



G-20 diplomacy and a shifting world order

This editorial is based on the Article [G-20 diplomacy and a shifting world order](#) which was published in The Hindu on 26/09/2023. It talks about the Changing World Order and Challenges because of China's perception about India's G20 presidency.

For Prelims: [Outcomes of the G20 Summit](#), [India-Middle East-Europe Corridor](#), [Global Biofuel Alliance](#), [Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository](#), [NATO](#), [Quad](#), [United Nations](#), [G-20](#), [BRICS](#), [African Union](#)

For Mains: Outcomes of the G20 Summit, Current Status of the World Order, Relevance of [NAM Policy](#), Way Forward for India.

India scripted amazing success at the [G-20](#) meeting in Delhi and, despite the odds, succeeded in producing a consensus Declaration worthy of an event of this magnitude. Securing an agreement on almost a hundred issues on the agenda, apart from that on the **Russia-Ukraine war**, was no mean achievement. All told, the [G-20 outcomes](#) seemed to mirror the hopes and the wishes of the wider global community.

From condemnation of terrorism to climate issues, from trebling of [renewable energy](#) capacity to matters such as lifestyle for [sustainable development](#) and reform of [multilateral development banks](#), apart from highlighting India's contributions such as [digital public infrastructure](#) and [Unified Payments Interface](#), the Declaration seemed to echo the prevailing mood in the G-20 of favoring compromise over conflict and fully endorsing Prime Minister Narendra's dictum of "One Earth, One Family, One Future".

What are the Key Outcomes of the G20 Summit?

- [African Union](#) joined the G20 Organization and became a member from this year.
- [New Delhi Leaders Declaration](#) has been signed by the country heads as per which Inclusive Growth will be emphasized.
- [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor](#) has been proposed and passed by the leaders of these countries.
- [Global Biofuel Alliance](#) has been created by the member countries which will emphasize the maximum use of Biofuel.
- Launch of One Future Alliance and Creation of a [Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository](#).
- The G20 leaders agreed to pursue **tripling renewable energy capacity globally by 2030** and accepted the need to phase-down unabated coal power.

Why India needs to be cautious about Chinese Perception?

- **Geo-Political and Security Issues:** China's apprehension about the G-20's focus solely on economic cooperation and not on addressing geo-political and security concerns raises concerns for India. China's reservations suggest that it may interpret India's presidency and initiatives as attempts to sideline or challenge its influence in these areas. This could lead to friction in bilateral relations.
- **Geo-Political Tool:** China's implicit warning against the [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor](#) Plan becoming a "geo-political tool" indicates its suspicion that India's economic initiatives could be used to counter its regional interests. This implies that India must tread carefully to avoid escalating tensions.
- **Western Perceptions:** China perceives the G-20 as a Western tool to impose its world view, which could lead to China viewing India's leadership in the G-20 with suspicion. India should be cautious not to be perceived as aligning too closely with Western interests to prevent further strain in Sino-Indian relations.
- **Hegemonic Ambitions:** China's status as a regional hegemon in Asia and its continued efforts to expand its influence pose a potential threat to India's security and interests. India must be cautious because it is a prime target in China's strategic calculations, and any misstep could escalate tensions.
- **Quad Membership:** India's membership in the [Quad](#), a grouping seen as anti-China, adds another layer of complexity to Sino-Indian relations. China is likely to closely monitor India's actions within this alliance, and any provocative moves could lead to a deterioration in bilateral ties.
- **Global Uncertainties:** The global context is marked by multiple crises, including geopolitical competition, inflation, and conflicts like the one in Ukraine. India needs to be cautious because these uncertainties can spill over into its own neighborhood and affect its security and stability.

What is the Current Status of the World Order?

- **Emerging Blocs:** There are two emerging blocs in the world order. One is led by Western countries, while the other is led by China and Russia. These two blocs are often referred to as "enduring rivals" and are engaged in a battle for global supremacy. This rivalry suggests a shift in the balance of power on the global stage.
- **Challenges to the Rules-Based Order:** The concept of a "rules-based world order" has been challenged, and it is no longer a universally accepted framework. Instead, the world is experiencing what some describe as an "emerging world disorder." This disorder is characterized by the resurgence of antagonistic blocs and a diminishing role for non-aligned nations.
- **NATO's Role:** The stalemate in the Ukraine conflict and concerns about Russian expansionism have prompted the U.S. to strengthen and expand [NATO](#). This has led to the prospect of a U.S.-equipped territorial force in Ukraine and the inclusion of non-NATO allies in a U.S. -led alliance aimed at countering authoritarianism, primarily represented by Russia and China.
- **Evolution of G-20:** The role of the G-20 has evolved over the years. Initially, during the 2008-09 economic crisis, it played a crucial role in addressing economic issues and preventing a global economic downturn. However, in recent years, the G-20's focus has shifted more towards addressing global political conflicts rather than economic concerns.
- **Russia-China Strategic Alignment:** Russia and China have been deepening their strategic alignment, forming a closer partnership in various areas, including diplomacy and trade. This alignment has implications for global power dynamics and poses challenges to Western influence.
- **Global Influence:** China is actively challenging U.S. naval power in the Pacific Ocean, and Russia is seeking to expand its influence in Africa by supplying food grains at subsidized prices to African states. This reflects a broader trend of major powers extending their reach and influence beyond their traditional spheres of control.

Has the NAM Policy lost its Relevance?

- **Challenges to Non-Alignment:** The concept of [non-alignment](#), which was historically associated with countries not aligning with major power blocs during the [Cold War](#), is facing significant challenges.
 - New alignments and alliances are making it increasingly difficult for countries to maintain their non-aligned status.
 - These new alliances, such as [BRICS](#), are themselves becoming more involved in global

politics and security matters, which complicates the idea of non-alignment.

- **Shrinking Space for Non-Alignment:** The proliferation of security agreements and the emergence of multiple international relationships have significantly reduced the space for countries to pursue a truly non-aligned foreign policy.
 - With the strengthening of rival camps, there are limited opportunities for nations to maintain neutrality and independence in global affairs.
- **Diminished Influence:** In the face of new alignments and power dynamics, countries like India may find it challenging to exert significant influence on global events.
 - Despite participating in international forums like the G-20 and emphasizing the importance of the [Global South](#), their ability to shape the course of world events may be limited.
 - This implies a diminishing role for traditionally non-aligned nations in the international arena.

What should India do in Such a Situation?

- **Diversify Alliances and Partnerships:** India can pursue a strategy of diversification by expanding its alliances and partnerships with a wide range of countries. This includes strengthening ties with both traditional allies and emerging powers. India has already taken steps in this direction by deepening relationships with countries like the United States, Russia, Japan, and countries in the [European Union](#).
- **Active Diplomacy:** India can play an active role in international diplomacy, mediating conflicts, and contributing to global governance. Being a proactive participant in regional and international forums such as the [United Nations](#), [G-20](#), and [BRICS](#) can help India assert its influence on critical global issues.
- **Economic Integration:** Promote economic integration and trade alliances with multiple countries. India should focus on boosting economic ties with key partners in regions like Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Expanding trade networks can enhance India's economic influence and geopolitical standing.
- **Maintain Strategic Autonomy:** While diversifying alliances, India should also maintain strategic autonomy and ensure that its decisions align with its national interests. Avoiding over-dependence on any single power or bloc is crucial to retaining flexibility in foreign policy.
- **Invest in Defense and Security:** Given the evolving security challenges in the region, India should continue to invest in its defense capabilities to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Strengthening its military partnerships with like-minded nations can enhance its security posture.
- **Engage in Multilateralism:** Actively engage in multilateral institutions and forums to shape global norms and policies. India can advocate for reforms in institutions like the [United Nations Security Council](#) to ensure a more equitable representation of emerging powers.
- **Focus on Development and Connectivity:** India can pursue a development-centric foreign policy approach by investing in infrastructure projects, connectivity initiatives, and capacity-building programs in neighboring and strategically important regions. This can foster goodwill and strengthen regional influence.
- **Adaptability and Pragmatism:** India should remain adaptable and pragmatic in its foreign policy decisions, ready to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities as they arise.
 - The external affairs minister has clearly said, "This is a time for us to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play, draw neighbors in, extend the neighborhood and expand traditional constituencies of support."

Drishti Mains Question:

In light of India's recent successes at the G20 Summit and the evolving global geopolitical landscape, discuss the challenges for India's foreign policy. Outline a comprehensive strategy that India should adopt to effectively safeguard its national interests.

Prelims:

Q. In which one of the following groups are all the four countries members of G20? (2020)

- (a)** Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
- (b)** Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
- (c)** Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
- (d)** Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Ans: (a)

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