



MULTILATERALISM IN THE NEW COLD WAR

Focus: GS-II International Relations

Introduction

In the new cold war, defined by technology and trade not territory, non-alignment is an uncertain option.

Developments on the International Stage for India

- As chair of the Executive Board of the World Health Assembly India can set the global response in terms of multilateralism, not just medical issues.
- In 2021 India joins the UN Security Council (non-permanent seat).
- India will also chair the BRICS Summit in 2021.
- India is set to host the G-20 in 2022 as well.

Clash of values, U.S. and China

- The clash between China and the U.S. at the just concluded World Health Assembly in May marks the end of the multilateralism of the past 70 years.
- The agenda-setting role of the G7 over UN institutions and global rules has also been effectively challenged by WHO ignoring the reform diktat of the U.S. leading to its withdrawal, and characterisation of the G7 as “outdated”.
- The U.S. has also implicitly rejected the G20 and UN Security Council, for an expanded G7.
- Now, Social and economic rights have emerged to be as important as political and procedural rights.
- The U.S. faces an uphill task in seeking to lead a new multidimensional institution as China’s re-emergence is based on technology, innovation and trade balancing U.S.



military superiority at a time of declining global trust in free-market liberalism, central to western civilisation.

Non-coercive form: Way forward for India

- For India, the strategic issue is neither adjustment to China's power nor deference to U.S. leadership.
- The global vacuum, shift in relative power and its own potential, provides India the capacity to articulate a benign multilateralism as a NAM-Plus that resonates with large parts of the world and brings both BRICS and the G7 into the tent. This new multilateralism should rely on outcomes, not rules, 'security' downplayed for 'comparable levels of wellbeing' and a new P-5 that is not based on the G7.
- National security now relies on technological superiority in artificial intelligence (AI), cyber and space, and not expensive capital equipment, as India's military has acknowledged. Instead of massive arms imports we should use the savings to enhance endogenous capacity and mould the global digital economy between state-centric (China), firm-centric (the U.S.) and public-centric (India) systems.
- A global community at comparable levels of well-being requires new principles for trade.
- Ancient civilisational values provide the conceptual underpinning, restructuring both the economic order and societal behaviour for equitable sustainable development.

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-Source: The Hindu