Alteration in India’s Foreign Policy

What is the issue?

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- In recent times India is trying to recalibrate its relation with global economic powers.
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- But India approach with US relations is not quite balancing out.
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What are the recent events on Indo-US relations?

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- India in the Shangri-La Dialogue spoke of India and the U.S.’s “shared vision” of an open and secure Indo-Pacific region.
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- But India’s views differed so much from US, which seemed clear that New Delhi and Washington no longer see eye-to-eye on this issue, and several others as well.
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- India referred to the Indo-Pacific, a term coined by the U.S. for the Indian and Pacific Oceans region, as a natural geographical region, not a strategic one.
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- US called the Indo-Pacific a “priority theatre” and a “subset of [America’s] broader security strategy” for his military command, now renamed the Indo-Pacific Command.
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What foreign policy priorities of India concerns US?

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- India maintains good relation with the U.S., Russia and China in equal measure.
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- Where USA vowed to counter China's moves in the Indo-Pacific, and U.S. National Defence Strategy puts both China and Russia in its crosshairs as the world's two "revisionist powers".
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- A year ago, India seemed clear in its intention to counter China's growing clout in its neighbourhood, especially post-Doklam, challenge the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and back a Quadrilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Japan and Australia to maintain an open Indo-Pacific.
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- But India's stand has changed in recent times as the Doklam issue has been buried, the BRI isn't as much a concern as before.
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- The government's non-confrontational attitude to the Maldives and Nepal also indicates a softened policy on China in the neighbourhood.
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- Recently India also rejected an Australian request to join maritime exercises along with the U.S. and Japan.
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- Contrast to this is India's acceptance of military exercises with countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Russia-China led grouping.
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What will be implications of India's policy?

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- US had come to accept India's diffidence on signing outstanding India-U.S. foundational agreements.
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- US has now confused as India publicly enters the international arena in the corner with Russia and China, while proclaiming its intention to continue energy deals with Iran and Venezuela in defiance of American sanctions.
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- Trade protectionism is clearly the other big point of divergence between India and the U.S., which have in recent months taken each other to the

World Trade Organisation on several issues.
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- There has been a surge in disputes between the two countries on the new American steel and aluminium tariffs.
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- USA’s actions on CAATSA and Iran nuclear deal have also had a direct impact on India, given its high dependence on defence hardware from Russia and its considerable energy interests in Iran.
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Source: The Hindu

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