

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
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Today, India and US interests are not easily aligned : IE

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Rapprochement with China. India mends fences with China: Deccan Herald

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Hormuz is a warning for the Indo-Pacific: Foreign Affairs

Article - 1 : Today, India and US interests are not easily aligned

Today, India and US interests are not easily aligned. Let's confront this

AS UNITED States Secretary of State Marco Rubio begins an important visit, India needs to confront hard truths about the Indo-US relationship. Of late, India, like much of the world, gives the striking impression of a deer being caught in the headlights. The US is not just untrustworthy, it is currently the biggest wrecking ball to hit global stability. But dependence on China carries its own discomfort. There are no effective alternative coalitions yet to counteract these powers. Many of India's wounds, however, are self-inflicted. India will have to wean itself away from its own delusions.

First, any dealings with the US have to account for not just bilateral considerations or worries about China, but the entire global context. Indian foreign policy has been hugely diminished because we now operate on the assumption that we should focus on our interests, narrowly understood, even if the world be damned. India is not uniquely at fault. But the idea that bilateral wins or very short-term tactical considerations alone can create the space for India's rise is myopic. Given India's history, it is absolutely astonishing that it is the one country that, in the international system is, for all practical purposes, condoning not one but two imperial projects. India was tepid in its defence of international law when Russia invaded Ukraine. Its near silence, and the open and practical embrace of Israel and the US's strategic objectives on Iran, is damning. India talks the language of civilisation, sovereignty and multipolarity, but

is increasingly comfortable with imperial coercion. But these imperial projects directly harm India's material interests as well. As we have belatedly acknowledged, the war in Iran will do more material damage to our economy than any adversary could. We have to return to thinking that what is good for the world will, in the long run, be good for us as well. This requires recognising the US, in the current form, for what it is — an imperial power unleashing a new and dangerous nihilism in the world order. It's not a saviour, it is a threat.

It is often said that the US cannot deal with countries that are not allies, while India has tried to maintain strategic autonomy. But the present moment far supersedes this framing in two ways. The first is that the US betrays its allies and reduces them to a state of abject dependence. But India's case is peculiar. Over the last couple of years, it has become entirely apparent that in India, the US has managed to achieve something more than an alliance. In superficial terms, India exercises the rituals of strategic autonomy. It purchases Russian oil, it is trying to achieve trade diversification, and it will even cast an occasional inconvenient vote at multilateral forums.

Yet beyond these gestures, something deeper has shifted. Significant sections of India's foreign policy establishment, if not public opinion, have internalised the assumption that India's rise should be irrevocably tied to American power. This internalisation matters



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

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more than formal alliances. We can see this transformation most clearly in the framing of public discourse. It is astonishing, for instance, how quickly responsibility for instability in the Strait of Hormuz is displaced onto Iran alone, while the fact that the strait is closed due to the US is underplayed. Whatever one thinks of Iran's regime, India's open embrace of Israel, the US, and the UAE, in a war with extraordinary second and third-order effects for global order, reflects this ideological adaptation.

Nowhere is this blindness more visible than on the issue of Pakistan. It should always have been obvious that the US could never view Pakistan solely through Indian eyes. Our illusion was exposed repeatedly, especially in the political aftermath of Operation Sindoor. The US positioned itself as the indispensable external guarantor of subcontinental stability. India may reject the language of mediation publicly. But America rarely relinquishes the role of regional arbiter, and Pakistan has always been important to its imperial inter-

ests. Our interests will not align with America in the Subcontinent, so we have to find a way of dealing with it on our own terms. Another illusion that has been shattered is the idea that India will be indispensable to US strategy in Asia; the truth is, it is quite dispensable.

A deepening of the economic relationship with the US would be beneficial. However, the punitive

tariffs imposed on India were not just about industrial policy, but about showing India its place. The US Supreme Court invalidated President Donald Trump's tariffs, giving India a reprieve. But we should not be under any illusion about how extractive the US intends to be, and will remain so beyond Trump. Again, India could benefit from a deeper alignment with the US's technology. But India should be well aware of the hubris the US brings to the table. It is convinced that India is far behind in technology and that China is not a serious technology option for India. So, it will come begging to the table. There is no easy short-term answer to this conundrum. But we have to resist the defeatism of the pro-America lobby in this regime, which throws in the towel whenever America is in question. It is also ironic that the US will measure success in this trip by how much Indian investment can get to the United States. Again, our political economy and the strategies of the Ambani and Adani groups make us vulnerable. At their best, India and the US's affinity still lay in the fact that both aspired to be open and free societies. What ties the regimes now is a comfort with evil and transactionalism. But even in this moment of darkness, India needs to confront its own abjectness and give up its delusions about America and itself. Our interests are not as easily aligned. Let us start by confronting this truth.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

Context India must stop assuming that its rise naturally fits with American power & must look at the US relationship with greater realism, caution and strategic autonomy.

Facts

US - India interests not naturally aligned - India is dispensable to US in Asia.

India strategic autonomy - buying Russian oil, diversifying trade & casting inconvenient votes.

Analytical Crux

India-US relations are significant, but they cannot be treated as a roadmap to India's rise. The problem is not only US unreliability, but India's willingness to believe that U.S. power will secure India's future. Strategic autonomy becomes weak when it remains only in gestures and not in thinking. India must practice interest-based autonomy, not emotional alignment with any great power.

Verbatim Quotes

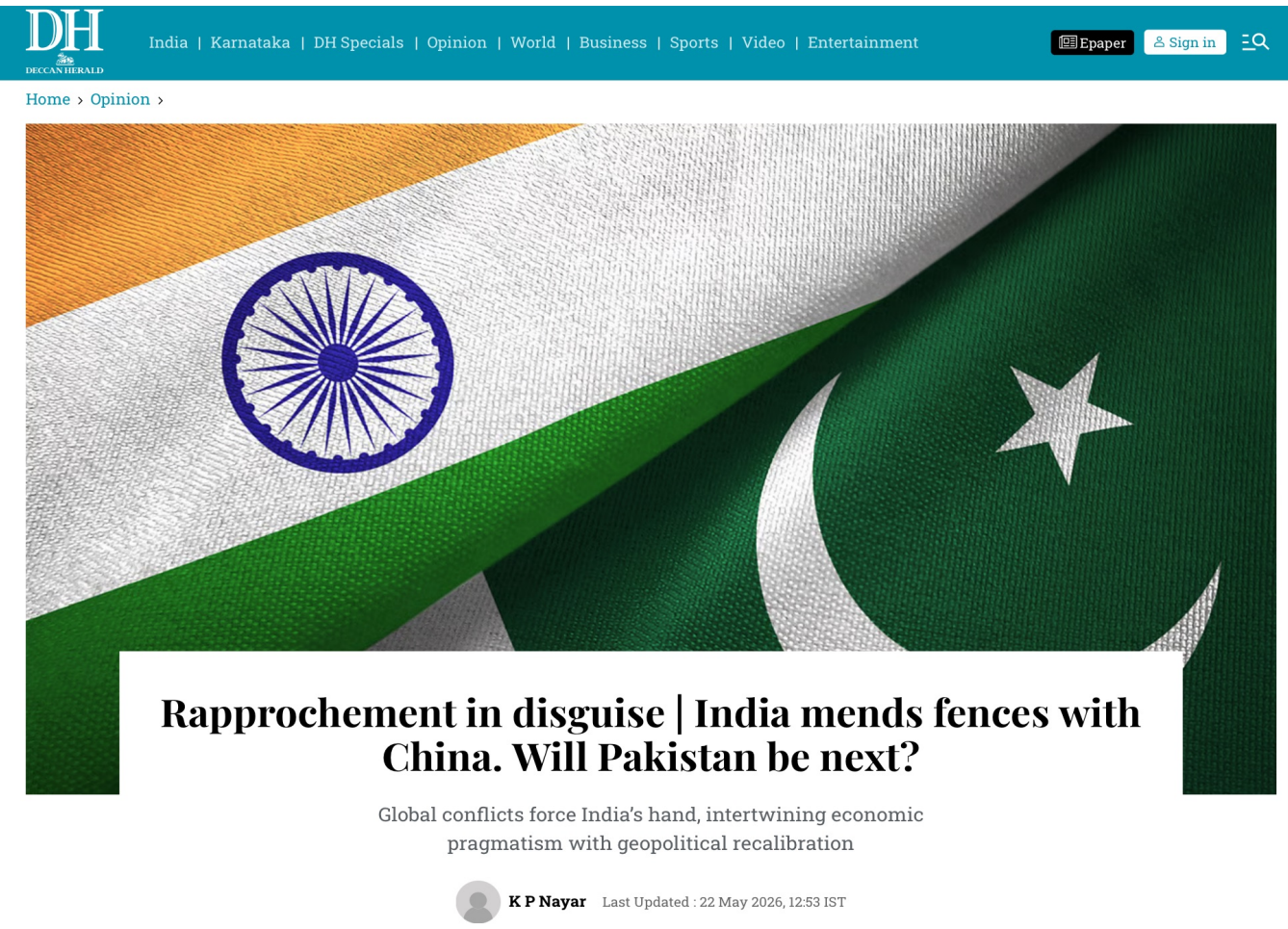
"The US is not just untrustworthy it is currently the biggest wrecking ball to global stability."

- Pratap Bhanu Mehta

"America rarely relinquishes the role of regional arbiter. However, India's interests will not align with America. US betrays its allies & reduces them to a deeper dependence."

- Pratap Bhanu Mehta

Article - 2 : Rapprochement with China. India mends fences with China



Context

Global conflicts and economic pressure are pushing India towards a cautious opening with China and possibly a renewed dialogue track with Pakistan.

Facts

- India allowed 10% Chinese investments in Indian companies.

- Pakistan's diplomacy gained through China, US & the UN system.

- Economic Survey 2023-24 → Chinese FDI essential for India's manufacturing & export growth.

- India in the last two decades - From a South Asian power to global power.

Analytical Crux

There is a difference between public posture and strategic necessity. India may not want to call it rapprochement, but economic logic is pushing it to reopen space with China. Similarly, a permanent no-talks policy with Pakistan is difficult when both sides are nuclear-armed neighbours. Diplomacy is not about liking the other side, but about managing risk, trade-offs & changing global conditions.

Verbatim Quotes

“Global conflicts force India's hand, intertwining economic pragmatism with geopolitical recalibration.”
— KP Nayar

“No talks, cannot be a long-term policy between two neighbouring countries when the possibility of conflict perennially looms over them and both adversaries are nuclear-armed.”
— KP Nayar

Article - 3 : Hormuz is a warning for the Indo-Pacific

Hormuz Is a Warning for...

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

LOG IN

Hormuz Is a Warning for the Indo-Pacific

The Coming Contest for Asia's Waterways

LYNN KUOK

May 22, 2026



An American assault ship entering the Singapore Strait, March 2026
EDGAR SU / REUTERS

LYNN KUOK is Lee Kuan Yew Chair at the Brookings Institution.

[More by Lynn Kuok →](#)

Context Strait of Hormuz crisis is a warning that Indo-Pacific waterways like Malacca, Taiwan Strait and Luzon Strait can also be weaponised, with serious effects on trade, energy and semiconductor supply chains.

Facts

- Malacca Strait - 40% of global trade and 80% of China's energy imports.

- 'Transit passage' UNCLOS - Right of unimpeded navigation and overflight to ships & aircrafts.

- Taiwan Strait - 20% of global maritime trade.

Analytical Crux

Geography is becoming a weapon in Indo-Pacific politics. Narrow waterways are no longer just trade routes; they are pressure points where even weaker actors can disturb global markets. Straits are strategic assets that may effectively be weaponized. Legal rules like UNCLOS becomes weak if not supported by maritime capability, economic redundancy and diplomatic credibility.

Verbatim Quotes

"Nowhere are the consequences of weaponizing straits likely to be greater than in Asia. Developments in Hormuz validate China's anti-access / area-denial (A2/AD) strategy."

-Lynn Kuok

- **PSIR 2025:** “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 2025:** “India maintains strong ties with countries that will assure a free and open Indo-Pacific and guarantee greater connectivity with rest of the world. Analyze.”
- **PSIR 2025:** “Discuss the potential role India can play in initiating a possible phase of trilateral economic engagement among India, China and Nepal.”
- **PSIR 2024:** “India and USA have become such strong strategic partners that they need not become formal allies.” Comment.
- **GS-II 2024:** “Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Maldives for India with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further also discuss how this relationship affects India’s maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition?”
- **GS-II 2023:** ““Sea is an important Component of the Cosmos’ Discuss in the light of the above statement the role of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) in protecting environment and enhancing maritime safety and security.”

PSIR & GS2 Daily Brief

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Upcoming Batch: 9th June, 2026

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