

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
Amit Pratap
Singh
| ForumIAS |



Article - 1

The End of the Axis of
Abraham : Foreign
Affairs

Article - 2

The End of America's
soft power : Foreign
Policy

Article - 3

Why the next India -
Pakistan war will
escalate : Foreign Affairs

Article - 1 : The End of the Axis of Abraham

The End of the Axis of A...

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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The End of the Axis of Abraham

The Arab Gulf and Israel Have Different Visions for a New Middle East

H. A. HELLYER

May 4, 2026



After Iranian missiles strikes, Doha, Qatar, March 2026
MOHAMMED SALEM / REUTERS

H. A. HELLYER is Senior Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies and Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress.

[More by H. A. Hellyer →](#)

Context The Iran war has weakened the old Gulf security model and Gulf states no longer want a regional order built around Israeli dominance.

Facts

Iran's closure of Hormuz blocked exports of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar.

Bahrain, Kuwait & Saudi Arabia - US designated 'major non-NATO allies'.

Saudi Arabian military industries aims to localise 50% of Saudi military spending by 2030.

Analytical Crux

The Gulf can no longer depend on U.S. protection or on balancing between Iran and Israel. The Iran war has shown that U.S. bases can become a source of vulnerability, not ~~only~~ protection. Gulf states do not want Israel dominance to be the foundation of regional security. Their challenge is to build security autonomy through intra-Gulf defence coordination, diversified partnerships and stronger domestic defence capacity.

Verbatim Quotes

“A neutrality not acknowledged by the relevant actors is, in practice, inoperable, even if sincerely offered.”
— H.A. Hellyer

“The Gulf states' unity historically peaked during acute crises and rarely extended to long-term strategic alignment.”
— H.A. Hellyer

Article - 2 : The End of America's soft power

FP

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The End of America's Soft Power

The United States has given up on one of its core international strengths.



By **Stephen M. Walt**, a columnist at *Foreign Policy* and the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations at Harvard University.



Republican presidential nominee, former President Donald Trump pumps his fist as he walks off stage at the end of a campaign rally at the Santander Arena on November 04, 2024 in Reading, Pennsylvania. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Context Trump's foreign policy is damaging America's global influence by relying much on hard power and weakening the institutions that once made U.S. attractive to others.

Facts

■ Marshall Plan, NATO, Civil Rights movement, trade liberalisation - success of America's soft power.

■ Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and the current Iran war failures due to excessive faith in hard power.

■ The U.S. withdrew from more than 60 international organisations.

Analytical Crux

Power is not only about weapons, tariffs and threats; it is also about attraction, trust and legitimacy.

America's global influence was built through a mix of hard power and soft power, not by coercion. Trump's approach weakens institutions like USAID, Voice of America, universities and diplomacy, which once made the U.S. attractive.

Verbatim Quotes

"States with hard power could compel others through force and intimidation or by offering aid or protection."

- Stephen M. Walt

"Trump's approach is to intimidate rather than persuade, to compel rather than attract."

- Stephen M. Walt

Article - 3 : Why the next India - Pakistan war will escalate

Why the Next India-Paki...

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Why the Next India-Pakistan War Will Escalate

And Why America Will Struggle to Contain It

ELIZABETH THRELKELD

May 4, 2026



An Indian soldier standing next to Akash missiles in New Delhi, January 2026

ELIZABETH THRELKELD is a Senior Fellow and Director of the South Asia Program at the Stimson Center.

[More by Elizabeth Threlkeld →](#)

Context The next India-Pakistan crisis may be more dangerous because both countries are learning to fight faster, deeper and harder below the nuclear threshold.

Facts

■ The May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict, most serious fight between two nuclear powers in decades.

■ The fast conventional escalation is creating the risk of inadvertent nuclear escalation.

Analytical Crux

India and Pakistan believe they can fight a bigger conventional war without crossing the nuclear threshold. The confidence is dangerous because drones, missiles, airbases, nuclear-adjacent facilities, water threats and naval moves can create confusion. The danger is not deliberate nuclear use, but misreading, panic and compressed timelines. US mediation will become harder because India rejects third-party intervention and Trump's past claims created political sensitivity.

Verbatim Quotes

"The next crisis between India & Pakistan likely to be more dangerous, destructive & difficult for Washington to manage."
- Elizabeth Threlkeld

"The continued risk of escalation in a region home to a quarter of the world's population should not be underestimated."
- Elizabeth Threlkeld

2025

- **PSIR Paper-II:** “India continues to invoke its time-tested policy of strategic autonomy vis-à-vis both the United States of America and Russia by rejecting US’ offer of mediation on Kashmir issue and by refusing to criticize Russia in its ongoing war against Ukraine. Comment.”
- **PSIR Paper-II:** “Trump’s unilateral imposition of reciprocal tariffs on scores of countries poses impending threat to the future of the rule-based multilateral global trading system under the WTO. What options do the WTO members have to salvage the organization?”

2024

- **PSIR Paper-II:** “Critically examine the continuity and change in India’s Palestine policy in the wake of the ongoing Israel-Hamas War.”
- **GS-II:** “‘The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China’s supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China’s political and economic dominance.’ Explain this statement with examples.”

2023

- **PSIR Paper-II:** “Discuss the relevance of the normative ethos of the Non-Aligned Movement in magnifying India’s soft power in pursuit of her national interest.”
- **PSIR Paper-II:** “Discuss the various constraints on American hegemony today. Which of these are likely to become more prominent in the future?”

PSIR & GS2 Daily Brief

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

PSIR OPTIONAL FOUNDATION

The program focuses on Comprehensive coverage of the topic mentioned in PSIR Syllabus supplemented with regular handouts.

Upcoming Batch: 6th July, 2026

OGP (OPTIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM)

Focus will be on conceptual clarity and building the ability of the candidates to interlink static portion with current developments.

Upcoming Batch: 9th June, 2026

PSIR DYNAMICS

The program focuses on Current-Relevant dedicated classes cover national and international developments, integrated with PSIR syllabus.

Upcoming Batch: 22nd June, 2026

ATS (AUGMENTED TEST SERIES)

ATS sharpens structure, presentation, and depth converting effort into higher score.

Upcoming Batch: 26th April, 2026

O-AWFG (ANSWER WRITING FOCUS GROUP)

The answer writing program creates discipline and enhances skills. It helps students develop structure, articulation, coherence, and approach.

Upcoming Batch: 20th April, 2026

O-AWFG PRIME

The test series program enhances speed, flow and dynamic understanding of the subject.

Upcoming Batch : 20th April, 2026

PYQ Mastery Series

The series focuses on PYQ practice anchored in conceptual clarity and contemporary relevance.

Upcoming Batch: 22 June, 2026

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Note: Edit program names/offerings as per the latest ForumIAS schedule.