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**Cultural Constructs in Iran–China Relations:  
Reinterpreting Civilizational Commonalities within the framework  
of Constructivism**

*Hossein-Ali Ghobadi*

*Parvin Alipoor*

*Zeinab Saberpour*

**Abstract**

Iran and China, as two ancient and influential civilizations, have maintained deep and enduring cultural ties throughout history. Revisiting these shared cultural foundations offers new opportunities for strategic cultural diplomacy. This study adopts a descriptive–analytical approach based on secondary analysis of written sources to identify and interpret the cultural commonalities between the two nations. The findings categorize these commonalities into three main dimensions: cultural elements, shared mythologies, and ritual practices. When activated through intercultural engagement, these components can foster shared identities and redefine mutual interests. The conceptual model proposed in this research, grounded in constructivist theory, outlines how cultural commonalities serve not merely as historical parallels but as dynamic tools for building future convergence. In this framework, culture is not a passive reflection of the past but an active instrument for shaping strategic cooperation. These shared cultural constructs, when mobilized through sustained intercultural communication, can become powerful assets in advancing mutual understanding, trust, and long-term collaboration between Iran and China.

**Keywords**

Intercultural Communication, Constructivism, Iran, China, Cultural Elements, Mythology, Rituals

## **Introduction**

Everyone acknowledges that cultural commonalities between countries are generally deeper and more enduring than communications, political alignments, economic relations, and international agreements, and are linked to humanity, fundamental interests, and human refinement, and can lead to double synergies in various fields and bring about common interests between countries in many areas. Iran and China are each considered to be the embodiment of a great and ancient civilization.

Both nations have been the origin of many scientific discoveries and inventions. While the Chinese invented paper, silk, printing, the compass, and gunpowder, the Iranians invented refrigeration, sulfuric acid, and the qanat (water supply system), all of which have developed and influenced a large part of our contemporary lives. Thus, the achievements of both Chinese and Iranian civilizations have accelerated the advancement of science and technology. Both nations consider their historical monuments and cultural heritage to be an inseparable part of their culture, as these ancient structures represent their identity, history, and connection to the past.

Paying attention to the role of culture in international relations and considering the realities of contemporary international relations, including in the upstream documents of the two countries and the long-term memorandum of understanding concluded between Iran and China, it is necessary to recognize and explain the components and elements of the cultural commonalities of the two nations. In this regard, the main question of the research is: What are the cultural commonalities of Iran and China? And what cultural conceptual structure can these commonalities form and what interpretations of these commonalities can be made within the framework of the theory of constructivism?

## **Methodology**

The present study is descriptive-analytical and based on a systematic review of written sources and documents (secondary analysis). This approach is based on the collection and critical analysis of data

previously collected by other researchers in the fields of history, comparative anthropology, and international relations. Methodological steps: 1) Identifying keywords: focusing on “cultural commonalities,” “Iran and China,” “Silk Road,” “structuralism,” and “cultural diplomacy”; 2) Extracting common themes: reviewing scientific articles, reference books, and diplomatic reports to extract repetitive and overlapping cultural elements; 3) Analytical categorization: organizing findings into three main components (elements, myths, rituals) to avoid fragmentation and achieve a single conceptual structure; and 4) Structural analysis: interpreting findings based on the assumption that cultural commonalities strengthen shared identities and provide the basis for positive interactions.

## **Findings**

Although the relations between the two great civilizations of Iran and China were comprehensive and extensive, their cultural relations were formed in the form of religions and sects, and the most lasting goods exchanged between the two nations are cultural and religious exchanges. The remaining works of the Nestorian, Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Manichaean religions, and most importantly, the religion of Islam, which was introduced and spread in China by Iranian merchants and religious missionaries without resorting to direct propaganda and attracted millions of Chinese to these religions, are evidence of this fact.

Strategic Importance of Cultural Commonalities in Iran-China Relations:

**Stability of Relations:** These commonalities create bonds that are deeper and more enduring than short-term political or economic understandings. As Ibn Battuta noted in his travelogue regarding the hospitality of China's ruler toward Muslims, these ancient values form the foundation of long-term relations.

**Diplomatic Capital:** Shared roots in mythology (such as the Golden Age) and rituals (Nowruz and the Spring Festival) provide both countries

with immense cultural capital. This can serve as a model for cultural diplomacy among Eastern civilizations on the international stage.

According to the findings, the components of Iran-China cultural commonalities include elements, myths, and rituals. This triad alone constitutes merely a list of similarities. However, what transforms these components into a strategic force is the conceptual construct of "**intercultural communication**," which has been shaped through the continuous interaction of these elements throughout history.

This intercultural communication operates on two levels:

1. **The Subconscious Level:** Individuals with similar cultural backgrounds (e.g., the importance of respecting teachers) experience fewer misunderstandings in their initial interactions. This reduces "**communication pressure**."
2. **The Conscious Level:** Diplomats and policymakers can consciously highlight these commonalities (e.g., in Nowruz ceremonies or cultural events related to the Silk Road) to strengthen the foundations of trust.

Thus, the shared heritage creates a conceptual construct wherein the two nations are perceived not only as trade partners but as "**civilizational family**." This provides a foundation for stability in shared interests when facing changes in the international environment.

## **Conclusion**

the conclusion of the research is based on the principle that recognition and introduction of the cultural commonalities between Iran and China to Iranians, Chinese people is of great importance. This is one of the most essential prerequisites for establishing stable and fruitful relations between the two countries. The main challenge, however, is the lack of perceived need for such understanding, as well as the disinterest among the people of both countries in gaining a better, more accurate, and deeper knowledge of each other's lands, peoples, and cultures. This seems to be directly linked to the negative cultural

perceptions and attitudes shaped by western media influences toward one another.

. To overcome this problem and transform the common heritage into a “living heritage”, the following measures are necessary:

- 1) Official and popular institution-building: Establishing coherent international coordination mechanisms to protect this heritage. Strengthening multi-layered cultural diplomacy (official, popular, scientific and media) should be prioritized.
- 2) Education and awareness-raising: The necessity of increasing the awareness of local communities, especially the younger generation of Iranian and Chinese, of this common heritage through joint curricula and the use of modern media capacities.
- 3) Developing joint research: Conducting joint expert and scientific research to more accurately identify other dimensions of these commonalities, especially in the field of philosophy and practical ethics (such as the common emphasis on “keeping one’s promise” in Confucian thought and Islamic texts).

By actively utilizing these cultural capacities, Iran-China relations can go beyond mere economic-security cooperation and become a sustainable model of civilizational synergy in the global multilateral system.

# **The Status of Strategic Cooperation in China's Economic Diplomacy: A Case Study of Iran**

*Friborz Arghavani  
Morteza Esmaili  
Abolfazl Habibabadi*

## **Abstract**

After the 1990s, with the expansion of globalization and interdependence between countries, one of the key features in China's foreign policy has been the development of relations through economic diplomacy, with a focus on strategic cooperation. The present study, while analyzing and evaluating China's economic diplomacy through strategic cooperation, evaluating the various levels of China's strategic cooperation, and conducting a case study of this country's strategic cooperation with Iran within the framework of the 25-year agreement, seeks to answer the question of Why China pursues its economic expansion and development in the form of economic diplomacy through strategic cooperation? The research hypothesis is articulated as follows: the multiple tiers present in strategic cooperation not only provide China with the opportunity to assess the economic and political capacities of its counterpart for long-term collaboration but also, by fostering mutual interdependence with the target country, lead to that country being defined and institutionalized within the framework of China's international political-economic objectives—namely, enhancing its position within the international power structure and balancing against the West—over the long term. Accordingly, the findings of this research indicate that Beijing seeks to leverage strategic cooperation to achieve political weight commensurate with its economic weight. By pursuing various levels of strategic cooperation within the framework of interdependence, Beijing, in addition to utilizing Iran's economic and political capacities for long-term cooperation, has sought to benefit from Iran's position within the context of its international political economy goals by fostering interdependence.

## **Keywords**

Iran, China, Economic Diplomacy, Interdependence, Strategic Cooperation

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

The contemporary international system, following extensive structural and functional developments since the end of the Cold War, has undergone profound transformations in various dimensions of relations between states and non-state actors. Globalization and the unprecedented increase in interdependence have transformed the nature of power and the means of exerting influence, leading to a shift from traditional diplomacy, which primarily focused on political-military dimensions, to more comprehensive approaches, including economic diplomacy. Unlike traditional powers that often seek to create military alliances and geopolitical competition, China is not inclined to participate in regional or trans-regional military arrangements, but it strongly welcomes active cooperation in international economic arrangements and institutions. In this new era, the concept of "partnership" has become the core of Chinese diplomacy. The "strategic partnership" model, first concluded with Brazil in 1993, has shaped the essence of Chinese diplomacy by emphasizing the creation of a broad network of relationships based on "seeking common ground while preserving differences." This approach allows China to cooperate with various countries, regardless of ideological or political differences, based on common interests. Based on what has been stated, this article seeks to answer the question of why China pursues economic expansion and development through strategic economic diplomacy. This article claims that the various levels of strategic cooperation, while providing China with the opportunity to assess the economic and political capacities of the other party for long-term cooperation, cause that country to be defined and institutionalized in the long-term system of China's international political economy goals (promotion within the framework of international power and balance against the West).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Given the importance of interdependence in the era of globalization, strategic partnerships and cooperation can serve as a platform for creating and consolidating it. Contrary to the security nature of strategic cooperation during the Cold War, in the modern era, due to the

globalization of the economy, the importance of thematic components, the prominence of the role of non-state actors, and more importantly, the prioritization of welfare and economic growth in foreign policy, governments are trying to pursue and achieve economic growth and development within the framework of strategic cooperation. Therefore, the three concepts of "globalization", "interdependence", and "strategic cooperation" are an appropriate conceptual framework for analyzing strategic cooperation in China's economic diplomacy, including the twenty-five-year agreement with Tehran.

In this regard, the present study, drawing on the theory of interdependence, examines the role of strategic cooperation in China's economic diplomacy, using Iran as a case study. This theory, developed by thinkers such as Robert Cohen and Joseph Nye, provides a powerful analytical tool for understanding the complexities of international relations in the contemporary era, particularly amid globalization and the growing economic, social, and cultural ties between countries.

## **Method**

The present study, emphasizing China's economic diplomacy through the partnership and cooperation model, examines the country's strategic agreement with Iran from the perspectives of Chinese motivations and influential factors, as well as the importance of Iranian national interests. This study examines how China's strategic cooperation, by fostering interdependence, enables Beijing to advance its international political economy goals and strengthen its position in the global order.

## **Findings**

The findings of this analysis show that China's economic diplomacy serves as the backbone of its foreign policy, advancing its economic expansion and development through a broad network of strategic partnerships worldwide. This clever strategy has allowed Beijing to reclaim its historical, economic, and political position in the international system while avoiding direct confrontation and costly friction with major powers, especially the United States. This approach allows China to

expand its influence smoothly and sustainably and to secure its economic interests worldwide without entering traditional military alliances that often entail defense commitments and geopolitical constraints. Beijing uses a variety of sophisticated economic diplomacy tools, such as expanding trade, encouraging foreign direct investment, providing development loans and aid, and especially the massive and ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, to attract target countries into its sphere of influence by creating economic interdependence. This interdependence not only helps China secure its energy and raw materials needs, but also increasingly increases its political influence in these regions, as dependent countries are less likely to take hostile actions or oppose China's strategic interests.

Regarding the case study of Iran, the findings clearly show that China pursues multiple economic and political interests in a long-term strategic partnership with Iran. From an economic perspective, Iran is of particular importance to China due to its vast energy reserves (oil and gas) as well as its strategic geopolitical location on global trade routes (especially in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative). The agreement will enable China to maintain long-term, stable access to Iranian energy resources amid global competition. Politically, Iran is important to Beijing as a potential partner in countering the West's unilateral influence and in strengthening the multipolar order in the international system. The 25-year Iran-China agreement is a concrete and important symbol of this strategic partnership through which Beijing seeks to build interdependence with Iran. The agreement provides new opportunities for both countries: Iran can access the investment and technology needed for development, and China can ensure energy security and access to new markets. But at the same time, this cooperation could lead to Iran's asymmetrical dependence on China, leaving it more vulnerable to Chinese influence.

## **Conclusion**

Beijing seeks to bring about structural and substantive changes in its foreign policy through strategic partnerships and smart economic diplomacy. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to gain political weight in the global equation that matches its growing economic

weight. This approach enables Beijing to play a prominent role in the international system as a responsible great power and to pursue its international political economy goals in light of its increasing international power and its counterbalance to the West. This indicates that China is shaping a new model of global influence, one built on economic ties, mutual interdependence, and strategic cooperation, rather than on coercion and military confrontation.

# **A Prospective Analysis of China's Strategy in Afghanistan after the 12-Day War**

*Behnam Sarkheil*

## **Abstract**

The Twelve-Day War between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel in June 2025 triggered a major transformation in the geopolitical and security order of West Asia. While the conflict was short in duration, its strategic implications were far-reaching, reshaping the balance of power among regional and extra-regional actors. For China, which had pursued a cautious, non-interventionist policy toward Afghanistan since 2001, the post-war context created a new set of challenges and opportunities. The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in 2021 had initially offered Beijing a chance to expand its economic presence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, the growing instability of the Taliban regime, the resurgence of extremist groups such as ISIS-Khorasan, and renewed U.S. interest in regaining a foothold in the region—exemplified by recent statements by Donald Trump about reclaiming the Bagram Air Base—have compelled China to reconsider its regional strategy. This research investigates how China might redefine its Afghan policy in the two-to-five-year horizon following the 2025 war, and how these transformations could influence the emerging regional security architecture.

## **Keywords**

Afghanistan, America, Iran, 12-Day War, China, Security Diplomacy.

## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

The Twelve-Day War between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel in June 2025 triggered a major transformation in the geopolitical and security order of West Asia. While the conflict was short in duration, its strategic implications were far-reaching, reshaping the balance of power among regional and extra-regional actors. For China, which had pursued a cautious, non-interventionist policy toward Afghanistan since 2001, the post-war context created a new set of challenges and opportunities. The withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan in 2021 had initially offered Beijing a chance to expand its economic presence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, the growing instability of the Taliban regime, the resurgence of extremist groups such as ISIS-Khorasan, and renewed U.S. interest in regaining a foothold in the region—exemplified by recent statements by Donald Trump about reclaiming the Bagram Air Base—have compelled China to reconsider its regional strategy. This research investigates how China might redefine its Afghan policy in the two-to-five-year horizon following the 2025 war, and how these transformations could influence the emerging regional security architecture.

### Literature Review

The academic literature on China's engagement in Afghanistan has mostly concentrated on earlier periods, particularly before the Taliban's return to power in 2021. Scholars such as **Shafiee & Salehi (2016)** examined the "neighborhood diplomacy" of China based on realist assumptions but paid limited attention to its long-term strategic evolution. **Sajjadi & Momeni (2024)** explored the political economy of Chinese investments, notably in the Aynak Copper Mine, yet without integrating security dimensions. **Safavi et al. (2024)** analyzed China's broader geopolitical posture in West Asia but treated Afghanistan as a peripheral issue. International analyses, including **Rolland (2021)** and **Cheng (2020)**, have emphasized the constraints of the BRI in fragile states but did not anticipate post-war reconfigurations.

This study builds on these contributions but goes beyond them by incorporating *futures studies* and *Regional Security Complex Theory*

(RSCT) proposed by **Buzan & Wæver (2003)**. According to RSCT, clusters of neighboring states form interdependent security systems in which internal instability and external interference are tightly connected. Afghanistan, situated at the intersection of Central, South, and West Asia, constitutes a pivotal link in China's western security complex, directly affecting its domestic stability in Xinjiang and its geoeconomic ambitions across Eurasia.

### **Methodology**

The research adopts a qualitative foresight design that combines content analysis, expert interviews, and scenario building. Eighteen driving forces were first identified from official Chinese documents, think-tank reports (Brookings, Carnegie, Xinhua), and regional policy analyses. Through cross-impact assessment, two key drivers were selected as both *highly uncertain* and *highly influential*:

- (1) the stability of the Taliban regime, and
- (2) the level of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.

These two axes form the basis of a 2×2 scenario matrix, producing four plausible futures that reflect different combinations of domestic order and external intervention. The foresight horizon spans the period from 2025 to 2030, encompassing short- to mid-term developments that could reshape China's approach to security and development in its western periphery.

### **Discussion**

The first scenario, "Taliban Stabilization and Sino-Taliban Convergence," envisions a relatively stable Afghanistan under the Taliban's consolidated rule. With Western disengagement continuing, Beijing deepens its economic and diplomatic engagement, integrates Afghanistan into the Belt and Road network, and pursues limited security cooperation focused on counter-terrorism. This scenario represents the most favorable outcome for China, allowing expansion of its geoeconomic influence and creation of a buffer against Western power projection.

The second scenario, "Structural Instability and Rising Extremism," describes a fragmented Afghanistan where Taliban authority weakens and extremist networks—particularly ISIS-Khorasan—gain ground.

China responds by strengthening border control, increasing intelligence sharing with Pakistan, Iran, and Russia, and emphasizing the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in regional crisis management. In this outcome, Beijing faces growing security costs and diminished economic incentives.

The third scenario, “U.S. Return and New Geopolitical Rivalry,” is rooted in recent political debates within Washington about the need to re-establish a limited military or intelligence presence in Afghanistan. Statements by Donald Trump in September 2025, as well as by Gen. Kenneth McKenzie and former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, have suggested that a partial re-engagement could restore U.S. oversight of counter-terrorism operations and strategic competition with China. In such a case, Beijing perceives renewed Western containment efforts and seeks to counterbalance them by reinforcing cooperation with Russia and Iran, expanding the SCO’s political role, and pursuing “non-military deterrence” through economic and technological means.

The fourth scenario, “Regional Multi-Power Game,” arises when neither the Taliban nor the United States can dominate Afghanistan. Instead, the vacuum invites active involvement by regional powers such as India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Turkey. China must then navigate a complex web of rivalries, adopting a flexible multilateral diplomacy to protect its interests. Although this scenario preserves limited Chinese influence, it significantly raises the costs of engagement and the risk of entanglement in regional disputes.

Together, these scenarios illustrate China’s gradual transition from a *cautious observer* to an *adaptive regional actor* seeking to construct a self-sustaining “periphery stability loop.” The analysis also highlights the interdependence between China’s internal security (especially in Xinjiang) and external strategy, emphasizing that the Afghan theater functions simultaneously as a geopolitical buffer and as a testing ground for China’s emerging model of regional governance.

## **Conclusion**

The foresight analysis concludes that the post-2025 regional order will push China toward a more proactive and multidimensional approach to

Afghanistan. Beijing's evolving strategy combines economic diplomacy, regional security cooperation, and soft-power outreach to mitigate risks emanating from instability and Western re-entry. Each of the four scenarios entails distinct policy implications: the first offers the highest economic rewards; the second imposes the greatest security burdens; the third signals renewed global rivalry; and the fourth reflects the reality of multipolar contestation.

For Iran, China's expanding footprint presents a dual challenge: while it opens opportunities for joint connectivity projects and counter-terrorism collaboration, it may also marginalize Iran's role in trans-Eurasian corridors. Hence, Tehran's optimal response lies in strategic diversification—maintaining partnership with China while simultaneously engaging India, Russia, and Central Asian states.

In summary, China's future policy in Afghanistan after the Twelve-Day War will not evolve linearly but through dynamic adaptation to uncertain conditions. The interaction between Taliban stability and U.S. involvement will remain the critical determinant shaping both Beijing's behavior and the broader architecture of regional security in Asia.

# **Geo-Economics Fragmentation and its Impact on China's Presence in Afghanistan**

*Bahador Aminian  
Mohammad-Mahdi Ehsantalab  
Amir-Hesam Hashemi*

## **Abstract**

Recent developments in the international system have weakened the process of globalization and given rise to an emerging trend known as “Goeconomics fragmentation.” Goeconomics fragmentation refers to the reversal of global economic integration, in which under the influence of geopolitical rivalries and strategic considerations flows of trade, capital, and supply chains are reoriented toward aligned and regional blocs. Using a descriptive-analytical method and drawing on documentary data and library sources, the present article examines the following question: What impact has global goeconomics fragmentation had on China’s pattern of presence and economic policymaking in Afghanistan? The study’s analytical conclusions show that the effects of this process on the foreign policies of great powers can be assessed through their increasing focus on supply chain security, economic regionalism, and the redefinition of geostrategic interests. Based on the case study, Afghanistan due to its geopolitical position and rich mineral resources has assumed a special place in China’s goeconomics strategy. Compared to the period before the emergence of global goeconomics fragmentation, when China’s foreign policy was centered on developing extra regional economic relations, Beijing now seeks, within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and through strengthening its economic presence in Afghanistan, to simultaneously pursue its security and economic objectives at the regional level. Moreover, China aims to maximize its benefits from the new form of regionalism resulting from global goeconomics fragmentation. Accordingly, its foreign policy pattern in Afghanistan has shifted toward active regionalism, security risks management, increasing goeconomics influence, and integrating Afghanistan into its supply chains and value-creation networks.

## **Keywords**

Geo-economics Fragmentation, Afghanistan, China, Regionalism, Foreign Policy.

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of its political dominance in Central Asia led to the emergence of new states and their increased participation in regional and international affairs. In the new global order based on free markets, economic considerations gained growing importance in the foreign policies of major powers, while the rise of new economic poles pushed the global economy toward multipolarity. Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and security developments in the Middle East heightened global powers' concerns about the security of supply chains and national economic interests, contributing to the rise of economic regionalism and the formation of "geoeconomics fragmentation". Within this context, the present study analyzes the impact of global geoeconomics fragmentation on China's presence in Afghanistan. The main hypothesis is that the intensification of geoeconomics fragmentation has pushed China to place greater emphasis on a geoeconomics approach in its foreign policy particularly through economic securitization, the regionalization of supply chains, and the use of economic instruments to expand its influence in Afghanistan. Owing to its geopolitical location and rich mineral resources, Afghanistan has become more central to China's strategic outlook, and China seeks to establish or stabilize key segments of its vital supply chains in its immediate neighborhood, including Afghanistan, without engaging in direct security confrontation. The innovation of this study lies in using "global geoeconomics fragmentation" as a new theoretical framework for explaining China's behavior in Afghanistan. It demonstrates how the regionalization of supply chains, economic bloc formation, and the securitization of trade have shifted China's pattern of engagement from a purely development-driven and extra regional approach to one shaped by geoeconomics regionalism.

Recent transformations in the global order show that regionalism is entering a new phase known as "new regionalism," a framework characterized by open, flexible cooperation grounded primarily in economic interests but with significant security dimensions. This development is part of a broader transition in which major powers can

no longer manage the international system unilaterally, pushing the world toward “post-hegemonic multilateralism” a multilayered, diverse, and fragmented order in which regional interpretations of global governance gain increasing importance. Within this context, fractures in the global trade system have become evident; the rise of bilateral and regional trade agreements has challenged the centrality of the WTO, although participation in trade negotiations and the variety of issues under discussion have expanded. This situation reflects a broader trend referred to as “geoeconomics fragmentation,” a concept first introduced in the IMF’s 2023 report, describing the shift of economic activity away from global integration toward regionally aligned blocs. Geoeconomics fragmentation is driven by the securitization of economic affairs, strategic rivalry, aspirations for economic autonomy, and concerns about technological dependence. Its consequences include greater uncertainty in global trade, weakened dispute-settlement mechanisms, increased restrictions on foreign investment, and the securitization and reshaping of supply chains. In recent years, intensifying U.S.–China competition has accelerated this process, making FDI flows increasingly dependent on geopolitical alignment and gradually compelling states to choose between the two major powers.

### **Methodology**

The research employs a qualitative methodology, using a descriptive–analytical approach and a case study design, drawing on documentary and library sources, statistical data, and primary materials related to China’s foreign policy.

### **Discussion**

Since the 1970s, under Deng Xiaoping’s leadership, China initiated a new foreign policy path centered on reforms, détente, pragmatism, and the pursuit of national interests. After the Cold War, the failure of the “major power diplomacy” approach led Beijing to rebuild its strategy through the “New Security Concept,” expanded neighborhood diplomacy, and interregional engagement to reduce perceptions of threat and create broader common interests. During this period,

China's foreign policy apparatus became more diversified, with state-owned enterprises, local governments, financial institutions, and major energy companies emerging as influential actors.

The Belt and Road Initiative became the core of China's foreign and development policy, facilitating a shift of geoeconomics power from West to East and expanding China's outward investment. Through this initiative, China seeks a model of economic integration and a more multipolar global order. Its neighborhood policy focuses on maintaining a stable regional environment, advancing the Belt and Road, and building shared interests with neighboring countries. Within this framework, Afghanistan due to its strategic location and rich mineral resources has gained a special place in China's geoeconomics vision and forms part of Beijing's strategy within an increasingly fragmented global order.

With the Taliban's return to power in 2021, China adopted a cautious and pragmatic approach toward Afghanistan. Without formally recognizing the Taliban, Beijing focuses on four main objectives: securing its western border and preventing terrorist threats to Xinjiang, exploring economic opportunities especially in the mining sector, using multilateral mechanisms to manage the Afghan crisis, and maintaining a positive image through limited humanitarian assistance without costly commitments. China views Afghanistan as high-risk yet strategically important, and through multilayered diplomacy, soft influence, and efforts to link Afghanistan to regional projects such as CPEC-Plus, it seeks to maintain stability, expand its regional influence, and access resources without engaging in direct intervention.

After the Doha Agreement, China's engagement with the Taliban increased significantly, and Beijing took a more active role in diplomacy with Afghanistan. China was among the few countries that did not evacuate its embassy after the fall of Kabul in 2021, reflecting the trust built over a decade of quiet diplomacy. The change of power in Afghanistan created new opportunities and challenges for China. Economically, trade between China and Afghanistan has grown considerably in recent years. In September 2025 alone, China's exports to Afghanistan reached \$143 million, a 22.8% increase compared to the previous year, while Afghanistan's exports to China

remained much smaller and were mainly raw materials and agricultural products. China's annual exports to Afghanistan in 2024 were reported at around \$1.54 billion. Afghanistan is also strategically important for China, as Beijing seeks to reduce its dependence on vulnerable maritime routes, especially the Malacca Strait. Overland routes through Afghanistan can help lower China's trade and energy risks. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's need for economic engagement have further facilitated the strengthening of China-Afghanistan geoeconomic ties. With the Taliban's return and the relative stabilization of the country, China has gained greater opportunities for economic and political activity in Afghanistan and has structured its actions accordingly.

Afghanistan holds strategic geoeconomics and geopolitical importance for China. Kabul's integration into the Belt and Road Initiative enables China to create alternative overland routes for energy and trade, reducing dependence on vulnerable maritime routes, particularly the Malacca Strait. China's investments in infrastructure projects, such as the Wakhan Corridor, and in Afghanistan's mineral resources including lithium, copper, and rare earth metals reflect its economic, geoeconomics, and security interests. Afghanistan's mineral wealth, geographic position, and potential as a transit hub make it a strategic partner for China in securing energy, diversifying resources, and strengthening economic influence. The success of this strategy depends on internal stability, border security, and infrastructure development in Afghanistan, requiring active cooperation between China, the Taliban, and other regional actors.

## **Conclusion**

Global geo-economics shifts have transformed the international economic order, leading to a trend of regionalization and strategic supply chain diversification, which China has embraced to reduce dependence on the U.S. and secure its economic interests. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China seeks to control critical supply chains, expand geo-economics influence, and establish shared interests with participating countries while mitigating risks from sanctions and global disruptions

Reduced Western economic engagement with Afghanistan after 2021 has created more space for China's growing role. Within the framework of geo-economics fragmentation, Afghanistan due to its geopolitical location and abundant mineral resources—has gained heightened strategic importance for China. Beijing's involvement in Afghanistan is thus not merely economic; it is part of a broader strategy aimed at strengthening supply-chain resilience, mitigating pressures caused by global economic polarization, and advancing a form of geo-economics regionalism. Consequently, China's expanding presence in Afghanistan represents a component of its emerging architecture of economic security and an effort to secure its position within the fragmented and multilayered global order.

# The United States' Strategic Competition with China, with an Emphasis on Biden's Foreign Policy

*Abbas Talebi  
Mohammad-  
Reza Mousavi*

## **Abstract**

Over the past two decades, the strategic competition between the United States and China has become one of the central topics in the international system. This confrontation has not only encompassed economic, security, technological, and geopolitical dimensions, but has also affected the bilateral relations between the two great powers and the structure of the global order. With the beginning of the Biden presidency in 2021, US foreign policy towards China has undergone changes that have characteristics of both continuity and distinction from previous eras. This article uses a descriptive-analytical method and the theoretical framework of aggressive realism, focusing on the strategic competition between the United States and China during the Biden era, to respond to the question of what were the United States' goals in confronting China? The findings show that first, unlike his predecessor's unilateralist approach to rebuilding and strengthening regional alliances such as the (Quad and AUKUS), Biden placed limiting access to advanced technologies (through sanctions and export bans) at the heart of his strategic competition against China. Second, Biden's diplomacy emphasized the concept of intense but responsible competition to define a safe floor or margin for this competition to prevent it from turning into direct conflict. Third, the nature and logic of these competitions have been full of inherent contradictions, from competition to cooperation on climate change, health, and wellness.

## **Keywords**

realism US foreign policy, China, strategic competition, aggressive.

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

A significant portion of political and international relations literature over the past two decades has focused on the shifting dynamics among global hegemonic powers. Since the inception of the modern world system, the rise and fall of great powers has been a dominant theme in international political discourse. In the current era, the reconfiguration of major power alignments has become a prevalent topic in political and media discussions. The intensification of these debates is largely influenced by increasing indicators confirming the strategic competition between the United States and China. China's growth as a global technological and military power has unsettled the United States and some of its allies, leading the U.S. government to identify China as the most serious threat to its hegemony over the past two decades. This article focuses on U.S. strategic competition with China during the Biden administration, addressing the question: What have been the U.S. objectives in confronting China? In response, the hypothesis posits that Biden, by changing tactics and adopting a negotiation-based approach while rallying alliances with other key global economic players, has provided a stronger foundation for his administration to sustain a confrontational trade war stance against China.

### **Methodology**

This article employs a descriptive-explanatory method, with data collected from library resources, academic journals, and reputable online platforms.

### **Literature Review**

The main body of literature concerning U.S.-China relations during the Biden era, encompassing realist approaches and multi-level analyses, forms the conceptual framework of this research. Three overlapping trends are identifiable:

1. Realist analyses and threat balancing, emphasizing Sino-American competition and the persistent shifts in U.S. foreign policy.
2. Studies focused on U.S. liberal democratic values in constraining China, highlighting how liberal democratic principles have become

central to the Biden doctrine, with the U.S. concentrating on strengthening alliances to gain a competitive edge.

3. Analyses of the U.S.-China trade war, underscoring the prominence of Biden's policies in the trade domain. This research, grounded in offensive realism, addresses the multifaceted nature of competition—economic, military, and technological.

## **Discussion**

Existing findings present a complex, conditional, and multi-faceted picture of U.S. foreign policy toward China:

1. China is the most critical country in the U.S. national security strategy under Biden, rapidly increasing its geopolitical weight and closing in on the U.S. The strategy frequently references China's geopolitical behavior due to its military expansion, weapons development, and nuclear activities.
2. Containing China as a serious threat to U.S. hegemony is one of the few issues with bipartisan consensus, transcending partisan rivalry to become a core U.S. strategic direction, especially since Xi Jinping's rise to power.
3. Efforts to counter China involve reviving alliance networks and coalitions, a strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific, rejuvenating the Quad alliance, and advancing the Build Back Better World initiative.
4. While Biden's concerns have largely centered on trade, security concerns have been no less significant. There has been a noticeable reduction in the use of military tools; although coercion and deterrence remain relevant, Biden has prioritized diplomatic engagement.

## **Conclusion**

Nations view their foreign policy actions through the lens of national interest, but the choices they make depend on leaders' perceptions and how they define and pursue those interests under varying circumstances. An analysis of U.S. foreign policy trends indicates that the Biden administration's approach represents not a fundamental shift

in essence or nature but a change in methods compared to its predecessors. The findings show that:

1. Biden has sought to contain China by advancing and shaping multilateral initiatives and reassessing bilateral alliances, aiming to establish a security and economic coalition to check China's power in the Indo-Pacific—the primary arena of global competition between the two nations. Within this strategy, he has worked to strengthen cooperation with allies, leveraging their capabilities to address shared regional and global challenges.
2. Biden's policy toward China has largely continued the stringent measures of the previous administration, particularly in areas such as human rights, democracy, and the trade war. However, his approach has focused on managing competition and avoiding direct confrontation rather than aggression, which remains a key priority of his administration. By altering tactics, employing diplomatic methods, and securing cooperation from other major global economic players, Biden has endeavored to create a stronger foundation for sustaining economic competition with China.

# **Strategic Competition in Global Diplomacy: A Discursive Analysis of the Speeches of the United States, China, and Russia at the 2025 United Nations General Assembly**

*Reza Gorzin*

## **Abstract**

In recent decades, the international system has been transitioning from a relatively stable liberal order toward an environment characterized by increasing competition among major powers, a competition that extends beyond traditional hard-balancing to normative, semantic, narrative, and discursive dimensions. The speeches of national leaders at the United Nations General Assembly reflect their perceptions of the global order, identity, power, and the role of state agency within the international structure. In this context, diplomacy has become a strategic arena for contesting meaning, narrating power, and redefining legitimacy. The United States, China, and Russia, as key actors in this transitional period, seek to stabilize or redefine their order-shaping roles and strategic positions through discursive diplomacy and symbolic power.

This study employs a qualitative approach using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis across three levels: linguistic, ideological, and functional to examine the official speeches of the United States, China, and Russia at the 2025 UN General Assembly. The findings indicate that the United States emphasizes structural primacy, global leadership, and the persistence of the liberal order through a realist-liberal discourse; China, through a development-oriented and multilateralist discourse and initiatives such as GDI, GGI, and GSI, seeks to reinforce the legitimacy of its order-shaping role; and Russia, using a confrontational and law-based discourse, presents itself as a defender of a multipolar order and a critic of unilateralism. The results suggest that strategic competition in global diplomacy is less about geopolitics alone and more a discursive process aimed at controlling meaning, legitimacy, and international public perception.

## **Keywords**

Diplomacy; Strategic Competition; International Order; United States, China, Russia.

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

In the complex and competitive environment of the current inter-title system, the presence of people in the field of global diplomacy, discursive coherence and public diplomacy skills are important, and among them, the UN General Assembly has a special place as a stage for discursive competition of great powers. International relations studies show that studying power competition at the hardware and geopolitical level is not enough. In addition to analyzing discourses, power narratives and comparisons of large concepts, one can understand the unfolding processes of the global system and the transformation of the power structure of the provider. Understanding the narrative mechanisms and competitive patterns in the UN General Assembly and its peripheral circles allows the international analytical and policy-making community to gain a deeper understanding of the future trends of transformation in the global business order. A theoretical and comparative analysis of the United States, China, and Russia in the United Nations General Assembly provides an important capacity for understanding how concept, meaning, and diplomacy are embedded in the process of constructing international order.

### **Literature Review**

Previous studies have mainly focused on the geopolitical dimensions of great power competition or the analysis of their practical policies. (Mearsheimer, 2018: 45; Lynch, 2021: 23) A number of studies have focused on the public diplomacy and soft power of the United States, some on China's development and multilateral diplomacy, and some on Russia's confrontational and security-oriented foreign policy. However, few studies have attempted to simultaneously and comparatively examine these three discourses in the specific context of the United Nations General Assembly.

### **Research Methodology**

Analyzing competitive dynamics in the contemporary international system requires the use of a hybrid theoretical framework consisting

of the three main paradigms of realism, liberalism, and structuralism. This necessity stems from the multidimensional nature of new competitions, which are no longer limited to material or institutional areas, but are increasingly manifested in the areas of discourse and identity formation. In the context of the transition to a post-hegemonic order, discourses of power have become unprecedentedly dependent on media tools, normativity, and representation. This strategic transformation has elevated the field of diplomacy from the level of formal state exchanges to the sphere of competition over meaning-making and legitimacy. This research, by adopting a qualitative method and utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach within the framework of the theories of realism, liberalism, and structuralism, seeks to explore how great powers use international forums as a platform for discourse engineering and what effects this process has on the structure of international diplomacy and future developments in the world order.

## **Discussion**

The speech of the US representative at the UN General Assembly was a comprehensive reflection of the country's nationalist, exclusive and unilateralist foreign policy approach. This discourse, which is based on direct confrontation with international institutions and an extreme emphasis on the priority of national interests ("America First"), was presented in an aggressive tone and with sharp criticism of multilateral structures. The most prominent components of this speech include emphasizing border control and opposition to open immigration policies, expressing skepticism about climate change and European green energy policies, describing the UN as an institution that speaks "empty words", claiming to manage and end several international conflicts, calling for increased sanctions against Russia, applying maximum pressure on Iran and warning against actions related to the recognition of the state of Palestine. Although this approach may be effective in the short term in the domestic arena of American politics and for a certain base of supporters, on a global scale it could lead to a decrease in international cooperation, an increase in tensions, and ultimately a weakening of the United States' strategic position. The

long-term result of such a discourse could be an image of America as an irresponsible and isolated actor on the world stage.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's speech at the UN General Assembly can be seen as a symbol of China's increasing strategic self-confidence and its transition from a conservative approach to active and innovative activism in international diplomacy. This speech not only expressed Beijing's official positions on global issues, but also reflected the country's conscious effort to redefine its place in the structure of the global order, consolidate its role as an order-maker, and present a positive image of China as a responsible actor, a reliable partner, and a promoter of development-oriented cooperation. In this context, China is trying to present a new discourse on global governance and strengthen the legitimacy of its strategic activism by proposing concepts such as multilateralism, mutual respect, win-win cooperation, sustainable development, reform of international structures, confronting global challenges, and climate governance. According to the constructivist approach, China's civilizational identity is considered one of the main elements in its foreign policy; an element that is represented in the form of the discourse of Asian civilization, development-oriented cooperation, and cultural respect, and is used as a basis for generating legitimacy, attracting global support, and reinterpreting the rules of international order.

The speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at the United Nations General Assembly was not merely a diplomatic statement; it was a meaningful attempt to redefine Russia's narrative in the international order and present a discursive alternative to the Western liberal order. Combining hard deterrence, conditional and flexible diplomacy, and identity-security narratives, the speech sought to present an image of Russia as a responsible, powerful, legitimate, and revisionist power. At the beginning of the speech, Russia emphasized that the world was facing structural crises in the areas of security, legitimacy, and international justice, spoke of the need for a transition to a multipolar order, and introduced the United Nations as "the fulcrum of legitimizing power." Lavrov, using the concept of collective security and genuine multilateralism, tried to portray himself as a supporter of the international system based on

international law, and in return, accused the West of “selective use of international rules, sanctions, and interventionism.” In the middle part of the speech, Russia, using a thematic framework, described the Ukrainian crisis not as a military attack but as a defensive response to “security threats and NATO expansion,” and tried to justify its actions using legal, historical, and moral legitimacy. In this regard, Russia claimed that any attack on its vital security would be met with a decisive response; but it remained ready to negotiate on the condition that it respect its “legitimate security interests”. In the third part, the audience of the speech was directly non-Western countries and the Global South. Lavrov tried to change Russia’s image from a “power engaged in conflict” to a supporter of a just global order by speaking out against hegemony, international justice, respect for sovereignty, and non-intervention.

### **Conclusion**

Comprehensive analysis of this article, using theoretical frameworks of international relations and the method of critical discourse analysis, suggests that global diplomacy is experiencing a fundamental transformation in the structure of the international system. This transformation, which can be referred to as the transition to a complex multipolar order, has multiple dimensions and characteristics. The findings of this research, which are based on a qualitative content analysis of the speeches of representatives of the United States of America, China, and Russia at the United Nations General Assembly, indicate the formation of a new pattern of strategic competition in the international arena. Unlike the Cold War period, this competition is taking place not only in the hardware dimension, but increasingly in the software and normative dimensions.

# **India's Economic Diplomacy toward the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2014–2024)**

*Parham Pourramezan  
Mandana.Tishehyar*

## **Abstract**

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the world underwent profound transformations, the most significant manifestation of which was globalization. Consequently, from the mid-1990s when the emphasis on multilateralism began to grow, new emerging powers also started to play a more active role in the international arena. One of the most prominent among them is India, which, since Narendra Modi assumed office, has pursued a development-oriented foreign policy that has enabled it to engage economically with various countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia. In turn, Saudi Arabia, in support of its own development driven programs, requires both capital and labor, and India represents a suitable partner capable of meeting these needs on the basis of mutual economic interdependence. The relationship between these two political units has deep historical roots and, despite its predominantly economic nature, simultaneously serves several additional strategic purposes. The main question of this article is as follows: What elements characterize India's economic diplomacy in Saudi Arabia, and what objectives does it seek to pursue? The research method used in this study is qualitative, employing a descriptive–analytical approach. The authors seek to demonstrate, within the framework of interdependence theory, that India through a soft-power-oriented approach embedded in economic cooperation aims to pursue objectives such as containing Pakistan, balancing China, ensuring food security, developing energy-refining infrastructure, combating terrorism, and increasingly strengthening the “Great Indian Market” policy in the Persian Gulf region.

## **Keywords**

Economic Diplomacy, India, The Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Interdependence

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

India with its large population and growing economy, is increasingly dependent on energy resources and foreign investment to sustain its development trajectory. Conversely, Saudi Arabia as the world's largest oil producer with substantial financial reserves plays a vital role in meeting these needs. India's reliance on Saudi oil has risen significantly in recent years, serving as a major driver in the deepening of bilateral cooperation in energy and other economic sectors. At the same time, Saudi Arabia is seeking to diversify its economy and reduce its dependence on oil revenues. Vision 2030 represents an ambitious blueprint for Saudi Arabia's economic and social transformation, requiring extensive foreign investment and advanced technological capabilities. India, with its expanding pool of skilled human resources, is well positioned to contribute meaningfully to the realization of this vision. India's dependence on imported energy has created an opportunity to further expand its economic relations with Saudi Arabia and to manage this interdependence through economic diplomacy. Additionally, strategic competition between China and the United States—two major external actors in the Gulf region constitutes another factor shaping Saudi-Indian relations. While the United States remains a traditional ally of Saudi Arabia, China has significantly strengthened its economic and political engagement with the Kingdom in recent years. This evolving geopolitical environment has enabled Saudi Arabia to leverage great-power competition to advance its national interests. Amid these developments, India and Saudi Arabia two pivotal actors in regional and global economic landscapes have experienced substantial transformations in their bilateral relations over the past decade. These transformations, particularly in the sphere of economic diplomacy, underscore the importance of conducting a comprehensive and systematic examination of India's economic diplomacy towards Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, the central question of this study is: What are the key features and objectives of India's economic diplomacy strategy in Saudi Arabia? Within the framework of interdependence theory, this research seeks to demonstrate that India, through a soft-power-oriented approach in the economic domain, aims to advance objectives such as managing Pakistan,

balancing China, ensuring food security, and strengthening its “large market” policy in its interactions with Saudi Arabia. The significance of this study lies in the fact that, within the Iranian context of regional studies, this topic has remained unexplored. Therefore, understanding and explaining India’s approach toward Saudi Arabia can contribute to enhancing economic diplomacy and policymaking processes in Iran.

### **Methodology**

research method employed in this article is qualitative with a descriptive–analytical approach. This means that the target population, conditions, and phenomena are first described systematically, after which the existing realities are analyzed. This research method answers questions related to what, when, where, and how, but it is not suitable for addressing questions that involve the element of “why.” Unlike experimental research, in descriptive studies the researcher does not control or manipulate the variables; rather, the variables are observed and examined. Furthermore, the data collection tools used in this article include books, scholarly articles, reports, online databases, and other relevant sources. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth understanding of the motivations as well as the political and strategic considerations underlying the economic decisions of both countries; therefore, it is well-suited to the purpose of this research.

### **Literature Review**

The prior studies relevant to this research can be reviewed from three perspectives. The first group includes studies that focus on issues related to India. Verma (2023), in a study titled “Trump and Modi: The Ideological, Political, and Economic Foundations of the India–U.S. Trade Dispute,” argues that the initiative launched in 2014 for India’s advancement—aimed at promoting domestic manufacturing and attracting foreign investment—seeks to position India as a global production hub, thereby facilitating job creation and economic growth. Accordingly, India’s economic dependence on the United States for the export of technical labor and goods underscores the importance of avoiding any tension in New Delhi–Washington relations.

Chatterjee (2019), in a study titled “India’s Look West Policy in the Modi Era: Regional Focus as a Fading Horizon,” contends that India’s foreign policy toward Middle Eastern countries, within the framework of international relations theories, is not rooted in the geographical concept of the region; rather, it is India’s economic approach that drives its engagement there. The Gulf states account for 15% of India’s total foreign trade. Collectively, the GCC countries have been India’s second-largest trading partner, the largest source of imports to India, and the second-largest destination for Indian exports. Thus, Modi’s policy toward “West Asia” can be characterized as one of mutual economic interdependence.

Pour-Ramazan and Tisheyar (2023), in a study titled “India’s Economic Diplomacy in Oman (2014–2021),” emphasize that with the rise of the Modi government in India, the country’s policymakers have prioritized economic development and adopted economic diplomacy to meet energy needs, attract investment, and expand exports of technical, engineering, and defense capabilities. Consequently, West Asia—given its substantial potential—serves as a suitable arena for India’s policy orientations.

Finally, Rah-e-Najat (2024), in a study titled “The Status of the Arab Core of West Asia in Narendra Modi’s Foreign Policy,” argues that since India can be regarded as the world’s largest democratic structure, its opposition to any destabilizing elements can be inferred from its foreign policy behavior. Thus, he identifies the primary objective of India’s foreign policy in West Asia as the advancement of economic interests alongside the restoration of stability in the region

## **Discussion**

The Indian diaspora plays a significant role in strengthening bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and India, acting as a vital link that reinforces economic, cultural, and social ties.

Approximately 2.8 million Indians reside in Saudi Arabia, constituting the largest expatriate community in the country. They contribute substantially to India’s economy through remittances, amounting to around \$8 billion annually. These financial flows not only support families back home but also stimulate India’s economic growth.

Indian migrants are engaged in diverse sectors, including hospitality, healthcare, education, and engineering. Their presence helps fill skill gaps in the Saudi labor market while facilitating knowledge transfer between the two countries. The Saudi leadership has recognized these contributions, viewing the Indian community as an integral component of the Kingdom's development programs.

The Indian diaspora also plays a crucial role in strengthening cultural ties by introducing shared traditions and values. Initiatives such as the promotion of yoga and Bollywood films contribute significantly to enhancing visibility and mutual understanding between the two nations. The increased Hajj quota for Indian pilgrims to 200,000 further reflects strong religious ties, reinforcing bilateral relations.

Ultimately, the Indian diaspora forms the cornerstone of India-Saudi Arabia relations. Their economic contributions through remittances, active participation across various sectors, and cultural exchanges provide a robust framework for bilateral cooperation. As both countries continue to enhance their relations through strategic initiatives, the diaspora's role in advancing mutual interests and strengthening long-term partnerships remains central.

## **Conclusion**

Economic diplomacy, as one of the key instruments of a country's foreign policy, seeks to leverage economic power to achieve political and strategic objectives. In the case of India, economic diplomacy constitutes a crucial component of the country's broader strategy to emerge as a global power. With a population exceeding 1.3 billion and a rapidly growing economy, India requires energy resources, foreign investment, and new markets for its goods and services. Consequently, India's economic diplomacy has focused on engaging with diverse countries around the world, particularly those in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia. The objectives of India in strengthening economic diplomacy in its relations with Saudi Arabia can be summarized as follows:

India aspires to become a global economic hub. Its economic diplomacy in Saudi Arabia focuses on attracting foreign investment and expanding export markets. This strategy strengthens India's position as a global economic power.

Overall, India's economic diplomacy in Saudi Arabia, as part of its broader strategy to emerge as a global power, encompasses multiple dimensions. It is not solely driven by economic interests but also pursues security and strategic objectives. By enhancing economic relations with Saudi Arabia, India aims to secure energy supplies, manage Pakistan's influence, balance China's power, ensure food security, and strengthen the "Made in India" and larger market initiatives. This comprehensive strategy helps India consolidate its position as both a regional and global power.

# Indian Foreign Policy toward the United States: Ukraine War and Gaza War

*Fateme Rezazade Laledashti  
Seyed Amir Niakoe*

## **Abstract**

India, as an emerging power, is poised to become one of the most influential actors in the future international system. Consequently, understanding this country's foreign policy regarding U.S. demands is of paramount importance. Comprehending this orientation will be highly effective in diagnosing potential scenarios for the international system. In this context, this research seeks to answer the following question: What has been India's security strategy toward the United States in events such as the Ukraine War and the Gaza War? The provisional hypothesis of this study suggests that, given past trends, India has adopted a strategy of following the U.S. lead in both the Ukraine and Gaza wars. However, the findings indicate that in the case of the Ukraine War, influenced by changes in the structure of the international system as well as shifts in U.S. domestic and foreign policy, India did not strictly adhere to either a balancing or band-wagoning strategy. Instead, by considering elements of both approaches, it pragmatically pursued its national interests. Regarding the Gaza War, however, India's support for Israel can be interpreted within the framework of hard band-wagoning with the United States. The research method employed in this article is analytical-descriptive. The study has a qualitative nature, and data collection was conducted through academic articles and online sources.

## **Keywords**

India, the United States, Gaza War, Ukraine War.

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

India is one of the most important emerging economies within the structure of the international system. Consequently, understanding this

country's strategy regarding international events is of great importance. Many analysts view New Delhi's policies as aligned with those of Washington. In this context, the present research seeks to answer the following question: **What** has been India's security strategy toward the United States in events such as the Ukraine War and the Gaza War?

The provisional hypothesis of the research indicates that due to the common threats both countries face—such as Islamic terrorism, the rise of China as a superpower, extensive defense trade, bilateral intelligence agreements, etc.—India has adopted a **bandwagoning strategy** with the United States in both the Ukraine and Gaza wars.

However, the findings of the research reveal that in the case of the Ukraine War, influenced by changes in the international system's structure and shifts in U.S. domestic and foreign policy, India did not strictly adhere to either a **balancing** or **bandwagoning** strategy. Instead, by drawing insights from both approaches, it pragmatically pursued its national interests. In the case of the Gaza War, however, India's support for Israel can be interpreted within the framework of **hard bandwagoning** with the United States.

### **Theoretical framework**

In order to assess the validity of the stated hypothesis, we have used the framework of the theory of explaining the security strategy of different actors toward the unipolar order, and due to some changes in the structure of the international system since the presentation of this theory by Hansen and his colleagues, in order to achieve the correct result in accordance with the current conditions of the international system, there are also some limited points we have added to the theory. The theorists of this theory divided different strategies against single pole into four strategies: soft bandwagoning, hard bandwagoning, soft balancing, and hard balancing. In order to specify the chosen strategy of the countries, three variables of relative power, relative ideology and relative security were examined. The variable of relative power, which was in favor of America as the superior power at the time of the presentation of the theory, has now changed from a definite state to a relative and scrutinized case due to the rise in power of other countries, which is the point added by the authors of this research.

## **Method**

It is worth mentioning that the research method in this article is analytical-descriptive. This means that after extracting data from the investigated sources and following the process of the events, we described and analysed the events using the theoretical framework of the research. This research has a qualitative nature and data collection has been done through articles and online sources.

## **Discussion and Findings**

In the context of the Ukraine war, the United States specifically adopted the approach of confronting Russia. Expectations were based on the fact that India would follow the US strategy. India initially adopted a conservative approach in this regard. On the one hand, it maintained its prestige by reducing the level of political relations, and on the other hand, by abstaining from the resolutions against Russia, it tried not to confront Russia, but then adopted a more open approach by resuming official meetings.

On the other hand, Russia, it plays a prominent role in the field of energy security and economic security of India. It is also very important to cooperate with Russia in order to balance the alliance between Russia and China. The supply of military weapons to India by Russia is also one of the other things that can be investigated in the subset of this variable. In connection with the variable of ideological proximity, although there is a great difference between India and Russia, but due to the importance of the last two variables in India's foreign policy and due to the pendulum of the Indian government, the ideological difference has played a lesser role in New Delhi's orientations in this incident.

In connection with India's strategy in the Gaza war, India merely voted in favour of some resolutions against Israel in order to maintain its political prestige, but in practice provided arms and political support to Israel. India and Israel have extensive relations in the political, military and economic fields, and Israel plays an important role in providing India's relative security.

Regarding the Gaza war, India did not face much structural pressure. On the one hand, supporting Israel as a strategic partner of the United States pleased Washington. On the other hand, this relationship, due to the common position of the two countries towards Islamists, Israel's good relationship with the region, its relationship with this country on development-oriented issues and the deep arms ties between the parties, ensures India's national security and relative security.

### **Conclusion**

Although the United States is considered one of the most important variables influencing India's foreign policy, New Delhi, as an independent state, always seeks to secure its national interests through its foreign policy strategies. Therefore, the idea that New Delhi simply follows the United States will not be a provable proposition. India's foreign policy is a clear manifestation of a swinging state policy with a multilateralist foreign policy. Hence, it should always be kept in mind that cost-benefit analysis in New Delhi's foreign policy takes precedence over any compulsion arising from relations and alliances.