

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.

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| ForumIAS |



Article - 1

The quiet legacy of the peacekeeper : Deccan Herald

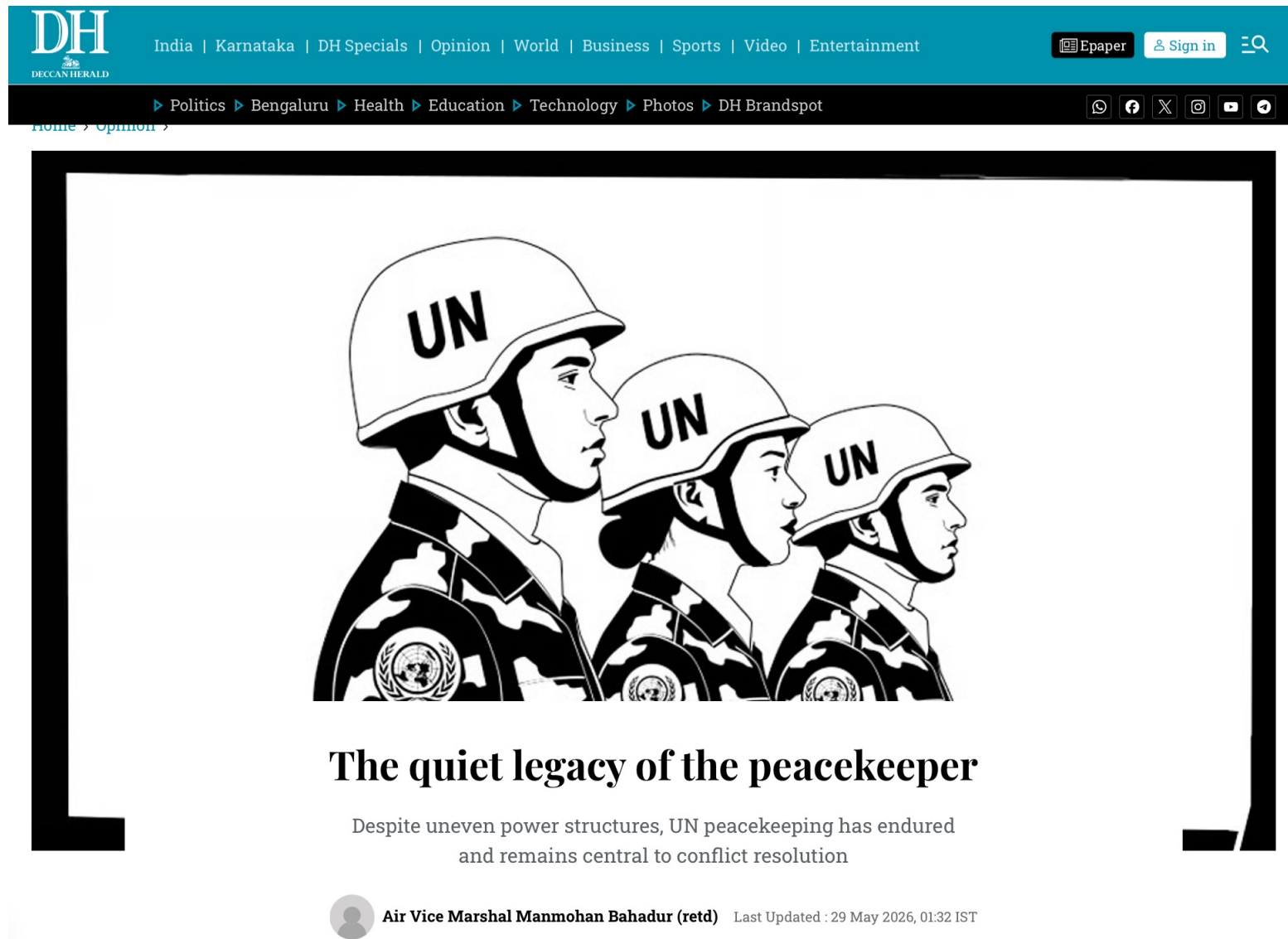
Article - 2

Brinkmanship in the age of growing conflict : The Hindu

Article - 3

Quad Foreign ministers' meeting in global developments: VIF

Article - 1 : The quiet legacy of the peacekeeper



Context India's long & respected role in UN peacekeeping and how power politics limits the political gains of troop-contributing countries.

Facts

India is part of 53 of 72 UN peacekeeping missions & contributed 3 lakh troops.

China - 23.785% ; India - 0.2212% : contribution to UN peacekeeping budget.

UN peacekeeper got Nobel peace prize in 1988.

Analytical Crux

UN peacekeeping shows that global institutions may be weak, but they are necessary when no other neutral platform exists. India's peacekeeping role gives it moral authority, field experience and soft power, but not equal political leverage because UN decision-making is shaped by PS & budget power. The UN is not free from power politics, yet it remains the closest available "honest broker". For India, peacekeeping is both a service to world peace and claim for a larger voice in global governance.

Verbatim Quotes

"Despite uneven power structures, UN peacekeeping operations have graduated to peacemaking and peace enforcement and stabilisation or state-building missions."

- Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur

Article - 2 : Brinkmanship in the age of growing conflict

Brinkmanship in the age of growing conflict

Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the blockade by the United States of Iranian ports are among several recent acts of brinkmanship. A legacy of the Cold War era, brinkmanship refers to single action or a series of actions during a conflict or a short-of-war situation that forces a perilous climb up the escalation ladder to force the adversary to back down, make concessions, negotiate or even do something irrational that would justify the use of uncalibrated or widespread use of force. Coined by western political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s while analysing crises such as the Berlin Blockade (1948-49) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), the term also warned of the risk of escalation spiralling out of control, particularly in the nuclear context (Armageddon).

The return of brinkmanship

With the vast spread of the spectrum of conflict in the post-Cold War era without the disappearance of the nuclear overhang, brinkmanship has once again assumed dangerous proportions and merits some examination in a contemporary context. Terrorism has emerged as a principal instrument of brinkmanship, frequently used by non-state actors to provoke disproportionate state responses and gain international attention and sympathy in pursuit of larger goals. Without debating the dilemma posed by the proposition that argues, 'One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter', globally proscribed terrorist movements have rarely achieved their stated aims through brinkmanship – al Qaeda and the Islamic State being among them. A few such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the FLN (National Liberation Front) in Algeria did force the more powerful adversary to make concessions.

Another flavour of brinkmanship that has emerged in recent decades is proxy brinkmanship of the kind that Pakistan and Iran have engaged in for the last four decades against



Arjun Subramaniam
Military historian and a strategic analyst

The growing reliance on brinkmanship threatens an already fragile global order

stronger powers. Using proxies largely designated as global terrorist outfits, this brand of asymmetric brinkmanship seeks to erode the resolve and power of stronger powers and force them to make concessions over long-festering issues of statehood and sovereignty. The attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 23, 2023, are an example of this kind of brinkmanship. Israel's disproportionate counter-brinkmanship in Gaza in pursuit of destroying Hamas is testimony to the breakdown of deterrence and the propensity to climb the escalation ladder at breakneck speed to achieve difficult strategic outcomes.

Rising geopolitical tensions

Among the larger powers today, the U.S. has seldom resorted to brinkmanship and prefers instead to achieve its geopolitical objectives through the brute and direct application of force or economic coercion. Frustrated at its inability to drag Iran to the negotiating table, the U.S. has resorted to brinkmanship by imposing a blockade on Iran, hoping to squeeze it economically and make it come to the negotiating table. Iran, on the other hand, has resorted to its own brand of asymmetric counter-brinkmanship that has yielded disproportionate strategic outcomes by blocking the Strait of Hormuz. Where this will go is anybody's guess until both the parties agree to meet mid-way – such are the complications of the brinkmanship game.

Russia's brinkmanship, driven by frustration over its inability to halt the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's eastward expansion despite Moscow's takeover of Crimea in 2014, and by expectations that Ukraine would capitulate after the advance on Kyiv in February 2022, has instead resulted in a prolonged war. Russia's periodic sabre-rattling over nuclear restraint is also a legacy of the Cold War that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to keep alive. The indiscriminate use of hypersonic and other area

weapons against population centres such as Kiev by the Russians triggers a brinkmanship chain that is hard to control and infuse any semblance of restraint in the four-year-long conflict.

Ever since China upped its maritime game since 2006 and laid claims to vast expanses of the South China Sea and parts of the East China Sea, it has mastered the art of controlled brinkmanship against weaker neighbours, daring them to push back against its attempts to establish maritime hegemony in the region. Except for Japan which has pushed back strongly against Chinese coercion over claims on the Senkaku Islands, and Taiwan which continues to stare the People's Republic of China in the eye, all other countries with shores along the South China Sea have been mute to Chinese reclamation of islands and claims on territorial waters.

If there is one nation that has perfected the art of brinkmanship in the 21st century, it is North Korea. This largely underdeveloped and opaque country, with its demonstrated missile and nuclear prowess and nuclear proliferation, has kept the most powerful power in the world from forcing it into a 'rules based world order', while also keeping the region on edge.

The displacement of diplomacy

India's strategic DNA of restraint and responsibility and its calibrated use of force eschews any inclination to resort to brinkmanship even under the gravest provocation. The fragile global geopolitical system is now fraught with danger, and diplomacy no longer seems to be the preferred choice for conflict resolution. With global institutions such as the United Nations increasingly marginalised, coercion, brinkmanship and the uncalibrated use of force seem to be emerging as preferred options in settling conflicts of various genres. The world needs to seriously introspect this.

Context

Brinkmanship has returned as a dangerous method of conflict politics, where states and non-state actors push crises close to escalation to force concessions.

Facts

Brinkmanship's example - Berlin blockade & Cuban Missile Crisis.

China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and North Korea uses brinkmanship.

India's approach - restraint, responsibility and calibrated use of force.

Analytical Crux

Brinkmanship refers to actions during a conflict or a short-of-war situation that forces a perilous climb up the escalation ladder. It is the politics of calculated risk, but in today's world the risk is becoming less calculated & more dangerous. Both states & non-state actors use escalation, proxies, terrorism, chokepoints & nuclear signalling to gain leverage. Diplomacy no longer seems to be the preferred choice for conflict resolution.

Verbatim Quotes

“The growing reliance on brinkmanship threatens an already fragile global order. If there is one nation that has perfected the art of brinkmanship in the 21st century, it is North Korea.”

- Arjun Subramaniam

Article - 3 : Quad Foreign ministers' meeting in global developments



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May 2026: Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Global Developments

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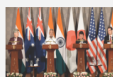


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Understanding
Russia's Changing
Role in the South
Caucasus
Introduction After
the second
Nagorno-Karabakh
war between Arm



May 2026: Quad
Foreign Ministers'
Meeting in Global

Context Quad's importance in a fragmented world where security is linked to supply chains, critical minerals, maritime routes, technology and energy.

Facts

Quad - a non alliance format, not a formal military alliance.

Quad pledged up to \$20 billion for critical minerals supply chains.

China is prime trade partner for all Quad members.

Analytical Crux

The Quad should not be understood as an anti-China military platform. Its value lies in building economic security, maritime security, critical minerals supply chains, technology ecosystems and regional public goods. Since China remains economically linked with all Quad members, simple containment will not work. The Quad must become commercially useful, politically quiet and regionally attractive for ASEAN, Pacific Islands and Indian ocean states. For India, it is a key Indo-Pacific platform without the burden of a formal alliance.

Verbatim Quotes

“The world is fragmenting geoeconomically, but it's not synchronous with geopolitical alignments. The states view security through economic survival, not apart from it.”

— Purna Gandhi

- **GS II 2025:** “The reform process in the United Nations remains unresolved, because of the delicate imbalance of East and West and entanglement of the USA vs. Russo-Chinese alliance.”
- **GS II 2024:** 'Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security.' Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level.
- **PSIR PAPER II 2024:** "India must strive to become a semi-permanent member of the UNSC, rather than a permanent member without the right to veto." Comment.
- **PSIR PAPER II 2023:** “Discuss the importance of India's role in UN peacekeeping operations as a ground for its claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.”
- **PSIR PAPER II 2023:** “Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) performs an important role in India's strategic balancing act to withstand the dominance of China in Asia.” Discuss

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