

Recent Developments in Foreign Policy — Part I

Day 49. India's western arc — the Gulf & wider West Asia, Iran, the UAE, Afghanistan, and the deepening United States partnership. *Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.*

1 The Setting — India's Western Arc

India's western neighbourhood — the Gulf, the wider West Asia and Afghanistan — carries the country's energy lifeline, its largest diaspora, and its most active theatre of great-power contestation.

West Asia holds **47.7%** of the world's oil and **42.7%** of natural gas; more than **60%** of the world's oil flows through the **Strait of Hormuz** (**Chinnaya R Gharekhian**).

"...to shed a drop of blood for every drop of oil." — **Winston Churchill**

"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and will be repelled by any means necessary including military force." — **Jimmy Carter, January 1980 (the Carter Doctrine)**

India's engagement has moved from an ideologically-driven Non-Aligned posture to one built on **pragmatism** and **strategic autonomy**. Two phrases mark the shift: **S. Jaishankar's** "Think West and Act East," and the "Look West" / "Link and Act West" turn under **Narendra Modi**.

Organising principle today

Independent, issue-based partnerships with each country — Arab Gulf, Israel and Iran — without being trapped by their rivalries or by the prism of Pakistan.

2 Why West Asia Matters — Five Stakes

Stake	Substance
Geo-strategic	Proximity to India's western border — an extended neighbourhood directly affecting security; the Arabian Sea a bridge, regional stability a precondition for India's own.
Geo-economic	Nearly two-thirds of oil from GCC states (import dependency above 80% in 2018); diaspora over 7 million (some estimates ~8 million); remittances of roughly US\$40 billion a year; sea-lane security across the Gulf, Red Sea and Indian Ocean.
Maritime	As the US security role evolves, space opens for India — the Navy's anti-piracy work in the Gulf of Aden; presence near Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb .
Internal security	Religious extremism and groups like ISIS pose spillover risk to domestic stability.
Geopolitical	Higher growth needs a peaceful periphery; India balances Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel at once to prevent escalation that could hit global markets.

Expert readings

- **Shivshankar Menon** — a more active forward policy to pursue India's geo-strategic interests.
- **Manoj Joshi** — careful handling for maximum gain while avoiding political minefields.
- **Rajiv Bhatia** — pragmatism as the guiding principle of the transformation.

People-first strand

Protecting nationals in conflict zones is a first-order priority: during the 2025 Israel–Iran crisis, **Operation Sindhu** evacuated Indian citizens from both Iran and Israel — humanitarian outreach as statecraft, without formally aligning against any party.

UPSC 2019 · ISm Write a brief note on India's interests in West Asia.

3 Evolution of India's West Asia Policy

The Nehruvian phase

- Non-aligned values — sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference.
- **Nehru** organised the first **Asian Relations Conference** (New Delhi, March 1947); Oman signed a defence pact with India in 1972.
- The **Nehru–Nasser** alliance — India backed the Arabs against Western interference over Palestine and the 1956 Suez Crisis.

The 1990 Gulf Crisis — a turning point

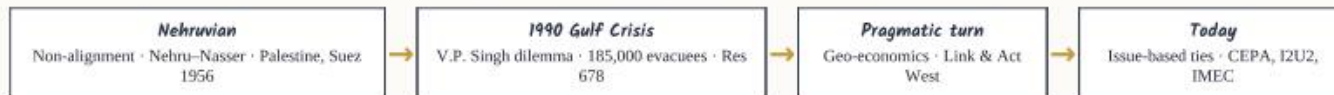
- Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (2 August 1990) confronted the **V.P. Singh** government with a dilemma — Iraq was an ideological ally that backed India on Kashmir, but new economic openings pointed the other way.
- India did not formally condemn Iraq, stressing the safety of **185,000** stranded Indian expatriates; it later supported **UNSC Resolution 678** (November 1990).
- January 1991: India allowed American planes to refuel at Indian facilities — a signal of alignment. **Muchkund Dubey** called the crisis a US "test of friendship."

The pragmatic turn

- Post-1991 unipolarity narrowed options and pushed a shift from geopolitics to **geo-economics**.
- **Modi's** "Link and Act West" policy — cooperative bilateralism and multi-alignment.
- Instruments: **CEPA** (India–UAE), Rupee–Dirham / Local Currency Settlement, e-Migrate linked with Saudi e-Thawtheeq, and minilaterals like **I2U2**.

"...from the ideologically-driven Non-Aligned Movement to a policy based on greater pragmatism." — **Meher Wadhawan**

Three phases of India's West Asia policy



4 Reading the Region — Three Lenses

School	Core claim	Regional reading
Realist Morgenthau, Waltz	States pursue survival and power in an anarchic system.	Saudi–Iran rivalry (Sunni/Shia; MBS versus Iran's Hezbollah, nuclear programme and soft power) — ties restored in 2023, China-mediated; Saudi–US friction over Khashoggi softened once Biden took office; Saudi–Russia via OPEC+; Iraq asserts control; Qatar hedges, the UAE turns assertive.
Liberal Kant, Locke	Cooperation, trade and institutions promote peace.	Abraham Accords ; the Oslo Accords (1993) — PLO–Israel recognition; the GCC persists despite the 2017 Qatar blockade; Vision 2030 and Saudi outreach to China (BRI).
Constructivist Wendt	Ideas, identities and shared norms shape behaviour.	Iran's Umm al-Qura theory; Erdogan's neo-Ottoman vision; many Arab states now see Iran, not Israel, as the greater threat; the Saudi–Iran thaw stressed shared Islamic identity; MBS's social reforms; Iran's Mahsa Amini protests (2022).

Assessment

The Hobbesian reading of international politics as a "struggle for power" without a common authority still holds. Realism dominates, but liberal and constructivist currents grow stronger; the region's course turns on how these paradigms interact under multipolarity.

5 Security Architecture — Which Way Does It Order?

The recent Israel–Iran war was aerial — the most advanced air force against the most advanced ballistic-missile capability — sharpening one question: bipolar, multipolar, or hybrid order?

Israeli primacy set against a multipolar diplomatic web

Bipolar pull

Israel the unmatched actor — precision air force, multilayer missile defence, covert reach; a weakened "axis of resistance" (Hezbollah stocks slashed, Iran's limits exposed).

Multipolar pull

Arab capitals resist hard alignment; Russia's Gulf security blueprint, Iran's Hormuz Peace Endeavour, China's Global Security Initiative — non-bloc, UN-anchored.

Signals of bipolarity: Israel's 2025–26 doctrine of pre-emption, rapid manoeuvre and US tie-ups; Syria tied down.

Signals of multipolarity: Riyadh's Palestinian-state condition; Qatar mediates; Bahrain alone joined strikes on the Houthis; the UAE hedges between Washington and Beijing.

Net; hard-power balance almost bipolar · diplomatic-economic web multipolar → a hybrid order

6 Key Developments in the Region

Development	What it did
Abraham Accords (2020)	Israel normalised relations with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco — breaking the Arab consensus that recognition awaits a Palestinian settlement. Drivers: shared concern over Iran, economic opportunity, changing global dynamics.
Indo-Abraham Accords / "New Quad"	India, Israel, the UAE and the USA — a "minilateral." India shifts from managing each country separately to a unified regional approach, mirroring the Indo-Pacific. C. Raja Mohan reads it as extending India's influence; members treat the region as a "Zone of Opportunity," not a "Zone of Conflict."
Israel–Hamas War	Escalated October 2023 after a surprise Hamas attack and Israel's declaration of war; a severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza. A US-facilitated ceasefire (January 2025) turned on prisoner exchanges and improved security.

The deeper churn — the 'Arab Street' reading

- Roots in nineteenth-century European imperialism and imposed liberal-secular institutions displacing Sharia — culminating in **Kemal Atatürk's** abolition of Sharia in Turkey (1924).

- Rapid top-down Westernisation left people “stranded both materially and spiritually” (**Pankaj Mishra**).
- **Talmiz Ahmad**: the twentieth-century Islamic discourse “was an oppositional concept that functioned outside the prevailing state order.”
- Outcomes uneven — resilient authoritarianism persisted; the long-run effect ran through political economy (Vision 2030, geo-economics, new partners like China).

7 Implications of Instability for India

- **Energy shock is first-order** — India imports ~85% of its crude; Iraq has been among its top-three suppliers, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- Oil spikes widen fiscal and current-account deficits, raise fertiliser and freight costs, and inflate the subsidy bill.
- Supply-chain disruption — threats to shipping raise freight rates and consumer prices.
- Maritime security — Houthi drone strikes and hijackings in the Red Sea threaten freedom of navigation at **Hormuz** and **Bab-el-Mandeb**.
- Risks to expatriates and remittances; a standing evacuation imperative.
- Spillover of extremism (ISIS-type) into internal security.
- Delay to connectivity — the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (**IMEC**) and Chabahar exposed to disruption.

8 India–Iran

Overview

A deep historical and cultural bond; **Modi** calls it “a friendship as old as history.” India’s ~25 million Shias and ~70,000 Parsis add a civilisational dimension.

“Few people have been closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of India and Iran.” — **Jawaharlal Nehru**, *The Discovery of India*

Why Iran matters

- Geography and energy — a major oil supplier bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan; a key alternative route when transit through Pakistan is blocked; a junction of South Asia, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus, opening onto the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.
- Strategic and cultural mutualities — India’s Shia population and NAM leadership align with Iran’s diplomatic goals; India’s balance offsets a Pakistan aligned with the US and Saudi Arabia.

The US factor & sanctions history

- Post-1979 revolution and the hostage crisis reordered Iran’s ties with the world.
- US pressure repeatedly constrained India — Reliance pressured over a ~US\$900 million US Exim Bank loan (**S Samuel C Rajiv**); India’s 2006 **IAEA vote** against Iran; discontinuation of the Asian Clearing Union swap (December 2010); oil-import cuts of 11% (2012) and ~15% annually thereafter.
- The **IPI “peace pipeline”** — a 2,775-km Iran–Pakistan–India gas project — could never be realised under US pressure; India instead signed the India–US Civil Nuclear Agreement.

Under Modi and after

- Modi’s May 2016 visit (first by an Indian PM in fifteen years — **Ankit Panda**) produced ~12 agreements, chiefly on **Chabahar** and a Trilateral Transport and Transit Corridor with Iran and Afghanistan; a US\$150 million Exim credit line; IRCON on the ~500-km Chabahar–Zahedan railway.
- Chabahar bypasses Pakistan and counters China’s Gwadar; goods reach Afghanistan via the Delaram–Zaranj highway.
- Trump’s May 2018 JCPOA withdrawal and renewed sanctions forced India to cut Iranian oil imports (**Ravi Joshi**, ORF).
- Foreign Secretary **Vijay Gokhale** reframed strategic autonomy as “issue-based” alignment; India secured written US assurance for ~US\$85 million of Chabahar equipment.
- Frictions — Article 370; India’s Israel–UAE–US coalition role; Iran’s limited Taliban support (**Samuel Ramani**); the Farzad-B gas field.

India has been, and will likely “remain on the tightrope.” — **Anita Inder Singh**

2020 & 2025 flashpoints

- **2020** — the US killing of Quds Force commander **Qasem Soleimani** near Baghdad raised fears of full-blown Iran–US conflict, threatening energy security for India, China, Japan and South Korea.
- **2025** — India welcomed the June Israel–Iran ceasefire, praised US and Qatari mediation (“there is no alternative to dialogue and diplomacy”), distanced itself from the SCO’s condemnation of Israel, and launched Operation Sindhu. **P.R. Kumaraswamy** called the stance “calculated, nuanced, and matured”; **Shanthie Mariet D’Souza** warned that strategic ambiguity works only while conflicts stay within India’s core interests.

Abraham Accords — effect on India–Iran

Positive: validate strategic autonomy; a calmer Israel–Gulf equation gives India more room. **Negative**: closer Israel–Gulf ties may strain India–Iran, sharpen sectarian tension, and pressure India to keep Israel ties from overshadowing Iran.

India–Iran: four decades on the tightrope



UPSC 2019 · ISm

How is the current standoff between the USA and Iran affecting India’s energy security?

9 India–United Arab Emirates

Ties run back centuries through Indian Ocean trade and migration; formal relations from 1972. **Modi's** 2015 visit established the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

Track	Convergence
Economic / trade	India is the UAE's second-largest partner, the UAE India's third-largest; trade ~ US\$85 billion since the 2022 CEPA ; UAE sovereign-wealth investment in infrastructure, renewables and technology; IMEC to cut transport costs; the Rupee–Dirham / Local Currency Settlement cuts third-currency dependence.
Energy / security	Oil supply, strategic petroleum reserves, upstream projects; maritime security, counter-terrorism, defence production and intelligence-sharing.
Tech / education / soft power	ISRO–UAE Space Agency links; an IIM Ahmedabad campus in the UAE; a 3.5-million -strong diaspora, the largest expatriate community there.
Geopolitical	India's Look West Policy aligns with the UAE's Vision 2021 and Economic Vision 2030.

Challenges

CEPA trade still concentrated in gems, petroleum and electronics rather than technology and green energy; the Kafala system and slow labour reforms. **Talmiz Ahmad** reads engagement as shaped by economic realities and shifting Gulf security; the Atlantic Council cautions on the institutional capacity to deliver.

“This is not just a transactional relationship — it's a meeting of visions, backed by determined leadership.” — Dr. Muneer Ahmed, IPCS

10 India–Afghanistan

History & setting

- The “graveyard of empires” — from Alexander to the USSR and the US; ties trace to the Indus Valley (a Seleucid successor state passed to the Maurya Empire, 305 BCE).
- The nineteenth-century **Great Game** cast Afghanistan as a buffer state; British India and the Afghan Amir signed the MoU on the **Durand Line**.
- India recognised the Republic of Afghanistan on 19 July 1973; both were founding NAM members; the **Strategic Partnership Agreement** (October 2011) deepened ties; the fall of Kabul (August 2021) forced a rethink.

Scholars: **Brahma Chellaney** (use Iran for alternate access beyond Pakistan); **Rajiv Sikri** invokes **Kautilya's** Mandala — a friend is the neighbour's neighbour; **Happymon Jacob** (soft power alone is not enough, and India lacks a Plan B); **Rajeshwari Pillai Rajagopalan** (the Afghan-led / Afghan-owned line isolated India); **Vivek Chadha** (a stable Afghanistan curbs terrorism).

India's footprint — two decades of capacity-building

Domain	What India built
Economy	~ US\$10.8 billion in investments by 2012; over US\$100 million to expand Chabahar; two air corridors when Pakistan denied ground access.
Commercial	Biggest South Asian market for Afghan goods; bilateral trade ~US\$1.5 billion (CY 2019–20); the Air-Freight Corridor carried cargo worth over US\$216 million across ~1,000 flights since 2017.
HICDP	Since 2005, ~US\$120 million; ~ 433 High Impact Community Development Projects across all 34 provinces , with 110 more under way.
Aid	~ US\$3 billion in humanitarian and reconstruction work to August 2021 — the Afghan Parliament, the Salma Dam, schools, clinics, power plants and stadiums; 500,000 COVID vaccine doses (Jan 2022); 20,000 tonnes of wheat via Chabahar (Mar 2023); ~14,000 Afghan students in India (2023, ICCR).

Why Afghanistan matters

Internal security (radical ideology, drug trafficking, ISI-proxy safe havens); geo-economic (a transit hub; minerals — copper, iron, lithium); geo-strategic (a buffer against north-western threats); regional balance versus China and Pakistan; connectivity to Central Asia via Chabahar and the Delaram–Zaranj highway. **Harsh V. Pant** — development investment ties India to Afghan stability.

Why the US left

- Withdrawal finalised 30 August 2021 — Operation Enduring Freedom (post-9/11) had targeted the Taliban for aiding Al-Qaeda.
- Re-prioritisation from Central Asia to the Asia-Pacific (Quad); over **US\$3 trillion** spent on the “War Against Terror”; a Democratic 2020 priority — Biden clarified the US was not there for nation-building.
- M. K. Narayanan** — the US left Afghanistan worse than it found it after spending more than US\$1 trillion, the government collapsing and the Taliban taking control quickly and bloodlessly.

Transforming Afghanistan into a modern democracy was “an unrealistic and overly ambitious objective.” — Henry Kissinger

From 9/11 to the fall of Kabul



Taliban 1.0 vs 2.0

Taliban 1.0	Taliban 2.0
Reliant on donations and ISI backing; the pre-2001 pariah regime.	Seeks to shed the terrorist label and gain legitimacy (Doha office, peace process); runs its own economy (drug trade, taxes, extortion); improved training, weapons and equipment.

India's stakes under Taliban rule

More elusive than China, Russia and Iran — a product of competing realpolitik and principle; its emphasis on morality now “tempered by a more pragmatic discourse.” **Dhruva Jaishankar** — focused humanitarian aid and global-opinion pressure can shape Taliban conduct on rights; **Gautam Mukhopadhyaya** — letting old developmental projects continue keeps India's foothold and goodwill; **Phunchok Stobdan** and **Manjeet Pardesi** — a dual-track strategy that engages the Taliban while guarding against premature legitimisation.

India's engagement since 2021

- Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri** met Taliban Foreign Minister **Amir Khan Muttaqi** — the highest-level meeting since 2021, ending the phase of “cautious engagement” that Foreign Secretary **Harsh Vardhan Shringla** had earlier called “limited.”
- 1.6 tonnes of medicines (December 2021); an official team in Kabul (June 2022); concern over women's exclusion from universities, citing **UNSC Resolution 2593**; the Afghan embassy in New Delhi closed (October 2023).
- In May 2025 **S. Jaishankar** held a landmark call with Muttaqi after the Taliban condemned the Pahalgam attack; visa relaxation followed; bilateral trade surpassed **US\$1 billion** (2024–25) with zero-tariff access for Afghan agricultural exports.

India works through regional platforms — the Moscow Format, the Delhi Regional Security Dialogue (November 2021), the India–Central Asia Summit (2022), and SCO-RATS. Its stance is read through **Keohane** and **Nye's** complex interdependence, combined with realist pragmatism and constructivist solidarity.

Way forward — scholarly compass

- Vinash Paliwal** — “A pragmatic understanding of the geopolitical reality is what motivates India's engagement with Afghanistan under Taliban leadership.”
- Vivek Katju** — discreet contacts keep India informed but risk legitimising the Taliban; **Rakesh Sood** — a “no boots on the ground” policy.
- Harsh V. Pant** — shift focus from Kashmir to Afghanistan, and seek an understanding among Washington, Moscow and Delhi.

“India should not try to fish in troubled waters.” — **M.K. Bhadra Kumar**

UPSC 2018 · 20m Do you think that India's capacity building role in Afghanistan has shrunk the strategic space for Pakistan there? Discuss.

UPSC 2020 · 20m “The war in Afghanistan is crucial from the point of view of India's national security. If the Americans withdraw and jihadis emerge with a sense of triumphalism, India will face an increasing onslaught of terrorism.” Comment.

UPSC 2021 · 10m How does the recent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban impact India's strategic interests?

11 Growing Relations with the United States

- From post-Cold War suspicion to close cooperation — the US is among India's largest trade and investment partners.
- Maritime and defence anchor: the Malabar exercise grew from bilateral to a quadrilateral with Japan and Australia; the **QUAD** and the institutional **2+2 dialogue**.
- The India–US Civil Nuclear Agreement reshaped the strategic equation (India gave up the IPI pipeline for it).

India's Indo-Pacific concept

SAGAR — “Security and Growth for All in the Region” — and the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (**IPOI**, 2019), built on seven pillars, anchored on “Act East” and “Act West.”

The partnership coexists with **strategic autonomy**: India rejected US mediation on Kashmir and refused to criticise Russia over Ukraine, becoming the second-largest importer of Russian oil. The wider web runs through Japan, Vietnam, Australia and France, with ASEAN centrality at its core.

UPSC 2025 · 15m India maintains strong ties with countries that will assure a free and open Indo-Pacific and guarantee greater connectivity with the rest of the world. Analyze.

UPSC 2025 · 20m India continues to invoke its time-tested policy of strategic autonomy vis-a-vis both the United States of America and Russia by rejecting the US' offer of mediation on the Kashmir issue and by refusing to criticize Russia in its ongoing war against Ukraine. Comment.

UPSC 2025 · 20m India's reluctance to perceive any ‘existential threat’ inevitably made the multilateral path to nuclear security a ‘default option’ until it decided to cross the nuclear Rubicon in 1998. Identify and analyze some of the major reasons behind this shift in India's position on the nuclear question.

12 Operation Sindoor & the Deterrence Turn (2025)

The Pahalgam attack (22 April 2025; 26 civilians killed — The Resistance Front, a Lashkar-e-Taiba front) triggered **Operation Sindoor** on the night of 6–7 May; four days of the sharpest India–Pakistan crisis in decades ended in a 10 May ceasefire.

What was new

- Strikes on nine terror sites in Pakistan and PoK — the Muridke and Bahawalpur headquarters of **LeT** and **JeM**; the deepest into Pakistani Punjab since 1971.
- First Indian use of **BrahMos** and SCALP-EG cruise missiles against Pakistan; the first India–Pakistan clash where both sides used drones.
- The 1960 **Indus Waters Treaty** held “in abeyance” until Pakistan “credibly and irrevocably abjures” cross-border terrorism.
- Ceasefire (10 May) via DGMO channels; the US role is disputed — Washington claimed mediation, India insists the pause was bilateral.

The “new normal” — Modi’s three pillars (12 May)

Retaliation for any terror attack, on India’s terms · no tolerance of “nuclear blackmail” · no distinction between terrorists and the governments that sponsor them.

“*Terror and talks cannot go together... Terror and trade cannot go together... Water and blood cannot flow together.*” — **Narendra Modi, Address to the Nation, 12 May 2025**

The debate — what actually changed

Reading	Argument
Deterrence by punishment	Arzan Tarapore — a shift to cumulative deterrence (“mowing the grass”); the strike, not its threat, imposes cost. Happymon Jacob — a tripwire that collapses the sub-conventional / conventional line and calls Pakistan’s nuclear bluff.
Calibrated force	Walter Ladwig III and Christopher Clary — a calibrated use of force, not brinkmanship; overt nuclear signalling stayed lower than in earlier crises.
Sceptical / continuity	Moeed Yusuf & Rizwan Zeb — a commitment trap; “crises in a nuclearized environment rather than nuclear crises.” Sameer Lalwani — standoff “non-contact” strikes may not move a proxy-reliant Pakistan.
Pattern, not doctrine	Soumya Awasthi and Harsh V. Pant — no codified counter-terror doctrine yet; a clearer pattern of behaviour that still awaits institutional permanence.

UPSC 2025 · 10m Would you agree with the contention that India’s inclination to lean on a ‘more aggressive hyper-realist posture’ has gained a new momentum in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist strike? Comment.

13 Power Quotes — Lines Worth Carrying In

“If Delhi’s approach to the region in the past was defined by political diffidence; pragmatism now shapes the Modi government’s outreach to the Middle East.” — **C. Raja Mohan**

“Afghanistan is a test case for India’s aspiration to be a leading power with a wider regional and global responsibility.” — **Shivshankar Menon**

India is “expanding energy, connectivity and trade ties with Iran to secure its interests... retain strategic autonomy and balance rival powers.” — **Sumitha Narayanan Kutty**

“Once we make up our mind, the distance between Kashi and Kashan is just half a step.” — **Narendra Modi**

14 Scholar Index

Alexander Wendt · Ankit Panda · Anita Inder Singh · Arzan Tarapore · Brahma Chellaney · C. Raja Mohan · Chinnaya R Gharekhian · Christopher Clary · Dhruva Jaishankar · Dr. Muneer Ahmed · Gautam Mukhopadhyaya · Hans Morgenthau · Happymon Jacob · Harsh V. Pant · Henry Kissinger · Immanuel Kant · John Locke · Kautilya · Kenneth Waltz · Keohane & Nye · Manjeet Pardesi · Manoj Joshi · Meher Wadhawan · M.K. Bhadra Kumar · M. K. Narayanan · Moeed Yusuf · Muchkund Dubey · Pankaj Mishra · Phunchok Stobdan · P.R. Kumaraswamy · Rajeshwari Pillai Rajagopalan · Rajiv Bhatia · Rajiv Sikri · Rakesh Sood · Ravi Joshi · Rizwan Zeb · Samuel Ramani · S Samuel C Rajiv · Sameer Lalwani · Shanthie Mariet D’Souza · Shivshankar Menon · Soumya Awasthi · Sumitha Narayanan Kutty · Talmiz Ahmad · Thomas Hobbes · Vijay Gokhale · Vikram Misri · Vinash Paliwal · Vivek Chadha · Vivek Katju · Walter Ladwig III

15 How UPSC Asks It

Previous Year Question	Year · Marks
Write a brief note on India’s interests in West Asia.	2019 · 15m
How is the current standoff between the USA and Iran affecting India’s energy security?	2019 · 15m
What are the challenges and limitations in India–Iran relations?	2023 · 15m

Previous Year Question	Year · Marks
Do you think that India's capacity building role in Afghanistan has shrunk the strategic space for Pakistan there? Discuss.	2018 · 20m
"The war in Afghanistan is crucial from the point of view of India's national security. If the Americans withdraw and jihadis emerge with a sense of triumphalism, India will face an increasing onslaught of terrorism." Comment.	2020 · 20m
How does the recent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban impact India's strategic interests?	2021 · 10m
India maintains strong ties with countries that will assure a free and open Indo-Pacific and guarantee greater connectivity with the rest of the world. Analyze.	2025 · 15m
India continues to invoke its time-tested policy of strategic autonomy vis-a-vis both the United States of America and Russia by rejecting the US' offer of mediation on the Kashmir issue and by refusing to criticize Russia in its ongoing war against Ukraine. Comment.	2025 · 20m
Would you agree with the contention that India's inclination to lean on a 'more aggressive hyper-realist posture' has gained a new momentum in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist strike? Comment.	2025 · 10m
India's reluctance to perceive any 'existential threat' inevitably made the multilateral path to nuclear security a 'default option' until it decided to cross the nuclear Rubicon in 1998. Identify and analyze some of the major reasons behind this shift in India's position on the nuclear question.	2025 · 20m

16 Today's Practice

UPSC 2020 · 20m "The war in Afghanistan is crucial from the point of view of India's national security. If the Americans withdraw and jihadis emerge with a sense of triumphalism, India will face an increasing onslaught of terrorism." Comment.

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Model answers to today's practice drop tonight on [@psirbyamitpratap](#). Every point above sits in full in your Foundation / OGP class notes and handouts — revise it, then write.

See you tomorrow with Day 50 — Recent Developments in Foreign Policy, Part 2: India-Saudi Arabia, India-Iran & India-Israel.