# PSIR & GS2 Daily Brief

Date: / / 20 | Issue:

## ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

**Briefs,** scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers, and leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles and research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your Mains answers.

## TODAY'S ARTICLES (fill in)

| # | Headline / Topic | Source |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Neighbourhood diplomacy and its west asia challenge - The Hindu | |
| 2 | Continuity or Change? Decoding UNSC resolution on Iran - ORF | |
| 3 | The fate of the Washington Consensus, once talisman - The Hindu | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |
| 7 | | |
| 8 | | |

# Article - 1

## Neighbourhood diplomacy and its West Asia challenge

Suhasini Haidar

With the sinking of the Iranian warship, *IRIS Dena*, in the Indian Ocean, by the United States on March 4, the war in West Asia came home to South Asia. With each passing day, the war that began on February 28 has reached South Asian homes in a number of ways – disrupting the availability of daily necessities, travel, trade, food and fuel for cooking and transport, fertilizers, and the safety of citizens in the West Asia region.

Approximately 25 million South Asians live and work in West Asia, including 10 million Indians, five million Pakistanis, between five to six million Bangladeshis, two million Nepalis, and significant numbers from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives. Afghans – between five to eight million – are refugees in Iran. In addition, Indians make up about 15% of the population of seafarers, or crew aboard merchant ships worldwide, along with other South Asians, all of whom are at risk of harm, particularly those positioned around the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran has weaponised access. As New Delhi formulates its next steps in the war, it is necessary to consider not only what it will mean for the whole region but also its own ties with each neighbour.

**India's stance could raise eyebrows**

It is important to recognise that New Delhi's posture at the start of the war – when U.S.-Israel strikes killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and much of his immediate family – has been out of step with most of the region. Bangladesh and Pakistan issued statements condoling Khamenei's death almost immediately, the Maldives condemned the U.S.-Israel attacks on Iran and Iran's counter-attacks equally, and the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister offered his condolences. In contrast, it took South Block five days to send Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to the Iranian Embassy.

It took another week for the Ministry of External Affairs to express "grief" over the killing of more than 150 students and teachers at a school for girls abutting a naval base in Minab. Even in the wider region, a statement by Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) criticised U.S. and Israel for "initiating" attacks, and subsequent attacks by Iran.

This is less about optics and more about India's – and South Asia's – cultural values: the killing of Khamenei, an 86-year-old religious leader of a state, violated international norms, regardless of how his policies were viewed. That India's statements in the following days condemned Iran's retaliatory strikes without ever criticising U.S. or Israeli actions against Iran and Lebanon is an anomaly.

It is possible to explain the initial reactions in light of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel two days before the strikes, and his statement in the Knesset that India would stand with Israel "in the moment and beyond". But as the horror of the escalating war mounts and the Iranian regime demonstrates its resilience, there is a need to calibrate a more balanced response. India's traditional position, of building strong bilateral ties with every country in West Asia, without taking sides in regional fault lines has always kept it in a position of trust and goodwill; this was proven during Mr. Modi's outreach to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian for the passage of Indian ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

In addition, the U.S.'s unabashed pride in bombing *IRIS Dena* near Sri Lanka without even attempting to help the surviving sailors has come as a shock to many in the region. It is admirable that the Indian Navy immediately assisted the Sri Lankan Navy in the rescue operations, and that both Delhi and Colombo offered safe harbour to other Iranian military ships in the area. Yet, the Indian Navy's failure to express its condolences for the deaths of the sailors who had recently been its guests at India's multinational naval exercise MILAN 2026 and the International Fleet Review in Visakhapatnam in February, is difficult to understand.

**Economic, regional and maritime security**

Going forward, India must reassure its neighbours – other than Pakistan, which it has no relationship with at present – that it remains cognisant of their concerns. As energy shortages deepened, New Delhi received requests for petrol and diesel from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives; landlocked Nepal and Bhutan may follow suit if the situation worsens. India must plan ahead to avoid a repeat of 2021, when it had to halt vaccine supplies to its neighbourhood for several critical weeks to deal with the crisis caused by the spread of the delta variant of SARS-CoV-2. Subsequently, India's "Vaccine Maitri" programme did much to ease those memories, and enforced the need for an "all of region" approach to such situations.

Since 2020, South Asia has been has been buffeted by several crises: COVID-19, supply chain blockages from India-China tensions along the Line of Actual Control, sanctions affecting grain, oil, and urea amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, fluctuations in remittances due to constant flare-ups in West Asia, the impact of the Trump administration's tariff policy on the region's labour-intensive apparel and fashion industry, and seafood exports, and the growing shadow of Artificial Intelligence on jobs in a region with a restless young population.

It is not a coincidence that many of India's neighbours have seen youth protests erupt, and new governments installed as a result – an example is Nepal's election on March 5 which brought its first Gen-Z-led government to power. The Bharatiya Janata Party's poll losses in the general election in 2024, which resulted in Mr. Modi's first minority government within a coalition, are also attributed to the disaffection of unemployed and underemployed youth. The changes have impacted India's diplomacy, as the Modi government has had to amend its more muscular neighbourhood policy to engage leaders elected on these mandates and who are less beholden to India.

India must also recognise that its position as "net security provider" in the region has been challenged by the U.S.'s sinking of the *IRIS Dena*, which cuts more deeply given their joint membership of the Quad (the strategic forum comprising the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia).

At their last meeting in July 2025, the Quad Foreign Ministers issued a statement reaffirming their commitment to "peace and stability" in the Indo-Pacific region and declaring that they "strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion", a reference to China. With the U.S. behaving unilaterally, India must move to strengthen its own coalitions in the maritime region, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Colombo Security Conclave, and the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) so that it is not caught unawares in the future. South Asia requires more regional trade, connectivity and energy sharing platforms, along with more conversations on regional security, as each country in the subcontinent is a stakeholder.

On the global stage, India's position as Chair of the Quad requires it to host a summit this year – when U.S. President Donald Trump is to visit India. But India's immediate priority should be to convene a Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting to ensure better communication and chart a more stable course for the maritime region in view of the West Asia war.

**New Delhi must restore the balance**

On the other side of the global North-South divide, India is also due to convene the BRICS Summit in 2026 – while bringing current rivals and BRICS members Iran and the United Arab Emirates to the table may be difficult given current tensions, New Delhi's diplomatic skills must be exerted in forging consensus for a BRICS statement that also highlights South Asia's economic and security concerns. Having momentarily abandoned its balancing act between the U.S.-Israel and Iran, it is time for India to restore the balance in its West Asia policy. New Delhi's traditional position on the tightrope may be tense, but it gives a more beneficial vantage point from which to steer the future of its people and those across the wider neighbourhood.

The conflict will test India's regional influence and strategic balance

*suhasini.h@thehindu.co.in*

**Context** The article talks about escalating conflict in West Asia involving U.S., Iran & Israel with spillover effects on South Asia's energy security, trade & diaspora. It highlights India's diplomatic dilemma of balancing ties while maintaining autonomy.

## Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

- Realism – Balance of Power & National Interest : "Having momentarily abandoned its balancing act, it is time for India to restore the balance.

## Facts

- Indians form – 15% of global seafarers
- Strait of Hormuz – 20% of global oil trade.
- India imports – 80-85% of its crude oil.

- Complex Interdependence - Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye : "The war has reached South Asian homes, disrupting availability of daily necessities, travel, trade, food & fuel.
- Regional Security Complex Theory - Barry Buzan : "Security in West Asia directly impacts South Asia — interlinked regional security dynamics.

## Analytical Crux

India's initial tilt risks undermining its credibility as a neutral balancer & trusted interlocutor in West Asia. The crisis highlights structural vulnerability of South Asia - energy dependence, diaspora exposure & maritime chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz.

Further, India's claim as a "net security provider" is being tested, focusing greater reliance on Quad & regional frameworks. There is need for recalibrated foreign policy rooted in strategic autonomy, regional sensitivity & multi-alignment.

# Article - 2

1:22 PM Tue 17 Mar

orfonline.org

50%

Continuity or Change? Decoding the UN Security Council Resolution on Iran

AUTHOR : HEENA MAKHIJA

Expert Speak Raisina Debates

Published on *Mar 16, 2026*

*As the UNSC breaks its recent record of paralysis over the Iran crisis, the resolution highlights both the growing agency of Gulf powers and the persistent constraints of great-power rivalry*

Author

Heena Makhija

Dr. Makhija is an Associate Fellow at ORF and specializes in the study of Multilateralism, International Organizations,

**Context** The UNSC adopted resolution 2817, condemning Iran's actions & calling for de-escalation. The resolution saw rare consensus within UNSC, despite deep divisions among major powers (P5), especially Russia and China.

## Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

- Liberal Institutionalism - Role of International Institutions & Cooperation : "the U.N. Charter tasks the council with maintenance of international peace & security under Article 24."
- Collective Security : "affirming the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence." "Calling for immediate halt to hostilities."

## Facts

- Article 51 of UN Charter - "inherent right to self defence."
- UNSC resolution 2817 adopted on March 11, 2026.

■ Hegemonic Stability Theory – dominant power shapes global order and institutions.

" UNSC has ended up providing political backing – if not outright legal authorisation – for US led military interventions.

## Analytical Crux

The UNSC resolution 2817 shows a rare consensus shaped by the rising diplomatic clout of Gulf Cooperation Council, rather than US dominance.

Invoking Article 51 of the UN charter while omitting US-Israel actions, highlights the political nature of UNSC decisions. Russia - China abstentions reflect tactical restraint, not unity. Overall, it reveals both shifting power dynamics and UNSC's limited conflict-resolution capacity.

# The fate of the Washington Consensus, once talisman

Once upon a late-20th-century lecture circuit, the phrase "Washington Consensus" (WC) did the work of a talisman: 10 tidy policy prescriptions that promised macro stability, market-led growth, and a path out of crisis for beleaguered states. John Williamson, who coined the term in 1989, formulated its 10 commandments: fiscal discipline; reordering public spending toward pro-growth priorities; tax reform to broaden the tax base and lower rates; liberalisation of interest rates; competitive exchange rates; trade liberalisation through lowering tariffs; liberalisation of inward foreign direct investment; privatisation of state-owned enterprises; deregulation to remove barriers to entry and competition; and securing property rights. These were presented as near-universal remedies, administered by institutions in the West that watched the global macro-economy like physicians with a single, favoured prescription, summed up in the words liberalise, privatise, and deregulate. Three decades on, the prescription seems obsolete, overtaken by the onrush of global events.

**Shashi Tharoor**

is a fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress) for Thiruvananthapuram (Lok Sabha), the award-winning author of 28 books and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for External Affairs

**Its shaping, its legacy**

The Washington Consensus was never merely technocratic; it carried a political history. Adopted in moments of crisis, its reforms arrived bound up with conditionality, bargaining power, and a belief that markets, once set free, would generate growth that trickled down. The core tenets of the "consensus" emerged from the ideological crucible of Reaganomics and Thatcherite structural adjustment programmes. These principles – fiscal austerity, deregulation, privatisation, and trade liberalisation – were adopted with little critical scrutiny by the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, or BWIs) and their regional counterparts such as the Asian Development Bank during the mid to late 1980s. Their embrace was largely a response to the debt crises and macroeconomic instability that afflicted many developing countries at the time.

Yet, the consequences of this orthodoxy were far-reaching and, in many cases, deeply destabilising. The Asian financial crisis, which erupted in Bangkok in 1997, and the global financial meltdown of 2008, were among the most visible symptoms of the Consensus's systemic flaws. Equally telling were the breakdowns of the WTO ministerial meetings in Seattle (1999) and Cancún (2003), which exposed the deepening rift between developed and developing nations – a divide the Doha Round never managed to bridge.

One of the most damaging legacies of the Consensus was its categorical rejection of industrial strategy. Promoted by the BWIs on behalf of industrialised nations, this taboo was reinforced through WTO rules on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs), intellectual property (TRIPS), and subsidies – all of which constrained the policy space for developing countries seeking to nurture domestic industries. Another pillar of WC dogma was deregulation in favour of an idealised "free market", even in contexts where market institutions were weak or non-existent – as was the case across much of Africa and the least developed countries. For decades, the IMF advanced the notion that inequality was irrelevant so long as growth occurred and would eventually "trickle down". In practice, however, Structural Adjustment Programmes proved particularly harmful to the poorest nations, which lacked even the minimal institutional foundations upon which the WC's assumptions were built.

Compounding these issues was the manner in which the WC was conceived – largely in western capitals, without meaningful consultation with the developing countries that would bear the brunt of its implementation. The results were mixed enough to invite reappraisal, even during the WC's heyday. Some countries – parts of East Asia, Pinochet's Chile – found ways to combine market openings with strong state direction and industrial strategy. Others – several Latin American cases, some post-Soviet transitions – suffered debt crises, inequality spikes and social backlash.

**A loss of faith**

The conditionalities imposed by the BWIs and the rigidity of WTO rules led to widespread discontent, manifesting in street protests across the Global South throughout the 1990s and beyond. The backlash against globalisation – whether from the anti-capitalist left in earlier decades or the far right after 2008, with its toxic blend of white supremacy, racism, and anti-immigration sentiment – can be traced, at least in part, to the failures of the WC and the global financial crisis it helped precipitate. Movements such as MAGA and Brexit reflect this disillusionment.

Ironically, none of the countries that successfully industrialised – neither the United States nor Japan before the Second World War, nor South Korea, Taiwan, or Singapore in the post-war era – adhered to the WC's prescriptions during their formative years. Their success was rooted in state-led strategies that prioritised industrial policy, precisely the kind of intervention the "consensus" sought to delegitimise.

The WC may have dominated the late 20th century, but its time has passed. The task now is to craft a new consensus – one that is inclusive, context-sensitive, and responsive to the realities of a multipolar, digital, and ecologically fragile world.

We must revisit the policy mix that enabled the rare post-war success stories – South Korea, Taiwan, and in its own way, China – to ascend into the ranks of advanced economies. This does not mean a wholesale return to 20th-century models, but rather a thoughtful adaptation of their core principles to contemporary challenges. Education, public health, infrastructure investment, and "infant industry" protection remain as vital today as they were then. But new imperatives – digital trade, climate resilience, and AI governance – demand fresh thinking and innovative frameworks.

We are witnessing two new trends: one, the emergence of a "post-Washington consensus" that insists on public accountability, social safety nets, and the politics of redistribution; the other, the Beijing counter-narrative, where state-led intervention, targeted industrial policy, and limited political liberalisation offer an alternative template.

If the late 20th century was the triumph of liberalisation, the mid-2020s have seen its theatrical undoing in the form of the Trump tariff tempest – sweeping, erratic and punitive. Protectionism is being brandished as an instrument of geopolitics and domestic politics alike. Supply chains are being reconfigured, not so much for efficiency but for dominance and national security. The implicit bargain that underwrote the WC – that free markets would be the engine of prosperity, and supply chains the neutral plumbing of global commerce – has been strained by a revived appetite for economic nationalism, and the wielding of sovereign power as a battle-axe rather than a shield.

Tariffs and industrial subsidies signal a re-politicisation of economic policy. They reveal that Trump's America is willing to accept short-run costs and global friction to reclaim perceived strategic advantage. If in 1990 the default was "liberalise", in 2025 the default is "what will protect our interests?"

**The shattering of a myth**

Has the world moved to a new consensus? Not exactly. What has emerged is less a single set of new verities and more an acceptance that policy must be politically context-sensitive. A pragmatic eclecticism now rules: fiscal prudence still matters, but so does targeted public investment; markets are powerful allocators, but they need rules, institutions, and buffers; trade is growth-enhancing, but national security can justify strategic decoupling and politics can justify tariffs.

The neat ideological narrative – liberalise, privatise, deregulate – has given way to a toolbox from which policymakers pick instruments with explicit geopolitical and distributional aims. In that messy landscape, success will come from the hard work of designing policies that fit national capacities, global constraints, and political realities.

That is not the end of globalised liberalisation; it is the end of the myth that there is a ready-made template that every nation subscribes to. The struggle to grow and prosper is still every nation's struggle. But each has to find its own path forward amid the policy mess into which all have been plunged.

The Washington Consensus no longer fits a multipolar, digital and fragile world

# Article - 3

**Context** The article examines the rise & decline of Washington Consensus, a neoliberal model promoted by the International Monetary Fund & World Bank after the 1980s debt crisis.

It argues that along with growth it led to inequality, weak industrialisation & Global Financial crisis.

It focuses on the shift toward a "post-Washington Consensus" marked by state intervention, welfare & strategic policies in multipolar world.

## Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

- "The Washington Consensus did the work of a talisman: ten tidy prescriptions promising stability, growth & crisis recovery"
- "The backlash against globalisation reflects the failures of the Washington Consensus"

## Facts

Washington Consensus -

Coined by Williamson (1989) focusing on Liberalisation, Privatisation, Deregulation (LPD model).

■ "From 'liberalise' to 'protect our interests' marks the shift in global policy"

## Analytical Crux

The Washington Consensus is no longer a universal model – its market centric approach led to inequality, crisis & limited policy autonomy in developing states.

Successful economies instead combined markets with strong state-led industrial policies challenges consensus. There is a shift from rigid neoliberalism to pragmatic, context-specific policy making balancing growth, welfare and national security. It marks a transition toward a post-consensus global order where economic policy is shaped by geopolitics, domestic priorities and strategic autonomy rather than uniform prescriptions.

## The Programme in Political Science and International Relations emphasizes advanced research, critical thinking, and enhances interdisciplinary understanding. It provides comprehensive coverage in structured way for strategic advantage in upsc.