

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ORDER

A NEW INDIA FOR A CHANGING EUROPE

What to Expect from India's Foreign Policy

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August 2024



In the Indo-Pacific, India is a key partner for both the EU and Germany. The country is evolving into a global growth driver and power center in an emerging world order.



India and the EU need resilient partnerships to effectively address issues ranging from trade and defense to technology.



Adjustments to their existing relations, along with a willingness to recognize geopolitical realities and historical context, are necessary to carve out new common ground.

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FOREWORD

UNDERSTANDING INDIA AND BUILDING BRIDGES TO A SHARED FUTURE

The 2020s mark a turning point for Germany. This shift goes beyond mere rhetoric or the special fund designed for the German Armed Forces; it represents a new era that will require a substantial transformation of Germany's economic model, including its industrial, trade, and energy policies, as well as the restructuring of the European security architecture and a recalibration of the international order. To successfully navigate these immense challenges, Germany will need, in addition to its integration in NATO and the EU, strong strategic partnerships with emerging economies and growth markets across the world – particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. The country with perhaps the greatest potential for such a partnership is India.

Whether addressing these global challenges or maintaining a rules-based international order, the German-Indian strategic partnership serves as a vital tool for building alliances in an increasingly fragmented world. Furthermore, in areas of bilateral cooperation such as green energy production, resilient supply chains, research and development projects in artificial intelligence and quantum computing, and through the activities of over 2,000 German companies operating in India, the country holds significant importance for Germany.

In New Delhi, after a period of non-alignment and non-involvement in conflicts during the bipolar world of the Cold War, this stance is increasingly being replaced by geostrategic and geo-economic considerations that include a turn towards the West, a regional challenge with China, and a growing recognition of India's global importance. As the world's most populous country, India is staking its claim in the evolving global order. India not only sees itself as the so-called voice of the Global South and a rising economic power but also as a key player in a multipolar world, with a clear expectation of being adequately represented in global institutions – from the United Nations Security Council to non-Western alliances like BRICS+. India operates increasingly with a multi-vector approach, pursuing clear goals: preserving the international order, ensuring appropriate representation in its institutions, avoiding great power conflict, and fostering domestic growth while advancing national interests.

Germany can regard this new Indian ambition positively: the geostrategic convergence between the West and New Delhi, as well as mutual economic and trade interests, and the framework for cooperation in bi-, tri-, mini-, or multilateral formats, are all on the rise. To effectively harness this momentum, policy areas such as energy, technology, trade, and economic policy, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and India's stance towards China offer valuable avenues for collaboration. This also involves re-evaluating long-standing principles of German foreign policy, as the ongoing debate on deeper security and defense cooperation with India demonstrates. Clear positions and a values-based, pragmatic approach are crucial factors for the success of cooperation with New Delhi. Equally important is a deeper understanding of the world's largest and most complex democracy.

The following paper, "A New India for a Changing Europe", authored by C. Raja Mohan, builds on this premise. It was developed as part of the advisory project "A Decade of Transitions: Trends in Indian Foreign Policy" and aims to contribute to the successful contextualization of India's positions in international politics. Drawing on insights from a workshop co-organized in February 2024 by the Council for Strategic and Defense Research and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung India, the policy paper offers a comprehensive understanding of India's foreign policy transitions and future directions. Beyond this, the contribution takes a focused look at European-Indian cooperation and provides policy recommendations from a distinctly Indian perspective.

As Germany and Europe undergo transformation, „New India“ will only grow in political and economic importance and strategic relevance. Continuous exchange, mutual understanding, and a familiarity with each other's thought processes and logic of action are prerequisites for successful cooperation and its expansion.

As the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, we aim to contribute to this with this paper.

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A NEW INDIA FOR A CHANGING EUROPE

The rapidly changing global landscape presents new possibilities for the relationship between India, Europe and thus Germany. All are navigating technological innovation, climate change, economic shifts, and evolving security dynamics. With a growing economy and a young population, India is emerging as a significant global player. After prolonged neglect, India is paying greater attention to Europe as part of its pursuit for a multipolar world. Meanwhile, Europe is contending with internal changes and external pressures, prompting it to seek new partnerships for stability and influence, including with India.

This report explores key trends in Indian foreign policy over the past decade (2014-2024) and forecasts their impacts on India-Europe relations. It examines how India is adjusting its foreign policy to align with Europe's changing dynamics and makes recommendations for European policymakers on addressing challenges in the relationship, and seizing opportunities for mutual growth and global impact.

UNDERSTANDING NEW INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Over the past decade, five broader and cross-cutting shifts have characterized India's foreign policy. Conspicuous as these reorientations may be, their trajectories are much less specific. They occasionally work at cross-purposes and are complicated by empirical realities and geopolitical pushbacks. However, to any interested observer, these five transitions are crucial to understanding India's sense of constraints and opportunities in the coming years.

INDIA RISING

India's relative economic weight in the world has increased over the past decade. Its gross domestic product (GDP) has nearly doubled, from USD 1.9 trillion in 2014 to USD 3.7 trillion in 2024 (FY estimate), and India remains the fastest-growing major economy today.¹ By 2030, S&P Global

¹ "India Q4 GDP Highlights: Real GDP Estimated to Grow by 8.2% in FY24 as against 7.0% in FY23." *The Economic Times*, Economic Times, 31 May 2024, [m.economictimes.com/news/newsblogs/india-gdp-q4-fy24-live-update-today-rbi-annual-report-economic-growth-rate-latest-news-31st-may-2024/liveblog/110577602.cms](https://www.economictimes.com/news/newsblogs/india-gdp-q4-fy24-live-update-today-rbi-annual-report-economic-growth-rate-latest-news-31st-may-2024/liveblog/110577602.cms). Accessed 8 Aug. 2024.

Ratings expects India to be the third-largest economy in the world. The Indian Finance Ministry aims to achieve this feat, with a USD 5 trillion GDP, in the next three years.² In its pursuit to become a developed country by 2047, India has instituted ambitious models focused on export-led growth and self-reliance. For instance, India aims to become a manufacturing and export powerhouse ("Make in India"); build an entire domestic ecosystem for semiconductors ("Indian Semiconductor Mission"); and launch its first human spaceflight mission ("Mission Gaganyaan"). Indeed, if current macroeconomic and global trends hold, Goldman Sachs Research projects that by 2075, India will emerge as the second largest economy, trailing only China and potentially on par with or ahead of the United States.³ Concurrently, by leveraging such optimism, New Delhi has sought to move beyond the rhetoric of a developing and rising India, positioning itself as a great power in its own right. It has also emphasized a moral and inclusive identity ("Vishwamitra"), setting itself apart from China, the US, and Russia.

WIDENING RANGE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

India's broad approach to grand strategy has remained stable over the decade. It is perhaps best articulated by External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar in 2019: "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."⁴ Over the last ten years, deterring reportedly Pakistan-based terror attacks remained a priority, and managing China's rise has become increasingly critical in the aftermath of violent clashes at the Line

² "India to Be World's Third-Largest Economy by 2030 -S&P Global Ratings." *Reuters*, 5 Dec. 2023, www.reuters.com/world/india/india-be-worlds-third-largest-economy-by-2030-sp-global-ratings-2023-12-05/. PTI. "India to Become Third Largest Economy with GDP of \$5 Trillion in Three Years: Finance Ministry." *The Hindu*, 29 Jan. 2024, www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/india-to-become-third-largest-economy-with-gdp-of-5-trillion-in-three-years-finance-ministry/article67788662.ece#:~:text=India%20is%20expected%20to%20become.

³ "How India Could Rise to the World's Second-Biggest Economy." Goldman Sachs Research, 2023, www.goldmansachs.com/insights/articles/how-india-could-rise-to-the-worlds-second-biggest-economy.

⁴ S Jaishankar. "INDIA WAY : Strategies for an Uncertain World." Harpercollins India, 2020.

of Actual Control (LAC) in 2020. The latter has driven India to focus on the Indo-Pacific region, seeking to deepen and expand ties to counter growing Chinese influence. India has successfully established practical and effective habits of cooperation through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with its like-minded regional partners. Given that India's sense of the Indo-Pacific extends to the Middle East and East Africa, New Delhi has successfully upgraded its strategic and economic ties with Gulf states, including Israel. This significant shift in India's diplomatic position in the region is best represented by India's enthusiastic support for the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and its membership in I2U2, a grouping that also counts the US, Israel, and the UAE as members. India has also put Africa at the heart of its global south outreach and diplomacy, most notably illustrated by India's successful effort to secure the African Union's membership in the G20 in 2023.

TOWARDS RE-GLOBALIZATION AND SELF-RELIANCE

The geopolitical and economic uncertainties resulting from events such as the Ukraine war and the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with rising protectionism in the West and an increasingly shaky trade order centered around the WTO, have reinforced the idea that India is 'on its own.' Self-reliance emerged as an answer. New Delhi launched the Production Linked Incentive scheme, with a capital outlay of over USD 26 billion, to build manufacturing ecosystems in critical sectors, such as electronics, within the country.⁵ The shift away of the ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), from free-trade agreements in Asia was visible before, but the border stand-off with China at the LAC and concerns around Chinese investments and import dependencies (with the India-China trade deficit exceeding USD 85 billion in FY 24) further consolidated India's retreat from Regional Trade Agreements like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). To counteract its economic isolationism, New Delhi has instead signed Free Trade Agreements with key economies such as Australia, the UAE, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). It kick-started free trade agreement (FTA) talks with the EU after a hiatus of nine years. Parallely, India focused on the need for foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and leveraged its strategic partnerships in the West to make gains on higher-order tech cooperation through innovative mechanisms such as the United States-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) and India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC).

⁵ "Ministry of Commerce & Industry Says Investment of Rs 1.23 Lakh Crore Attracted under PLI Scheme till March 2024." *Business Standard*, 31 July 2024, www.business-standard.com/markets/capital-market-news/ministry-of-commerce-industry-says-investment-of-rs-1-23-lakh-crore-attracted-under-pli-scheme-till-march-2024-124073100483_1.html. Accessed 8 Aug. 2024.

CONTINENTAL DEADLOCKS TO MARITIME OPPORTUNITIES

India's traditional focus on land-based threats vis-a-vis Pakistan and China, and its historically inward-looking economy, had arguably prevented it from fully appreciating the possibilities of its advantageous maritime geography and the consequent need for maritime security. However, in more recent decades, as India's overall trade grew radically—from USD 95 billion in FY 2002 to USD 830 billion in FY 2011 to USD 1670 billion in FY 2023—New Delhi's awareness of its maritime domain increased substantially.⁶ Simultaneously, a growing Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) added a security dimension to India's erstwhile maritime imperatives. Consequently, New Delhi focused on greater collaboration with maritime powers, such as the US, France, and the UK, both bilaterally and multilaterally (for instance, through Quad), on non-traditional security issues and maritime domain awareness. India's embrace of the Indo-Pacific, manifested in the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), aligned well with broader geopolitical trends and convergent interests with its strategic partnerships. Through the greater expansion of maritime capabilities and ties, New Delhi has also tried to establish India's credentials as an emerging great power, perhaps best illustrated by its decision to field three Aircraft Carriers for power projection.

NEW PRAXIS

The decade has seen India recalibrate its diplomacy to emphasize greater personalization, assertiveness, risk-taking, and diversification of sources of influence. India's assertiveness, widely popular domestically, was evident in how it defended its stance against Western criticisms of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. India is also much less accepting of international scrutiny in matters seen as wholly domestic, such as human rights and characterizations of democratic backsliding. But Delhi is not letting the arguments about human rights hinder its efforts to strengthen ties with the US and Europe.

India is also just beginning to systematically engage its growing diaspora community across the world. Engaging with the Indian communities abroad has become an integral part of Indian diplomacy. Occasionally large events like the 'Howdy Modi' rally in Houston during the 2020 election season in the US underlined the growing political salience of the diaspora as well as potential dangers of being seen as intervening in the domestic politics in the host countries.⁷ Diaspora could be a positive living bridge with

⁶ "India's Global Trade Dynamics: A 20 Years Overview." *Indiastat*, 2022, www.indiastat.com/Socio-Economic-Voices/India-Global-Trade-Dynamics-20-Years-Overview#:~:text=Dynamics%20of%20India. Accessed 8 Aug. 2024.

⁷ Kapur, Devesh, "The Indian Prime Minister and Trump Addressed a Houston Rally. Who Was Signaling What?" *The Washington Post*, 29 Sept. 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/09/29/prime-minister-modi-india-donald-trump-addressed-huge-houston-rally-who-was-signaling-what/.

the host countries but could be a double-edged sword, as it risks internationalizing domestic political issues, such as India's ongoing challenges with Canada regarding Khalistan. Much of the Indian diaspora in the West is concentrated in the Anglosphere. But the Indian diaspora is beginning to grow in Europe as well. Given the controversial nature of European domestic politics on immigration, India and Europe are well advised to recognize the dangers, and manage the issues before they become toxic and prevent the positive possibilities for diasporic links.

As Indian foreign policy turns nimbler, adaptive, and outcome-seeking, PM Modi has increasingly chosen a personalized approach to manage contradictions in bilateral relations and international politics. With the induction of a new coalition government in Delhi, Indian foreign policy may see new elements and adaptations. The new government's emphasis on 'continuity' indicates confidence in the current trajectory of Indian foreign policy. Simultaneously, however, Delhi is also aware that global peace and stability will be severely tested in the coming years and that India will have to remain open to the prospect of unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities.

INDIA'S CHANGING APPROACH TO EUROPE

One of the significant shifts in India's foreign policy in the decade since 2014 has been the conscious elevation of Europe, including the United Kingdom, to a higher strategic priority. This elevated profile for Europe has been long overdue. The tectonic shifts in great power relations have compelled India and Europe to reconnect. While Europe enables India to diversify its defense imports, India can help Europe diversify its foreign trade. In this process, both sides enhance each other's leverage vis-à-vis other powers and infuse greater flexibility in an increasingly bifurcating world order. India is increasingly recognizing that Europe is a continent of diverse regions. Even as it learns the art of engaging Brussels, Delhi has stepped up its outreach to the Nordics and Baltics, the Visegrad Group, and the EuroMed region.

When the Narendra Modi government took charge in May 2014, its European relations were in a deadlock due to the collapse of free trade talks, absence of annual summits, and a major dispute with Italy—a critical European power—over the arrest of its marines following a shooting incident involving Indian nationals off the coast of Kerala in early 2012.⁸ During its first term, the Modi government decisively resolved the issue. The transformation of Delhi's bilateral relations with Rome has been emblematic of the more expansive and purposeful Indian engagement with Europe. This was reflected in the intensity of high-level engagement between India and Europe. During his tenure as PM since 2014, Modi traveled 27 times to Europe and re-

ceived 37 European heads of state and government. Since he became foreign minister in 2019, Jaishankar traveled to Europe 29 times and received 36 of his European counterparts in Delhi. Focusing on resolving long-standing irritants with vital bilateral partners and sustained high-level engagement saw unprecedented forward movement in India's relations with Europe in various areas, including the economic and security domains.

The acceleration of bilateral ties is visible in three broad domains—geopolitical, economic, and technological. On the geopolitical front, India discarded its historic hesitations about working with "Colonial European Powers" to shape regional security. As it seeks to cope with the structural changes in the Asian balance of power driven by China's rise, Delhi is now ready to engage with the European powers in a different post-colonial perspective on regional security. In opposition to China's slogan of 'Asia for Asians', Delhi has on various occasions emphasized its vision of a more inclusive regional order that includes roles for former colonial powers as well as the US.⁹

This is also reflected in the transformation of India's bilateral relations with Germany, Italy, France, and Britain, under PM Modi. Germany has emerged as a significant defense partner in its own right, as well as India's largest trade partner.¹⁰ The Comprehensive Partnership on Migration and Mobility has facilitated more accessible travel for research, study, and work, enhancing people-to-people connections.¹¹ Germany's assistance in renewable energy includes plans for a green hydrogen center in India underscoring its commitment to sustainable energy solutions. Defense cooperation has also deepened with discussions on constructing advanced diesel-electric submarines.¹² Nine key agreements were signed during the 6th Indo-German Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC) in 2023.¹³ The Green and Sustainable Development Partnership is notable, with

⁸ "Explained: What Is the Italian Marines Case?" *The Indian Express*, 10 Apr. 2021, indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-the-italian-marines-case-7266450/.

⁹ "Remarks by External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar at the launch of Asia Society Policy Institute." Ministry of External Affairs, 29 August 2022, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/35662/>.

¹⁰ "Germany Fully Backs Submarine Negotiations with India, Wants to Offer Military Cooperation Alternatives to New Delhi: German Envoy." *The Economic Times*, 9 Apr. 2024, economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/germany-fully-backs-submarine-negotiations-with-india-wants-to-offer-military-cooperation-alternatives-to-new-delhi-german-envoy/articleshow/109161107.cms?from=mdr. Accessed 28 June 2024.

¹¹ "Signing of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership" Ministry of External Affairs, 5 December 2022, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/35945/Signing_of_Agreement_between_the_Government_of_the_Republic_of_India_and_the_Government_of_the_Federal_Republic_of_Germany_on_a_Comprehensive_Migration.

¹² Peri, Dinakar. "Field Evaluation of Bids for Navy's Mega Submarine Deal Underway; German Govt. To Acquire Stake in TKMS." *The Hindu*, 5 May 2024, www.thehindu.com/news/national/field-evaluation-of-bids-for-navys-mega-submarine-deal-underway-german-govt-to-acquire-stake-in-tkms/article68142895.ece. Accessed 28 June 2024.

¹³ "Joint Statement: 6th India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations" Ministry of External Affairs, 2 May 2022, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/35251/Joint_Statement_6th_IndiaGermany_InterGovernmental_Consultations.

Germany committing EUR 10 billion in development aid until 2030.¹⁴ Other agreements cover joint programs in third countries and specialized training for Indian executives, emphasizing comprehensive development and strategic collaboration. Initiatives like the Joint Declaration on Forest Landscape Restoration and the Indo-German Green Hydrogen Task Force highlight a strong focus on climate action.¹⁵ These agreements and initiatives reflect a multifaceted partnership, positioning India and Germany as key collaborators in addressing global challenges and fostering mutual growth.

On the economic front, India and the EU resumed trade talks in 2022 after Brussels had suspended them in 2013. India signed a trade and investment agreement with EFTA in March 2024 that showcases the possibilities for reimaging the economic ties between India and Europe.¹⁶ An India-EU FTA will be the most significant development in relations. However, there remain wide gaps in the positions and preferences of each side – partly explained by contrasting socio-developmental conditions in both societies. India would prefer a more ‘shallow’ and sequential approach centering on services, goods, and mobility for Indian professionals and investments. On the other hand, Europe has adopted a much more ambitious ‘deep’ approach based on aligning policies on investments, competition, and intellectual property rights. Eventually, both sides must balance these two opposing approaches for mutual benefit.

The steady expansion of the bilateral engagement has not eliminated significant differences between India and Europe. This divergence has become sharper in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Many European leaders have been strongly critical of India’s reluctance to criticize Moscow’s aggression, Delhi’s unwillingness to stand up to the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine, and its readiness to purchase large quantities of oil from Russia at a time when the West was trying to isolate Moscow in the global economy.¹⁷ India has been wary of Europe’s insouciance towards Beijing’s encroachment in Asia and China’s assertiveness towards its neighbors. Sitting where they are, India and Europe unsurprisingly have a different appreciation of the challenges presented by Russia and China. Managing this divergence in the days ahead would be a significant task for both sides.

NEW TERMS OF EUROPE-INDIA ENGAGEMENT

India and the EU have often been described as two ‘Unions of diversity’, with both having a key stake in helping maintain a multipolar balance of power in Asia and upholding the rules-based international order centered on the protection of territorial integrity and national sovereignty. As enunciated by PM Modi, Europe has an opportunity to play a crucial role in helping India achieve its objective of becoming a developed state by 2047. India, on the other hand, can contribute to the continuing growth and dynamism of Europe. To get there, though, India and Europe need to define new terms of engagement that are in tune with new realities and emerging possibilities.

This also applies to India and Germany, the world’s third and fifth largest economies, as well as key actors in Asia and Europe respectively. However, both India and Germany have been termed ‘reluctant powers’, hesitating to take leadership on regional and global issues. That is beginning to change as Delhi and Berlin confront new geopolitical imperatives that are pushing them out of their familiar political comfort zones. The reality of Chinese and Russian geopolitical assertion and the potential dangers of American isolationism, demand that Delhi and Berlin take larger responsibilities for the security and prosperity of Europe and Asia. The unique legacies of German and Indian relations with Russia and China offer interesting avenues for Indo-German and Indo-European strategic cooperation. The search for new terms of engagement could begin with the recognition that the war in Ukraine offers an opportunity for a comprehensive overhaul of the relationship. Although the conflict in Ukraine has sharpened the disagreements between India and Europe, it has also compelled the two sides to reassess and better understand each other. Five key/broad issues stand out.

AMERICAN CENTRALITY

Today, Delhi has a solid partnership with Washington, an essential change from the Cold War and provides a more favorable environment for engagement between India and Europe. Although both have concerns about potential swings in US domestic politics, both recognize the US’ centrality in shaping the balance of power in Europe and Asia. Both Europe and India recognize that maintaining America’s involvement is crucial for their security, especially now amid the deepening partnership without limits between Russia and China. Yet, both recognize the value of strategic autonomy and understand that they cannot indefinitely depend on the goodwill of US taxpayers or the internationalist commitments of the foreign policy elite. As they develop their own capabilities, India and Europe must respond to the imperative of creating deeper ties between themselves. A strategic partnership between Europe and India would rest on three pillars: ongoing bilateral and security cooperation with the US, greater individual contributions to regional stability and prosperity, and enhanced bilateral cooperation between Europe and India.

¹⁴ Asit Ranjan Mishra. “Germany Commits 10 Billion Euros for Green Projects in India by 2030.” *Business Standard*, 2 May 2022, www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/germany-commits-10-billion-euros-for-green-projects-in-india-by-2030-122050201117_1.html. Accessed 28 June 2024.

¹⁵ “Joint Declaration of Intent on Forest Landscape Restoration between India and Germany Signed Virtually.” *Pib.gov.in*, 2022, pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1822121. Accessed 28 June 2024.

¹⁶ “India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement.” *Pib.gov.in*, pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=2013169.

¹⁷ “Row over Russian Energy Sanctions Gatecrashes EU-India Summit.” *POLITICO*, 16 May 2023, www.politico.eu/article/eu-india-summit-russia-oil-sanctions-subrahmanyam-jaishankar/.

INDIA AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

Europe finds it quite baffling that India is reluctant to condemn Russia's brazen violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and President Putin's claim that Ukraine has no right to exist as a nation. Delhi's unwillingness is rooted in several factors: the historical memory of Soviet support for Indian liberation from European colonialism, Moscow's role in blocking proposed resolutions in Kashmir under the UN umbrella, its past policy of balancing China in Asia, and its emergence as a reliable supplier of advanced weapons. While the past hangs over India's relationship with Russia, India recognizes that its future is with the West and is gradually navigating a 'managed decline' in its relationship with Russia.

While Europe needs to understand the unique context of Delhi's ties with Moscow, India must be sensitive to the history of Russian imperial expansion in Europe and the enduring fears it generates among the smaller countries on its Western periphery. Similarly, Delhi needs to appreciate the unique dynamic that governs post-war Russo-German ties and the multiple lines of European thinking on the future of the Russian question. Developing a greater appreciation of the history and current dynamic of European geopolitics cannot be an abstract question for Indian grand strategy. It is about reclaiming India's history of contributing to European security. Indian troops played a crucial role in the First and Second World Wars. As India rises, it cannot continue to view European security solely through the Russian lens; it needs to develop greater engagement with European security institutions. Moscow, after all, does not view Asia through an Indian lens.

EUROPE AND ASIAN SECURITY

While India may have a blind spot when it comes to the Russia problem, Europe shares a similar reluctance to confront Chinese encroachment in Asia and its surrounding waters. As in the Indian case, there are reasonable explanations for Europe's inability to respond to the China challenge. Four decades of intense economic cooperation have made China a significant market for the European industry. Disentangling this relationship is not going to be easy. China has invested heavily in diplomatic efforts to engage Europe over the past several decades, more so than any other Asian country, resulting in significant political goodwill for Beijing. Despite the power of the Chinese market and the political links built over time, Europe has begun to rethink its China policy. With encouragement from the US, Europe is also considering raising its security profile in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Skeptics point to the importance of Ukraine and question Europe's ability to make a big military difference to the Asian balance of power. However, Europe's normative power, diplomatic weight, and military-industrial capability will make, from an Indian perspective, an important contribution to managing China's expansionism in Asia. India would welcome a greater European role in Asia, considering the magnitude of the challenge posed by Beijing's alternative vision of a global order.

EURASIA AND ITS WATERS

Europe's engagement with Asian geopolitics and India's engagement with European security provide a much-needed response to the growing Sino-Russian continental axis. For too long, European and Asian theatres were seen as separate even though a dynamic economic and military interaction existed between Europe and Asia during the colonial era. While the colonial context casts a negative shadow over that history, it is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness of these regions. Today, Europe and Asia can work together in a new compact based on mutual respect and reciprocal benefit. We are seeing the growing impact of Asia on European geopolitics. Besides China's growing influence, South Korea has become an exciting source of arms supply to Poland and Ukraine. North Korea and Iran, too, have become essential players in the Ukraine conflict. The so-called AP4—Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea—have become regular invitees to the NATO summits since 2022.

Europe can play a crucial role in enhancing the national capabilities of Asian countries, helping them resist China's bullying and defend their sovereignty. This is especially relevant to India, which is confronting China in the Himalayas and aims to decrease its historical reliance on Russian weaponry for defense. France and other European states have long sold arms to India. Today, there is an opportunity for a significant European contribution to modernize India's defense industrial base. India, too, contributes to the European effort to accelerate the production of much-needed war material that is in short supply. The Trade and Technology Council, announced in April 2022, could become the principal vehicle for boosting high-technology cooperation between the two sides. India's large engineering talent pool could play an essential part in revitalizing the technology sector in Europe which is lagging behind the US. Given the challenges posed by the immigration crisis, India and Europe need clear frameworks to promote legal skilled migration while addressing illegal movement.

Today, the Western Indian Ocean, including Africa and the Middle East, is ripe for greater regional security cooperation between India and Europe. The IMEC initiative announced the opening of the door to new connectivity initiatives between India and Europe via the Middle East at the G-20 summit in Delhi in September 2023. Small steps are also being taken to develop joint projects in Africa between India and European states. All these developments point to the changing imagination of spatial and strategic connectivity between India, Europe, and the regions between them.

LIKE-MINDED COALITIONS

Multilateralism has been the anthem of the European Union, which overcame the bitter history of contested sovereignties on the old continent. Among all the prominent global actors, the EU has been the most active champion of

multilateralism, and it has acquired great depth and breadth in the post-Cold War decades. Yet, it is becoming increasingly clear that the multilateral order—economic, political, and security—that emerged after the Cold War is under stress. Domestic developments in the US and China and their economic contestation have put the future of the WTO under a dark cloud. The territorial expansions of Russia and China, which disregards the UN Charter's fundamental principle of respecting territorial sovereignty from an Indian perspective, have rendered the UNSC less effective in managing global security. Like Europe, India has also been a significant votary of multilateralism since independence. But the nation-building imperatives of India and the post-modern multilateralism of Europe have often clashed. There have been instances of cooperation, such as between India and Germany, in efforts to expand the UNSC. However, these efforts were unsuccessful, and it is unlikely that the major powers will reach an agreement on such a significant transformation.

However, India and Europe could better spend their energies building like-minded coalitions to address global challenges. Although these institutions cannot replace genuine multilateralism, they can serve as valuable tools until we can find ways to end great power rivalry and restore the centrality of multilateral institutions. The US has increasingly turned to these coalitions and unilateral institutions. India, traditionally reluctant to join such institutions, is now participating in many of them led by the US. Besides the Quad focusing on the Indo-Pacific order, India is now part of the Mineral Security Partnership (MSP), the Artemis Accords, and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) – all geared to improve multilateral cooperation addressing threats from emerging technology sectors such as critical minerals supply chain resilience, outer space, and Artificial Intelligence.

Europe is part of all three of the above. India is also regular invitee to the annual summits of the Group of Seven. Although the gap on global issues is large between India and the rest in the G-7, integrating India into the apex structure will help US and Europe lend legitimacy to this presumed global directorate of the West. For Delhi, gaining an immediate say in the management of the global order through these like-minded coalitions is more important than waiting for the day when India becomes a permanent member of the UNSC.

Together these five themes provide a solid new basis for engagement between a new India and a changing Europe.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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IMPRINT

Publisher:
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e. V.
Godesberger Allee 149 | 53175 Bonn | Germany
Email: info@fes.de

Issuing Department:
Division for International Cooperation
Department for Asia and the Pacific

Responsibility for content and editing:
Martin Mader, India Desk,
Division for International Cooperation
Phone: +49-30-269-35-7450
<https://www.fes.de/referat-asien-und-pazifik>

Design: pertext, Berlin | www.pertext.de

Contact:
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ISBN 978-3-98628-590-6

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