

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
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Daily Brief · Source Plan (Monday to Saturday)

Common Daily

The Hindu · *The Indian Express* · *Deccan Herald* · *The Statesman*

read every day, alongside the day's sources below

Day-wise Sources

Monday

ORF (*Observer Research Foundation*) · *Foreign Affairs* · *The Diplomat*

Tuesday

MP-IDSA · *EPW* (*Economic & Political Weekly*) · *Gateway House*

Wednesday

Firstpost · *South Asia Monitor* · *ICWA* (*Indian Council of World Affairs*)

Thursday

ORF · *Frontline* · *Bar & Bench* · *World Focus*

Friday

MP-IDSA · *Carnegie Endowment* · *VIF* (*Vivekananda International Foundation*)

Saturday

Firstpost · *Project Syndicate* · *The Economist*

As per relevance, articles from other relevant sources such as NatStrat, ThePrint and The Telegraph (India) will also be included.

Inside America's accommodation of China

Firstpost.



TRENDING | Xi in the US Netanyahu at UNGA Trump media ban US F-35 jet parts World Lung Day

Inside America's accommodation of China

Why America wants a G2, China wants a G1, and India seeks neither



Context

America is quietly making room for China at the top of the world order. Washington wants a two-power partnership (G2), Beijing wants sole primacy (G1), and India wants neither.

Facts

- The G2 idea was floated in American policy circles around 2008-09, when the financial crisis made Beijing's balance sheet look like the world's lifeboat.
- The 2025 rare earths and magnets squeeze, which turned decoupling into de-risking and de-risking into negotiation.
- The five-initiative scaffolding from BRI to the Global Governance Initiative at Tianjin: Beijing is building an alternative order, not joining an existing one.
- Roughly a hundred billion dollars of trade deficit with China alongside America as India's largest export market: the structural reason India cannot pick a side.

Analytical Crux

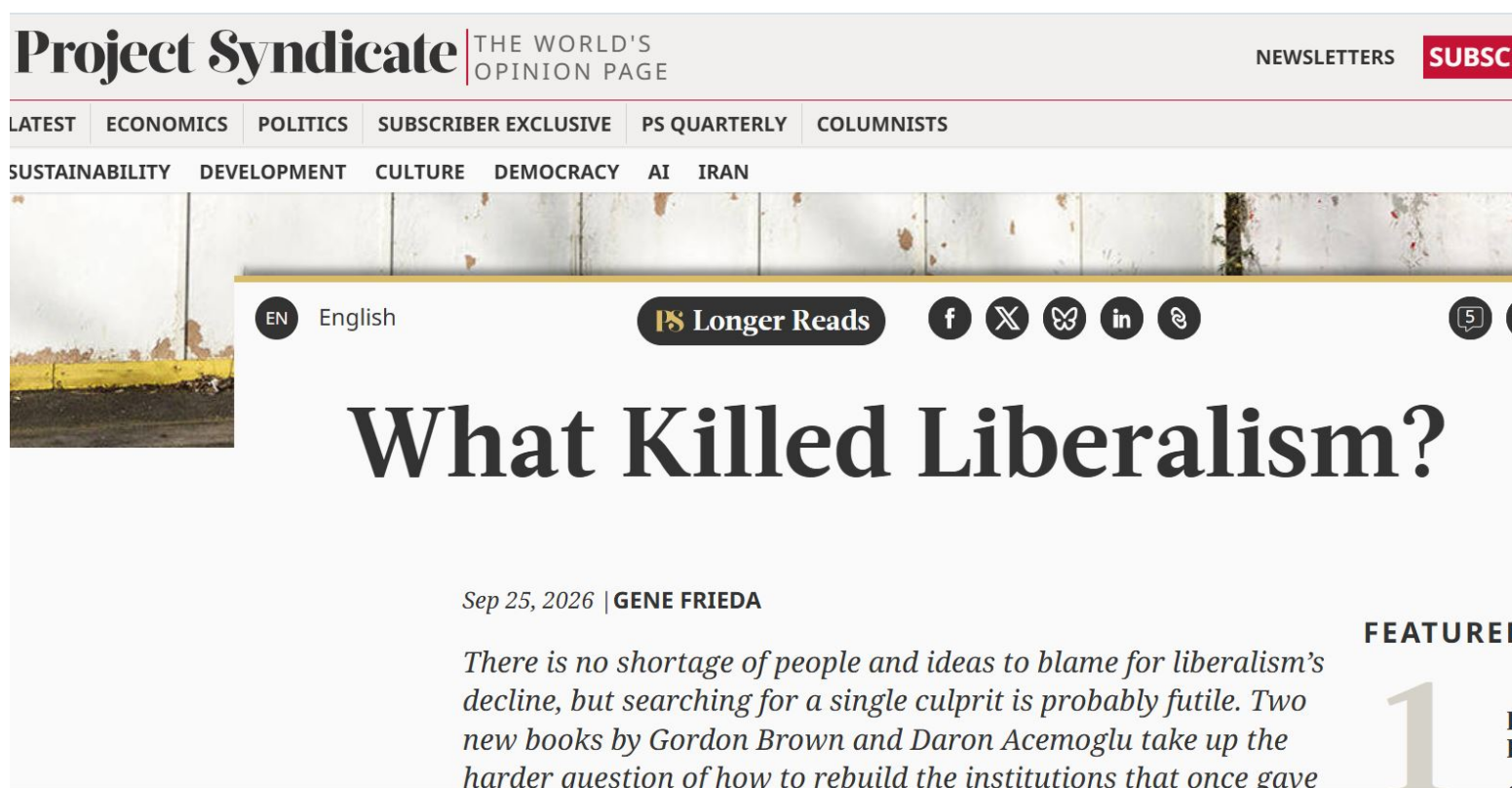
America is offering a partnership while China is accepting a promotion, and the two sides are therefore not negotiating the same thing. A G2 requires China to accept an order whose architecture i.e. the dollar, Bretton Woods, the alliance system was built by someone else. For India the conventional fear of being sidelined by a condominium misreads the situation, because entanglement with both powers is a source of bargaining power rather than a weakness. America needs India as the only democratic economy of scale that can absorb supply chains leaving China, and China needs India not to become a committed American ally on its southern flank. *India's task is not alignment but pricing i.e. extracting technology and market access from Washington and border stability and investment terms from Beijing. Therefore, bargaining power comes from being wanted by both and owned by neither.*

Verbatim Quotes

"Every concession Washington makes in pursuit of a G2 is banked in Beijing as evidence of a G1 in formation. In a G2 world, the most valuable actor is the one both giants need and neither owns."

– Hindol Sengupta

What Killed Liberalism?



Context

Liberal democracy is failing not because of any single culprit but because the coalition that once sustained it – secure work, strong unions, dense local institutions – came apart, and civic renewal alone cannot rebuild it.

Facts

■ **Brown's Focaldata survey across 20 countries** : a 16-20 percentage-point swing, broken down into trust and contact (3 points each), financial security (4-5) and economic optimism (6).

■ **2017 Satyanath-Voigtländer-Voth finding on interwar Germany** : Nazi Party membership grew faster where there were more clubs. Social capital is not inherently liberal.

■ **'Values-led pragmatism'** : a coalition of responsible states operating under a seven-principle charter to strengthen cooperation among middle powers.

Analytical Crux

The search for a single killer of liberalism is the wrong search, because the causes arrived in sequence and then reinforced one another. Brown and Acemoglu approach the wreckage from opposite ends. Brown wants to rebuild trust and association, Acemoglu wants to restore the economic power that made trust rational in the first place. The sharpest blow to the civic-renewal case is interwar Germany, where associational life was dense and fed fascism rather than resisting it, which establishes that social capital is a multiplier of whatever politics already exists and not a liberal safeguard. Even after governments abandoned neoliberal policy, populism kept rising, because the institutions and the status that work conferred do not return when the jobs do, and political narratives harden long after the grievance that produced them. Therefore, liberal democracy survives only where people hold real power over the institutions that govern them and everything else is scaffolding.

Verbatim Quotes

"Social capital is not inherently liberal. A trade union builds social ties, but so does a nationalist party. Liberal democracy depends on people having some power over the institutions that govern their lives."

- Gene Frieda

A declining United Nations is not good news for a rising India

A declining United Nations is not good news for a rising India

INDIA IS rising as the United Nations (UN) loses authority. Rivalry among major powers may create room for manoeuvre but it also makes agreements harder to trust. For an aspirational power, that is a poor bargain. Indian diplomacy must win more influence over UN decisions while helping make those decisions matter.

This year's General Assembly is unlikely to resolve that tension. Governments whose consent the UN needs are often pursuing objectives it was established to restrain. A week of diplomacy in New York will do little to change the calculations that lead powerful states to bypass the organisation or block its work.

India needs agreements that hold when relations sour. New Delhi has long defended sovereignty and resisted intrusive international rule-making. Yet constraints imposed by powerful countries can leave it with even less say. The question is who writes the rules and how much influence India has over them. Multilateral arrangements give India a voice in those negotiations and room to cooperate with countries it disagrees with elsewhere.

Ukraine, Gaza and the war involving Iran and the Gulf expose the Security Council's inability to restrain its strongest members and their clients. Sudan demonstrates the consequences of neglect. The Council was designed to work when the major powers could agree. Its veto gives each permanent member the means to block action when they cannot. Appeals to the Charter have little effect when those expected to uphold it can prevent its enforcement.

Unilateral coercive measures extend this problem into everyday commerce. An Indian company may be free to trade under Indian law yet find that a foreign bank will not process its payment or an insurer will not cover its cargo. Control over these networks lets powerful states project national restrictions far beyond their borders without authorisation from the UN Security Council. Weaponised interdependence leaves Indian businesses exposed to rules their government had no part in writing.

A world divided into rival financial and technological systems could make that dependence harder to escape. India might gain bargaining opportunities, but access to a market or technology could increasingly require accepting the conditions of one camp. A larger economy will not by itself remove that vulnerability.

The UN retains value even when its Council is paralysed. Universal membership gives smaller countries a claim to be heard without a major power's invitation. Its agencies deliver relief, document the human cost of crises and organise the scientific assessments used in climate negotiations. As climate shocks and widening inequalities strain developing countries, the UN gives them a forum to press claims on climate finance and sustainable development.

That is not enough. The UN still falls short too often. The Secretariat must simplify procedures, cut duplication and spend carefully. Governments are also weakening the organisation they invoke when convenient. They assign tasks they



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AKBARUDDIN

do not fund, delay payments they owe, and cut assistance while expecting the UN to absorb the damage. A peace operation given an ambitious mandate and inadequate resources is being set up to fail.

AI presents an early test of who gets to write rules that matter. The UN's independent scientific panel has warned that AI agents could become harder for humans to control. On September 23, technology executives briefed the Security Council on AI's risks. The Council has a role where AI threatens international security. Companies bring essential expertise, but also commercial interests. AI's reach into employment, education and development needs wider consideration. India should press for safety standards and access to technology to be negotiated where developing countries have a voice. Permanent members and some technology firms cannot represent everyone whose future these rules will shape.

India's influence at the UN depends on the partners it can bring to a negotiation. On September 21, India helped launch Partners for Multilateralism, or P4M, with Brazil, Canada, Kenya, the EU, Australia and Barbados. The group spans different diplomatic camps. The declaration recognises that economic interdependence is being used to exert pressure, disrupting trade, supply chains and development finance. Each partner has relationships that could help India persuade countries it might not otherwise persuade. Joint proposals on climate finance or protec-

tion against economic coercion could attract wider support. That work need not wait for agreement on the more contentious questions of UN reform.

The world's most populous democracy and a major economy, India has a compelling claim to permanent membership. Africa's exclusion from permanent membership makes the case for Council reform harder to ignore. Regional rivalries obstruct agreement on expansion. Charter amendments also require ratification by all five permanent members. An elected seat is the nearer prospect.

A practical priority for External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at this Assembly is to secure support for India's candidature for an elected Security Council seat for the 2028-29 term. Its opponent in the June 2027 election is Tajikistan, which has never served on the Council. A founding UN member in 1945, India has contributed more than 275,000 personnel to UN peacekeeping. Smaller countries will also want to know how India would use another term to address their concerns. India can draw on that record to argue for mandates troops can carry out, and for affected countries to be heard before the Council acts.

A Council term would give India more scope to negotiate agreements and insist that governments honour them. The test will come when an agreement obstructs the choices of powerful states. The Charter matters most when it gets in the way.

The writer is former permanent representative of India to the UN, and dean, Kautilya School of Public Policy, Hyderabad

Context

India's rise and the UN's decline are not good news together, because a weakened UN leaves India exposed to rules written by powerful states, and Indian diplomacy must therefore work both to gain influence over UN decisions and to make those decisions count.

Facts

■ On 21 September, India helped launch Partners for Multilateralism (P4M) with Brazil, Canada, Kenya, the EU, Australia and Barbados. It recognises that economic interdependence is used to exert pressure, disrupting trade, supply chains and development finance.

■ India as a founding member from 1945 with more than 275,000 personnel contributed to UN peacekeeping, and its candidature for an elected Security Council seat for 2028-29.

■ UN's value even with a paralysed Council : universal membership, agencies that deliver relief and document the human cost of crises, and scientific assessments used in climate negotiations.

Analytical Crux

The weak UN is a bad bargain for a rising power, which inverts the familiar assumption that great-power rivalry gives India room to manoeuvre. Rivalry does create space, but it also makes agreements harder to trust, and a country whose weight is growing needs commitments that survive a downturn in relations rather than one-off advantages. Sovereignty is no defence when control of payment and insurance networks lets one state extend its rules into another's commerce without any Council authorisation. The solution is coalitional rather than declaratory i.e. *P4M, an elected seat for 2028-29, and joint proposals on climate finance and economic coercion that need not wait for the deadlock over permanent membership to break.* Therefore, the test of India's UN strategy is whether it can make agreements bite on powerful states, including when they bite on India.

Verbatim Quotes

"Governments whose consent the UN needs are often pursuing objectives it was established to restrain."

- Syed Akbaruddin

No planet without One Health

Saturday, 26 September, 2026

The Statesman

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No planet without One Health

One Earth, One Family, One Future. India said three of the words at the G20. The fourth is the one that holds the other three up. [Stream History Documentaries](#)

CHARUDUTTA PANIGRAHI | New Delhi | September 26, 2026 8:43 am



Context

India has built a National One Health Mission, but without statutory backing, a permanent budget and the power to compel data sharing across some twenty-five departments, it will keep seeing outbreak signals.

Facts

■ **Four ingredients of spillover concentrated in one subcontinent :** *India holds the world's largest livestock population, alongside extraordinary biodiversity, dense human settlement and rapid land-use change.*

■ **The Mission's institutional trail :** *PM-STIAC recommendation in 2022, Cabinet approval in February 2024, the National Institute of One Health at Nagpur, and a BSL-3/4 network of twenty-two facilities.*

■ **India's existing surveillance assets are strong :** *IDSP reports, veterinary networks, pollution monitoring, food sampling, and INSACOG's genomic consortium.*

PSIR Optional by Amit Pratap Singh | ForumIAS

Analytical Crux

India's One Health problem is one of legal form, not of science or ambition, and that is a transferable insight about the Indian state. A mission created by an advisory council and sustained by a Cabinet note can coordinate when coordination is convenient and stalls when it is not. It cannot compel a ministry that does not report to it to release a dataset that ministry considers its own and it cannot survive a transfer of personnel or the slow decay that follows every outbreak. The surveillance data exists through IDSP, veterinary networks, pollution monitoring, INSACOG and the failure is not observation but correlation. What reaches well beyond public health is that good Indian policy ideas underperform when a scheme is given a mandate without also being given an institution, a permanent budget line and a named officer who can be held answerable. Therefore, what India has is a mission and what it needs is an institution because we do not fail to see but fail to integrate.

Verbatim Quotes

"India's most important public health idea of this decade is currently a conversation among the converted."

- Charudutta Panigrahi

Revisiting India’s nuclear doctrine without revising it

Revisiting India’s nuclear doctrine without revising it

India’s nuclear doctrine has remained largely unchanged for over two decades, even as its security environment has shifted dramatically. Since its operationalisation in 2003, China’s military rise has accelerated, Pakistan’s nuclear posture has evolved, disruptive technologies have reshaped deterrence, and geopolitical competition has become more multipolar. Yet, the doctrine’s core principles – credible minimum deterrence and a declared No First Use (NFU) posture – have endured, albeit with a specific provision retaining the option of nuclear retaliation following a major biological or chemical attack on India or Indian forces. The question is whether a framework crafted for the early 2000s remains fully aligned with the security challenges of the mid-2020s.

A doctrine for another era, strategic shifts
India’s nuclear doctrine emerged from the distinct strategic context of the late 1990s. The 1998 Pokhran-II tests established India as a nuclear weapons state, while Kargil (1999) showed that nuclear deterrence did not rule out conventional war. The 1999 Draft Nuclear Doctrine and the Cabinet Committee on Security’s January 4, 2003 decision sought to reconcile deterrence with restraint. The 2003 decision operationalised a posture based on credible minimum deterrence, No First Use (NFU) and massive retaliation to a nuclear attack, supported by a survivable second-strike capability and firm civilian control. Judged by its original objectives, the doctrine has provided continuity, predictability and strategic stability for more than two decades. The question is whether the assumptions underpinning it remain stable.

The strategic environment underpinning the framework has changed in three important ways. First, China and Pakistan have grown more strategically aligned. When the doctrine was



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India’s nuclear doctrine faces new strategic, technological and geopolitical challenges

formulated, the two nuclear-armed neighbours posed distinct challenges; today, those challenges are increasingly interconnected. China has expanded and modernised its nuclear forces, strengthened military infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control and deepened defence cooperation with Pakistan. Pakistan has diversified its nuclear capabilities, including tactical nuclear weapons intended to offset India’s conventional advantage. India must therefore account for the possibility that pressures from two closely aligned nuclear adversaries could interact during a crisis.

The second shift is technological. Artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, space-based surveillance, hypersonic weapons and ballistic missile defence are reshaping deterrence by shortening decision-making timelines, increasing the vulnerability of command-and-control networks and complicating assumptions about assured retaliation. These technologies do not invalidate the doctrine’s core principles, but they alter the environment in which they must operate. Nuclear deterrence ultimately depends on the alignment of doctrine, capability and survivability.

The third shift is geopolitical. The Indo-Pacific has become a key arena of great-power competition, while the international system has grown more multipolar. U.S.-China rivalry, closer China-Russia coordination and India’s expanding partnerships have reshaped the security environment. Nuclear doctrine can no longer be viewed solely through bilateral deterrence; regional crises are increasingly shaped by wider geopolitical competition.

Review, not revision
Strategic doctrines are policy instruments, not immutable documents. In India’s case, a review could examine emerging technologies, command-and-control resilience, second-strike

capabilities and the continuing relevance of existing concepts, including the doctrine’s approach to retaliation.

The issue of massive retaliation deserves scrutiny. Pakistan’s tactical nuclear weapons were intended to complicate India’s response options below the level of strategic exchange. A review could assess whether India’s declaratory posture provides sufficient deterrent clarity across nuclear contingencies, without necessarily changing its core principles.

There are, however, reasons for caution. India’s doctrine has reinforced its image as a restrained and responsible nuclear power while providing continuity in deterrence. Ambiguity over established principles, particularly NFU, could create uncertainty, encourage adversaries to recalibrate and complicate crisis management. The priority, therefore, should be to strengthen operational capabilities, modernise delivery systems and improve command-and-control resilience rather than reopen declaratory policy.

A review of NFU need not mean abandoning it. It could reaffirm its rationale, clarify its scope and ensure that supporting capabilities remain credible. Reviewing a doctrine is not the same as revising it.

Building credible capabilities
For India, any doctrinal review should also assess survivability, command and control, intelligence, early warning, cyber resilience and the nuclear triad. The aim should be to ensure that India’s declared policy remains backed by credible capabilities in a changing strategic environment, while aligning nuclear policy with its broader diplomatic objectives and strategic autonomy. Ultimately, a nuclear doctrine is an instrument of statecraft, not an immutable policy. India’s commitment to restraint, credible deterrence and responsible nuclear stewardship remains an enduring strategic asset.

Context

India's nuclear doctrine has stood largely unchanged since 2003 while China, Pakistan, technology and the global order have all moved. It is time to review the doctrine's supporting capabilities without touching its declared principles.

Facts

■ **The 2003 nuclear doctrine :**
operationalised a posture of credible minimum deterrence, No First Use and massive retaliation to a nuclear attack, supported by a survivable second-strike capability and firm civilian control.

■ **Pokhran-II in 1998 and Kargil in 1999 as the formative pair :**
the first made India a nuclear weapons state, the second showed deterrence does not rule out conventional war.

■ **Three shifts since 2003 :**
China-Pakistan alignment, disruptive technology, and a multipolar Indo-Pacific.

Analytical Crux

Strategic doctrines are policy instruments, not immutable documents. The 2003 doctrine has delivered what it promised i.e. continuity, predictability and strategic stability but it was built for a world of two separate nuclear neighbours, slow decisions and a single superpower. What has moved is not the logic of deterrence but its environment and it is time to review capabilities rather than a revision of principles. The one doctrinal question is the fit between massive retaliation and Pakistan's tactical weapons, which were designed precisely to create a level of conflict at which India's declared response looks disproportionate and therefore less believable. A review of NFU need not mean abandoning it. It could reaffirm its rationale, clarify its scope and ensure that supporting capabilities remain credible. India's declaratory policy should hold, while survivability, command and control, early warning, cyber resilience and the triad are where the credibility lies. Nuclear deterrence ultimately depends on the alignment of doctrine, capability and survivability.

Verbatim Quotes

"Nuclear doctrine can no longer be viewed solely through bilateral deterrence; regional crises are increasingly shaped by wider geopolitical competition."

– Advitya Madan

- PSIR Paper II, 2026: Does power transition theory reflect the dynamics of US-China relations?
- PSIR Paper II, 2025: The world currently has been in the throes of a twin process of ‘democratic backsliding’ and ‘democratic backlash’. How would you explain this paradox?
- PSIR Paper II, 2025: 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.
- GS Paper 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.” Examine and critically evaluate the East-West policy confrontations in this regard.
- PSIR Paper II, 2024: Critically examine India’s persistent refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) despite being recognized as a de facto nuclear power.
- 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.

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| 03 | THE ANALYSIS | The argument it raises, and the positions taken on it. |
| 04 | THEORY & VERBATIM QUOTATION | The concept on the syllabus, in the scholar's own words. |
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