

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2025 · 10 marks

For India, a multipolar world order would also mean a multipolar Asia. Comment.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

RI Cold War binaries dissolved → power diffused across many actors → India answers by multi-alignment (US, Russia, Europe, ASEAN — interest, not loyalty) → stake: world & Asia are one proposition **R2** Jaishankar → multipolar world “feasible only by a multipolar Asia” → global multipolarity empty if one power masters the region → stake the link

Body flow

world & Asia one proposition for India → China’s rise unbalances the region, narrows India’s choices (AIIB / expanded SCO / NDB) → India presses a multipolar Asia to secure interests vs China → design = equal distribution of power & responsibility → three elements: Asian security ↔ global security + India’s UNSC claim / shared decision-making (major & minor powers) / inclusivity not exclusivity (room for US) → shared leadership among India, China, Japan

Counter-view

is a multipolar Asia feasible? → **Rajagopalan**: China outweighs India or any Asian combination → Asia tilts to US-China bipolarity, India leans on the US → **Raja Mohan**: “myth of multipolarity” as a bipolar order forms

Conclusion routes

RI link holds as India’s purpose, not a guarantee → multipolar Asia a project, not an automatic yield of global multipolarity **R2** build it via India’s own rise + countervailing coalitions → India seeks a larger role in the diffusion of power while checking Chinese dominance

The world has moved from Cold war binaries to one where power sits with many actors. India reads this as an opening, responding through multi-alignment, engaging US, Russia, Europe & ASEAN by interest, not loyalty.

A multipolar world means little to India if a single power dominates its region. China's rise unbalances Asia's structure & narrows India's choices; the AIIB, an expanded SCO & the NDB marks its rising stature. India presses for a multipolar Asia to secure its interests against China.

The design rests on an equal distribution of power and responsibility. Three elements follow: the diffusion of power links Asian security to global security & strengthens India's claim at the UNSC;

major & minor powers share decision-making; and inclusivity, not exclusivity, leaves room for the US. India promotes shared leadership among itself, China and Japan.

Rajesh Rajagopalan argues China is "already wealthier & stronger than India or any combination of other Asian powers", pushing Asia toward US-China bipolarity & India toward US alignment. C. Raja Mohan sees a "myth of multipolarity" even as a bipolar order forms.

The link holds as India's purpose rather than a guarantee. A multipolar Asia must be built through India's own rise & countervailing coalitions - India seeking a larger role in the diffusion of power while checking dominance.

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