

India's Diplomacy and the Changing Political Landscapes

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Context - The changing geopolitical landscape, characterized by realignments and recalibrations among major powers, demands nimble, flexible, and open-ended diplomacy from India, as it faces the challenges posed by the deepening partnership between Russia and China.

Current Geopolitical Landscapes

1. Geopolitical Churn overview:

- Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida aims to elevate the Indo-Pacific partnership with India.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping visits Moscow to consolidate the Eurasian alliance with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.
- Recalibration of relations among major middle powers, such as the thaw between Iran and Saudi Arabia.
- Such events signify the ongoing realignment of major powers in the world.
- **Realignment and Dealignment:**
- The breakdown of the post-Cold War world order has accelerated due to Russian aggression against Ukraine and the conflict over Taiwan.

- Countries are adapting to the breakdown of the old order at different speeds and with varying senses of urgency.
- Some trends in the geopolitical landscape are enduring, while others represent short-term adjustments.
- **Middle East Dynamics:**
 - Saudi-Iran rapprochement could be tactical or strategic, but the regional powers have some room for bargaining with both Russia-China and the West.
 - Domestic crises in Turkey and Iran might encourage them to scale down their foreign policy adventurism.
- **East Asia Developments:**
 - The recent summit between South Korea and Japan marked the first meeting between the two leaders in nearly twelve years.
 - The volatile domestic politics of South Korea and its deep economic relationship with China make the regional dynamic uncertain.
 - India needs to navigate this shifting regional landscape with agile diplomacy.
- **Russia-China Partnership:**
 - The deepening partnership between Russia and China poses challenges for India.
 - Different perspectives on how this partnership might affect India-Russia relations.

Significance of Japanese PM's Visit to India

- **Strengthening the Strategic Partnership:** The visit helps to reaffirm and expand the strategic partnership between India and Japan, which is crucial for maintaining peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Both countries share common concerns about China's growing influence and assertiveness, and the visit highlights their commitment to working together to address these challenges.
- **Enhancing Defense Cooperation:** Kishida's visit to India provides an opportunity for both countries to discuss ways to enhance defense cooperation, including joint military exercises, defense technology transfers, and collaboration on defense research and development. This collaboration could help both countries build their capabilities to address regional security challenges.
- **Expanding Economic Ties:** The visit offers an opportunity to further expand trade and investment relations between India and Japan, which are already robust. Both countries can explore new areas of economic cooperation, such as infrastructure development, technology collaboration, and supply chain diversification, thereby reducing their dependence on China.
- **Focus on Connectivity and Infrastructure:** Japan has been actively involved in major infrastructure projects in India, such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and high-speed rail projects. Kishida's visit could lead to further collaboration in connectivity initiatives, both within India and across the Indo-Pacific region.

Russia-China Axis

- **Strategic Concerns:** A closer Russia-China alliance could potentially undermine India's

strategic interests, as both countries are India's neighbors and have had historical disputes with it. A stronger partnership between Russia and China could complicate India's efforts to maintain a balance of power in the region.

- **Impact on India-Russia Relations:** India has traditionally enjoyed a strong relationship with Russia, especially in defense cooperation. However, Russia's growing ties with China could potentially affect this relationship, as Moscow may prioritize its partnership with Beijing over New Delhi.
- **Influence in the Indo-Pacific:** A stronger Russia-China partnership could challenge India's influence in the Indo-Pacific region, where both countries are trying to expand their presence. This might lead to increased competition and tensions between India and the Russia-China alliance.
- **Security Challenges:** Increased military cooperation between Russia and China might pose security challenges for India, as it could result in a more assertive and capable China in the region. This could also affect India's efforts to maintain a stable security environment along its borders.

India's Diplomacy towards Changing Geopolitical Landscapes

- **Act East Policy:** India has strengthened its focus on East and Southeast Asia, both economically and strategically, through the Act East Policy. This approach aims to deepen India's engagement with the ASEAN countries, Japan, South Korea, and Australia, promoting regional connectivity, trade, and investment while also addressing shared security concerns.
- **Indo-Pacific Strategy:** Recognizing the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region, India has been actively participating in regional forums and partnerships, such as the Quad (comprising India, Japan, Australia, and the United States). This strategy aims to maintain a rules-based order, ensure freedom of navigation, and promote regional stability in the face of China's growing influence.
- **Balancing Relations with Major Powers:** India has been navigating its relationships with major powers, such as the United States, Russia, and China. While India has strengthened its strategic partnership with the US, it also maintains its long-standing ties with Russia, despite Moscow's growing closeness to Beijing. At the same time, India seeks to manage its complex relationship with China, balancing cooperation on regional and global issues with competition and strategic rivalry.
- **Neighbourhood First Policy:** India has been prioritizing its relationships with its immediate neighbors in South Asia, focusing on enhancing connectivity, economic integration, and people-to-people exchanges. This policy aims to foster regional stability, counterbalance China's growing influence, and promote India's leadership role in the region.

Conclusion

As the geopolitical landscape continues to shift and evolve, India needs to adapt its diplomacy to navigate the changing dynamics effectively. The deepening partnership between Russia and China requires India to reassess its strategic relationships and adopt a flexible approach in dealing with both traditional and emerging partners.