India’s Non-Alignment in Multipolar World

What is the issue?

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- United States agreed to grant India a special waiver from the trade sanctions on Iran.
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- This instance is seen has a victory for India’s skillful policy of non-alignment in the times of multipolar world.
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What is India’s deft diplomacy about?

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- Indian foreign policy has been primarily non-aligned in character.
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- During the Cold War, when the international system was largely bipolar in nature, India’s skillful diplomacy made sure that it doesn’t get trapped into the bipolar geopolitics.
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- As a solution, the Non-Alignment Movement was conceptualized in which India was one of the leaders.
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- India has always refrained from choosing or aligning completely with one side or the other.
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- This gave India a much-needed maneuvering capability to build strong ties with almost all major powers in the international system.
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- For instance, recently both the US and Iran were looking for India’s support during their tussle after the scrapping of the Iran Nuclear deal by the Trump administration. India for its part refused to choose sides.
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What multipolar world expect from India?

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- The international system today is vastly different from what it used to be back in the Cold War period.
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- Post-Cold War, when the international system has become multipolar, the relevance of India’s non-aligned credentials have come under question.
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- The global community expects India to take strong stands on global issues (often third-party issues), and even choose sides if needed.
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- The great powers like the US and Russia don’t want India to have the luxury of maneuvering itself in global politics.
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What is the significance of India’s diplomacy?

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- Indo-US diplomatic relations are in a tense situation due to India’s refusal to bring down its Iranian oil imports to zero.
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- Amidst of these tensions India managed to win its stand over the Iran’s Chabahar port, by protecting its own sovereignty, Click here to know more.
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- India has always carved out a middle path (‘madhyam marg’) for itself and has avoided getting into the ‘Us vs Them’ debate.
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- This can be seen through many examples, be it choosing between the US and Russia, Israel and Palestine, or Saudi Arabia and Iran. India’s track record has been to keep itself out of a position where it has to choose sides.
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What are the doubts prevailing on India’s diplomacy?

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- When a country’s power and reputation rises in the international order, the international community starts expecting differently from that state and wants it to assume greater responsibility.
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- Till now, Indian diplomacy has been fairly successful in doing that but the question is for how long can India continue to move on this tried and tested path of deft diplomacy.
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- The question about India’s foreign policy framework is whether the path of non-alignment was taken out of a conscious ‘choice’ or out of ‘necessity’ to balance the bipolarity of the Cold War politics with the US on one side and Soviet Union on the other.
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- Many experts on international relations consider the non-theorization of non-alignment policy as a missed opportunity on India’s part as it would have solidified the Indian foreign policy even more concretely as well as making it well-defined and nuanced.
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- Apart from this the question before India’s foreign policy makers is whether non-alignment is serving India’s self-interests as the non-alignment policy was product of a particular context and time.
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Source: Financial Express

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