particularly as Pakistan received nuclear assistance from North Korea.
- ▶ **Impact on West Asia-** India's nuclear tests heightened anxieties about nuclearization in West Asia, given the region's political tensions.
- ▶ **Effectiveness as a Deterrent-** Critics questioned the effectiveness of nuclear weapons as deterrents, citing instances like the Kargil conflict where nuclear deterrence did not prevent conventional warfare.

- ▶ **Risk of Nuclear Terrorism-** There is a significant concern about the risk of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors, leading to potential nuclear terrorism.
- ▶ **Opportunity Cost-** Critics argue that the resources devoted to the nuclear program could have been better utilized for developmental purposes, addressing India's socio-economic challenges.

India's Nuclear Doctrine

India's nuclear doctrine has evolved to emphasize credible minimum deterrence and no-first-use (NFU) against non-nuclear weapon states. In August 1999, the Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND), prepared by the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), was released. The official doctrine, announced in January 2003, included the possibility of nuclear retaliation against attacks with chemical and biological weapons and affirmed a massive retaliation policy for any nuclear attack.

1. This doctrine, emphasizes that nuclear weapons are solely for deterrence and that India will only use them in retaliation against a nuclear attack on its territory or on its forces anywhere.
2. The policy aims to deter adversaries by ensuring a retaliatory strike that would inflict unacceptable damage, thereby maintaining strategic stability in the region.
3. Additionally, India's doctrine underlines the importance of maintaining a robust and survivable nuclear arsenal, ensuring second-strike capability through a triad of land-based missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic aircraft.
4. The doctrine also includes a pledge not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states.

Analysis of India's Nuclear Security Doctrine (2003)

1. No-First-Use (NFU) Commitment

- ▶ **Dominant View:** The NFU policy enhances India's credibility as a responsible nuclear power and reinforces its commitment to non-proliferation. Proponents believe it promotes stability and reduces the risk of nuclear escalation.
- ▶ **Opposing View:** Critics argue that NFU limits India's strategic flexibility and response options in the face of nuclear aggression. They suggest that the doctrine should not be unconditionally binding to maintain strategic deterrence.

2. Credible Minimum Deterrence

- ▶ **Dominant View:** This concept involves maintaining a modest nuclear arsenal sufficient to deter potential adversaries from initiating nuclear aggression.
- ▶ **Opposing View:** Critics argue that the concept lacks clarity, leading to debates over the exact size and composition of India's nuclear arsenal. They advocate for more explicit definitions and guidelines for a robust deterrence posture.

3. Nuclear Retaliation to Chemical and Biological Weapons (CBW) Attacks

- ▶ **Dominant View:** India's doctrine reserves the right to retaliate with nuclear weapons in response to CBW attacks, aiming to deter adversaries from using such weapons against India.
- ▶ **Opposing View:** Critics express concerns about the proportionality and credibility of nuclear retaliation to CBW attacks, arguing that it might escalate conflicts and raise questions about India's adherence to the principle of minimum force.

4. Command-and-Control Aspects

- ▶ **Dominant View:** A centralized command-and-control system ensures effective management of India's nuclear forces, enhancing decision-making efficiency and preventing unauthorized use.
- ▶ **Opposing View:** Some argue that the system should undergo further scrutiny to address potential vulnerabilities, improve communication channels, and increase transparency.

5. Massive Retaliation

- ▶ **Dominant View:** The idea of "massive retaliation" has faced widespread criticism. Many within India's strategic community reject the notion of using nuclear weapons in a massive and disproportionate manner.
- ▶ **Opposing View:** Critics argue that the language of "massive retaliation" should be re-evaluated to ensure a more nuanced and proportional response to nuclear threats. They advocate for a more calibrated approach to deterrence.

Perspectives on Credible Minimum Deterrence

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Moderates' View | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Effective Command and Control: Moderates emphasize the importance of a reliable command and control system, ensuring survivability and prompt retaliation. ▶ No Need for Numerical Parity: They argue that India does not need numerical superiority or parity with adversaries as long as it has a viable retaliatory capability. S. Subramanian noted that what matters is the adversary's calculation of the punishment they can accept. ▶ Fits India's Strategic Culture: Moderates believe that credible minimum deterrence aligns with India's strategic culture, emphasizing virtual deterrence through keeping nuclear weapons unassembled and undeveloped. |
| Expansionists' View | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Need for a Larger Nuclear Arsenal: Expansionists advocate for a more ambitious nuclear force, arguing that India requires a larger and more powerful arsenal to strengthen its deterrent posture. ▶ Importance of ICBMs: They stress the necessity of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to bolster India's deterrence capabilities, especially considering evolving regional security dynamics. ▶ Dynamic Arsenal Size: Expansionists contend that the size of India's nuclear arsenal should be open-ended and adaptable, considering changing threat perceptions and potential adversaries. |

Scholars' and Experts' Views on India's Nuclear Policy

1. **Bharat Karnad- View on Minimum Deterrence:** Karnad criticizes the concept of "minimum" nuclear deterrence, seeing it as a military liability. He envisions a more significant role for nuclear weapons in India's ascent as a great power.
2. **Rajesh Basrur- Critique of Policy Clarity:** Basrur highlights the lack of clarity in India's approach to minimum deterrence, suggesting a drift in nuclear doctrine. He posits that India may have shifted from deterrence to compellence, particularly after the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament.
3. **Jayant Prasad- Advocacy for Minimum Credible Deterrence:** Prasad calls for redefining "minimum deterrence" to "Minimum Credible Deterrence" due to its ambiguous nature. He stresses the need for clearer operational aspects.
4. **Raja Menon- Mismatched Doctrine:** Menon points out inconsistencies in India's nuclear doctrine, urging a reassessment to align objectives with capabilities.
5. **Brahma Chellaney- Need for ICBMs:** Chellaney argues for intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to support India's doctrine of minimum credible deterrence and expresses concern over the deteriorating state of Indian nuclear forces.

Debate on No First Use (NFU) Policy

- ▶ In 2014, the BJP's election manifesto included a promise to "revise and update" India's nuclear doctrine, leading to speculation about changes to the NFU policy.
- ▶ Former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar expressed personal reservations about the NFU, questioning its binding nature.
- ▶ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in 2019 stated that while India is committed to NFU, future policy would depend on circumstances.

Critics of NFU Policy

1. **Bharat Karnad:** Criticizes India's practice of keeping nuclear weapons demoted due to logistical and bureaucratic issues, advocating for a more robust nuclear arsenal.
2. **P.R. Chari:** Raises concerns that NFU might undermine deterrence against Pakistan, potentially encouraging their use of tactical nuclear weapons.
3. **Vipin Narang:** Discusses the possibility of a pre-emptive first strike against Pakistan's nuclear reserves, given India's conventional military superiority.
4. **Rear Admiral Raja Menon:** Believes growing capabilities might influence India's posture, which lacked credible first-use capability in 1998.
5. **BS Nagal:** Argues against massive destruction of civilian centres, highlighting moral implications.

Supporters of NFU Policy

1. **K. Subramaniam:** Believes effective deterrence is about the perception of survivable nuclear capability, not sheer numbers.
2. **Manpreet Sethi:** Supports NFU as it is less costly, aligns with India's aversion to nuclear weapons, and avoids hair-

trigger alerts.

3. Admiral Verghese Koithara: Argues NFU reduces complexity and expense of maintaining a complicated command-and-control system, and avoids an arms race.
4. Rajesh Basrur: Suggests Pakistan's refusal of NFU does not significantly alter actual deployment patterns.
5. Shivshankar Menon: Supports NFU, reflecting confidence in India's second-strike capabilities.
6. Rakesh Sood: Highlights India's lack of first-strike capability to completely eliminate Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.
7. Harsh V. Pant: Cautions that changing NFU could harm India's prospects with the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and its image as a responsible nuclear power.
8. Manoj Joshi: Emphasizes considering China, in addition to Pakistan, before changing the nuclear doctrine.

Therefore, the dominant opinion in India favours maintaining the NFU policy, as affirmed by the Ministry of External Affairs in response to a Lok Sabha question, clarifying no changes to the NFU policy. There is a broad consensus within the Indian strategic community that India's nuclear doctrine should be periodically reviewed and that more information about the doctrine and policy should be released to deter adversaries and inform public debate.

Reigniting the Nuclear Debate: Scholarly Perspectives on India's Nuclear Policy Post-Pahalgam

The April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack has sparked a significant re-examination of India's nuclear doctrine, particularly its No First Use (NFU) policy, with global and Indian experts debating its effectiveness in an era of asymmetric warfare. Below is a synthesis of scholarly perspectives and strategic frameworks shaping the ongoing discourse.

1. Reassessing the No First Use (NFU) Doctrine

- ▶ **Post-Pahalgam Rhetoric:** Following the Pahalgam attack, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh criticized Pakistan's nuclear threats and called for international supervision of its nuclear arsenal, signaling growing doubts about the relevance of NFU. Scholars like Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan (ORF) argue that the NFU policy limits India's flexibility in responding to proxy wars and tactical nuclear threats.
- ▶ **Operational Realities:** According to the Belfer Center, India's commitment to NFU has shown signs of weakening, with nuclear investments in MIRV-equipped Agni-V missiles and nuclear submarines indicating a shift toward more flexible deterrence capabilities. This shift is in line with C. Raja Mohan's advocacy for doctrinal ambiguity to counter Pakistan's "full-spectrum deterrence."

2. Counterforce Strategies and Escalation Risks

- ▶ **Operation Sindoor's Precedent:** India's conventional retaliatory strikes under Operation Sindoor exemplify a strategy of calibrated escalation, which avoids triggering nuclear conflict while degrading terror infrastructure. Dr. Walter Ladwig (RUSI) supports this approach, emphasizing the value of precision strikes in maintaining strategic stability.
- ▶ **Nuclear Brinkmanship:** Hans Kristensen (Federation of American Scientists) warns that even limited strikes targeting key assets could push Pakistan, which lacks a no-first-use policy, toward the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons like the Nasr missile. This resonates with Shyam Saran's concerns about the fragility of nuclear red lines in the South Asian context.

3. Regional Dynamics and Great-Power Calculus

- ▶ **China's Nuclear Buildup:** Rajagopalan highlights the challenges posed by China's expanding nuclear arsenal, estimated at around 500 warheads, and its potential support to Pakistan. This complicates India's deterrent strategy, prompting calls for qualitative advancements in India's nuclear capabilities to maintain credible minimum deterrence.
- ▶ **Multilateral Pressures:** The Belfer Center stresses the failure of multilateral institutions to mediate crises between India and Pakistan, advocating for renewed efforts via forums like the Nuclear Security Summit. This aligns with Shivshankar Menon's criticism of the ad hoc diplomacy practiced by India, as outlined in his book Choices.

4. Theoretical Frameworks

- ▶ **Realist Perspective:** Scholars like John Mearsheimer argue that India's post-Pahalgam actions are a rational response to Pakistan's asymmetric strategies and China's nuclear rise. The shift toward counterforce capabilities reflects offensive realism, which emphasizes the necessity of power balancing in the face of adversarial threats.
- ▶ **Liberal Institutionalism:** Andrew Heywood critiques India's unilateralism following Pahalgam, advocating for stronger counterterrorism frameworks through multilateral institutions like the UN and FATF to isolate Pakistan economically, rather than relying solely on military deterrence.

India's Role in Global Disarmament and the Global Nuclear Order

India's position in the global nuclear order is multifaceted and has undergone significant evolution. As a nuclear-armed state that has not joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), India balances its security needs with its aspirations for influencing global nuclear governance.

- ▶ **Support for Comprehensive Nuclear Disarmament:** India has consistently advocated for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, viewing them as a global security threat. Actively participating in multilateral disarmament forums, India stresses the need for nuclear-armed states to reduce and eventually dismantle their arsenals.
- ▶ **Non-Proliferation Commitment:** Despite not being an NPT signatory, India adheres to a policy of responsible nuclear behaviour and non-proliferation. It maintains strict export controls and safeguards its nuclear technology and materials to prevent their unauthorized transfer to other countries or non-state actors.
- ▶ **Advocacy for Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT):** India strongly supports the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) aimed at halting the production of fissile materials (highly enriched uranium and plutonium) for nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to global disarmament efforts.
- ▶ **Commitment to No-First-Use (NFU) Policy:** India's nuclear doctrine includes a No-First-Use policy, pledging not to use nuclear weapons first in any conflict. This policy serves as a confidence-building measure to prevent nuclear escalation and enhance regional stability.
- ▶ **Engaging in Disarmament Forums:** India actively participates in international forums and organizations dedicated to disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Through these platforms, India engages in constructive dialogue to promote disarmament goals.
- ▶ **Role in the United Nations:** As a responsible member of the United Nations, India has supported and contributed to UN efforts on disarmament and arms control. It consistently emphasizes the importance of multilateral negotiations and consensus-building in achieving disarmament objectives.
- ▶ **Conventional Disarmament:** India also supports efforts for conventional disarmament, advocating for the reduction of conventional arms and military expenditures to promote regional and global stability.

India's Position on Key Treaties

- ▶ **NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty):** India remains outside the NPT, which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The treaty allows five recognized nuclear-weapon states (NWS) to possess nuclear weapons while obligating non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) to refrain from acquiring them. Despite its structural flaws and the exclusion of India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea, the NPT remains crucial in controlling nuclear proliferation.
- ▶ **CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty):** India is not a signatory to the CTBT, which seeks to ban all nuclear explosions for both civilian and military purposes.

India's Stance on the NPT

India has opted not to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) due to several key concerns and strategic imperatives.

- ▶ **Perceived Discriminatory Nature-** India views the NPT as inherently discriminatory because it establishes a clear division between the five recognized nuclear-weapon states (NWS)—the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China—and non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS).
 - ▶ The treaty permits the NWS to maintain their nuclear arsenals while obliging the NNWS to forgo the development of nuclear weapons. This differentiation is seen as unjust by India.
- ▶ **Security Concerns-** India's security landscape, characterized by nuclear-armed neighbours such as China and Pakistan, significantly influenced its decision not to join the NPT.
 - ▶ India believes that possessing nuclear weapons is essential for maintaining credible deterrence and ensuring national security against potential adversaries in the region.
- ▶ **Sovereignty and Strategic Autonomy-** India places a high value on sovereignty and independence in its foreign policy. Joining the NPT would involve accepting external constraints and norms on its nuclear program, which India perceives as a compromise of its strategic autonomy and decision-making independence.
- ▶ **Lack of Progress on Disarmament-** India has criticized the NPT for its failure to achieve substantial progress towards nuclear disarmament among the recognized nuclear-weapon states. India argues that the NPT has not effectively addressed vertical proliferation, which involves the reduction and eventual elimination of existing nuclear arsenals by the NWS.

► **Emphasis on Self-Reliance-** India's decision is also driven by its desire for self-reliance in nuclear technology and capabilities. The country has pursued an independent path in developing nuclear energy and defence technologies, including nuclear weapons, to ensure that it can meet its own security and energy needs without reliance on external powers.

► **Domestic and Political Considerations-** Domestic sentiment and political dynamics have also played a significant role in shaping India's stance on the NPT. The issue of nuclear weapons is deeply entwined with national pride and security, influencing public opinion and political decision-making to favour maintaining an independent nuclear policy.

Therefore, India's decision not to join the NPT is rooted in its concerns about the treaty's discriminatory nature, its regional security challenges, the need to preserve sovereignty and strategic autonomy, the lack of disarmament progress, and the emphasis on self-reliance.

By maintaining an independent nuclear policy, India seeks to address its security challenges and uphold its national interests in a region with nuclear-armed neighbors.

India's Position on the CTBT

► India's stance on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is principled and firm. India has stated that it cannot sign and ratify the CTBT in its current form, which it views as discriminatory.

► However, India has committed to a voluntary and unilateral moratorium on further nuclear testing.

► Notably, India is the only nuclear-armed state that believes its security would be enhanced in a world without nuclear weapons.

Potential Benefits of Joining the CTBT

► **Facilitation of Nuclear Deals:** Joining the CTBT could ease India's accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and other international nuclear agreements.

► **Access to International Monitoring:** Membership would grant India access to information from the International Monitoring System (IMS), aiding in tracking global peace and non-proliferation efforts, particularly concerning countries like Pakistan.

Reasons for Not Signing the CTBT

► **Non-Signatories:** Alongside Pakistan and North Korea, India has not signed the CTBT, whereas the US and China have signed but not ratified it.

► **Perceived Discrimination:** India views the treaty as biased against non-P5 countries and believes it unfairly targets nations like India that recently developed nuclear capabilities.

► **Exclusion of Modern Tests:** The treaty does not account for electronic and digital nuclear tests.

► **Ongoing Nuclear Tests:** Continued testing by countries like North Korea undermines the treaty's effectiveness.

► **No Disarmament Time Frame:** The treaty lacks a specific timeline for complete nuclear disarmament.

► **Entry into Force Clause:** The clause requires ratification by 44 countries with nuclear capabilities, which India finds unreasonable.

► **Pressure on India:** India feels the treaty imposes undue pressure to sign.

Therefore, while India supports global disarmament, it remains cautious about agreements that could prejudice its security. India has expressed support for the proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), viewing it as a more balanced approach to non-proliferation.

Multilateral Export Control Regimes and India

Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECRs) are voluntary, non-binding agreements among major supplier countries to regulate the transfer of certain military and dual-use technologies, aiming to prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

India is a member of three out of four key MECRs.

1. Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) - 2016

► **Membership:** India joined the MTCR in 2016.

► **Purpose:** The MTCR aims to prevent the proliferation of missiles and missile technology capable of carrying WMDs.

► **Benefits:** India's membership allows access to sensitive missile-related technologies and promotes responsible non-proliferation practices.

2. Wassenaar Arrangement - 2017

► **Membership:** India was admitted to the Wassenaar Arrangement in 2017.

- ▶ **Purpose:** This regime regulates the export of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.
- ▶ **Benefits:** Membership enhances India's access to advanced technologies and demonstrates its commitment to responsible export controls.

3. Australia Group - 2018

- ▶ **Membership:** India became a member of the Australia Group in 2018.
- ▶ **Purpose:** The group coordinates efforts to control the export of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technologies.
- ▶ **Benefits:** Membership strengthens India's ability to prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

Therefore, India's involvement in these multilateral export control regimes signifies its growing recognition as a responsible actor in international non-proliferation efforts. Through these memberships, India engages in legitimate trade and technology transfers while adhering to global non-proliferation norms and ensuring robust security measures.

India and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

India's efforts to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) have been consistently blocked by China and some other members. Despite these obstacles, there are several compelling reasons why India should be granted NSG membership.

▶ Reasons for India's NSG Membership

- ▶ **Responsible Nuclear Power:** India has maintained a positive record on non-proliferation and actively supports comprehensive nuclear disarmament.
- ▶ **Strategic Triad:** India possesses a credible minimum deterrence posture with a fully developed nuclear triad, ensuring its nuclear capability is balanced and responsible.
- ▶ **Export-Control Mechanism:** NSG membership would enhance India's access to advanced nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes.
- ▶ **Precedent for Non-NPT Signatories:** France joined the NSG before acceding to the NPT, setting a precedent for India's inclusion despite not being a signatory.
- ▶ **Support from Major NSG Members:** Key NSG members, including the US, Russia, Switzerland, and Japan, support India's membership bid.
- ▶ **Commitment to FMCT:** India actively supports negotiations for a universal and verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).
- ▶ **Reducing Nuclear Danger:** India has proposed measures to reduce the risks of accidental use of nuclear weapons.

India's responsible nuclear conduct, strategic capabilities, and support for disarmament make it a deserving candidate for NSG membership, with the backing of several major NSG members.

▶ Obstacles to India's NSG Membership

- ▶ **Non-Signatory to NPT:** India's bid for NSG membership faces opposition due to its status as a non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- ▶ **China's Blockade:** China insists on non-discriminatory procedures for the entry of non-NPT countries into the NSG.
- ▶ **Linkage with Pakistan:** China has linked India's membership bid with Pakistan's, creating further obstacles. However, Pakistan's credentials for NSG membership are often questioned.

Therefore, India's bid for NSG membership is primarily hindered by its non-NPT signatory status and China's demand for equal treatment for all non-NPT countries. The linkage with Pakistan's bid has further complicated the process, despite India's credentials as a responsible nuclear power.

▶ Reasons for China's Opposition

- ▶ **Norm-Based Entry:** Beijing wants NSG entry to be "norm-based," meaning that whatever rules govern Indian entry should apply to other non-NPT countries as well.
- ▶ **Strategic Concerns:** According to Rakesh Sood, China's opposition may stem from a perception that India's growing nuclear capabilities, including long-range missiles and SSBNs, could threaten China's status as the leading nuclear power in Asia.
- ▶ **Historical Precedents:** Sood also points out that countries like France were inducted into the NSG without signing the NPT, and that China itself did not fully adhere to non-proliferation criteria.

Way Forward

- ▶ **Persistent Advocacy:** Harsh V. Pant suggests that while NSG membership may not be immediately achievable, India should continue to present its case to keep its claim alive in the international community.
- ▶ **Diplomatic Approach:** Shyam Saran advises against making NSG membership an elemental issue between India and China. Instead, he advocates for a more quiet and calibrated diplomatic effort.

Linkages to the theories of IR

- ▶ **Realism** explains India's nuclear policy as a pursuit of security and power in an anarchic world. The nuclear arsenal acts as a deterrent against threats, ensuring survival and strategic autonomy in a hostile regional environment.
- ▶ **Constructivism** highlights how India's nuclear identity is shaped by historical experiences, cultural values, and norms emphasizing responsible use and restraint, including the "no first use" pledge, reflecting its unique strategic culture.
- ▶ **Liberal Institutionalism** accounts for India's engagement in multilateral disarmament forums and export control regimes. India supports global norms and institutions for nuclear safety and non-proliferation, balancing its independent posture with international cooperation.
- ▶ The concept of **Deterrence Theory** underpins India's nuclear doctrine, focusing on credible minimum deterrence to prevent aggression through assured retaliation, thus maintaining regional and strategic stability.

Key scholars and Statements

- ▶ **Bharat Karnad**
 - ▶ Karnad criticizes India's minimal deterrence doctrine, advocating for a larger nuclear arsenal to secure India's great power ambitions and to better counter regional threats.
- ▶ **Rajesh Basur**
 - ▶ Basur points out the ambiguity in India's nuclear doctrine, suggesting a shift from pure deterrence to compellence, especially after heightened tensions post-2001 Parliament attack.
- ▶ **Jayant Prasad**
 - ▶ Prasad calls for clearer operational definitions in India's doctrine, emphasizing the importance of maintaining **minimum credible deterrence** to ensure strategic stability and prevent escalation.
- ▶ **C. Raja Mohan**
 - ▶ Mohan views India's nuclear weapons program as a pragmatic choice, balancing security needs with foreign policy goals to maintain strategic autonomy amid complex geopolitical realities.

Model Introductions and Conclusions

Model Introduction 1:

India's **Nuclear Doctrine**, framed around the principle of **credible minimum deterrence (CMD)**, seeks to maintain a balance between national security and strategic restraint. As **Kenneth Waltz** argued, nuclear weapons are intended not for offensive purposes but to prevent war by ensuring mutual destruction. India's adoption of a **no-first-use (NFU)** policy reflects its commitment to responsible nuclear governance, aligning with **realist** theories of deterrence while emphasizing strategic stability in South Asia.

Model Conclusion 1:

In conclusion, India's **Nuclear Doctrine** is a delicate balance of **restraint and deterrence**, aiming to ensure national security while promoting peace and stability. As **Mahan** emphasized, power must be wielded prudently. India's commitment to **no-first-use** and **credible deterrence** serves as a counterbalance to regional threats, though its future trajectory will be shaped by evolving security dynamics and the strategic choices of its neighbors.

Model Introduction 2:

India's **Nuclear Doctrine**, deeply rooted in the pursuit of **strategic autonomy**, reflects the broader philosophy of **non-proliferation** and **global disarmament**, as articulated by **M.K. Gandhi** and later **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**. As **John Mearsheimer**

Model Conclusion 2:

India's nuclear stance underscores its commitment to **credible minimum deterrence** and **no first use**, ensuring regional stability amid evolving threats. While engaging in global non-proliferation efforts, India safeguards its

notes in his **Offensive Realism theory**, nuclear weapons serve as the ultimate deterrent, preserving state sovereignty. India's nuclear doctrine, while primarily defensive, also emphasizes its aspirations for a rules-based international order in the context of regional tensions with Pakistan and China.

strategic autonomy and security interests.

Model Introduction 3:

Since declaring itself a nuclear power in 1998, India has pursued a nuclear doctrine centered on **deterrence and responsible use**. It balances security imperatives with calls for **global disarmament** and remains committed to an independent nuclear path.

Model Conclusion 3:

Despite international pressure, India's nuclear doctrine reflects a pragmatic response to its security environment. By maintaining an independent nuclear posture and supporting disarmament dialogue, India asserts itself as a responsible and influential nuclear power.



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UNIT-8 – Recent Developments in Indian Foreign Policy

Previous year Questions (PYQs)

India's position on the recent crises in Afghanistan, Iraq, and West Asia

- ⊕ What steps has India taken to regain its foothold in Afghanistan since the Taliban has taken over the country in August 2021? (2023)
- ⊕ What are the challenges and limitations in India-Iran relations? (2023)
- ⊕ How does the recent takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban impact India's strategic interests? (2021)
- ⊕ "The war in Afghanistan is crucial from the point of view of India's national security. If the Americans withdraw and Jihadis emerge with a sense of triumphalism, India will face increasing onslaught of terrorism." Comment. (2020)
- ⊕ Write a brief note on India's interests in West Asia. (2019)
- ⊕ How is the current standoff between the USA and Iran affecting India's energy security?(2019)
- ⊕ Do you think that India's capacity building role in Afghanistan has shrunk the strategic space for Pakistan there? Discuss. (2018)
- ⊕ Discuss the humanitarian role played by india in the crisis-stricken Gulf countries like Yemen and Iraq. (2015)
- ⊕ "Afghanistan is a litmus test for India's ascendance as a regional and global power." Discuss. (2014)
- ⊕ Examine the implications of turmoil in Iraq and West Asia for India's security and foreign policy concerns. (2014)
- ⊕ Is it correct to conclude that the 'Arab Street' revolutions have radically altered the political power scenario of the West Asian countries? (2012)
- ⊕ To what extent is India's policy in regard to Afghanistan dictated by a vision of ' Global South' , rather than compulsions ? (2009)

Growing relations with US and Israel

- ⊕ How does India-Israel bilateral ties reflect the autonomy of India's foreign policy choices? (2022)
- ⊕ Identify the key sectors of cooperation between India and Israel since 2014. Examine their significance in strengthening the bilateral ties between the two countries. (2020)
- ⊕ "The growing closeness between India and Israel will strengthen the cause of Palestine." Comment.(2019)
- ⊕ Has the recent Indo-Israeli relationships given a new dynamics to India's stand on Palestinian statehood? (2017)
- ⊕ In the history of foreign policy, seldom have relations between any two nations blossomed as fast as they have in the case of India and Israel. Discuss. (2014)
- ⊕ Can Israel be termed a 'natural ally' of India? (2010)
- ⊕ Examine India's response to the Af-Pak policy of the US. (2011)

Vision of a new world order

Discuss India's vision of a New World order in the 21st century. (2022)

- ⊕ Write about the growing significance of QUAD. (2021)
- ⊕ Critically examine the role of India in shaping the emerging world order. (2020)
- ⊕ How is India responding to the idea of Indo-Pacific? (2019)
- ⊕ Evaluate India's vision of a new world order. (2019)

PYQs trend Analysis

The questions on recent developments in Indian foreign policy emphasize several key themes that are critical for aspirants to focus on.

- ⊕ A recurring theme is India's engagement with Afghanistan, particularly after the Taliban takeover in 2021. Questions

examine India's strategic interests in the region, including the humanitarian role it plays and its efforts to regain its foothold following the withdrawal of Western forces

- ⦿ Another major theme is India's relations with West Asia, including the challenges in India-Iran relations and the impact of the US-Iran standoff on India's energy security. Additionally, the humanitarian aspects of India's engagement in countries like Yemen and Iraq highlight the importance of soft power in India's foreign policy.
- ⦿ The growing India-Israel bilateral ties feature prominently, with questions exploring the autonomy of India's foreign policy choices in its dealings with Israel, especially in areas such as defense cooperation and counter-terrorism.
- ⦿ The evolving dynamics between India and Israel are also scrutinized in terms of their implications for India's stance on Palestinian statehood and Israel as a natural ally. This shows that India's relationships with non-traditional allies are being examined in relation to its broader foreign policy strategy.
- ⦿ Lastly, questions related to India's vision of a new world order and its response to the Indo-Pacific and QUAD suggest a focus on India's role in shaping the emerging global order.
- ⦿ Aspirants should focus on India's multilateral engagements, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, its efforts to balance relations with major powers like the US and China, and its role in organizations such as QUAD and IBSA.

Understanding India's strategic autonomy, global leadership aspirations, and response to shifting power dynamics will be key for tackling these questions effectively. The repeated focus on geopolitical stability, energy security, regional conflicts, and global diplomacy suggests that aspirants should have a strong grasp of India's foreign policy priorities, international relations, and security concerns

India- West Asia

Significance of West Asia for India

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Geo-Strategic Importance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Security Concerns: The proximity of West Asia to India's western border makes it an extended neighbourhood that directly impacts India's security. ▶ Geographical Unity: The Arabian Sea serves as a bridge, emphasizing the need for stability in West Asia for India's security. |
| Geo-Economic Considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Energy Dependency: India heavily relies on West Asia's oil reserves to fuel its economic growth. ▶ Diaspora Contribution: Over 7 million Indian expatriates in West Asia contribute approximately US\$ 40 billion in remittances annually. ▶ Trade Routes Security: Ensuring the safety of sea lanes passing through the Gulf, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean is crucial for India's trade. |
| Maritime Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Changing Dynamics: With the US traditionally ensuring security, evolving regional dynamics provide space for India to take a larger role in maritime security, as seen in the Indian Navy's participation in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. |
| Internal Security Concerns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Religious Extremism: The rise of extremism in West Asia poses a threat to regional stability and India's internal security. ▶ Terrorism Threat: Groups like ISIS and their potential influence on local activities in India are significant concerns. |
| Geopolitical Significance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Peaceful Periphery: India's higher growth rate requires a peaceful extended periphery, but ongoing conflicts in West Asia hinder this. ▶ West Asia's political dynamics, characterized by regional rivalries and conflicts, have significant implications for India's national security. ▶ India navigates complex relationships with major regional players such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel, balancing its interests to foster stability and prevent escalation of conflicts that could disrupt global markets and impact India's economic interests. |

Recent Developments and Their Impact on India

- Economic and Financial Integration:** The implementation of the Rupee-Dirham settlement system between India and the UAE enhances trade efficiency and reduces dependency on third-party currencies like the USD.
- Security and Defence Cooperation:** India has intensified its defence and security cooperation with West Asian countries, including joint military exercises and naval cooperation agreements, enhancing its strategic footprint in the region.
- Healthcare and Space Technology Cooperation:** India has engaged in various agreements with countries like Oman, Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia to enhance cooperation in healthcare and space technology.
- Impact of Regional Instability:** The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict has significant implications for regional stability, requiring diplomatic and strategic recalibrations by India.
- Climate Change Initiatives:** At COP 28, hosted by the UAE, India promoted its Green Credit initiative, showcasing leadership in global environmental governance.

Expert Perspectives

- ▶ Shivshankar Menon: Advocates for a more active forward policy in West Asia to pursue India's growing geo-strategic interests.
- ▶ Manoj Joshi: Emphasizes the need for India to navigate carefully to ensure maximum gain while avoiding political minefields.
- ▶ Rajiv Bhatia: Highlights the transformation in India's relations with West Asia, marked by pragmatism as the guiding principle.

India's Evolving Foreign Policy Towards West Asia

India's ambition to establish itself as a powerful and prosperous state in Asia has significantly influenced its foreign policy towards West Asia. Over the years, New Delhi has adapted its approach to suit the evolving needs of global politics, transitioning from the ideologically-driven Non-Aligned Movement to a policy based on greater pragmatism.

Transformation of India's Approach

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, **India's foreign policy has evolved to shed its traditionally inward-looking image. Modi's "Link and Act West" policy has spurred India's active engagement with West Asia, fostering economic diplomacy and strategic partnerships in the region.**

Change in Bilateral Engagements

- ▶ **India-Israel Relations:** Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1992, India's ties with Israel have seen a transformative shift. Bilateral trade, excluding defence, has grown substantially, with Israel becoming a significant weapons supplier to India. Collaboration extends to areas like agriculture, climate, water, science, technology, and food security.
- ▶ **India-UAE Relations:** India's engagement with Gulf Arab countries, particularly the UAE, has deepened, characterized by economic partnerships, technology transfer, renewable energy, and cultural exchange. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPA) have facilitated increased bilateral trade and investment.
- ▶ **Strategic Restraint to Autonomy-** India's historical policy of strategic restraint has evolved into a focus on strategic autonomy, **involving issue-based strategic partnerships without being constrained by regional rivalries.** The focus has shifted from geopolitics to geo-economics, where India aims to harness interdependence for mutual benefits.
- ▶ **Strategic Recalibration-** Modi's administration has recalibrated India's West Asia policy towards cooperative bilateralism and multi-alignment. Issue-based partnerships have been developed regardless of regional rivalries, promoting shared interests in areas like defence and security.
- ▶ **Rise of Minilaterals-** The emergence of minilateral forums like the I2U2 summit (India, Israel, UAE, and the US) exemplifies the changing dynamics of international relations, influenced by geopolitical shifts and economic opportunities. **These forums bring together nations with diverse interests, allowing for collective navigation of international challenges and advancement of economic interests.**
- ▶ **Alignment of Interests-** The I2U2 summit and various efforts of rapprochement reflect India's transition from strategic restraint to strategic autonomy. This transition is driven by a desire to leverage global interdependence for mutual benefits, whether in energy security or greater connectivity and trade through projects like the development of Chabahar Port in Iran.

Strategic Axes of India's New Approach

According to C. Raja Mohan, India's new approach to the region, under Modi, is fashioned around three axes:

- 1. Leveraging Gulf Riches:** To accelerate India's economic growth by tapping into the wealth of the Gulf States.
- 2. Strengthening Counter-Terror Cooperation:** To address India's most important national security preoccupation.
- 3. Deepening Defence Cooperation:** To explore prospects for enhanced defence collaboration with Gulf States.

India's assertion of strategic autonomy in its foreign policy towards West Asia reflects its active pursuit of economic opportunities and strategic interests in the region. As global powers shift inwards, India has taken up a vital role in supporting globalization, leveraging its engagement with West Asia to enhance its economic and security landscape. This pragmatic and dynamic approach underscores India's evolving role in international relations.

India-Palestine Relations

Evolution of India's Approach

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| Pre-Cold War Era: | ▶ Visionaries like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru empathized with the Palestinian cause, drawing parallels to India's struggles for independence |
| Cold War Era: | ▶ The Nehruvian consensus led India to support the Palestinian cause, showing solidarity and aiding capacity-building efforts while opposing the establishment of Israel. Despite this, India recognized Israel in 1950. |
| Cold War Era: Post-Cold War Era | ▶ Under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in 1992, India established diplomatic relations with Israel, marking a significant policy shift that reflected changing global dynamics |
| Recent Changes and Balancing | <p>▶ Ties with Israel: India has developed strategic ties with Israel, fostering a partnership while maintaining diplomatic distance, as evidenced by its abstentions in UNHRC resolutions against Israel.</p> <p>▶ Palestine's Position: India's stance on Palestine has evolved, refraining from explicit support for Palestinian claims on Jerusalem and maintaining an independent stance in international forums.</p> <p>▶ Strategic Calculations: India's dynamic role in West Asia is influenced by balancing regional dynamics, such as addressing Saudi Arabia and Israel's concerns over Iran, while seizing opportunities from international realignments.</p> |

India's Balancing Act on the Israel-Palestine Issue- Contemporary perspectives

India's position on the **Israel-Palestine issue** has evolved significantly, reflecting a blend of historical principles and strategic pragmatism.

Historically, India has supported Palestinian sovereignty, grounded in its **anti-colonial solidarity** and its position within the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**. India was one of the first non-Arab countries to recognize the **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)** and has consistently backed a **sovereign Palestinian** state based on **pre-1967 borders**, with **East Jerusalem** as its capital.

This stance has been evident in India's voting patterns at the **United Nations** and in its alignment with multilateral platforms such as the **G77** and **BRICS**, reinforcing its commitment to global equity.

▶ Strategic Shifts in the 21st Century

Since the late 1990s and especially after 2014, India has significantly deepened its relationship with Israel, driven by strategic priorities. Areas like **defence**, **intelligence-sharing**, technology, and **agriculture** have become key pillars of the **India-Israel partnership**.

As **Prof. Harsh V. Pant** and others observe, this shift in policy reflects India's changing national security priorities and the desire to gain access to cutting-edge technology and strategic partnerships in a rapidly changing geopolitical

landscape.

► **Balancing Diplomacy: Pragmatism in Action**

India's Israel-Palestine policy can be understood as a classic example of **strategic autonomy**—one that seeks to balance competing interests. While India continues to endorse a **two-state solution** and has condemned violence on both sides, its nuanced stance often comes across as **pragmatic**.

For example, during the **October 2023 conflict in Gaza**, India condemned **terrorism** but also expressed concern over **civilian casualties**, maintaining a careful diplomatic distance.

India's decision to **abstain** from voting on the **June 2025 UN ceasefire resolution** further highlighted its complex balancing act—preserving its ties with both **Israel** and the **Global South**, without fully aligning with either camp.

► **Domestic Factors and Geopolitical Drivers**

India's policy is also influenced by **domestic politics**, where **majoritarian sentiments** and the growing influence of its **diaspora** play a significant role. As scholars from **LSE** and the **ISPP** point out, these factors, along with India's need to maintain **energy security** and access to technology, have contributed to a more **nuanced approach** towards the Palestinian cause.

The balancing act is also a reflection of India's **realpolitik** and its aspirations on the global stage, particularly in relation to the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.

► **Critiques and Theoretical Perspectives**

Scholars have critiqued India's **abstentionism** at the UN, with **Suhasini Haidar** and others suggesting that it may come across as **ambiguous** or **passive**. However, **Brookings** and **ORF** analysts argue that this calculated, **hedged approach** maximizes India's diplomatic flexibility, helping it preserve relationships with both sides while safeguarding its broader interests. Constructivist theory explains this by highlighting India's ongoing commitment to historical solidarity with Palestine, while simultaneously acknowledging the shifting realist imperatives of modern international relations.

► **India's Foreign Policy in Contemporary IR Theory**

India's approach to the Israel-Palestine issue reflects a **hybrid foreign policy**—one that combines **principle** with **pragmatism**. Drawing from **complex interdependence** (Keohane & Nye) and elements of **constructivism**, India's policy emphasizes the importance of **dialogue** and **peace**, while also seeking to strengthen its geopolitical position through new partnerships. While this balancing act has faced criticism, it underscores India's ongoing pursuit of **strategic autonomy** and global **credibility** in a complex and fragmented international system.

► **Conclusion**

India's Israel-Palestine policy is a **dynamic** blend of **principles** and **pragmatism**, balancing **historical solidarity** with **strategic interests**. As India continues to navigate **domestic pressures**, **geopolitical shifts**, and its **global ambitions**, its position on this issue will likely remain a crucial indicator of its broader foreign policy approach. Whether viewed through the lens of **realism**, **constructivism**, or **complex interdependence**, India's nuanced stance will continue to reflect its search for **strategic autonomy** and its desire to assert itself as a key player in a **multipolar world**.

Scholarly opinions on the conflict

► **Jessica Stern: Psychological Impacts and Nonviolent Resistance**

- Jessica Stern discusses the psychological impacts of the Israel-Palestine conflict, suggesting that nonviolent resistance might be more effective than current approaches.
- She advocates for the international community, particularly the United States, to exert pressure to protect civilians and promote nonviolent methods of conflict resolution.

► **Noura Erakat: International Law and Humanitarian Concerns**

- Noura Erakat critiques the application of international law in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- She points to recent legal actions aimed at halting arms sales to Israel due to concerns over violations of international humanitarian law and criticizes the international community for its insufficient response to what she describes as genocidal actions by Israel.

► **Nishank Motwani: India-Israel Relations and Recent Conflicts**

- Nishank Motwani observes a notable shift in India-Israel relations under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, particularly in response to recent conflicts such as the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel.
- Motwani highlights how these events have strengthened bilateral relations, especially in strategic and defence

areas.

► **R. Ravindra: Impact on India's Interests**

- R. Ravindra, Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, has discussed the direct impact of the Israel-Hamas war on India's economic and energy interests, particularly regarding maritime safety in the Indian Ocean.
- He stressed the importance of preventing further escalation and ensuring the continuation of humanitarian aid, reinforcing India's support for a two-state solution as a pathway to lasting peace.

Model Introductions and Conclusions on India-Palestine relations

Model Introduction 1:

India's position on the Israel-Palestine issue has evolved from anti-colonial solidarity to a more pragmatic diplomacy. Historically, India has been a staunch supporter of Palestine's sovereignty, advocating for a two-state solution based on pre-1967 borders. However, recent shifts, particularly in its relations with Israel, reflect India's growing focus on strategic autonomy and its balancing act between principle and realpolitik.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict exemplifies its nuanced foreign policy, where historical solidarity meets strategic interests. Despite challenges in balancing its relationships with both parties, India continues to champion a peaceful resolution through dialogue and multilateral diplomacy, reflecting its broader commitment to equitable global governance and South-South solidarity.

Model Introduction 2:

As Amrita Narlikar suggests, India's foreign policy is defined by coalitional diplomacy and issue-based pragmatism. This is clearly seen in its stance on the Israel-Palestine issue, where India maintains unwavering support for Palestinian self-determination, while also deepening strategic ties with Israel. India's policy is a delicate balancing act, shaped by both domestic imperatives and geopolitical shifts.

Model Conclusion 2:

India's diplomatic position on the Israel-Palestine issue is a reflection of its strategic autonomy. By balancing its support for a two-state solution with growing ties to Israel, India navigates a complex geopolitical terrain. This approach allows India to assert its influence in the Global South while fostering relationships critical to its security and economic interests.

India-Israel Relationship

- India and Israel marked the 30th anniversary of full diplomatic relations, symbolizing an enduring friendship.
- This milestone was celebrated by illuminating historic landmarks with the colours of both nations' flags and unveiling a commemorative logo featuring the Star of David and the Ashoka Chakra, symbolizing the strong bond between them.

Evolution of India's Approach

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| Delayed Diplomatic Relations | Initially, India approached Israel with caution. Although India recognized Israel in 1950 and allowed an Israeli consulate in Mumbai, it hesitated to establish full diplomatic relations due to its alignment with anti-colonial movements and close ties with Arab nations. This reluctance persisted until 1992. |
| Shift in Approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► The turning point came in 2015 when President Pranab Mukherjee visited Israel, marking a significant shift in India's approach. ► This visit signified a new phase in bilateral relations, demonstrating India's willingness to engage with Israel at a higher level and laying the groundwork for further interactions. |
| PM Modi's Landmark Visit (2017) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► In 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Israel cemented the transformation in bilateral ties. ► This visit showcased the growing warmth and importance of the relationship between the two nations, marking a departure from the cautious approach of the past and indicating a strategic decision to engage more closely with Israel. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Reciprocal Interactions - Netanyahu's Visit (2018) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The impact of these high-level engagements was underlined by reciprocal visits. ▶ In 2018, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited India, highlighting the strengthening of ties and the mutual desire to forge a deeper partnership. |
| Broadened Partnership Beyond Military Cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The transformative aspect of these visits was the expansion of the partnership beyond traditional military cooperation. ▶ While India had previously collaborated with Israel in military matters, the focus expanded to include economic development and technology cooperation. ▶ This marked a significant departure from the past, showcasing India's intent to cultivate a multi-faceted relationship with Israel. |
| Views on Balancing Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Kanchi Gupta notes that India does not plan on abandoning its traditional support for Palestinian statehood, highlighting the ideological underpinnings of India's West Asia policy. ▶ Despite the emerging strategic partnership between India and Israel, domestic politics and ideological considerations still influence India's Israel policy. |

A Partnership for the Future

- ▶ Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** characterized the **strong India-Israel relationship** as a **"marriage made in heaven being implemented here on Earth,"** a sentiment that resonates well with the growing ties between the two nations.
- ▶ The **concept of I2T2, involving India's talent and Israel's technology, encapsulates the essence of their partnership aimed at shaping a better future.**

Therefore, India's evolving relationship with Israel reflects a strategic shift towards recognizing the importance of a multi-faceted partnership, **balancing historical support for Palestine with a pragmatic approach to engaging with Israel. This nuanced strategy underscores India's adaptability and the sophistication of its foreign policy in the context of West Asia.**

Model Introductions and Conclusions on India-Israel relations

| | |
|---|---|
| Model Introduction 1: India's relationship with Israel has evolved significantly since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992. Initially shaped by non-alignment and the Palestinian cause, India's growing cooperation with Israel today spans across defence, technology, agriculture, and cybersecurity. As India seeks to enhance its strategic autonomy, its deeper engagement with Israel reflects both pragmatic diplomacy and a shift towards security-driven partnerships in an increasingly volatile region | Model Conclusion 1: India's growing ties with Israel represent a clear shift in its foreign policy, moving from ideological non-alignment to strategic partnership. By embracing defence cooperation, technology exchange, and counter-terrorism collaboration, India secures vital strategic interests while maintaining a careful balance with its historical support for Palestine. This evolving relationship underscores India's pursuit of multipolarity in the global order.. |
| Model Introduction 2: The evolving relationship between India and Israel is emblematic of India's broader foreign policy strategy of strategic autonomy and pragmatism. While India has maintained its historic support for Palestinian self-determination, its growing ties with Israel—particularly in areas such as defence technology, agriculture, and cybersecurity—reflects India's increasing emphasis on national security and the need for technological advancements to secure its place as a rising global power. | Model Conclusion 2: India's expanding relationship with Israel underscores the country's shift towards pragmatic diplomacy, where strategic interests take precedence. By advancing ties in critical areas like defence and technology, India strengthens its global standing while navigating the complexities of its broader Middle Eastern relations. This partnership reflects India's balancing act between historical ideals and geopolitical realities in a rapidly changing world |

India-UAE relations

Historical Background and Evolution

India and the **UAE** share a connection going back centuries, built on vibrant **trade** and **migration** across the **Indian Ocean**. While formal **diplomatic ties** began in **1972**, it was **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** landmark **2015 visit** that gave the relationship new momentum, establishing the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

Dr. Muneer Ahmed of **IPCS** notes:

"India and the UAE have always found common ground because their economic and **geopolitical interests** align. The past decade has only deepened that trust and cooperation."

Areas of Convergence

1. Economic and Trade Synergy

- ▶ India is the UAE's second-largest trading partner, while the UAE is India's third-largest trading partner. Bilateral trade has risen to \$85 billion since the 2022 CEPA, which removed most tariffs and boosted sectors like gems, petroleum, electronics, and technology. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) will cut transport costs and link India, the Gulf, and Europe. UAE sovereign wealth funds are investing in infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology in India.

2. Energy and Security Cooperation

- ▶ The UAE is vital for India's energy security, supplying oil, investing in strategic petroleum reserves, and partnering in upstream projects. They also work together on maritime security, counter-terrorism, defence production, and intelligence-sharing to protect the Indian Ocean and Gulf waters.

3. Technology, Education, and Soft Power

- ▶ Partnerships span fintech, digital innovation, and space exploration—including collaborations between ISRO and the UAE Space Agency. Prestigious Indian institutions like IIM Ahmedabad have set up campuses in the UAE, deepening educational ties. The Indian diaspora—3.5 million strong—is the largest expatriate community in the UAE, serving as a bridge of commerce and culture.

4. Geopolitical Alignment

- ▶ Shared concerns over extremism and Gulf stability underpin the partnership. India's Look West Policy aligns with the UAE's Vision 2021 and Economic Vision 2030, reinforcing shared developmental goals.

Scholarly Perspectives

Former Ambassador Talmiz Ahmad remarks:

"India's engagement with the UAE is shaped by both **economic realities** and the **shifting security dynamics** of the Gulf."

▶ **Dr. Muneer Ahmed** adds:

- ▶ "This upswing is built on trust at the top level, **pragmatic responses** to regional politics, and a shared aim for **economic diversification**."

▶ The **Atlantic Council** cautions:

- ▶ "The main challenge is whether both sides can build the **institutional capacity** to deliver on their ambitious cooperation."

Key Challenges

| Challenge | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Trade Diversification | CEPA trade still focuses on gems, petroleum, and electronics rather than technology and green energy |
| Labour and Human Rights | The Kafala system often leads to rights abuses of Indian workers; reforms remain slow. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Non-Tariff Barriers | Exporters face issues like mandatory Halal certification. |
| Energy Pricing Disputes | Disagreements occur over oil pricing due to OPEC rules. |
| Geopolitical Balancing | Managing ties amid Middle East conflicts, and UAE's relations with Pakistan and China is sensitive. |
| Institutional Limitations | Stronger frameworks are needed for project management and implementation. |

The Way Forward

► Experts recommend:

- Diversify trade into technology, renewables, healthcare, and digital services.
- Create a high-level strategic dialogue for coordination in politics, defence, and economics.
- Push for Kafala reform to safeguard migrant workers.
- Carefully manage geopolitical balancing in the Middle East.
- Leverage the Indian diaspora as a diplomatic and economic bridge.

► Dr. Muneer Ahmed sums it up:

- "This is not just a **transactional relationship**—it's a **meeting of visions**, backed by determined leadership."

Conclusion

India-UAE ties have matured into a **strategic partnership** built on **trust**, **shared ambition**, and **cultural connections**. Challenges remain—**trade gaps**, **labour rights**, and **geopolitical complexity**—but the direction is clearly positive. Both nations see each other as pillars of **stability** and **growth in West Asia** and the **Indo-Pacific**. As **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** says: *"This partnership isn't just economic—it's a global signal."*

India-Iran Relations

- India and Iran share a profound historical and cultural connection, often described by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "friendship as old as history."
- This relationship is deeply rooted in cultural ties, with India's significant Shia population, including around 25 million Shias and 70,000 Parsis, playing a crucial role in shaping interactions. The historical and civilizational links between the two nations further strengthen their bond.

Significance of Iran

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|--|---|
| Geographical Proximity and Energy Trade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Iran's strategic importance for India is underscored by its geographical proximity and its role as a major supplier of oil. ► India's energy needs make Iran a key partner, and the country's location, bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, enhances its strategic value for India's security interests. ► Additionally, Iran offers a crucial alternative route for India in cases where transit through Pakistan is obstructed. |
| Strategic and Cultural Mutualities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► India's large Shia population positions it uniquely in Iran's strategic calculations. . ► The influence of Iran's founding figure, Ayatollah Khomeini, and India's leadership role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) align with Iran's diplomatic goals, reinforcing their cooperative stance on international issues. |
| Economic and Diplomatic Role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► For Iran, India serves as a significant economic partner, particularly as a major buyer of Iranian oil. ► India's role in NAM provides Iran with a valuable diplomatic platform, enhancing its outreach and international presence. ► India's balanced position in a region where Pakistan aligns with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia adds to its potential as a stabilizing force. |

Scholarly Perspectives

- ▶ Meena Singh Roy of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses emphasizes the need to address tensions over issues such as the Farzad B gas field to fully realize the potential of the India-Iran relationship and to expand sub-regional cooperation.
- ▶ Sumitha Narayanan Kutty of Jawaharlal Nehru University notes that India is broadening its energy, connectivity, and trade ties with Iran to safeguard its interests, maintain strategic autonomy, and balance rival powers.

Abraham Accords: Implications for India- Iran Relations

- ▶ The Abraham Accords are a series of normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab nations, brokered by the United States in 2020.
- ▶ Initially, these accords were signed by Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain, with Sudan and Morocco joining later.
- ▶ The agreements marked a significant shift in Middle Eastern geopolitics by fostering diplomatic, economic, and security cooperation between Israel and these Arab countries, which had previously not recognized Israel's statehood.
- ▶ The Accords aim to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region by encouraging dialogue, trade, and mutual understanding among the signatory nations.

The Abraham Accords have significant implications for India's foreign policy, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

Positive Impacts

- ▶ **Reinforced Strategic Autonomy:** The accords validate India's policy of strategic autonomy, allowing it to engage with nations based on individual merits rather than being drawn into their disputes. Strengthened Israel-Gulf relations support India's approach of balancing diverse partnerships.
- ▶ **Enhanced Regional Stability:** Improved relations between Israel and Gulf Arab states could lead to greater regional stability, which aligns with India's interests due to its extensive economic and security engagements in West Asia.
- ▶ **Balancing Opportunities:** As Israel and Gulf states grow closer, India has more room to manoeuvre diplomatically, enhancing partnerships and fostering cooperation without becoming entangled in regional rivalries.

Negative Impacts

- ▶ **Strain on Iran Relations:** The strengthening of ties between Israel and Gulf states may strain India's relationship with Iran, a crucial partner for energy and connectivity. Balancing these partnerships will be vital.
- ▶ **Sectarian Tensions:** The growing rapport between Sunni-majority Gulf nations and Israel could exacerbate sectarian tensions in the region, posing challenges for India in managing its relations with these countries.
- ▶ **Pakistan's Alignment Dilemma:** The shifting regional alignments might force Pakistan to choose between aligning with Israel-embracing Arab states or deepening ties with Iran. This could impact the dynamics of India-Pakistan relations.
- ▶ **Economic and Security Balance:** While Israel offers strategic benefits, India must ensure that its engagement with Israel does not overshadow its interests, necessitating close coordination between the two nations.

Recent Developments in India-Iran Relations

- ▶ **Strategic and Economic Cooperation**
 - ▶ India's development of the Chabahar Port in Iran stands out as a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and bypassing Pakistan.
 - ▶ This project positions India as a significant player in regional infrastructure and counters China's influence through the Gwadar Port in Pakistan. However, challenges such as geopolitical tensions and U.S. sanctions have affected this project.
- ▶ **Geopolitical Challenges**
 - ▶ The relationship has faced complications due to Iran's inclusion of regional players like China and Pakistan in the

Chabahar project, as well as U.S. sanctions impacting economic ties, including oil imports.

- ▶ Additionally, India and Iran share mutual interests in countering Sunni militant threats and stabilizing Afghanistan, adding complexity to the bilateral relationship.

▶ Political Dynamics

- ▶ The political landscape involving Iran's interactions with the U.S. and India's balancing act between Iran and Western countries adds layers of complexity to their relations.
- ▶ Despite these challenges, the partnership remains crucial for India's strategy to access Central Asia and counterbalance Chinese and Pakistani influence in the region.

India's Response to the Israel-Iran Crisis: A Diplomatic Tightrope

India's handling of the 2025 Israel-Iran conflict perfectly embodies its doctrine of strategic autonomy—balancing national interests with a commitment to dialogue and diplomacy. When tensions soared, India's official position remained focused on de-escalation and the primacy of peace talks.

India welcomed the June 2025 ceasefire between Israel and Iran and praised the mediation efforts of the US and Qatar. At the same time, India reaffirmed its readiness to contribute to peacebuilding, maintaining that "there is no alternative to dialogue and diplomacy."

Calculated Non-Alignment in Action

- ▶ India's careful distancing from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) condemnation of Israel's actions during the crisis exemplifies its mature, non-rhetorical diplomacy.
- ▶ As scholars note, India's decision to avoid taking sides or making bold statements demonstrates a pragmatic approach, similar to its stance on the Ukraine-Russia war.
- ▶ India's careful balancing act ensures that it can maintain its strategic ties with Israel without jeopardizing its long-standing economic and diplomatic relations with Iran.

Operational Priorities and Pragmatism

India's focus on protecting its nationals during the crisis was evident through its launch of "Operation Sindhu", which swiftly evacuated Indian citizens from both Iran and Israel. This operational priority highlighted India's pragmatic approach to diplomacy, emphasizing a people-first policy while navigating complex geopolitical tensions

Scholarly Insights: Strategic Ambiguity and Regional Calculations

- ▶ Experts such as P.R. Kumaraswamy from JNU characterize India's stance as "calculated, nuanced, and matured," stressing the importance of strategic silence and minimalist responses tailored to national interests.
- ▶ Analysts like Shanthie Mariet D'Souza also emphasize that India's strategic ambiguity, coupled with its readiness for peaceful engagement, is effective as long as regional conflicts do not escalate beyond India's core interests.
- ▶ However, prolonged tension in the region could challenge this delicate balancing act.

Challenges and Bilateral Complexities

- ▶ India's relations with Iran face challenges, particularly due to US sanctions, which limit trade and energy ties, including India's investments at Chabahar port.
- ▶ Additionally, Iran's response to India's abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir and India's participation in the Israel-UAE-US coalition have occasionally caused diplomatic friction.
- ▶ These issues add layers of complexity to India's bilateral ties, making its position in the Israel-Iran conflict even more challenging.

Strategic Calculations and Great Power Competition

Beyond the immediate crisis, India's regional priorities influence its stance. Iran remains crucial for India's connectivity to Central Asia and countering China's influence in the region, particularly its growing partnership with Iran.

Moreover, the energy routes through Iran and its role in Afghanistan's stability further complicate India's diplomatic calculus, requiring a delicate balance between its relations with Israel and Iran.

Linkages to the theories of IR

India's approach aligns with Keohane and Nye's theory of complex interdependence, where economic, security, and diplomatic ties with Iran and Israel are intricately linked.

This multidimensional relationship resists traditional Cold War-style alignments, showing that India's policy is shaped by realist interests and constructivist ideals of peaceful conflict resolution and strategic flexibility.

Conclusion

India's diplomatic positioning amid the Israel-Iran conflict highlights its adeptness at walking a tightrope between competing interests. By maintaining pragmatic engagement, strategic ambiguity, and prioritizing peaceful diplomacy, India protects its energy interests, regional connectivity, and global standing. This nuanced approach, underpinned by historical ties and modern-day strategic concerns, allows India to safeguard its credibility as an autonomous actor while advocating for dialogue and cooperation in a volatile region.

Model Introductions and conclusions on India-Iran Relations

Model Introduction 1:

India's relationship with Iran has been one of strategic significance, deeply rooted in historical, economic, and security ties. Over the years, India has maintained a pragmatic yet balanced approach, engaging with Iran on critical issues such as energy security, connectivity to Central Asia, and regional stability. Despite external pressures, including US sanctions, India has sought to maintain a relationship that reflects both its strategic autonomy and its role as a leader in the Global South.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's engagement with Iran highlights its nuanced foreign policy, blending strategic interests with diplomatic flexibility. While managing its ties with global powers like the US and Israel, India continues to prioritize its energy needs, regional stability, and economic cooperation with Iran. This approach underscores India's efforts to retain autonomy in a complex and evolving geopolitical landscape.

Model Introduction 2:

India's relationship with Iran is characterized by deep strategic cooperation, particularly in the fields of energy, infrastructure, and regional connectivity. India has sought to balance its ties with Iran amidst geopolitical challenges, including US sanctions and its growing partnership with Israel. India's approach reflects its commitment to multipolarity and strategic autonomy, ensuring that it advances its national interests while navigating a complex regional environment.

Model Conclusion 2:

India's relationship with Iran remains a cornerstone of its foreign policy in West Asia. By prioritizing regional connectivity and energy security, India continues to navigate a path that balances realpolitik with its commitment to diplomacy. India's careful management of this relationship strengthens its role as a key player in regional stability while maintaining global autonomy in its foreign engagements.

India-Saudi Arabia Relations

The bond between **India** and **Saudi Arabia**, shaped by centuries of **trade** and **cultural exchange**, has evolved into a comprehensive strategic partnership in the 21st century. This transformation goes beyond mere transactional interests, reflecting a deeper, more institutionalized alignment between the two nations, as highlighted by experts and policymakers.

Historical Context and Diplomatic Evolution

Formal **bilateral ties** were established in **1947**, but the relationship truly gained significant momentum over the past two decades. Landmark agreements such as the **Delhi Declaration (2006)** and **Riyadh Declaration (2010)** elevated the ties to a strategic partnership. The establishment of the **India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)** in 2019 marked a transition from routine exchanges to a more structured cooperation in areas like **energy, defence, technology, and culture**.

Significance of Saudi Arabia for India

Saudi Arabia plays a central role in **India's energy security** and **geopolitical strategy**. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** captured its importance succinctly:

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of India's most valued partners—a maritime neighbour, a trusted friend, and a strategic ally... In a world full of uncertainties, our bond stands strong, as a pillar of stability."

1. Energy Security

- ▶ Saudi Arabia is India's third-largest crude oil supplier, contributing 14.3% to India's oil imports in 2023-24, and is a key source of LPG (18.2% of imports). With U.S. sanctions limiting access to Iranian energy, Saudi Arabia's dependable supplies are vital for India's energy stability. The two nations are expanding cooperation into renewable energy sectors, including green hydrogen and solar power, with Saudi investments helping India transition to cleaner energy sources.

2. Economic & Investment Ties

- ▶ In 2023-24, bilateral trade reached \$42.98 billion, with India emerging as Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner. Saudi Arabia has committed \$100 billion in investments across sectors like energy, infrastructure, technology, and health. India has also invested about \$3 billion in Saudi Arabia, and Saudi FDI in India continues to grow, backed by government support for large-scale projects.

3. Diaspora and Societal Interactions

- ▶ With over 2.7 million Indian expatriates, India's community in Saudi Arabia is the largest foreign group, sending more than \$11 billion annually in remittances. The Hajj pilgrimage for 175,000 Indians further demonstrates the strength of people-to-people ties and Saudi Arabia's role in facilitating religious connections.

4. Security and Geopolitical Leverage

- ▶ Saudi Arabia's influence within the Islamic world and South Asia provides India with significant diplomatic leverage, particularly in areas like counter-terrorism, religious moderation, and regional balance. Saudi Arabia's strategic location near the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil chokepoint, adds further strategic depth to the partnership.

5. The Vision 2030 Synergy

- ▶ Under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Vision 2030 is driving the Kingdom's economic diversification. India is seen as a key partner in this vision, especially in start-ups, R&D, digital innovation, and infrastructure. As Dr. Yogender Singh (The Academic, 2025) notes:

"The partnership has expanded significantly across sectors, including energy, defence, infrastructure, technology, and education, driven by leadership-level trust and

Key Areas of Convergence

- ▶ **Energy:** Joint ventures in hydrocarbon and renewable energy (like green hydrogen) reflect mutual strategic interests.
- ▶ **Defence & Security:** Both nations collaborate on military exercises (EX-SADA TANSEEQ), counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and intelligence sharing.
- ▶ **Technology:** Agreements focus on fintech, digital infrastructure, pharma, and semiconductors, advancing economic collaboration.
- ▶ **Cultural Exchange:** Initiatives in tourism, arts, and sports—including the official recognition of yoga—strengthen cultural ties.
- ▶ **Labour Cooperation:** Recent MoUs are aimed at reforming the Kafala system, improving legal rights and working conditions for Indian migrants.

Persistent Challenges

| Area | Challenge |
|------------------------|---|
| Labour Rights | Saudi Saudization restricts expatriate employment, and the Kafala system remains a point of contention for workers' rights. |
| Trade Imbalance | India's trade deficit with Saudi Arabia stood at \$31.3 billion in 2022-23. |

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|-------------------------|--|
| Delayed Projects | Strategic infrastructure projects, like the West Coast refinery, face delays due to land and regulatory hurdles. |
| Geopolitics | Saudi outreach to Pakistan and China, along with India's ties with Iran, complicate full strategic convergence. |
| FTA with GCC | Negotiations over a Free Trade Agreement between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council have faced delays. |

Scholarly Perspectives

▶ **Dr. Md. Muddassir Quamar** (MPI & Dirasat) states:

- ▶ "Saudi Arabia, in India's **Middle East calculus**, is not just an **energy partner**, but a **strategic anchor** for India's **regional security and global economic integration**."

▶ **Kinda Bakr** (Gulf Research Center) highlights:

- ▶ "The institutionalization of the **SPC** has transformed ties from **ad hoc engagement** to a more strategic relationship with **strong economic**, political, and security components."

The **Gulf Research Center** also emphasizes the **trust** developed through **frequent leadership dialogues**, which has been central to shaping this future-forward partnership.

Way Forward

- ▶ **Expand the Economic Basket:** Broaden trade and investments into manufacturing, technology, healthcare, and agritech to reduce dependence on hydrocarbons.
- ▶ **Augment Security Dialogue:** Strengthen defence cooperation, including joint training, technology transfer, and anti-terror mechanisms.
- ▶ **Diaspora Welfare:** Focus on legal reforms to address Saudization alternatives and ensure better protection for Indian workers through Kafala reforms.
- ▶ **Leverage Vision 2030:** Position Indian start-ups, tech SMEs, and educational institutions to align with Saudi diversification goals.
- ▶ **Balance Strategic Autonomy:** Continue adept diplomacy to manage regional geopolitics, maintaining good relations with Saudi Arabia and its regional competitors.

In 2025, India-Saudi Arabia relations reflect a robust partnership rooted in trust, mutual necessity, and forward-looking alignment. While challenges like trade imbalances, labour policies, and regional rivalries persist, the relationship continues to grow in importance. As Prime Minister Modi aptly states, the partnership "stands as a pillar of stability" in an uncertain world, poised to shape the future of the Indo-West Asian geopolitical and economic landscape for years to come.

Concept of "New World Order"

- ▶ The term "new world order" gained significant prominence following President George H.W. Bush's 1991 speech, which advocated for a global system governed by the rule of law.
- ▶ This concept was articulated during the end of the Cold War, reflecting a transition from the Westphalian multipolar system to the bipolar Cold War structure, and eventually to a unipolar world order dominated by the United States.

Implications of the term

- ▶ The global landscape has shifted from **Westphalian multipolarity to Cold War bipolarity and then to post-Cold War unipolarity**.
- ▶ Currently, the world is at a **critical juncture, with the Indo-Pacific region, particularly Asia, emerging as a pivotal area of global politics**.

- ▶ While the United States remains a dominant power, it faces increasing challenges from regional hegemonies in Asia. **The 21st century, often described as the “Asian Century,” positions India as a central player in shaping the future world order.**

India's Vision for the New World Order

- ▶ India's vision of a new world order emphasizes a **multipolar world, reflecting its historical perspective of being a crucial part of a pluralistic and tolerant global system.**
- ▶ This vision contrasts with China's **“Middle Kingdom” perspective.** India's advocacy for a multipolar world aligns with its aim to expand its strategic space without being constrained by any new hegemon or bipolar system.

India's support for a multipolar world is rooted in several factors:

- ▶ **Strategic Autonomy:** As an emerging power, India seeks to enhance its strategic manoeuvrability, avoiding dominance by any single power or bloc.
- ▶ **Diverse Interests:** India's diverse national interests necessitate cooperation with multiple global players, rather than relying on a single dominant power.
- ▶ **Countering Hegemony:** India promotes the formation of countervailing coalitions to prevent the rise of any hegemon that could disrupt global balance

Scholarly Perspectives on India's Multipolar Vision

1. **S. Jaishankar** - emphasizes the need for India to engage with a variety of global partners in a multipolar world. He advocates for proactive participation in global affairs through strategic alliances and active roles in international organizations, given the decline of traditional powers and the rise of new centres of influence.
2. **Veena Kukreja** - observes that India's foreign policy is becoming more assertive and expansive due to its growing economic and military strength. She argues that the end of U.S. unipolarity provides India with a chance to assert itself more prominently on the world stage.
3. **Barry Buzan** - Buzan discusses the shift towards a multipolar world as a result of the 'rise of the rest,' where power is diffused among multiple nations rather than being concentrated. This transition presents both opportunities and challenges for India as it navigates its strategic interests amidst competing global powers.
4. **C. Raja Mohan** - Mohan highlights how India's foreign policy has evolved to adapt to a multipolar world. He notes a shift from non-alignment to multi-alignment, reflecting India's strategy to manage the complexities of a decentralized global power structure.
5. **Avinash Kumar** - Kumar critiques the current global order and supports India's vision of a multipolar world as a means to democratize international relations. He advocates for India to leverage its rising influence to push for reforms in global governance, aiming for a more equitable global order.
6. **Sumit Ganguly** - examines India's strategic autonomy and its impact on global politics. He underscores India's efforts to balance strategic independence with active global diplomacy, suggesting that this balancing act is essential for enhancing India's role in a multipolar world.

In summary, India's vision of a new world order, centred on multipolarity, reflects both its historical perspectives and strategic interests. As global power dynamics evolve, India aims to play a pivotal role in shaping a more balanced and equitable international system.

India's Contribution to the New World Order

- ▶ **The Role of Cultural Heritage**
- ▶ India's core values of multiculturalism, pluralism, tolerance, and cosmopolitanism significantly contribute to shaping a more inclusive and balanced global order.
 - ▶ To effectively project this vision internationally, India must also focus on nurturing unity and inclusivity at home, embracing its diverse cultural legacy.
- ▶ **Concrete Expressions of India's Vision**
- ▶ India's commitment to a new world order is clearly articulated in recent statements by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the World Economic Forum, Modi emphasized India's role as a **“champion of liberal international order.”**
 - ▶ Similarly, **during the Shangri-La Dialogue, he clarified India's strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region.** These

statements reflect India's dedication to a multipolar world and underscore its intention to infuse its cultural values into global diplomacy

Key Themes in PM Modi's Speeches

- ▶ **Cultural Inspiration:** Modi has drawn inspiration from India's historical and cultural heritage, citing Lothal as the ancient port symbolizing historical trade and Buddhism as a shared heritage promoting peace and compassion.
- ▶ **Commitment to Rule of Law:** India's dedication to principles of equality and the liberal international order was highlighted.
- ▶ **Role in the Indo-Pacific:** India envisions itself as a crucial link in the Indo-Pacific region, reinforcing its strategic and cultural role.

Strategic Opportunities and Challenges

- ▶ The evolving geopolitical landscape offers India a unique chance to reassess its foreign policy and economic strategies.
- ▶ Strengthening its global economic position through cautious geo-economic strategies, especially in the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, could mark a pivotal moment in India's economic history.

Challenges Ahead

For India to emerge as a key player in the new world order, it must first address internal communal divisions. India's potential role as a harbinger of peace, harmony, and prosperity hinges on its ability to present itself as a stable and cohesive democracy. Therefore, in a rapidly changing global environment, India aims to redefine its role from a mere 'balancer' to a 'leading state' on the global stage.

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Achieving this will require strategic risks, flexibility, and a robust foreign policy framework.

By leveraging its cultural strengths and maintaining a diverse set of foreign policy options, India can assert itself as a significant player in shaping the future of international relations.

India's G20 Presidency: Advancing a Vision for an Inclusive World Order

A Unified Vision

- ▶ India's G20 presidency has been anchored in the principles of unity and inclusiveness, drawing inspiration from its ancient spiritual traditions.
- ▶ The theme of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' reflects the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which embodies the idea that the world is one interconnected entity.
- ▶ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasized that the major global challenges—such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics, and endemics—require cooperative solutions rather than confrontational approaches.
- ▶ The focus will be on leveraging technology to develop digital solutions that can be applied globally for sustainable progress.

Anirban Ganguly's Insights: The Modi Doctrine

In his book "The Modi Doctrine" (2016), Anirban Ganguly identifies the Panchamrit framework as a cornerstone of Modi's foreign policy. This framework includes:

- ▶ **Samman (Dignity and Honor):** Emphasizing respect and recognition.
- ▶ **Samvad (Dialogue and Engagement):** Promoting deeper interactions and cooperation.
- ▶ **Samridhi (Shared Prosperity):** Fostering economic growth and development.
- ▶ **Suraksha (Security):** Ensuring regional and global security.
- ▶ **Sanskriti evam Sabhyata (Cultural and Civilizational Linkages):** Highlighting cultural connections.

These elements illustrate India's ambition to be a defining force in a multipolar world, leveraging its cultural heritage to assert its global influence.

Key Achievements of India's G20 Presidency

- 1. Inclusion of the African Union:** This landmark decision significantly enhanced the representation of developing nations within the G20 framework. It aligns with India's push for a more equitable global governance structure, ensuring that voices from the Global South are better represented.
- 2. Global Biofuels Alliance:** Launched by India, the US, and Brazil, this initiative aims to advance sustainable biofuel development. It seeks to improve global energy practices and facilitate the transfer of technology, promoting greener energy solutions.
- 3. Digital and Economic Policies:** The summit introduced new frameworks to bolster the digital economy and enhance cybersecurity. It included measures to regulate cryptocurrencies and improve digital trade infrastructure, with the goal of driving global economic growth through digital innovation.
- 4. Environmental and Social Commitments:** Under India's leadership, the G20 made significant commitments to triple global renewable energy capacity and drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Additionally, new policies were introduced to support gig and platform workers, fostering greater social inclusivity and economic security.
- 5. Economic Corridors:** The proposed India-Middle East-Europe Corridor was emphasized as a strategic initiative to improve connectivity and economic integration. This corridor is positioned as a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative, enhancing regional and global trade routes.

Reinforcing India's Global Role

The 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi highlighted India's pivotal role in steering global discussions toward more inclusive and sustainable development. India's presidency has reinforced its image as a responsible rising power, leveraging its historical wisdom to lead global efforts effectively. By focusing on human-centric globalization, India aims to influence intergovernmental policies and shape the post-pandemic global economic agenda, setting a precedent for future international relations and economic strategies.

India-Afghanistan Relations

- ▶ Afghanistan has long been a focal point of great-power politics, from the British colonial era to the U.S. intervention in the early 2000s.
 - ▶ India's strategic location, bordered by Pakistan and Iran and connected to Central Asian Republics, has heightened its awareness of the threats posed by instability in Afghanistan.
 - ▶ The fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021 prompted India to reassess its approach towards its western neighbour.
- Regardless of the prevailing regime in Afghanistan, India has consistently aimed to stabilize the country and assert itself as a significant regional player. India has largely emphasized a development-centric partnership in its dealings with Afghanistan.

Key Perspectives on India-Afghanistan Relations

- ▶ **Shivshankar Menon:** Former National Security Advisor of India, described Afghanistan as a test case for India's ambitions to be a leading power with broader regional and global responsibilities.
- ▶ **Vivek Chadha:** Highlighted the critical nature of a stable Afghanistan for India's security, as it helps curb the spread of terrorism and religious extremism.
- ▶ **Brahma Chellaney:** Suggested that India should use its partnership with Iran to access Afghanistan and Central Asia, circumventing Pakistan. He also emphasized India's support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.
- ▶ **Harsh V. Pant:** Asserted that India's substantial investment in Afghanistan's development underscores its interest in maintaining stability, as a destabilized Afghanistan could undermine these efforts.

Strategic and Economic Significance

- ▶ **Geo-strategic Importance:** Afghanistan's position acts as a buffer between India and potential threats from the northwest. The historical context of invasions into India from the north underscores the need for Afghan stability for India's defence.
- ▶ **Security Considerations:** The border shared between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a historically tense neighbour, creates an additional layer of security concern for India. The instability in Afghanistan can also provide a haven for terrorist

groups targeting India.

- ▶ **Geo-economic Significance:** Afghanistan's role as a transit hub between Central Asia and South Asia is crucial for trade and connectivity. Additionally, the region's mineral wealth, including resources like copper, iron, and lithium, presents potential economic benefits for India.

Indian Policy Framework in Afghanistan

- ▶ Historically, Afghanistan has been a battleground for proxy conflicts involving global powers, influencing India's strategic approach.
- ▶ India's policy towards Afghanistan has been shaped by its goal of ensuring a stable and peaceful neighbour.
- ▶ This strategy involves development assistance, capacity-building initiatives, and humanitarian support.
- ▶ The strategic landscape of Afghanistan, bordered by major powers like China, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and India, contributes to its complex geopolitical significance.

India's Strategy Post-Taliban in Afghanistan

Pragmatic Approach

Since the **Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August 2021**, India has opted for a pragmatic strategy that avoids formal recognition of the regime while pursuing informal engagement. This approach balances national security concerns with ongoing humanitarian efforts and people-to-people exchanges.

- ▶ **Non-Recognition of the Taliban:** India has chosen not to officially recognize the Taliban government. Nonetheless, it maintains informal channels of communication to address security issues and ensure continued dialogue.
- ▶ **Humanitarian Aid:** Despite the lack of formal recognition, India has provided essential humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. This includes food supplies and COVID-19 vaccines, reflecting India's commitment to supporting the Afghan people amidst ongoing security concerns.
- ▶ **Security and Regional Concerns:** India's main apprehensions involve the potential spread of Taliban's hardliner ideology, which could inspire Islamist terror groups within India and exacerbate regional instability. Additionally, the Taliban's ties with Pakistan pose risks of increased terrorist activities from Afghan territory.
- ▶ **Opportunities and Challenges:** The ongoing tensions between the Taliban and Pakistan, including border disputes, might present India with opportunities for engagement. The Taliban's acceptance of Indian humanitarian aid routed through Pakistan indicates possible leverage.
- ▶ **Regional Collaborations:** India has participated in regional security dialogues and collaborations with like-minded nations to foster peace and stability in Afghanistan. Coordination with the United States remains crucial for addressing security concerns.
- ▶ **Future Directions:** India's strategy is centred on maintaining a balance between humanitarian aid and security interests while collaborating with regional and global partners to ensure stability in Afghanistan. India remains cautious of Pakistan's influence over the Taliban and aims to mitigate potential threats.

Recent Developments in India-Afghanistan Relations

India's engagement with Afghanistan has evolved notably under the Taliban regime:

- 1. Diplomatic Presence:** India has re-established diplomatic channels in Afghanistan, focusing on humanitarian aid and economic cooperation. Discussions have included expanding trade ties through the Chabahar Port, which offers Afghanistan an alternative route to international markets bypassing Pakistan.
- 2. Humanitarian Support:** India continues to coordinate aid efforts, emphasizing support for health, education, and infrastructure. Meetings with Taliban officials have reiterated India's commitment to addressing immediate humanitarian needs.
- 3. Economic and Transit Matters:** Talks between Indian and Taliban representatives have addressed economic and transit issues, with particular emphasis on the Chabahar Port's role in facilitating trade for landlocked Afghanistan.
- 4. Regional Diplomacy:** India's participation in regional conferences organized by the Taliban highlights its commitment to international and regional initiatives. This involvement signifies India's strategic role in promoting stability and development in Afghanistan.

5. **Security and Governance:** Discussions at international forums have focused on Afghanistan's governance, advocating for an inclusive government that respects human rights. However, there is a noticeable divergence in international responses to engaging with the Taliban.

Scholarly Perspectives

- ▶ **Vivek Katju:** Former Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, emphasized that India's cautious diplomacy aims to protect its investments and intelligence assets in Afghanistan.
- ▶ **Dhruva Jaishankar:** At ORF, Jaishankar suggested that focused humanitarian aid and mobilizing global opinion can influence Taliban policies to align with human rights standards.
- ▶ **Gautam Mukhopadhyaya:** Former Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan, proposed that continuing developmental projects under the Taliban can help maintain India's influence and goodwill among Afghans.

India's strategy towards Afghanistan under the Taliban is marked by a blend of pragmatism and flexibility. While refraining from formal recognition, India engages informally to address security threats and provide humanitarian support. The evolving dynamics between the Taliban and Pakistan, coupled with regional collaborations, shape India's approach as it seeks to contribute to Afghanistan's stability while managing its own security interests.

India's Evolving Engagement with Afghanistan

India's approach to **Afghanistan** in 2024–25 marks a notable recalibration, blending **developmental diplomacy** with **pragmatism** as it navigates the **Taliban-led regime**. India's traditional stance of cautious engagement with the Afghan people has shifted in response to new regional realities.

- ▶ In May 2025, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a landmark call with Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, marking a new chapter of diplomatic interaction. This followed the Taliban's condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack, signaling India's readiness to engage, albeit with caution and a focus on national interests.
- ▶ India's visa relaxation and resumption of official meetings in 2025 illustrate a shift away from its previous policy of isolation, driven by both humanitarian concerns and regional security imperatives. With an eye on countering regional instability and Pakistan's influence, India is slowly rebuilding its relationship with Afghanistan while safeguarding its interests.

Strategic and Economic Engagement

India's deep engagement in Afghanistan's development reflects a commitment to long-term partnerships.

- ▶ India has invested over **\$3 billion** in projects ranging from infrastructure to healthcare, contributing to Afghanistan's economic recovery.
- ▶ Bilateral trade surpassed **\$1 billion in 2024–25**, with Afghan agricultural exports benefiting from India's zero-tariff access, underscoring India's focus on fostering legal and sustainable trade ties.
- ▶ The key to India's strategy lies in Chabahar Port, offering Afghanistan a crucial sea route beyond Pakistan, and strengthening cooperation with Iran in the process.
- ▶ India's support for Afghanistan's humanitarian needs including food, medicine, and aid for refugees reinforces its image as a country committed to peace and regional stability.
- ▶ India's approach to **Afghanistan** in 2024–25 marks a notable recalibration, blending **developmental diplomacy** with **pragmatism** as it navigates the **Taliban-led regime**. India's traditional stance of cautious engagement with the Afghan people has shifted in response to new regional realities.

Security and Regional Dynamics

- ▶ India's engagement with the Taliban also seeks to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a sanctuary for terror groups targeting India, such as LeT and JeM.
- ▶ Counter-terrorism cooperation remains a critical component of this engagement, with India cautiously encouraging the Taliban to fulfill its anti-terrorism pledges.
- ▶ India's strategic focus remains on balancing its influence in Afghanistan to counter both Pakistan's dominance and China's growing economic footprint in the region.
- ▶ The Taliban's outreach to India, in part, reflects Afghanistan's desire to diversify international support, which India has carefully leveraged through investment and development aid. However, India remains cautious, avoiding recognition of the Taliban while maintaining its influence through non-security avenues, primarily humanitarian and developmental assistance.

Scholarly Insights

- ▶ Experts like **Ambassador Phunchok Stobdan** and analysts from **ORF** highlight India's approach as a **dual-track** strategy—maintaining historical ties with the Afghan people while being pragmatic in its dealings with the Taliban.
- ▶ Scholars like **Harsh Pant** and **Manjeet Pardesi** caution India against **legitimizing** the Taliban prematurely but stress the importance of **engagement** to protect India's **geopolitical and developmental interests**.
- ▶ India's strategy has been characterized by **soft power leverage**, emphasizing infrastructure development, education, and **women's empowerment** in Afghanistan, rather than direct security involvement.
- ▶ This approach has helped maintain India's goodwill and **regional influence** without overstretching its resources or compromising its **moral** position.

Linkages to the theories of IR

India's stance on Afghanistan can be viewed through the lens of **Keohane and Nye's complex interdependence theory**, where India's multi-dimensional engagement spanning trade, humanitarian aid, and cultural ties minimizes antagonism and enhances its regional influence.

India's **realist pragmatism** is evident in its careful navigation of security and diplomatic concerns, while its **constructivist** approach anchors its diplomacy in **solidarity** with the Afghan people, reflecting India's values of **sovereignty, democracy, and regional cooperation**.

Conclusion

India's recent engagement with Afghanistan is a finely balanced mix of **realpolitik** and **principled diplomacy**. India's willingness to engage diplomatically with the Taliban while reinforcing its traditional developmental commitments demonstrates its adaptive foreign policy.

This approach, rooted in India's historical goodwill towards Afghanistan, offers a way forward for **regional stability** and **strategic influence**, all while prioritizing security and humanitarian concerns. India's ongoing efforts to **expand influence** in Afghanistan, alongside **countering terrorism** and strengthening **regional partnerships**, make it a key player in the **Heart of Asia**.

Model introductions and Conclusions on India-Afghanistan relations

Model Introduction 1:

India's relationship with **Afghanistan** has historically been marked by strong **developmental ties**, underpinned by India's commitment to **humanitarian aid, infrastructure development**, and regional stability. Despite the complex dynamics post-2021, India has recalibrated its approach, engaging with the **Taliban** pragmatically while safeguarding its **national security interests**. The evolving India-Afghanistan relations in 2024–25 reflect a blend of **strategic autonomy** and **principled diplomacy** in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment.

Model Conclusion 1:

India's approach to Afghanistan remains **nuanced** and **pragmatic**, with a focus on **developmental diplomacy** while balancing **security concerns** and **regional dynamics**. By continuing **humanitarian support** and **investment** initiatives, India seeks to maintain influence in Afghanistan while **countering regional instability** and safeguarding its long-term interests. This careful balancing act underscores India's evolving foreign policy in the **South Asian** context.

Model Introduction 2:

India's engagement with **Afghanistan** is rooted in its long-standing **developmental diplomacy**, focusing on infrastructure, humanitarian aid, and regional connectivity. Since the Taliban's return to power, India has adopted a **pragmatic approach** to maintain vital **strategic ties**, balancing its relationship with **Iran, Israel**, and regional powers. India's relationship with Afghanistan in 2024–25 reflects a careful mix of **security imperatives** and **people-to-people engagement** amidst shifting political realities.

Model Conclusion 2:

India's **evolving relationship** with Afghanistan underscores its **strategic flexibility**, as it balances **historical ties** with the need for **security assurances** and **regional stability**. India's ongoing **humanitarian aid** and **investment in infrastructure** remain key pillars of engagement, while its careful diplomacy highlights a focus on maintaining **strategic influence** in **Central Asia** and ensuring **long-term regional peace**.

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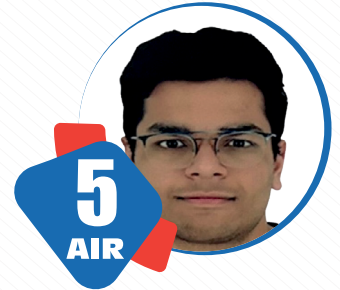
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