

# Issue Brief

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Dynamic Global Trends:  
Need for Resilience  
&  
Flexibility by India

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# *Dynamic Global Trends: Need for Resilience & Flexibility by India*

## **Abstract**

As global trends continue to evolve unpredictably, India's strategic imperative is focused on flexibility and resilience in pursuance of economic and security interests. India's ability to pivot, while staying steady, will define its relevance in the next global cycle. Resilience and flexibility form the twin pillars of India's strategy viz. to secure its economic interests, uphold strategic autonomy and 'shape rather than merely respond' to a turbulent global order. India's resilience, is a function of its robust economy—stable domestic drivers and pragmatic foreign policy that allows it to navigate a fragmented world on its own terms.

Keywords: Reliance and flexibility, Strategic Autonomy, Pragmatic Foreign Policy, Turbulent Word Order, Leader of Global South

Strong and secure state with a well-protected kingdom is essential for prosperity, trade and the overall well-being of its people

— Acharya Chanakya

Current dynamic geopolitical trends have witnessed a shift from a 'Unipolar to Multipolar World' order. The turbulent global contours have led to increased geo-economic fragmentation, weaponisation of interdependence, intense competition over critical resources & technology, exacerbation of existing instabilities by climate change and domestic political intricacies. As global trends continue to evolve unpredictably, India's strategic imperative is clear — embed flexibility and resilience in pursuance of economic and security interests. India paves at investing in shock-proof establishments, diversifying vulnerabilities and cultivating the diplomatic, technological and industrial depth needed to absorb disruptions without losing momentum. India's ability to pivot, while staying steady, will define its relevance in the next global cycle. Resilience and flexibility form the twin pillars of India's strategy viz. to secure its economic interests, uphold strategic autonomy and 'shape rather than merely respond' to a turbulent global order.

## **Current Geopolitical Landscape**

The current global landscape is marked by a complex interplay of geopolitical fragmentation, persistent humanitarian crises, uneven economic growth and accelerating

impact of new technologies. The environment is moving towards a multipolar world, with traditional alliances shifting and new powers emerging. The influence of the United States is witnessing a challenge by the rise of China and assertiveness of Russia. This has led to '*bloc confrontation*', steering to an East-West dynamics wherein a consolidated Euro-Atlantic West (NATO, EU & G7) is informally counterbalanced by a Sino-Russian front as also the expansion of groups like BRICS. Non-aligned countries like India, Brazil and Saudi Arabia are gaining influence by maintaining flexibility and adopting a multi-aligned approach towards trade and security. Longstanding international institutions like the UNO & WTO are facing political deadlock and are struggling to address global challenges effectively.

Ongoing conflicts continue to shape the global security landscape—wars in Ukraine and the Middle East remain major sources of instability with risks of escalation involving other regional or global powers. Tensions in the South China Sea and around Taiwan are intensifying as the US pivots its focus to the Indo-Pacific region. Warfare is increasingly blending traditional military actions with multi-domain facets like cyber, space, information and grey zone warfare including non-state actors. Competition over oceans i.e. shipping lanes, undersea cables & deep-sea mining and outer space i.e. astro-politics and satellite technology is intensifying, creating new security frontiers. The current geo-political milieu is thus characterised by heightened complexity and unpredictability demanding that nations navigate a fragmented and competitive landscape while managing a diverse set of elevated risks.

### **Geo - Economic Fragmentation**

The era of seamless globalisation is giving way to a more fragmented and uncertain environment. Protectionist policies, exemplified by the United States, imposing tariffs on goods from many partners are accelerating the 'rewiring of global trade' and leading to retaliatory responses. Nations are looking for 'friend-shoring' by prioritising national and economic security over purely economic considerations, leading to efforts to build more resilient, geographically shorter supply chains and source from politically aligned partners. Economic linkages such as trade, sanctions and access to financial systems are being increasingly used as tools of statecraft and political pressure.

The struggle for control over strategic resources and technological superiority has become a primary driver of geo-political competition. The shift towards clean energy has created new dependencies. The countries that control critical minerals like lithium, cobalt and rare earths needed for batteries and renewables are gaining influence. Artificial intelligence, semiconductors and network infrastructure have become central battle grounds. Governments

are racing to innovate and regulate AI, leading to distinct technological blocs i.e.. US vs China and an increased risk of cyber warfare targeting critical infrastructure.

### India's Shift from Non- Alignment to All- Alignment'

India's foreign policy is best described as a strategy of 'multi-alignment' or 'all-alignment', which is an evolution of its historical commitment to strategic autonomy rather than a strict non-alignment policy. This approach involves actively engaging with multiple global powers and blocs simultaneously, based purely on national interest, rather than aligning exclusively with any single power or ideology. Highlights of multilateral approach adopted by India are enumerated as under:

- **Strategic Autonomy.** The core principle remains India's right to make independent foreign policy decisions free from external influence. This allows India to navigate a complex, multipolar world order and pursue its own path with clarity. India today, make partners entirely based on its own national interests.
- **Balancing Relationships.** India skilfully manages a balanced relations with rival powers like the US, Russia and China to maximise its leverage.

- **Relations with the West.** India has deepened ties with the United States through initiatives like the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) and the I2U2 group (India, Israel, UAE, US) focusing on Indo-Pacific security and economic and technological cooperation. However, weaponisation of trade by US against India, due to its closeness to Russia for purchase of oil and defence equipment, has been a thorn in the relations, fuelled by the present US political dispensation.
- **Relations with Russia.** Despite Western pressure and sanctions over the Ukraine war as also high tariff, India has maintained its strategic partnership with Russia— continuing to purchase discounted crude oil and defence equipment. The recent visit of President Putin to India has been a testimony to the closeness in relations. Signing of RELOS (Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support) between the two Strategic Partners will further tighten this bond.
- **Relations with China.** While a long-term rival with significant border disputes, India manages functional trade and diplomatic relations with China, engaging in forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). PM

Modi chose to visit China to attend SCO meeting in September 2025, despite trade intimidation by US, thus displaying India's diversified stand.

- **Issue-Based Coalitions.** India prefers agile, purpose-driven groupings (mini-lateralism) to address specific security, technological or economic challenges without the constraints of formal military alliances or comprehensive commitments.
- **Economic Pragmatism.** The policy is guided by economic needs such as diversifying trade partners, securing energy supplies from multiple sources and attracting investment and technology from various global players. This helps build resilient supply chains and reduce dependency on any single nation.
- **Leader of Global South.** India is asserting leadership in the Global South through its growing economic power, advocacy for developing nations in global forums like inclusion for the African Union in G20 and South-South cooperation in technology (Digital Public Infrastructure) and health (Vaccine Maitri), thus positioning itself as a bridge between the North and the South.
- **Active Multilateral Engagement.** India actively participates in various international groupings like the G20, QUAD, SCO and BRICS using these platforms to shape global norms on trade, technology advancements, climate action and digital governance.
- **Independent Foreign Policy.** India engages with rival powers like the US and Russia simultaneously i.e. continuing to import Russian oil despite Western pressure while deepening ties with the US on technology and defence, hence, maximising its leverage and freedom of action.

In essence, India's current policy is a pragmatic and flexible strategy designed to secure its national interests by maximising its options in a world where global blocs are hardening.

### India's Resilience in Present Global Landscape

India demonstrates significant resilience in the present global order, primarily driven by a robust domestic economy, pragmatic multi-alignment foreign policy and growing technological capabilities. This approach allows India to navigate global uncertainties and external shocks while positioning itself as a major global player. Key features of India's resilience are enumerated as under:-

- **Economic Resilience.** India, being the fourth largest economy, has economic stability as a major source of its resilience amidst global headwinds like trade tensions, supply chain disruptions and imported inflation.
  - **Strong Domestic Demand.** A large young population, rising middle class domestic consumption and investment provides a significant buffer against weak external demand.
  - **Macro-economic Stability.** Prudent fiscal and monetary policies, manageable external debt and substantial foreign exchange reserves have helped maintain stability as also control inflation compared to many other economies.
  - **Diversified Economy.** Growth is broad-based across agriculture, manufacturing and strong services sector, especially IT exports, reduces vulnerability to single-sector shocks.
  - **FDI Inflows.** India has continued to attract significant Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), indicating global investor confidence in its long-term growth potential.
- **Technological and Structural Reforms.** Ongoing domestic structural reforms enhance India's long-term resilience and global competitiveness. Platforms like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Aadhaar have not only revolutionised the domestic digital economy but are also being leveraged as a soft power tool & blueprint for other nations to emulate.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat.** This policy aims to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce supply chain dependencies, particularly in critical sectors viz. defence, electronics and semiconductors. At inception, it targeted towards economic self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on external sources. The initiative, that was conceptualised in 2014, outlines measures to strengthen local production capabilities, supports the nation's economic stability and expand India's role in international trade networks. India has gravitated from being 'largest importer to a sizeable exporter' including exports in defence sector. India's defence exports have seen explosive growth, rising 34-fold from ₹686 crore (FY14) to a record ₹23,622 crore (FY25), driven by Atmanirbhar Bharat. Government policies, increased private sector participation, public private coordination and strategic reforms has steered exports to over 100 countries including the West, targeting \$5.8 billion by 2029.

- **Startups.** India boasts the third largest startup ecosystem in the world, driven by rapid digital adoption—a young demographic and proactive government support. With over 1,59,000 recognised startups and more than 100 Unicorns as of early 2025, the sector is a significant engine for innovation and job creation. India's 1.4 billion population and low-cost internet access provides a massive customer base for digital businesses in e-commerce, fintech, health-tech and ed-tech. The 'Startup India' initiative offers tax exemptions, easier compliance and funding support to reduce entry barriers. With a median age of 28, India has a young, tech-savvy workforce, with many professionals moving into the startup world, showcasing their expertise. Both domestic and international venture capital firms as also angel investors are actively funding Indian startups, with specific focus on Artificial Intelligence, deep-tech and sustainability.
- **Infrastructure Development.** India's infrastructure growth is experiencing a significant boom, driven by massive government investment (₹10 lakh crore in FY24)— focused policy like PM GatiShakti and major expansion in roads (second largest network), railways (electrification/ new trains), airports (third largest domestic market), ports and urban transport (metro expansion). Key highlights include a faster pace of highway construction, increased cargo handling, widespread metro network growth and a push for private sector participation—all aimed at boosting connectivity and economic resilience. National Highway length grew significantly, with construction speed rising to 33.8 km/day (2023-24); high-speed corridors expanded to over 2,000 km. Near 100% broad-gauge electrification, substantial growth in LHB coach production, introduction of Vande Bharat trains and record freight loading (over 1.6 billion tonnes in 2025). Operational airports increased from 74 (2014) to 160 (2025), serving a booming domestic market. Cargo handling capacity doubled, improving India's global shipping rank.
- **Innovative Financing.** Encouraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and structured finance has contributed significantly in India's growth story.

Indian government's vision of '*Viksit Bharat by 2047*'— to transform India into a developed nation, is focussed on economic prosperity, social empowerment, sustainable development and good governance. This vision is being driven through various initiatives like the *Viksit Bharat@2047* platform for youth ideas, infrastructure development, quality education, health care, skill development, meaningful employment and economic reforms

aiming for a \$30 trillion economy with inclusive growth. The vision of *Viksit Bharat* has been imbued in all facets of governance and functioning of the country and seems to be a ‘Mission Possible’.

## Conclusion

In an era, defined by volatile supply chains, geopolitical fragmentation and rapid technological shifts, India cannot afford a reactive stance. Building resilience through diversified partnerships, secure critical-mineral access, strong domestic capabilities, and flexible diplomacy is no longer optional, but foundational. The world’s strategic centre of gravity is shifting and India’s ability to anticipate, adapt and act will determine whether it emerges merely as a participant in global trends or not. India’s resilience, in the current global landscape, is a function of its robust economy, stable domestic drivers and pragmatic foreign policy that allows it to navigate a fragmented world on its own terms. India is playing a role of a balancer not only in Global South, but also for the world.



## About the Author

Colonel Vivek Singh was commissioned into the Rajputana Rifles Regiment in June 2002. He commanded his unit in Eastern Sector and Western Borders and has served in various Staff appointments at Brigade and Corps Headquarters and as Directing Staff at the Army War College, Mhow. He is a graduate of Higher Air Command Course from College of Air Warfare, Secunderabad and presently posted at Headquarters Southern Command. Views expressed are personal.



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