

PERSPECTIVES

Monthly Current Affairs for PSIR Optional – International Relations & Indian Politics

THE EROSION OF THE UNIPOLAR 'WEST':

Europe Shifts to Strategic Autonomy

RISE OF NON-WESTERN PEACEMAKERS:

Middle East & China Lead Mediation



MULTILATERALISM AT A CROSSROADS:

UN 80th Anniversary Amidst Structural Anxiety

MODERNIZING INDIA'S BATTLEFIELD DOCTRINE:

Towards Integrated Theatre Commands & AI

OCTOBER 26

'Strategic Convergence'

Shared Indo-Pacific Concerns, Joint Signaling

Shared Indo-Pacific Concerns, Joint Signaling

CONTENTS

- 1 THE BATTLEFIELD, CHANGE AND THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES**
— HARSH V. PANT & ANKIT K.
- 2 THE COURSE AHEAD FOR TRUMP'S GAZA CEASEFIRE PLAN**
— T. S. TIRUMURTI
- 3 ISRAEL'S NEW DOCTRINE OF 'GOING ON THE ATTACK'**
— NARESH KAUSHIK
- 4 ISRAEL'S TACTICAL GAINS IN A STRATEGIC LABYRINTH**
— STANLY JOHNY
- 5 WEST IS TURNING MULTIPOLAR**
— C. RAJA MOHAN
- 6 RINGING OUT THE OLD WORLD ORDER?**
— SHASHI THAROOR
- 7 THE NEW ARC OF INDIA-AUSTRALIA COLLABORATION**
— HARSH V. PANT & PRATNASHREE BASU
- 8 INDIA'S TRAVAILS IN NEGOTIATING A FRIENDLESS WORLD**
— M. K. NARAYANAN
- 9 RISE OF THE NEW PEACEMAKERS**
— C. RAJA MOHAN
- 10 MULTILATERALISM ISN'T DEAD**
— SHASHI THAROOR
- 11 THE CHIMERICA CHALLENGE**
— C. RAJA MOHAN
- 12 THE MIRAGE OF PORT-LED DEVELOPMENT IN GREAT NICOBAR**
— ABHIJIT SINGH

This October edition of our PSIR magazine is framed by a world in strategic flux, where power is dispersing faster than rules can be rebuilt. The essays brought together here explore how this disorder is reshaping India's choices at sea, in diplomacy, and within the architecture of global governance itself. Rather than offering easy prescriptions, these articles confront the hard realities of operating in a multipolar system marked by weak multilateralism, competitive geopolitics, and growing strategic uncertainty.

Several contributions interrogate the changing nature of the global order. Shashi Tharoor's reflections on multilateralism and the unravelling of the post-war system underline a central paradox: global institutions are fraying precisely when collective action is most needed. Complementing this, C. Raja Mohan's analyses of a multipolar West, the rise of new peacemakers, and the evolving US-China dynamic show how diplomacy, mediation, and power projection are being redefined. Together, these essays reveal a world where influence flows not just from military or economic might, but from the ability to shape norms, broker outcomes, and navigate fragmentation.

India's own strategic responses form another key theme. The analysis of India-Australia defence cooperation traces how middle-power partnerships are moving from rhetoric to operational substance in the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, the critique of port-led development in Great Nicobar challenges assumptions about infrastructure, strategy, and economics, warning against conflating ambition with viability in maritime planning.

Taken together, these essays underscore a sobering truth: India's strategic moment is defined less by alignment or dominance than by careful calibration. Whether in global institutions, regional security, or maritime development, the task before India is to balance ambition with realism, autonomy with cooperation, and power with legitimacy. This issue invites readers to engage with that challenge not as a distant abstraction, but as a set of choices that will shape India's role in an increasingly unsettled world.



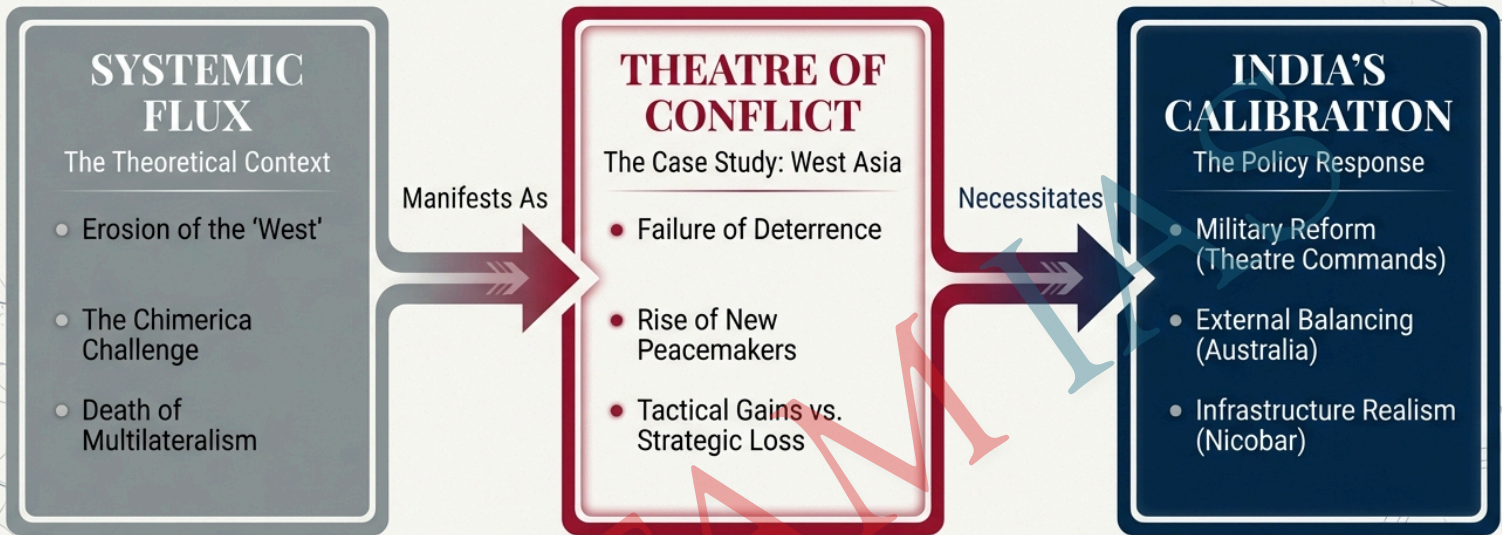
Rahul Puri

PSIR OPTIONAL FACULTY
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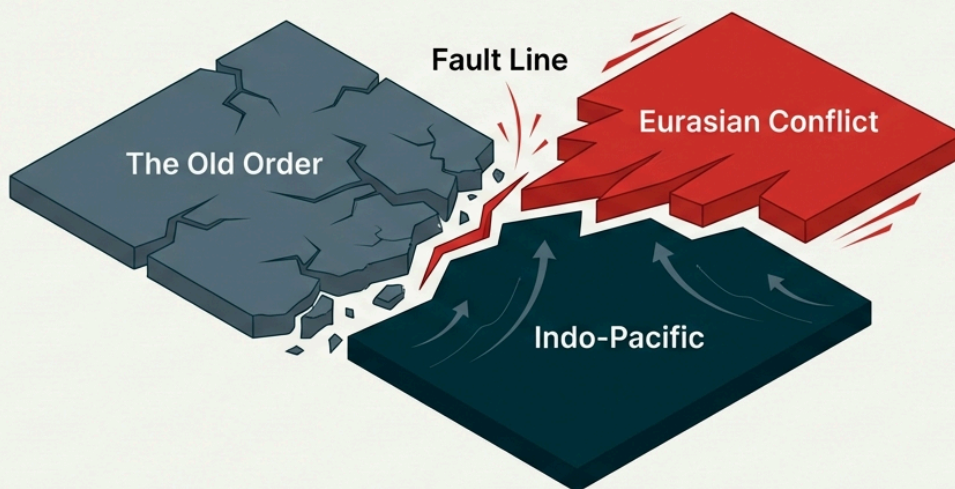
THE STRATEGIC CASCADE

A GEOPOLITICAL PROCESS FLOW



GEOPOLITICAL TECTONICS

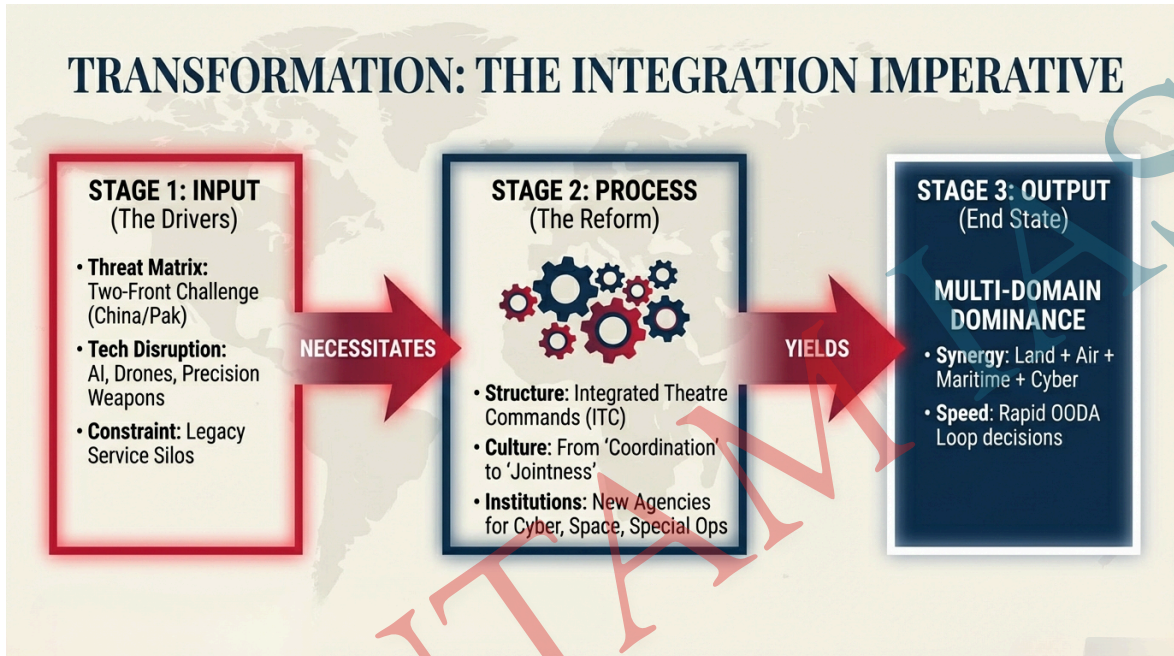
From Global Disorder to Indian Strategy



A Strategic Analysis of Systemic Flux, Regional Conflict, and National Calibration.

THE BATTLEFIELD, CHANGE AND THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES

HARSH V. PANT &
ANKIT K.



Rapid changes in the character of warfare, driven by artificial intelligence, automation, drones, and precision weapons, are transforming how militaries operate. For India, these shifts are occurring against the backdrop of a possible **two-front challenge from China and Pakistan**. Although the cost of deploying force has reduced, operational risks have increased, making speed, adaptability, and integration critical. India is therefore reshaping its military structure, doctrine, technology, and professional military education, even as earlier efforts at reform produced limited results.

A central transformation underway is the move from service-specific coordination to genuine command-level integration through integrated theatre commands. Political intent and institutional reforms have been signalled through changes in command-and-control structures and greater empowerment of commanders. **Tri-service agencies for cyber, space, and special operations**, along with new integrated battle formations, point to progress, but the pace of implementation still lags behind the demands of modern conflict.

Jointness, however, cannot simply replicate foreign models. While China has operated integrated theatre commands for years, India's strategic environment and institutional culture require an indigenous approach. Recent military operations demonstrated capability and resolve but did not fully test deep, multi-service integration.

New doctrines, including those for amphibious operations and mission-specific combat groups, suggest movement toward combining land, air, and maritime power in a more coherent manner.

Future warfare is expected to be decisively multi-domain, where information, data, and speed can shape outcomes as much as conventional firepower. **Doctrinal evolution is therefore being paired with technological modernisation**, including the induction of advanced drones, missiles, aircraft, and automated command-and-control systems. These capabilities enhance intelligence, surveillance, precision strike, and coordinated operations across land and sea, strengthening both continental and maritime postures.

Lasting effectiveness depends on placing integration and learning at the heart of military power. Stable joint commands, shared data standards, and empowered theatre leadership are essential, alongside reforms in professional military education that produce technologically literate commanders. Deeper civil-military fusion, stronger ties with research institutions, industry, and universities, and a culture of experimentation and rapid correction are necessary to keep pace with a constantly evolving battlefield.

THE COURSE AHEAD FOR TRUMP'S GAZA CEASEFIRE PLAN

T. S. TIRUMURTI

The piece discusses the 20-point Gaza ceasefire plan unveiled by Donald Trump ahead of the second anniversary of Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel. While Hamas has reacted cautiously positively, it has indicated that parts of the plan would need renegotiation. Israel, meanwhile, remains dissatisfied with several conditions. The plan has been welcomed internationally as a potential **last opportunity to end the Gaza war**, even though its credibility is weakened by the collapse of an earlier US-brokered ceasefire that Israel abandoned unilaterally.

At its core, the plan lays out broad intentions rather than a concrete roadmap. It excludes any clear commitment to Palestinian statehood and places heavy obligations on Palestinians, such as hostage release within 72 hours, Hamas's disarmament or exit from Gaza, and governance reforms under international oversight. Israel's responsibilities, including territorial withdrawal and timelines for military exit, are left vague. This imbalance raises concerns that the framework could function more as a tool of pressure than a mutually binding peace process.

THE BROKEN BRIDGE: GAZA CEASEFIRE PROPOSAL

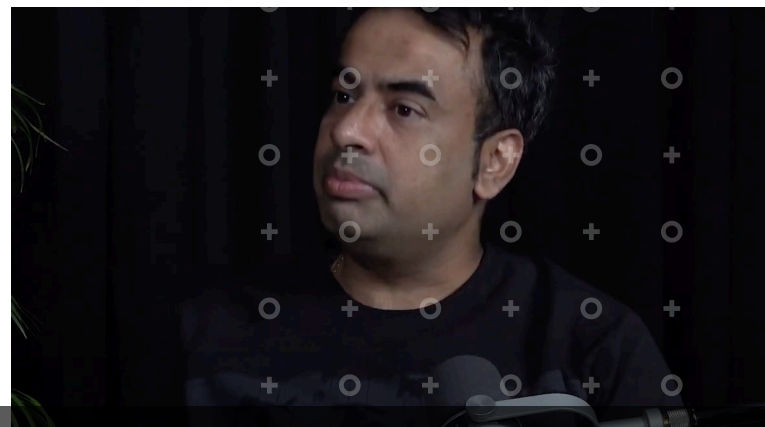


Verdict: A proposal that manages conflict rather than resolves it; a tool of pressure, not a binding process. (Ref: T.S. Tirumurti)

The sequencing of the plan is particularly problematic. Fighting can continue alongside implementation, meaning there is no guaranteed full ceasefire. **The release of Israeli hostages has become the central focus, driven by domestic political pressure on Israel's leadership.** Once hostages are released, leverage over Israel diminishes, leaving Palestinian compliance as the primary measure of progress, without any effective monitoring or enforcement mechanism.

Governance arrangements proposed for post-war Gaza involve international control through a technocratic committee operating under a US-led security framework, with Hamas stepping aside. However, Palestinians would have little say in determining their political future, and elections are postponed indefinitely. Given Hamas's electoral victory in 2006 and the long-standing division between Gaza and the West Bank, the exclusion of broader Palestinian consensus risks deepening internal fragmentation rather than resolving it.

Finally, the plan shifts the burden of ending the war away from Israel by framing continued violence as a failure of Palestinian implementation. It **sidelines international law, UN resolutions, and established parameters for a two-state solution.** The longer-term questions, how durable the ceasefire will be, whether Israel will be restrained, and whether Palestinian statehood remains viable, are effectively pushed aside. The result is a proposal that manages conflict rather than resolves it, reflecting changing regional realities while leaving the core political issue unresolved.



ISRAEL'S NEW DOCTRINE OF 'GOING ON THE ATTACK'

NARESH KAUSHIK

The piece describes a surge of short-term optimism following Donald Trump's peace initiative, supported by hostage-release talks and calls to halt Israeli bombing. This optimism, however, fades when Israel's conduct since the Hamas attack is examined. The use of **overwhelming military force** has become central to Israel's security approach, backed strongly by the United States, but it offers little prospect of durable peace.

Israel's response to the Hamas attack is portrayed as exceptionally brutal, marked by large-scale destruction in Gaza and rhetoric that dehumanises Palestinians. Senior Israeli leaders have spoken openly about Gaza as a post-war real estate opportunity and advanced plans that imply permanent displacement of Palestinians. Military operations have targeted entire communities rather than just Hamas, reinforcing fears that civilians are being treated as legitimate collateral.

At the political level, **Israel's leadership has openly rejected the idea of a Palestinian state**. Expansion of settlements and plans to annex large parts of the West Bank reflect the growing influence of far-right parties within the Israeli government. These moves deepen Palestinian despair and close off diplomatic pathways, even as many countries move toward recognising Palestinian statehood.

Israel's doctrine of force is no longer confined to Gaza. Cross-border strikes and covert operations in Syria, Iran, Yemen, Lebanon, and Qatar signal a shift toward openly projecting power across the region. While Israel has weakened Hamas and Hezbollah militarily and struck Iranian interests, these actions have not eliminated Hamas, which remains influential in Gaza and capable of recruitment.

International opinion is beginning to turn. Civilian casualties, destruction, and humanitarian crises have pushed Israel toward diplomatic isolation, with trade restrictions, sanctions discussions, and cultural boycotts gaining momentum. Within **Israel itself, public dissatisfaction is rising**, with many citizens and military leaders questioning the effectiveness of endless war. The prevailing fear is that a doctrine built on permanent offence will leave Israelis less secure, while further radicalising Palestinians and prolonging the conflict.

ISRAEL'S TACTICAL GAINS IN A STRATEGIC LABYRINTH

STANLY JOHNY



Before October 7, 2023, West Asia appeared relatively stable from a geopolitical standpoint, with the Palestinian issue pushed to the margins and Arab states increasingly aligning with Israel against Iran. The **Abraham Accords** and **US-backed regional initiatives** aimed to place Israel at the centre of a new regional order. Hamas's attack shattered this vision, exposing the fragility of the arrangement and forcing Israel into an all-out war that quickly expanded beyond Gaza into a wider regional confrontation.

Israel entered the war with two declared goals: destroying Hamas and securing the release of hostages. Militarily, it has achieved significant tactical successes, damaging Hamas's infrastructure, killing its leaders, weakening Hezbollah, striking Iranian targets, and exploiting power shifts in Syria. These actions have projected strength and deterrence, but they have not eliminated Hamas, which remains rooted in Palestinian nationalism and capable of regenerating as an insurgent force rather than a conventional army.

Strategically, these battlefield gains have failed to translate into long-term security. The war has **internationalised the Palestinian issue once again, with growing global recognition of Palestinian statehood** and increasing criticism of Israel's conduct. Regionally, Israel's expansion of military operations into Syria, Lebanon, Iran, and even Qatar has unsettled Arab states, pushing them to reassess their security alignments and reduce reliance on Israel as a stabilising force.

Despite its military dominance, Israel remains trapped without a clear endgame. Continued occupation and large-scale violence have deepened diplomatic isolation while hardening Palestinian resistance. The original vision of reshaping West Asia around Israel has collapsed, leaving Israel dependent on US political and military backing and facing mounting pressure to halt the war. Tactical victories, in the absence of a political settlement, have produced a strategic maze rather than a durable solution.

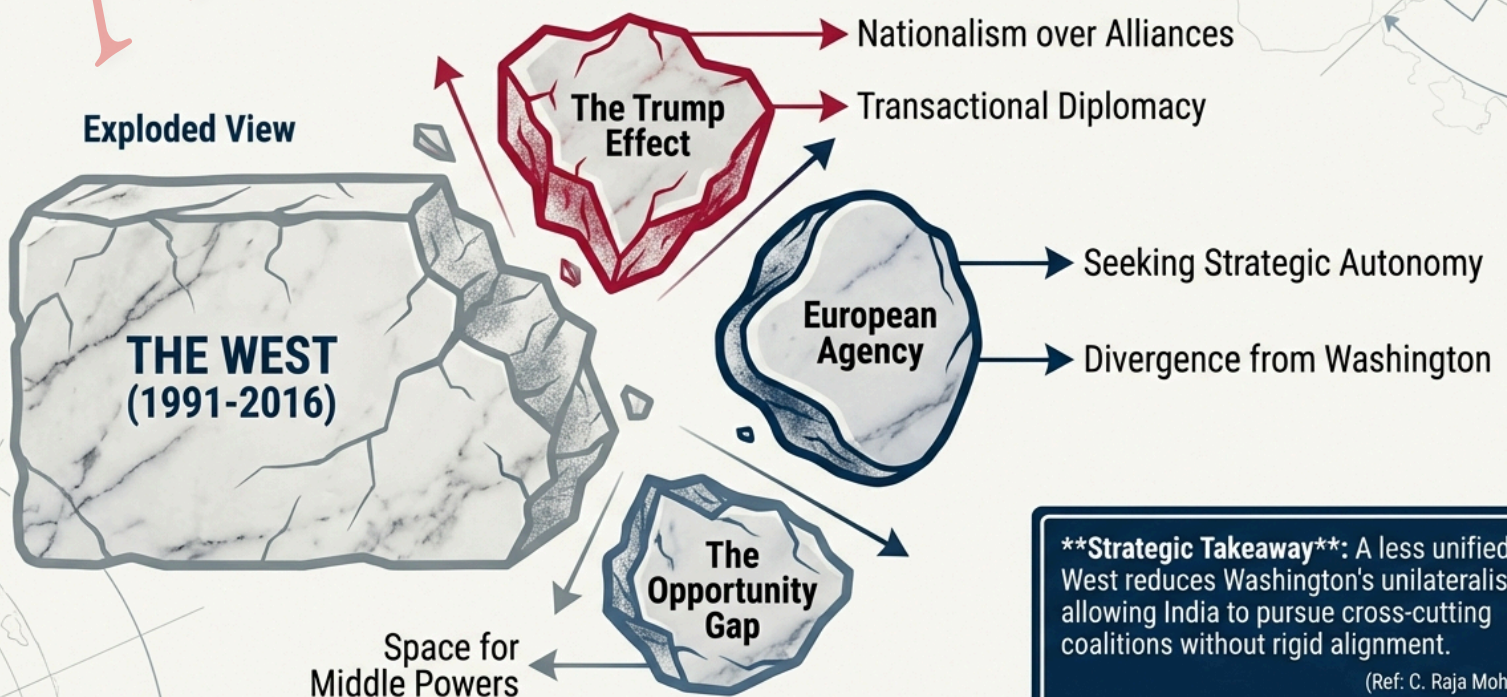
WEST IS TURNING MULTIPOLAR

C. RAJA MOHAN

The idea of a single, cohesive “West” led unquestioningly by the United States is steadily eroding. Europe has grown increasingly uncomfortable with Donald Trump’s America **First nationalism, which has questioned alliances, disrupted global trade rules,** and treated partners as transactional assets. This unease reflects a broader global shift away from the post-Cold War unipolar moment that once defined Western dominance.

This shift has direct implications for global geopolitics. A **less unified West reduces Washington’s ability to act unilaterally** while opening space for middle powers to exercise greater influence. China and Russia are adjusting to this changing landscape, while Europe diversifies its partnerships beyond the Atlantic, engaging more deeply with Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

THE FRACTURED MONOLITH



For India, Western pluralism creates greater diplomatic room for manoeuvre. A loosely knit West allows India to pursue cross-cutting coalitions, balance relations with the US, Europe, Russia, and China, and avoid rigid alliance structures. Europe's growing engagement with India in trade, technology, defence, and connectivity reflects this convergence of interests.

Historically, the West was held together by American power, reinforced by European and **Japanese alignment during the Cold War**. The collapse of the Soviet Union briefly strengthened this unity, but it soon began to fracture as Russia reasserted itself and China rose as a systemic challenger. The return of great-power rivalry exposed limits in US leadership and accelerated debates within Europe about autonomy and self-reliance.

Europe is now moving from dependence to agency. It is investing in independent defence capabilities, technological and industrial sovereignty, and a more distinct voice on global governance. While internal divisions over security priorities and economic interests persist, the overall trajectory points toward a plural West in which Europe seeks strategic weight rather than automatic alignment with Washington.

However, the benefits of a multipolar West are not automatic. India's ability to leverage these openings depends on its domestic capacity for reform, economic modernisation, and institutional agility. Without strengthening these foundations, India risks underusing the strategic space created by a changing West. A plural Western order offers opportunity, but converting it into lasting advantage requires sustained internal transformation.

RINGING OUT THE OLD WORLD ORDER

SHASHI
THAROOR

Eighty years after the Allied victory in World War II, the international system built in its aftermath is visibly fraying. The **US-led order that once rested on liberal democracy**, multilateral institutions, and open markets is losing coherence. American leadership, long the anchor of global stability, appears uncertain, creating space for a new contest over influence and legitimacy, with China positioning itself as a major alternative pole.

The post-war order was never without contradictions. US interventions from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, along with episodes of overreach, steadily weakened its moral authority. The 2008 financial crisis further exposed structural flaws. These pressures accumulated over time, but the acceleration came with Donald Trump's presidency, which openly questioned multilateralism, alliances, and the value of global institutions that the US itself had created.

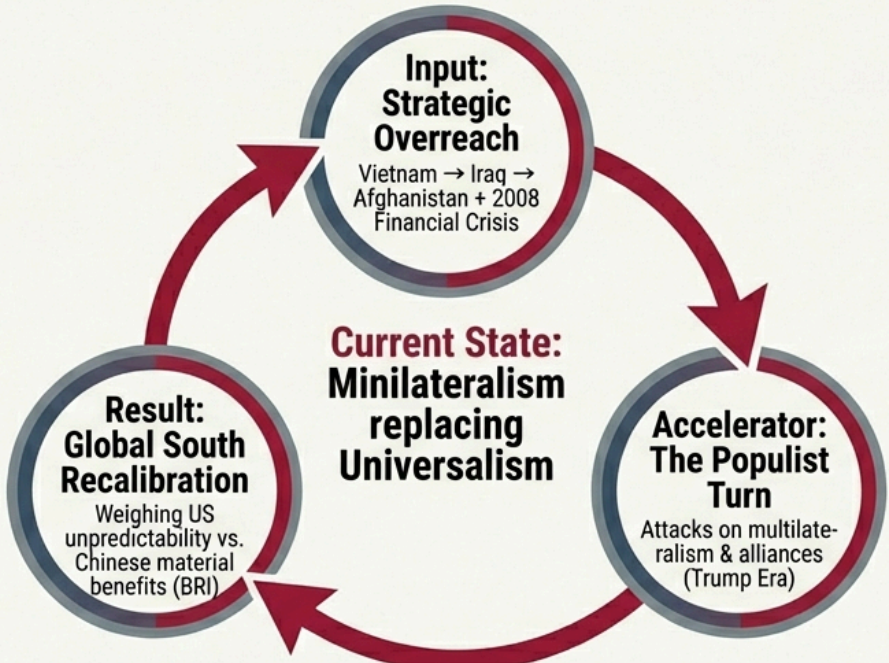
As a result, the emerging global order is defined less by ideological blocs and more by pragmatic choices. Countries across the Global South are recalibrating their foreign policies, weighing the costs of US unpredictability against the benefits of Chinese engagement. The choice for many is not between democracy and authoritarianism, but between economic growth, strategic autonomy, and political stability in a multipolar world.

China has moved swiftly to exploit this opening. Through economic scale, infrastructure investment, and initiatives such as the **Belt and Road, Beijing has offered many countries predictability and material benefits at a time of global uncertainty.** While China's record on human rights, territorial disputes, and economic coercion raises serious concerns, its appeal lies in stability, investment, and respect for national sovereignty rather than ideological alignment.

Trump's embrace of unilateralism and transactional diplomacy eroded trust in American leadership. Withdrawal from international agreements, attacks on global institutions, erratic trade wars, and **public disparagement of allies signalled a sharp break from past practice.** This inward turn diminished US credibility and created a vacuum in global governance, unsettling partners and rivals alike.

The United States now faces a critical choice. It can continue down a path of narrow nationalism, ceding influence to rivals, or it can rebuild trust, adapt leadership to new realities, and re-engage with partners on shared terms. Restoring credibility will be costly and difficult, but withdrawal carries a far higher price. The old world order is fading, and the struggle to shape what replaces it has only just begun.

THE EROSION OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE



The New Choice: Not Democracy vs. Autocracy, but Stability/Investment vs. Ideology.

THE NEW ARC OF INDIA-AUSTRALIA COLLABORATION

HARSH V. PANT AND
PRATNASHREE BASU

From strategic intent to operational cooperation

- Defence ties have moved beyond political signalling to practical outcomes.
- The inaugural **Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue** institutionalises high-level engagement.
- Updated defence agreements focus on maritime security and joint operational planning.

Expanding operational depth

- Air-to-air refuelling arrangements improve reach of combined air operations.
- Submarine rescue support and joint staff talks strengthen crisis-response coordination.
- Regular exercises, including Talisman Sabre, enhance interoperability across domains.

Three-phase evolution of the partnership

- Strategic convergence: Shared concerns over China's assertive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific.
- Operational integration: Growth in joint exercises, logistics cooperation, and information-sharing.
- Sustainment focus: Shift toward maintenance, supply chains, and long-term interoperability.

Key drivers of closer defence ties

- Changing maritime balance of power and increased regional uncertainty.
- Need to reduce dependence on a single external security provider.
- Developments like AUKUS increasing demand for regional interoperability and support networks.

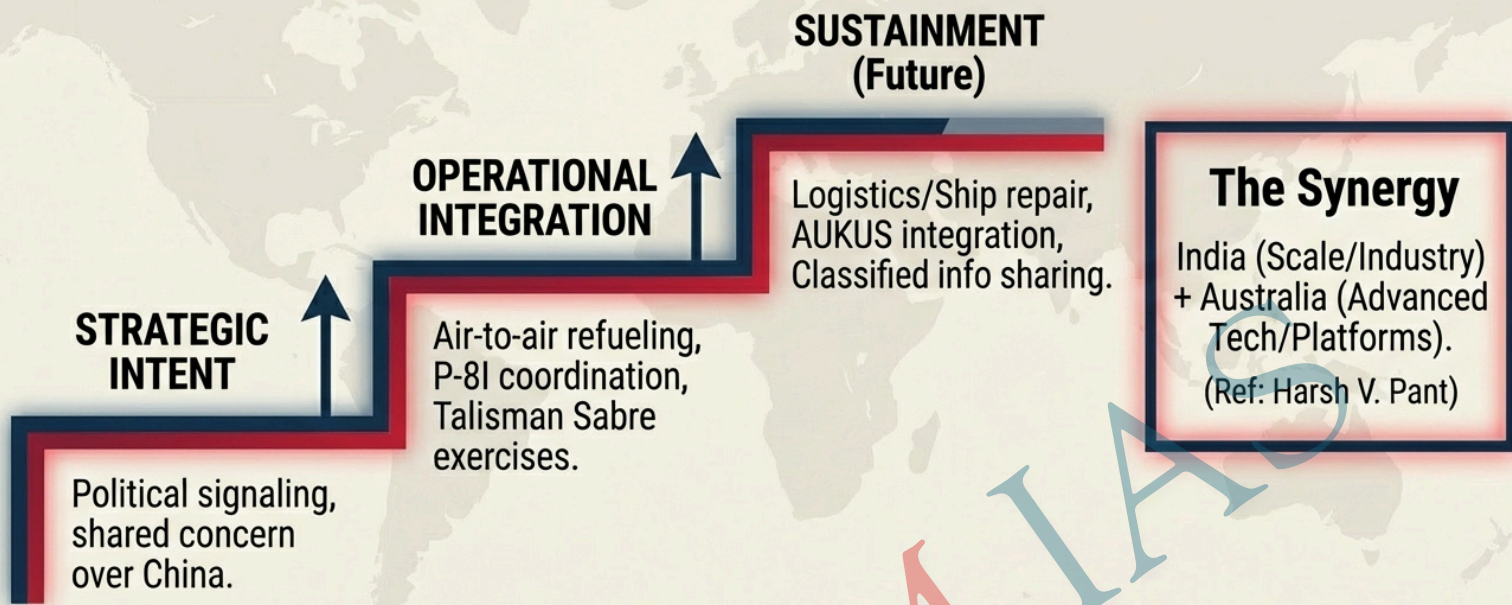
Complementary strengths of India and Australia

- India offers scale, cost efficiency, and growing defence-industrial capacity.
- **Australia contributes advanced maritime platforms, technology, and R&D expertise.**
- Combined capabilities enable co-development, logistics support, and maritime domain awareness.

The road ahead

- Effective implementation of logistics and ship-repair arrangements is critical.
- Deeper classified information-sharing and concrete defence-industrial projects are needed.
- Alignment with broader Quad initiatives can anchor the partnership in Indo-Pacific stability.

PARTNERSHIP MODEL: INDIA-AUSTRALIA



INDIA'S TRAVAILS IN NEGOTIATING A FRIENDLESS WORLD

M. K. NARAYANAN

A foreign policy struggling to adapt

- India's foreign policy thinking remains rooted in outdated assumptions from earlier decades.
- Rapid shifts in global power politics demand flexibility that is currently lacking.
- **Multilateralism has weakened**, leaving India exposed in a more transactional world order.

Declining geopolitical relevance

- Despite economic growth, India appears increasingly sidelined in major global and regional processes.
- Exclusion from key diplomatic initiatives, such as West Asia peace efforts, reinforces perceptions of irrelevance.
- **Low-level representation at critical international events** has compounded this diplomatic marginalisation.

Strategic drift and diplomatic passivity

- India has often appeared as a bystander during major regional upheavals, including unrest in neighbouring countries.
- The **absence of timely diplomatic engagement** suggests a lack of depth and strategic clarity.
- Regional powers that once valued India's influence are now filling the vacuum themselves.

Managing an assertive China

- China's strategic thinking and diplomatic tactics remain difficult for India to decode.
- Beijing's expanding influence east of India and across Asia is reshaping regional order.
- Short-term transactional deals pursued by major powers are unsuitable models for India's long-term interests.

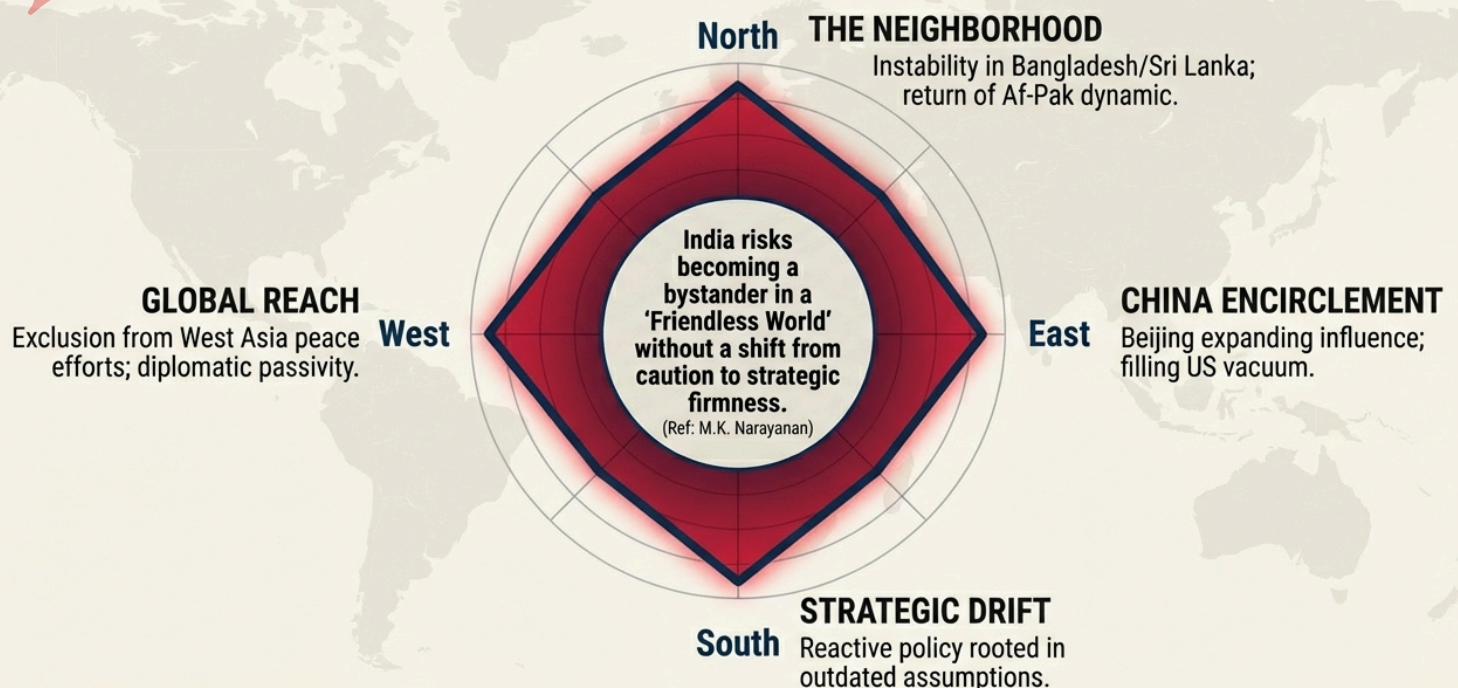
Growing challenges in the neighbourhood

- The Afghanistan-Pakistan dynamic poses serious security risks for India's northwest.
- Pakistan's strengthened position under its military leadership demands proactive counter-strategy.
- Relations with neighbours such as Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka require sustained diplomatic repair and persuasion.

The need for strategic renewal

- India must recognise the emergence of a China-influenced regional order as US influence recedes.
- Diplomatic caution must be balanced with strategic firmness and clearer signalling.
- Protecting India's civilisational identity and long-term autonomy requires constant vigilance, policy innovation, and adaptability.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC VULNERABILITIES



RISE OF THE NEW PEACEMAKERS

C. RAJA MOHAN

THE NEW MEDIATION ECOSYSTEM



Mediation shifts away from the West:

- Conflict mediation is no longer dominated by Western powers or the United Nations.
- Fragmentation within the West and weakening of the UN have created diplomatic space for new actors.
- Mediation is emerging as a key instrument of influence rather than a **neutral humanitarian exercise**.

Middle Eastern states as active peacemakers

- **Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE** have taken centre stage in conflict resolution.
- Peace talks on Afghanistan, Gaza, Ukraine, and regional disputes are increasingly hosted in Doha, Istanbul, Riyadh, and Abu Dhabi.
- These states use mediation to enhance strategic relevance and global visibility.

Turkey and Qatar's mediation strategies

- Turkey leverages intelligence networks, regional access, and links with both state and non-state actors.
- **Qatar has mastered niche diplomacy** by maintaining channels with groups such as Hamas and the Taliban.
- Their ability to engage all sides gives them access denied to traditional Western mediators.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE as diplomatic power brokers

- Saudi Arabia has elevated mediation to a tool of prestige and leadership, hosting high-profile summits and talks.
- The UAE has focused on sustained facilitation, humanitarian coordination, and prisoner exchanges.
- Both states convert economic wealth into long-term diplomatic influence.

China's entry into global mediation

- China is positioning itself as both a great power and a peacemaker.
- Initiatives such as brokering Saudi-Iran rapprochement signal Beijing's ambition to reshape global governance.
- Mediation complements China's economic presence and offers an alternative to Western-led diplomacy.

Implications for India and global order

- Mediation has become a **language of power** in a multipolar world.
- India has traditionally avoided third-party involvement in disputes but must adapt to a changing landscape.
- Reclaiming space in regional and global peacemaking requires flexibility, engagement with diverse actors, and renewed diplomatic confidence.

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MULTILATERALISM ISN'T DEAD

SHASHI THAROOR

A troubled moment for multilateralism

- As the UN marks its 80th anniversary, the global mood is anxious rather than celebratory.
- Institutions created after **World War II face scepticism**, funding cuts, and declining political support.
- The United States, once the chief architect, appears increasingly disengaged from multilateral leadership.

Why multilateralism mattered

- Multilateralism rests on the idea that global problems need collective solutions.
- Institutions like the UN provided smaller states a voice and helped manage peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, and global norms.
- Landmark achievements such as human rights frameworks, climate agreements, and development goals emerged through cooperative processes.

Structural and philosophical challenges

- The UN's structure reflects outdated power realities, particularly in the Security Council.
- Multilateralism struggles with a **deeper divide between global interdependence and national sovereignty**.
- Rising nationalism and populism have made many societies suspicious of global cooperation.

Causes of the current erosion

- Great-power rivalry, especially between the US and China, has weakened consensus-based decision-making.
- Growing preference for **bilateral or "mini-lateral" arrangements** has sidelined universal institutions.
- Violations of international law and norms in conflicts like Ukraine and Gaza have damaged institutional credibility.

Why abandonment is not an option:

- Despite its flaws, no alternative forum exists where all nations can engage collectively.
- Global crises such as climate change, **pandemics, inequality, and technological disruption** demand coordinated responses.
- Walking away would mean abandoning the very idea of shared global responsibility.

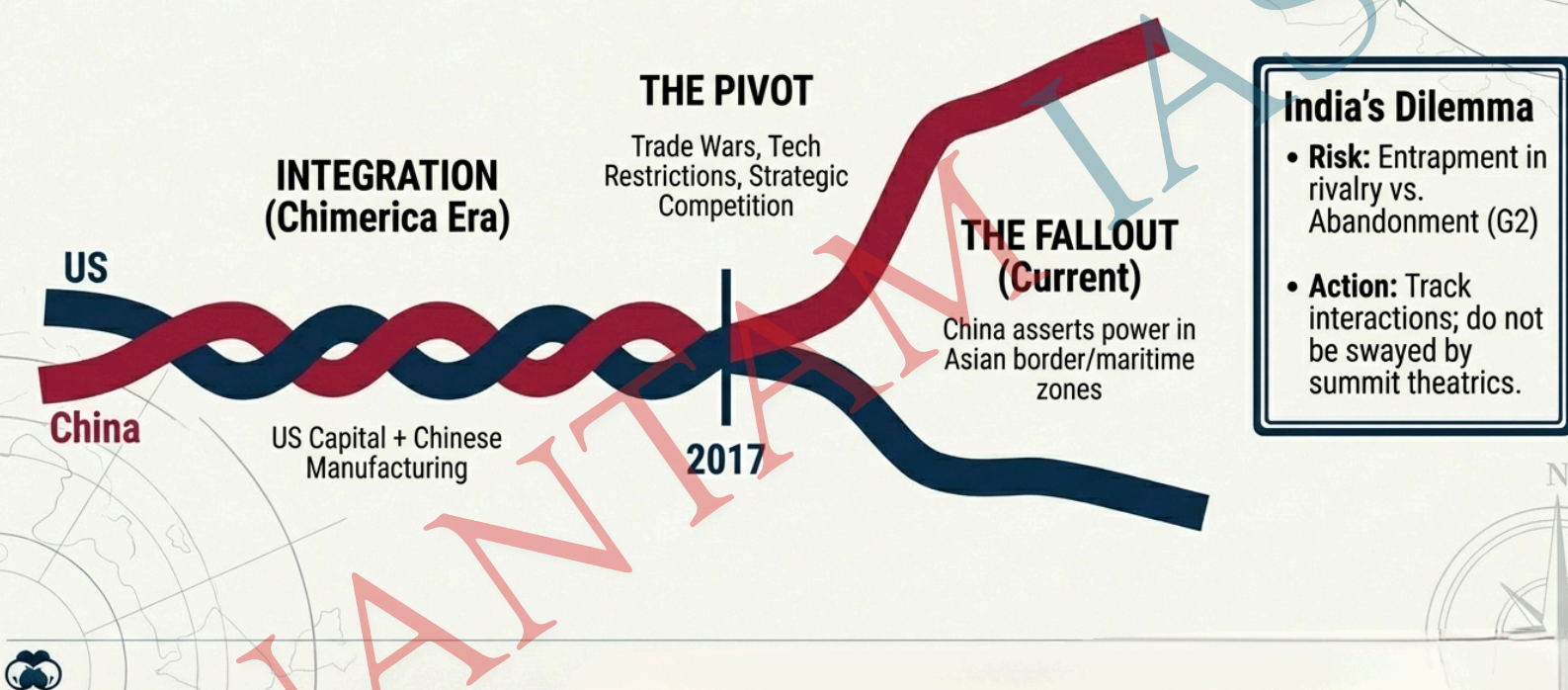
The path to renewal

- The future of multilateralism depends on rebuilding legitimacy, not just reforming institutions.
- Global cooperation must deliver tangible benefits, jobs, security, dignity for ordinary citizens.
- Leadership must come not only from major powers but also from emerging states, regional coalitions, and civil society, with countries like India playing a constructive role.

THE CHIMERICA CHALLENGE

C. RAJA MOHAN

THE DECOUPLING CURVE: US-CHINA DYNAMICS



The centrality of US-China relations

- US-China ties have become the most consequential bilateral relationship shaping Asia's geopolitics.
- **Shifts in Washington-Beijing relations ripple across the region**, forcing countries like India to constantly recalibrate.
- Asia's strategic environment is increasingly defined by uncertainty and competition between the two powers.

Historical evolution of Chimerica

- The US-China relationship has moved through multiple phases, from wartime alliance to Cold War hostility.
- China's economic opening integrated American **capital with Chinese manufacturing, creating "Chimerica"**.
- India normalised relations with both powers after 1991 but often remained cautious and reactive.

From engagement to rivalry

- US policy shifted decisively from engagement to strategic competition after 2017.
- Trade wars, technology restrictions, supply chain decoupling, and alliance-building intensified rivalry.
- China responded with greater assertiveness across Asia, including along India's borders and maritime zones.

The Trump factor and Asian anxieties

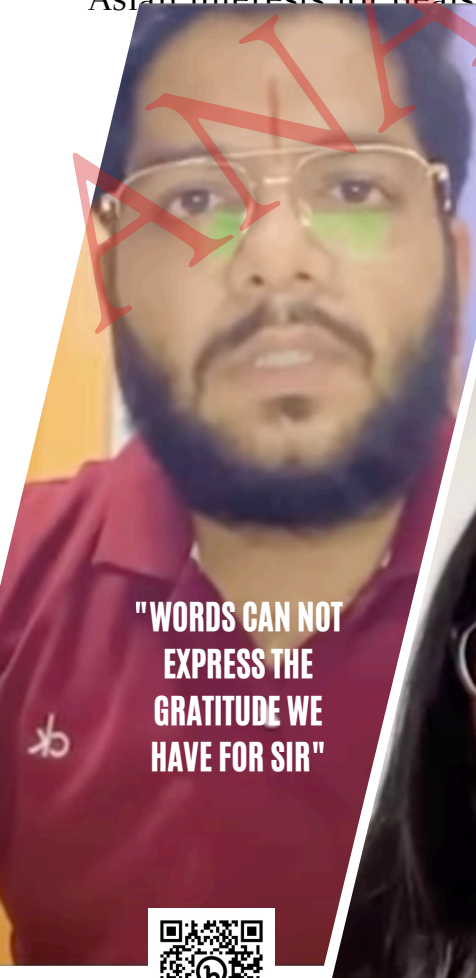
- Donald Trump's Asia outreach signalled both continuity and adjustment in US strategy.
- **Support for alliances such as AUKUS and the US-Japan partnership** reassured some Asian states.
- Persistent fears remain that US transactional diplomacy could sacrifice Asian interests for deals with China.

The case for proactive Indian strategy

- India must track US-China interactions closely without being swayed by summit theatrics.
- Strengthening economic reform, defence capacity, and technological capabilities is essential.
- Limiting confrontation with China while expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation offers the best path forward.

India's dilemma and missed leverage

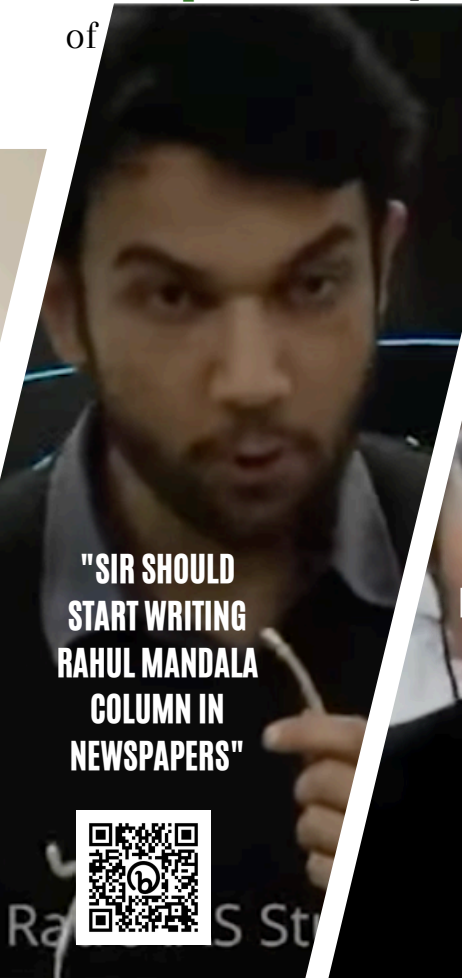
- India has often responded hesitantly, constrained by fear of entrapment in great-power rivalry.
- China's growing power gap with India and deeper US-China engagement risk sidelining New Delhi.
- **Strategic hesitation is no longer viable as competition** reshapes Asia's balance of



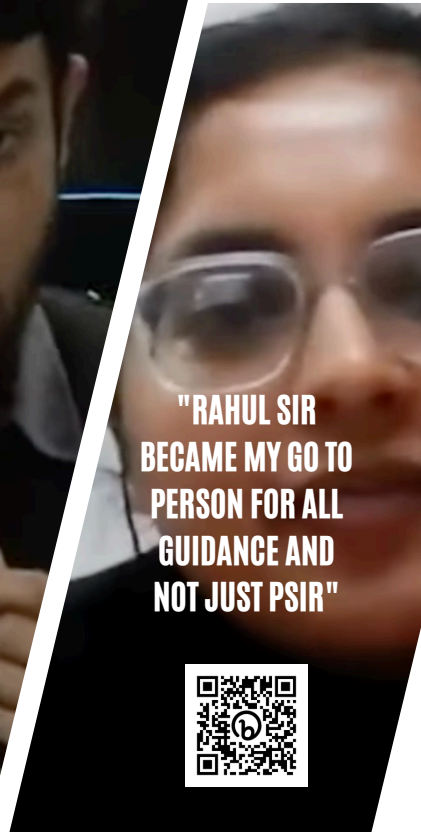
"WORDS CAN NOT EXPRESS THE GRATITUDE WE HAVE FOR SIR"



"I COULD NEVER EXPECT TO LEARN SO MUCH IN MY OWN GRADUATION SUBJECT"



"SIR SHOULD START WRITING RAHUL MANDALA COLUMN IN NEWSPAPERS"



"RAHUL SIR BECAME MY GO TO PERSON FOR ALL GUIDANCE AND NOT JUST PSIR"



THE MIRAGE OF PORT-LED DEVELOPMENT IN GREAT NICOBAR

ABHIJIT SINGH

Overstated promise of a mega port

- The proposed **Great Nicobar port** is projected as a strategic and commercial game-changer.
- Claims of transforming India into a regional maritime hub dominate public discourse.
- Environmental, economic, and operational risks are routinely underplayed in these projections.

Faulty assumptions behind port-led growth

- The belief that port capacity automatically attracts cargo and shipping traffic is flawed.
- Successful transshipment hubs depend on network connectivity, carrier loyalty, and feeder links.
- Past experience at Indian ports shows infrastructure alone does not guarantee traffic.

INFRASTRUCTURE REALISM: GREAT NICOBAR

THE HYPE



- Game Changer
- Regional Hub
- Strategic Deterrence

THE REALITY



- **Geography:** 1,200km from mainland = High Opex
- **Economics:** No local cargo base
- **Logistics:** Unsustainable dependence on feeder services

****Correction**:** Do not conflate commercial transshipment with military utility. Naval facilities provide surveillance; the mega-port is a commercial risk.

Structural and geographic disadvantages

- **Galathea Bay lies around 1,200 km** from the Indian mainland, making operations costly.
- Absence of hinterland, industry, or local cargo base increases dependence on feeder services.
- All supplies, fuel, and personnel would need to be shipped in, raising operating expenses.

Strategic logic versus commercial reality

- Arguments linking the port to strategic deterrence blur commercial and military objectives.
- Existing naval facilities already support surveillance and maritime domain awareness.
- Strategic goals should be pursued transparently rather than embedded in commercial port projects.

Weak commercial viability

- Shipping lines are unlikely to commit without long-term subsidies and policy support.
- Comparisons with Colombo and Singapore ignore their dense logistics networks and cost advantages.
- Even established regional ports struggle to attract sustained transshipment volumes.

Lessons from logistics and port economics

- Carrier decisions are shaped by cost structures, efficiency, and network integration.
- **Cases like Vizhinjam show dependence on a single shipping** line is not a sustainable model.
- Without a viable logistics ecosystem, the project risks becoming a costly symbol of military ambition rather than a driver

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