



## EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

**GENERAL STUDIES 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATION**

**DATE: 29.03.2025**

**TOPIC:** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

### India's geopolitical vision should be larger

#### India's Limited Political Role in Global Conflicts

- **Historical Role:** India has historically played an active role in regional conflicts, such as in Bangladesh (1971), the Maldives (1988), and Sri Lanka (2009).
- **Recent Reticence:** Despite its past engagements, India has refrained from similar involvement in recent international conflicts.
- **Global Contributions:** India has made significant contributions to global welfare through initiatives like 'Vaccine Maitri,' the International Solar Alliance, and disaster relief efforts, showcasing its global engagement outside of conflict zones.
- **Russia-Ukraine War:** Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for India's diplomatic efforts in relation to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

#### India's Reticence and Economic Priorities

- **Focus on Economic Growth:** Over the past two decades, India has concentrated on economic growth, becoming the world's fifth-largest economy.
- **Risk of Economic Disruption:** There is a prevailing belief that engaging in international conflicts could hinder India's economic progress and disrupt its bilateral relations with other countries.
- **Regional Approach:** India has preferred to let regional powers handle conflicts, especially in areas like West Asia, where Gulf countries have assumed the lead in regional affairs.

#### Expectations from India on the Global Stage

- **Non-Aligned Movement:** Historically, India played a leading role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which aimed to empower developing nations and reduce colonial influences.
- **Modern Multi-Alignment Policy:** India today follows a multi-alignment policy that strengthens bilateral ties but lacks broader global leadership on major international issues.
- **Global Expectations:** As a major democracy and an aspiring permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), India is expected to take a more active role in shaping global decisions and addressing global conflicts.

#### India's Influence in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict



- **Diplomatic Stance:** India's decision to abstain from voting on the Ukraine war in the UNSC allowed it to encourage other developing countries to adopt a balanced stance.
- **PM Modi's Statement:** Prime Minister Modi's statement that "this is not an era of war" and his advice against the use of nuclear weapons highlighted India's diplomatic influence in the conflict.
- **Building Credibility:** Putin's gratitude towards India signifies that India has built credibility with both Russia and Ukraine, positioning it as a potential player in conflict resolution and diplomatic efforts.

## The Risk of Losing Influence to Other Nations

- **Rise of Other Mediation Powers:** Countries like Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar have taken proactive roles in mediating international conflicts.
  - **Türkiye** hosted Ukraine-Russia peace talks.
  - **Saudi Arabia** facilitated U.S.-Russia discussions.
  - **Qatar** played a role in facilitating Congo peace talks.
- **Geopolitical Risk:** If India continues to remain passive, it risks losing its geopolitical influence to these emerging players who are increasingly active in conflict mediation and resolution.

## Global Power Shifts and India's Strategic Needs

- **Political Shifts in the West:** The political shift to the right in the U.S. and parts of Europe may lead to a reduction in their engagement with Asia and Europe, creating gaps that India could fill.
- **Countering China's Influence:** India must expand its geopolitical influence to counter China's growing power in Asia, especially considering India's economic trade dependence on China.
- **Pressure on the Quad:** As global power dynamics shift, the Quad (India, Japan, Australia, and the U.S.) may lose its strategic relevance, placing additional pressure on India to take a more active stance in international affairs.

## Time for a Policy Shift

- **Regional Strategy Beyond Bilateral Ties:** India needs to develop a regional strategy that goes beyond strengthening bilateral ties, particularly in regions like West and Central Asia.
- **Re-engaging with European Nations:** India must strengthen its ties with European nations and undertake economic reforms to boost its competitiveness and improve trade relations, particularly with the U.S.



- **Signaling Readiness for Global Leadership:** While India may not necessarily mediate all conflicts, it must signal its readiness to take an active role in shaping global affairs and asserting its leadership on global issues.

## Historical Precedents and Lessons for Today

- **India's Role in the Korean War:** During the Korean War (1951-52), India played a key role in the UN despite being a newly independent and impoverished nation. This demonstrated India's commitment to global peace and diplomacy even in challenging circumstances.
- **Recent UNSC Tenure:** India's recent tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC (2021-2022) saw it act as a bridge for divergent views, showing its diplomatic flexibility and influence on global decisions.
- **Balancing Growth with Engagement:** India must balance its focus on economic growth with active geopolitical engagement to secure its position as a major global power in a fragmented world.

## Conclusion

- **Need for Active Engagement:** India must play a more active role in shaping the evolving world order while continuing to balance its focus on economic growth.
- **Strengthening Multi-Alignment:** Expanding its multi-alignment policy beyond bilateral ties will enhance India's global influence, allowing it to safeguard national interests and contribute effectively to global decision-making in a rapidly changing world.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/indias-geopolitical-vision-should-be-larger/article69387128.ece>