

PSIR & GS-2 Daily Brief

About this initiative : Briefs, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers & leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles & research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your mains answers.

PSIR
Optional by
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Article - 1 : Pakistan's mediation in West Asia crisis: survival or diplomatic utility



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
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Pakistan's Mediation in the West Asia Crisis: Strategic Survival and Diplomatic Utility

April 15, 2026 | Issue Brief



Context The article argues that Pakistan's activism in the 2026 West Asia crisis is not a sign of real regional leadership, but a survival strategy to turn weakness into temporary diplomatic relevance.

Facts

● Pakistan's Iran border across Balochistan makes de-escalation a hard security need.

● The 2025 Pahalgam terror attack showed erosion of earlier escalation limits.

Theoretical Lens

Rally-around-the-flag-effect : Coined by John Mueller in 1970. The effect is driven by intense national unity, patriotism and a decline in criticism for political opposition, often framing the leader as a symbol of national defence.

Analytical Crux

The article's real point is that Pakistan is not mediating from strength; it is mediating from weakness. Economic fragility, energy dependence, border insecurity with Iran and domestic vulnerability have pushed Islamabad to make itself useful in a crisis. The contrast with India is important: a bigger power often carries bigger constraints, while a weaker state can sometimes move more tactically. So, the larger lesson is that weak states can create short-term relevance in a fractured regional order, but they cannot easily convert it into durable power.

Verbatim Quotes

"Pakistan's mediation bid does not reflect newfound regional leadership so much as a strategy of geopolitical survival through diplomatic utility."

"Mediation is less a peace project than an instrument of state survival."

Article - 2: A new world order needs a credible architect-India must claim that role

A new world order needs a credible architect. India must claim that role



THAROORTHINK
BY SHASHI THAROOR

THE ANNALS of history are often written in the ink of unintended consequences. As the fragile ceasefire enters its second week, the US naval blockade takes effect in the Strait of Hormuz. With potential escalations threatening mayhem, the world finds itself staring at a landscape transformed by a conflict few desired and none can claim to have won. For India, a nation that historically prides itself on its moral heritage, this crisis has exposed the fragility of our energy security and our lack of leverage with the big powers. But more importantly, it has presented a moment of existential choice: In the wake of the collapse of the peace negotiations, will India continue to hedge its bets in the shadows of giants, or will it stand up to be counted as a principled architect of a new, durable global order?

The Iran war, launched under the banner of "Operation Epic Fury", was framed by Washington as a surgical necessity — a mission to degrade Iran's nuclear capabilities and proxy networks. Yet, as the war dragged into its second month, the goalposts shifted with dizzying frequency. From regime change to the desperate restoration of maritime navigation, the shifting objectives revealed a fundamental truth: Modern warfare is a blunt instrument incapable of resolving geopolitical problems surgically.

The primary casualty of this military hubris was the Strait of Hormuz. By attempting to "secure" the region, the offensive triggered the very insecurity it sought to prevent: A blockade of the strait. The result was a self-inflicted irony of global proportions: US President Donald Trump called the reopening of the strait his major war aim, though the strait had been open and functioning smoothly till the war began, and then announced a blockade himself! As of today, we have a stalemate. There is talk of peace negotiations resum-

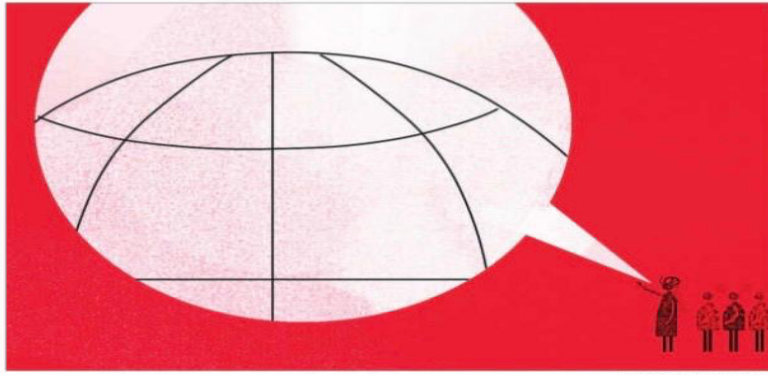


ILLUSTRATION: C R SASIKUMAR

ing on Friday in Islamabad, while an economic chokehold is applied to Iran against a backdrop of threats and attacks that leaves every underlying tension unresolved and the region more volatile than ever.

In the arithmetic of this war, the big winners (and some of the losers) were not those on the battlefield. Russia, despite its own war in Ukraine, found a lifeline in the chaos. As global attention drifted away from Eastern Europe, Moscow saw surging revenues from booming (and temporarily sanction-free) energy sales. China, too, emerged as a quiet net beneficiary. By settling discounted Iranian crude in yuan rather than petrodollars, Beijing accelerated the de-dollarisation of the global economy without firing a shot. And as the US, once the guarantor of world order, behaved as its biggest disruptor, China's statesmanlike restraint enhanced its global image.

The big losers were the Gulf countries, forced to confront the fragility of their prosperity and the precariousness of their security, and the broader region, including India, whose economies were imperilled by new gas and related shortages. NATO allies, wary of a

conflict that seemed driven by whim rather than collective security, largely declined direct involvement. This sparked Trump's renewed questioning of the alliance's utility, raising ominous dilemmas for European security. Gulf states found themselves in an invidious position: Publicly calling for diplomacy while privately urging Washington to destroy Iran's capabilities, countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE bore the brunt of retaliatory strikes they could neither prevent nor avoid. The porous US security umbrella was exposed, leading to a new consciousness of vulnerability. Saudi Arabia's strategic mutual defence agreement with Pakistan, and China anchoring its Gulf engagement in economics rather than military might, reflect new geopolitical calculations.

For India, the closure of Hormuz, through which half of our crude imports flow, remains a national emergency. The resulting surge in crude imports from Russia to over 2 million barrels per day and increasing LNG supplies from the US, plus slashing fuel taxes, demonstrated tactical dexterity: India managed to keep the lights on and the pumps running by pi-

voting with unprecedented speed, but gas shortages still meant the war affected the Indian kitchen.

However, the diplomatic arithmetic was less straightforward. India's silence on the US-Israeli strikes that triggered the war suggested a foreign policy driven more by the constraints of the moment than by the convictions of a rising power. "The voice of the Global South". I had argued in these pages that India's strategic restraint makes sense when principle collides with national interest. India has far too much at stake in the US and in the Gulf Arab states currently facing Iranian missile and drone attacks to afford to grandstand. But when India remains passive as explosive-laden threats fly and violations of the UN Charter multiply, it risks losing the very credibility that makes it a leader of the Global South. It is time for a proactive, principled diplomacy that prioritises viable supply corridors, energy diversification, and a coherent security framework.

For now, the world's focus is on Hormuz. Continuing our strategic restraint is the wisest course for now, but as a nation claiming strategic autonomy, India must recognise that preserving its credibility as an autonomous actor is not just a moral aspiration: it is a vital national interest. The war nobody wanted has produced a vacuum in the global order. The old structures of security have proved to be either too feeble or too porous to prevent catastrophe.

In the longer term, India can no longer afford to be a passive observer of the fires in our neighbourhood. We are not merely an "affected country"; we are a stakeholder in the survival of the global commons. Whatever happens next, the world is looking for a credible, principled voice to help build the architecture of a new order. India must deploy its relationships with all sides to claim that role. It is time to move beyond the tactical manoeuvring of survival, toward the strategic clarity of diplomatic leadership. For the sake of our own growth, for the stability of our region, and for the moral conscience of the world, India must lead the way back from the brink. The war nobody wanted has given us an opening we must not forfeit.

The writer is Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram, Lok Sabha, and chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs

When India remains passive as expletive-laden threats fly and violations of the UN Charter multiply, it risks losing the very credibility that makes it a leader of the Global South. It is time for a proactive, principled diplomacy

Context West Asia war

has opened a leadership vacuum, and India should move from cautious balancing to principled diplomatic leadership.

Facts

● India's crude imports from Russia rose to over 2 million barrels per day.

● China used yuan to settle discounted Iranian crude purchases.

● India increased LNG supplies from the U.S. and cut fuel taxes to manage the shock.

Analytical Crux

This war has exposed both the weakness of the existing global order and the limits of India's reactive diplomacy. India did show tactical skill in energy management, but tactical adjustment is not the same as strategic leadership. If India wants to be seen as a real autonomous power, it must combine national interest with visible principle and active diplomacy. The article is therefore a call for India to move from crisis response to order-shaping leadership.

Verbatim Quotes

"We are not merely 'an affected country'; we are stakeholders in the survival of the global commons."

"The war nobody wanted has given us an opening we must not forfeit."

"Modern warfare is a blunt instrument incapable of resolving geopolitical problems surgically."

Article - 3 : Managing multipolarity in a Multilateral world

The screenshot shows the Gateway House website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for MEMBERSHIP, IN MEDIA, CONTACT US, BRIEFING SIGN UP, and DONATE. Below this is a header with a decorative image of an archway and a search icon. A secondary navigation bar includes links for about us, experts, regions (highlighted), issues, publications, conferences, and events. The date 'THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2026' is displayed. On the left, a sidebar lists various content types like Articles, Blogs, Maps and Infographics, Reports, etc. The main article title is 'Managing multipolarity in a multilateral world' by Lt Gen S L Narasimhan. The article text begins with 'Multipolarity indicates who holds power, while multilateralism is about how states choose to cooperate. In today's world, power is diffusing and interdependence is deepening simultaneously. A multipolar world creates fluid alignments and strategic competition, but multilateralism manages interdependence through rules and institutions. The world is becoming both, simultaneously, requiring states to manage competition, preserve cooperation, and stabilise an increasingly complex global landscape. That is easier said.'

Context The article explains that today's world is becoming multi-polar & multilateral at the same time, so states must manage both power competition and institutional cooperation together.

Facts

● New parallel bodies and systems include AIIB, NDB, CIPS and SPFS.

● The major poles are US, China, EU, India & Russia.

● The main institutions are UN, WTO, IMF and G20.

● India is working through G20, SCO, BRICS and Quad while seeking UNSC and Bretton Woods reform.

Analytical Crux

Global politics today cannot be understood only through power distribution or only through institutions; both are changing together. Multipolarity increase rivalry and flexibility, but it also makes cooperation harder. That is why multilateralism becomes more necessary even when institutions are under stress. India gains space in such a world, but it must use that space carefully through multialignment, institutional reform & strategic balance. The central task for states now is to compete without destroying the institutions needed for cooperation.

Verbatim Quotes

“Power shapes institutions and institutions shape power. The relationship is dynamic, not linear.”

“These two forces overlap, collide and sometimes reinforce each other.”

“The challenge for international community is to preserve cooperation even as strategic rivalry intensifies.”

PSIR & GS2 Daily Brief

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Upcoming Batch: 22 June, 2026

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