

INVasset's Voice



India's Foreign Policy Is **Turning Strategic** Not Aligned

India's Foreign Policy Is Becoming Pure Strategy, Not Alignment

For decades, global diplomacy operated on a simple premise: countries chose sides. Nations aligned with blocs, ideologies, and military alliances that defined their place in the world order. But the global system is evolving, and India's foreign policy is increasingly reflecting a very different approach — one driven not by alignment, but by strategic autonomy and economic pragmatism.

Today, India is no longer sitting on the sidelines of geopolitics. It is present at almost every major table, engaging with competing global powers simultaneously while maintaining the flexibility to pursue its own interests. In an increasingly polarized world where the United States, China, Russia, and Western alliances are pushing nations into camps, India is charting a path that prioritizes partnerships over positioning.

Rather than choosing sides, India is choosing deals.

The US Bet: Strategic Investment in Energy Infrastructure

One of the most striking developments reflecting this shift is the reported plan by Reliance Industries to invest nearly \$300 billion in building a large-scale oil refinery in Texas. If executed, such a project would represent one of the largest foreign energy investments ever undertaken by an Indian company.

But this move is not simply about refining capacity.

It represents something deeper — a strategic economic footprint inside the United States' energy infrastructure. By embedding itself into America's industrial ecosystem, India signals that it is not merely a partner but an indispensable participant in global energy supply chains.

In a world where energy security is increasingly geopolitical, such investments ensure that India remains impossible to ignore.

Russia: Energy Economics Over Ideology

While India deepens economic engagement with the United States, it has simultaneously strengthened energy ties with Russia.

Since the onset of Western sanctions on Moscow, India has dramatically increased imports of discounted Russian crude oil. The logic is straightforward: cheaper energy imports help stabilize domestic fuel prices and reduce inflationary pressures in the world's fastest-growing large economy.

This decision has often been interpreted through a geopolitical lens. But for India, the equation is less ideological and far more arithmetic.

Energy security and price stability take precedence.

QUAD: Securing the Indo-Pacific

India's participation in the QUAD alliance with the United States, Japan, and Australia reflects another pillar of its foreign policy strategy — securing trade routes and maritime stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Nearly 90% of India's trade by volume travels through sea lanes. Ensuring that these routes remain open and secure is therefore not optional.

Through joint naval exercises, technology cooperation, and security coordination, India is strengthening its role as a key maritime power in the Indo-Pacific without formally aligning itself with any military bloc.

Israel: Quiet Defense Modernization

India's defense relationship with Israel is another example of pragmatic diplomacy operating largely away from public headlines.

Over the past decade, Israel has become one of India's most important suppliers of advanced defense technologies — including drones, missile systems, surveillance platforms, and electronic warfare equipment.

Rather than large public announcements, much of this cooperation has focused on quietly modernizing India's military capabilities while expanding domestic defense manufacturing.

The Middle East: A Strategic Economic Lifeline

India's relationship with the Middle East is driven by a combination of economics, diaspora ties, and energy security.

More than 9 million Indians live and work across Gulf countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait. Their remittances contribute tens of billions of dollars annually to India's economy.

At the same time, these countries remain critical suppliers of crude oil and natural gas.

For India, maintaining strong relations across the region is not simply diplomacy — it is an economic necessity that supports millions of households back home.

Iran: The Strategic Gateway to Central Asia

India's investment in Iran's **Chabahar Port** reflects its long-term geopolitical planning.

Chabahar provides India with a direct trade and connectivity corridor to Afghanistan and Central Asia without relying on routes through Pakistan. This access is strategically significant for trade, logistics, and regional influence.

Despite international sanctions and geopolitical complications, India has consistently maintained engagement with Iran to ensure that this strategic route remains viable.

France: Strategic Autonomy Through Technology

France has emerged as one of India's most important strategic partners in Europe.

The partnership spans nuclear energy cooperation, defense manufacturing, and aerospace technology. France has been a long-standing supplier of advanced defense systems to India and remains supportive of India's push toward strategic autonomy in military technology and energy security.

Unlike many Western partnerships, the India-France relationship is often characterized by a higher degree of policy alignment and mutual strategic independence.

UAE & Saudi Arabia: Capital and Connectivity

India's ties with **the UAE and Saudi Arabia** have expanded significantly over the past decade.

These countries are not only major energy suppliers but also key sources of sovereign wealth investment into Indian infrastructure, logistics, and digital sectors.

At the same time, India continues to prioritize the welfare of millions of Indian workers in the region while strengthening trade and investment flows between both sides.

Japan: Manufacturing and Technology Collaboration

Japan remains a critical partner in India's long-term economic transformation.

From the **Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train** project to cooperation in semiconductor supply chains, digital infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing, Japan is helping India scale up its industrial capacity.

These collaborations aim to strengthen India's domestic manufacturing ecosystem and reduce global supply chain vulnerabilities.

Australia: Securing Critical Minerals

As the world accelerates toward electric vehicles and renewable energy systems, access to critical minerals is becoming a strategic priority.

India's growing partnership with **Australia focuses on securing supplies of lithium, cobalt, and other minerals** essential for battery manufacturing and clean energy technologies.

These resources will play a crucial role in supporting India's transition toward electric mobility and green energy infrastructure.

A Foreign Policy Built on National Interest

Taken together, these partnerships illustrate a clear pattern.

India is not pursuing traditional alliances based on ideology or geopolitical alignment. Instead, it is building a network of relationships that serve specific strategic goals — energy security, trade access, defense modernization, technology collaboration, and economic resilience.

Each relationship serves a purpose.

Each partnership strengthens India's position in a different domain.

The Emerging Doctrine: Strategic Multi-Alignment

India's approach can best be described as **strategic multi-alignment**.

Rather than locking itself into a single geopolitical bloc, India engages with multiple powers simultaneously while preserving the flexibility to act independently.

This model allows India to benefit from global cooperation without surrendering strategic autonomy. In an increasingly fragmented world order, that flexibility may prove to be one of its most powerful diplomatic assets

The Bottom Line

India is no longer navigating global politics defensively.

It is shaping them.

By building economic, technological, and security partnerships across competing global powers, India is positioning itself as a bridge between geopolitical blocs rather than a member of any single one.

The message behind this strategy is simple:

**India does not choose sides.
India chooses India.**

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**This research has been done by the
Core Fundamental Research Team of INVasset PMS Desk.**

Anirudh Garg

anirudhgarg@invasset.com

Harshal Dasani

harshaldasani@invasset.com

Bhavik Joshi

bhavikjoshi@invasset.com



MUMBAI

911, One Lodha Place,
Lower Parel, Mumbai, Maharashtra-400013

GURUGRAM

4th Floor, Two Horizon Centre,
DLF Phase 5, Gurugram, Haryana-122002

LUDHIANA

Plot No. 14-15, Canal Road,
South City Ludhiana, Punjab -142027

AHMEDABAD

SI - M - B003, Shilp Incubation Center,
Gift SEZ, Gift City, Gandhinagar-382365

DUBAI

Office No. 503, 5th Floor Court Tower,
Business Bay, Dubai-391406



+91 98158-10172



info@invasset.com



www.invasset.com