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Globalism is over. India must be a regional leader

1. Changing Global Order and Context

- The decline in the relevance of global institutions like the United Nations is prompting a worldwide shift in focus from **globalism to regionalism and minilateralism**.
- India, recognizing this shift, is re-evaluating its foreign policy and increasing its engagement with regional frameworks like **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**.

2. The Rise of Regionalism Over Globalism

- The article opens by noting that **globalism is waning**, with countries turning to regional alliances for more practical and effective cooperation.
- Traditional global institutions are seen as **ineffective and slow** to respond to real-world problems.
- The notion that **geopolitics is inherently regional** is gaining acceptance, returning to a pre-globalization understanding of international relations.

3. Historical Failure of Global Governance

- The concept of global governance began with **Woodrow Wilson's 14-point plan in 1918**, leading to the **League of Nations**, which quickly failed due to U.S. withdrawal and lack of enforcement.
- Later, the **Atlantic Charter** and the formation of **post-WWII institutions like the UN** renewed hopes, but these too fell short of fostering true global cooperation.
- Globalism, despite its moral appeal, **failed to overcome power politics and nationalism**.

4. Realpolitik and the Illusion of Globalism

- The 20th century was dominated not by global unity, but by **power blocs and military alliances** like NATO and the Warsaw Pact.
- Even during the Cold War, **regional dominance** was the real game, while **globalism was used as rhetorical cover** by superpowers.



- This contradiction highlighted how **great powers manipulate globalist ideals for regional gains.**

5. India's Idealistic Foreign Policy in the Past

- Post-independence India under **Jawaharlal Nehru** pursued **idealistic goals like Non-Alignment and Third World solidarity.**
- While initially pragmatic with regional meetings, Nehru shifted towards global moralism, **missing opportunities for concrete regional integration.**
- The article critiques India's failure to anchor itself in **realpolitik-driven regionalism.**

6. Global Examples of Successful Regionalism

- The **European Union (EU)** and **ASEAN** are examples of how **pragmatic regional cooperation** can deliver real benefits.
- These regional alliances evolved with **political will, shared interests, and institutional continuity.**
- They stand in contrast to India's weaker regional organizations like **SAARC** and **BIMSTEC**, which haven't achieved similar outcomes.

7. South Asia's Regional Underperformance

- **South Asia remains one of the least integrated regions** in the world, despite shared culture, history, and geography.
- **SAARC** has failed primarily due to **India-Pakistan tensions.**
- **BIMSTEC**, despite its potential, suffers from lack of visibility, leadership commitment, and limited implementation.
- Initiatives like **IORA** remain underutilized due to **resource constraints and inadequate follow-up.**

8. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA): Explained

- **Established:** March 7, 1997
- **Objective:** Promote cooperation among countries bordering the Indian Ocean or with strong maritime interests.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Maritime safety and security



- Trade and investment facilitation
- Disaster risk management
- Cultural and academic exchanges
- Aims to boost prosperity and collaboration among **Indian Ocean littoral nations**.

9. Modi Government's Renewed Regional Focus

- Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is actively **reviving regional diplomacy**.
- BIMSTEC has gained attention with **high-level summits and increased funding**.
- The **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** is being reimagined within the **Indo-Pacific strategic framework**, reflecting India's evolving geopolitical focus.
- Modi's initiatives are **re-aligning India's external engagement toward regional cooperation** with trusted partners.

10. Challenges Facing BIMSTEC and IORA

- Despite their potential, both platforms face:
 - **Lack of visibility and media coverage**
 - **Few summits and irregular meetings**
 - **Resource shortages and administrative inefficiencies**
 - **Low commitment from member states**
- These issues can only be addressed through **strong leadership, strategic clarity, and coordinated efforts**.

11. The Road Ahead for India

- The article stresses that **India must take responsibility** for driving regional cooperation forward.
- India must invest in **institutional strengthening, consistent engagement, and resource allocation** for BIMSTEC and IORA.
- With **globalism in retreat**, the geopolitical environment favors **regional integration**, and India must **seize this opportunity**.

12. Strategic Importance of BIMSTEC for India

- **Strategic Connectivity:**



- Strengthens links between **Northeast India and Southeast Asia**.
- A key instrument of the **Act East Policy**, enhancing India's engagement with eastern neighbors.
- **Leadership Role:**
 - India is the **largest economy and most influential member** of BIMSTEC.
 - Plays a central role in projects like **BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal) Motor Vehicle Agreement**, trilateral highways, and port development.
- **Economic Growth:**
 - Offers expanded markets and trade opportunities for **Indian businesses and MSMEs**.
- **Energy Security:**
 - Supports regional cooperation on **power grids, energy trade, and renewable energy projects**.
- **Geopolitical Influence:**
 - Strengthens India's presence in the **Indo-Pacific**, counterbalancing China's influence.
- **Alternative to SAARC:**
 - BIMSTEC circumvents **SAARC's limitations**, especially the **India-Pakistan conflict**, by excluding Pakistan and including like-minded nations.

13. Conclusion: A Pragmatic Path Forward

- The article concludes that **regionalism offers a practical and realistic path** for cooperation and development.
- India must move beyond romantic globalism and play a **proactive leadership role** in regional organizations.
- The future lies in **regional coalitions built on shared interests, connectivity, and strategic foresight**.
- For India, this is both a **strategic necessity and a historical opportunity** to shape the region's future.

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