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Does peace require power?

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Does peace require power?

— Tanvi Ghatage

For centuries, peace has been imagined as a moral achievement won through dialogue and cooperation. Yet, the world order tells us a different story, an uncomfortable one. One in which stability often comes from deterrence and not trust. Not from goodwill but from the credible fear of threat. From nuclear standoffs to military alliances, peace has frequently been sustained by power carefully calibrated to prevent its own use.

At its core, the idea of peace is split between two worldviews. The first sees peace as a moral ideal, an ethical state of being that humanity must strive toward. In this view, peace is the absence of conflict, achieved through empathy, cooperation, and the resolution of differences through dialogue. War is treated as a failure of diplomacy, and peace as the natural and righteous outcome once understanding is achieved.

The second worldview approaches peace far more strategically. Here, peace is not an emotional or moral condition, but a calculated outcome. States do not refrain from war because they are morally inclined to do so, but because the costs of conflict outweigh the benefits. Peace exists not because trust prevails, but because fear does. Fear of retaliation, escalation, and destruction.

In this understanding, peace is less about harmony and more about restraint.

This divide is reflected clearly in international relations theory. Liberalism argues that peace is achievable through diplomacy, economic interdependence, international institutions, and cooperation. According to this view, dialogue reduces misunderstanding, institutions reduce conflict, and shared interests create incentives for peace.

Realism, however, offers a far more skeptical assessment. It argues that the international system is anarchic, with no central authority to enforce rules. States therefore prioritise survival above all else. Peace, in this framework, is not the result of goodwill but of power. A state is secure not because others trust it, but because others fear the consequences of attacking it.

Israel's security doctrine reflects this realist logic. Situated in a persistently hostile regional environment, Israel prioritises military superiority as a means of survival. Its emphasis on deterrence, pre-emptive capability, and rapid military response is not rooted in expansionism, but in the belief that weakness invites aggression. Diplomatic initiatives have existed, but they have rarely survived without a parallel foundation of military strength. In this case, peace negotiations follow power, not the other way around.

Deterrence theory lies at the heart of strategic peace. It operates on a simple premise, when two states possess the ability to inflict unacceptable damage on each other, neither is willing to initiate conflict. The balance of power discourages risk-taking and encourages restraint.

Nuclear weapons represent the most extreme form of deterrence. During periods of heightened conflict, the mere mention of nuclear escalation immediately shifts global attention toward
de-escalation.

Diplomatic pressure intensifies, ceasefire talks accelerate, and international actors intervene to prevent catastrophe. The reason is not moral outrage alone, but the fear of irreversible destruction.

Nuclear tests themselves serve as deterrent signals. When states conduct such tests, they are not merely developing weapons; they are communicating capability. The message is clear: escalation will not end cleanly. Peace is maintained not through trust, but through the shared understanding that war would be disastrous.

Military alliances operate similarly. NATO being a primary example, several countries protected by collective defence mechanisms that are geographically small or militarily limited on their own. Yet they remain largely untouched. This is not because they pose individual threats, but because any aggression against them would trigger a response from a far larger collective force. The power behind them, not their size, maintains peace.

Acknowledging the role of power does not mean dismissing diplomacy. Dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation remain essential components of international stability. However, diplomacy is most effective when it is backed by credibility. Agreements hold when parties believe that violations will have consequences.

Pure reliance on moral persuasion, without leverage, often collapses under pressure. Diplomatic efforts tend to succeed when all sides recognise that continued hostility carries costs.

Conversely, diplomacy fails when one party believes it can act without repercussion.

At the same time, reliance on force alone is equally unsustainable. States that rely exclusively on military power risk isolation, economic decline, and internal instability. To thrive in global politics, states must combine power with legitimacy - strong defence with strategic relationships, alliances, and trust-building measures.

Peace, therefore, is neither purely diplomatic nor purely militaristic. It is sustained in the space where dialogue is supported by deterrence.

Military power is often criticised as inherently destabilising. Due to instances such as Russia's military aggression against Ukraine illustrates how power can be used coercively against a weaker state, destabilising an entire region. Similarly, regimes that rely on constant military posturing often seek to compensate for political insecurity rather than ensure peace.

Yet military power is not inherently aggressive. Its function depends on intent and application. There are instances where the use or display of force has contributed to stability rather than chaos.

India's intervention during the Bangladesh Liberation War serves as one such example. This was not India's war, yet its military involvement played a decisive role in ending widespread violence and facilitating the creation of a new state. The intervention was a demonstration of power, but one aimed at restoring stability rather than asserting dominance.

Similarly, Israel's military posture, while controversial, is primarily defensive in orientation. Its objective is deterrence, ensuring that adversaries calculate the costs of aggression as too high. In these cases, military power functions not as a tool of expansion, but as a mechanism of survival and stability.

Peace, as history shows, is rarely the product of moral consensus alone. More often, it is a managed condition—maintained through power, deterrence, and strategic calculation. This does not mean that peace achieved through force is ideal, but it does suggest that peace without power is fragile.

Power does not guarantee peace. But the absence of power almost certainly invites conflict. In an international system defined by uncertainty and competition, peace is less a moral destination and more a strategic achievement, one that must be constantly maintained, not merely hoped for.

Climate Diplomacy: The New Soft Power

— Gargi Mokashi

Power. It is defined as the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. We have seen various governments use a plethora of methods to exercise this "power", be it military invasions, alliances, or even economic sanctions. We call these hard powers. But there are other ways. Cultural exports, educational exchanges, and humanitarian aid all have the ability to influence international relations as well, but there is a key difference: they help obtain the preferred outcome by attraction, rather than coercion.

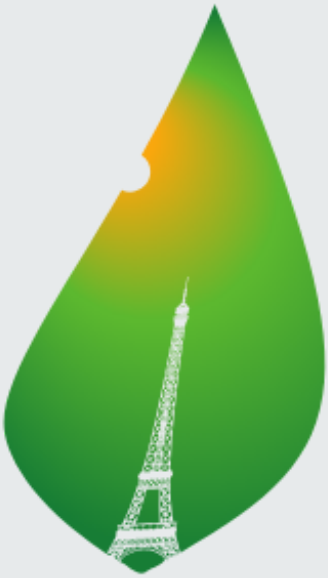
We call them soft powers.

"Soft power" is a term coined by Joseph Nye Jr. These powers, he argues, are the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants, without force. He outlines its three pillars as foreign policy, cultural influence, and political principles.

Among these traditional soft powers, another has emerged: climate diplomacy. Especially in the last decade, we have seen its rise as a strategic, geopolitical tool.

Climate diplomacy is the means by which global climate change is addressed through diplomatic channels and strategies. At the political level, the European Commission defines four strands of climate diplomacy, which are as follows:

1. Commitment to multilateralism; supporting implementation of the Paris Agreement. This is done through forums such as the UN and the annual COP (Conferences of the Parties).
2. Addressing peace and security implications, taking conflict-sensitive action, and improving regional cooperation by addressing climate impacts in areas that share resources.
3. Accelerating domestic action and raising global ambition; leveraging diplomatic pressure to create a culture that shares best practices and uses peer mechanisms.
4. Enhancing international climate cooperation; building partnerships beyond formal negotiations through advocacy, outreach, and public diplomatic talks.



PARIS2015
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP21·CMP11

Though the concept of climate diplomacy may not be new, it has certainly evolved from a mere environmental issue to an essential component of modern global geopolitics. The Paris Agreement (2015) has played a major role in this evolution. It established a universal, legally binding framework that called for universal participation. It set a firm, actionable temperature target to limit global warming to well below 2°C. Countries were also allowed to set their own targets, or NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions). It serves as the turning point in international cooperation on climate action.

International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched by India and France at COP-21 to accelerate solar energy adoption.

At COP-26, India presented the Panchamrit of its climate action:

1. Reach 500 GW of non-fossil energy capacity by 2030.
2. 50 per cent of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.
3. Reduction of total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now to 2030.
4. Reduction of the carbon intensity of the economy by 45 percent by 2030, over 2005 levels.
5. Achieving the target of net zero emissions by 2070.

It also conveyed that the world needs more mindful and deliberate utilization, as opposed to destructive consumption.

While these are all steps in the right direction, there is a lot of work to be done. Developing nations, like ourselves, must find the balance between sustainability and striving for economic growth, which requires significant energy consumption. International agreements must be strengthened and updated. More collaborative research in green technologies and holding countries accountable for their actionable commitments, will be the way of the future.

Bharat, Burma and Beyond

— Dhruv Joshi

1.Introduction – "Bharat, Burma and Beyond"

Five years ago, we all watched as the Myanmar Capital got taken over by the military, completely unaware of what would follow to be an extensive geopolitical deadlock between the 3 superpowers of the world, China, The United States, and India. Being in ethnic turmoil ever since its independence in 1948, Myanmar always felt like a ticking time bomb near our borders. India and Myanmar have always shared a strategic military relationship due to the overlapping insurgency in Northeast India. The crisis in Myanmar is no longer confined to its borders, it is a story of military rule, global power play, India's strategic restraint, and a quiet struggle for control over the Indian Ocean's eastern gateway.

2.The Military Coup in Myanmar

In February 2021, the Tatmadaw seized power in a military coup, detaining State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and senior leaders of the elected government. They claimed electoral fraud in the 2020 elections as the reason for this, declared a state of emergency even before the democratically elected leaders could even be sworn in to the new government. Behind this move lay the Tatmadaw's economic interests, wherein, Myanmar received $372Million USD in IMF aid for combating the COVID-19 pandemic.The funds came with no conditions, and without any precedent for refunds.

The coup triggered civil disobedience, nationwide protests, and the formation of resistance networks, including the People's Defence Forces, which aligned with ethnic armed organizations, plunging the country into a civil conflict. International reactions were sharply divided, Western nations condemned the takeover and imposed sanctions, while China and Russia adopted a cautious, non-interventionist stance, prioritising stability and strategic interests.

ASEAN, constrained by its consensus-based approach, struggled to mediate effectively, highlighting the regional limits of crisis diplomacy.

India had to be cautious, so as to not deteriorate the ties between India and Burma, and keeping in mind the military-led junta's affinity to China, encouraging dialogue between the Tatmadaw and the NLD. This approach reflected New Delhi's priority to safeguard border stability, ongoing connectivity projects, and security cooperation in the Northeast, while avoiding pushing Myanmar further towards Beijing.

3.Involvement of China and USA – and the Gains They Seek

China has provided diplomatic, logistical, and economic support to Myanmar's junta, including investments under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) such as oil and gas pipelines and a deep-sea port, to secure stability and protect strategic interests like alternative routes to the Strait of Malacca.

Beijing brokered ceasefires with mixed results and pressured ethnic armed groups like the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) to surrender key areas such as Lashio, aiding the junta's recapture of territories in 2025. The United States has imposed sanctions on junta allies involved in cyber scams and human trafficking, while providing nearly $400 million in non-lethal aid to pro-democracy groups and passing the BURMA Act for accountability measures. These actions reflect Washington's aim to counter the junta's abuses and support resistance amid ongoing civil war violence.

4.Impact on India – and Steps Taken by Us

For India, developments in Myanmar are not abstract geopolitical debates; they are immediate security concerns anchored in a 1,643 km shared border. Instability in Myanmar directly affects India's Northeast, where insurgent groups have historically leveraged cross-border sanctuaries, porous terrain, and weak state control. Consequently, New Delhi's engagement with Naypyidaw reflects strategic necessity rather than ideological alignment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's August 2025 meeting with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing signaled continuity under the Act East and Neighbourhood First frameworks.

The engagement underscored three core priorities: border stabilization, protection of strategic connectivity projects, and denial of external strategic encroachment. From a military standpoint, sustained cooperation with the Tatmadaw strengthened joint counter-insurgency operations, intelligence sharing, and coordinated patrols aimed at preventing Northeast insurgent groups from exploiting Myanmar's internal turmoil.

Security cooperation also safeguards critical infrastructure such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, which links India's Northeast to the Bay of Bengal via Myanmar. The project is not merely economic; it is a strategic artery designed to reduce Siliguri Corridor vulnerability and diversify logistical routes.

At a broader level, disengagement from Myanmar's military establishment risks a strategic vacuum. Any severe fragmentation of the Tatmadaw could embolden armed ethnic factions and expand space for external actors, particularly Chinese influence through infrastructure leverage and proxy alignments. For India, preventing such a scenario is an exercise in defensive realism: stability on the eastern frontier is non-negotiable.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's advocacy for dialogue complements this approach. While publicly supporting inclusive political processes, India has maintained pragmatic channels with military authorities to ensure operational continuity along the border. This calibrated engagement reflects a hard truth of regional geopolitics: proximity dictates policy.

In strategic terms, India's approach to Myanmar is less about endorsement and more about containment, continuity, and control. National security considerations, especially in border theatres, demand sustained military-to-military coordination, even amid global criticism.

5.Geopolitical Control in the Indian Ocean

Myanmar's crisis amplifies the stalemate in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), where India, China, and the US vie for maritime dominance over critical Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) carrying 80% of global oil trade. China's push via Myanmar's Kyaukpyu port and

China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) aims to bypass the Malacca Strait chokehold, potentially allowing People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) deployments closer to India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&N), which guard the Six Degree Channel and eastern approaches.

The US bolsters Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) partnerships to counter this "String of Pearls," while India leverages its geographic edge with A&N bases for surveillance and rapid response, denying Beijing uncontested access to the Bay of Bengal. This triangular tug-of-war risks escalation if Myanmar's instability disrupts SLOCs, forcing naval brinkmanship amid China's expanding IOR presence and India's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine.

6.Conclusion

The Myanmar deadlock could solidify China's Bay of Bengal foothold if the junta endures, eroding India's eastern flank and complicating Act East connectivity amid refugee surges and insurgent safe havens. A fragmented Myanmar risks proxy battles drawing in US-backed resistance, prolonging civil war and humanitarian crises that spill into the Indian Ocean, heightening flashpoint risks near Andamans. Ultimately, sustained Indian military diplomacy may tip regional balances, securing maritime gateways and averting a China-dominated eastern IOR that reshapes power dynamics through 2030.

Rented Relevance : The Reckoning of Functional Power

— Mukund Baheti

What makes a country relevant?

You may have thought of military strength, economic power, or nuclear deterrence. And sure, these matter, but along with these, there's one more thing that is always observed yet overlooked by us. That is functional power, a power built NOT on what you are, but on what you do for others. Functional power could range from controlling choke points and transit corridors to serving as a buffer state or battleground for proxies. It is transactional in nature and, in turn provide foreign investment, security umbrellas, diplomatic backing, and immense spillover benefits to a nation.

But functional power doesn't exist in isolation. It lies on a spectrum opposite to autonomous power. Autonomous power, also referred to as strategic autonomy, is the ability of a nation to pursue its national interests and make sovereign decisions without being overly reliant on or coerced by external influence. This autonomy is built on the grounds of Indigenous military might, optimal economy, technological innovation, or political institutions that don't crumble the moment external support is withdrawn.

All nations operate somewhere along this spectrum of functional power and autonomous power, while blending both in varying degrees. However, autonomous power is not built overnight. It demands decades of patience, consistent investments, and long-term policy discipline. Also states building autonomous power can't afford dramatic ideological pivots or erratic governance. Therefore, the temptation to earn quick benefits using functional power instead of the expensive and slow method becomes almost irresistible for the nations.

This brings us to a tiny nation in the heart of the Horn of Africa that shows exactly how a nation could boom with its functional power. In the 2000s, this tiny nation of 23,000 square kilometers of land area had no natural resources worth mentioning.

It had a population of under a million people emerging from a civil war and a non-performing economy. It had nothing the world needed. Except for its geography. That's Djibouti, a nation that leveraged nothing but its strategic location. It sits at the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and controls the approaches to the Suez Canal. The Strait acts as a chokepoint to Eurasian trade and accounts for approximately 9% of the global seaborne oil trade. Djibouti leveraged the opportunity with its natural deepwater port that made it a convenient refueling and transshipment center. In addition, Djiboutians have reaped enormous economic dividends from hosting foreign military facilities of many nations, including the USA, China, Japan, France, and Italy. These amounted to 10 percent of Djibouti's GDP in 2022, providing about $300 million in rent. Djibouti also services the trade of landlocked Ethiopia, which accounts for more than 80% of the Djiboutian port activities. This made a nation with nothing back then, which has now become indispensable for many.

So what's the problem? When a small nation is leveraging its location, attracting investment, building infrastructure, and growing its economy. Isn't this exactly how development is supposed to work?

It is. Until it isn't.

Pakistan reveals the raw fragility of functional power. Pakistan was an American anti-Soviet buffer during the Cold War. Post 9/11, it served as the logistics hub for the war on terror in the region. Now, China is building infrastructure projects in Pakistan under the $46 billion CPEC, part of the bigger BRI project. Since then, each patron delivered transactional benefits like aid, military hardware, and infrastructure. Each promised development, but none built Pakistan's autonomous capacity, because it was indeed an economic engine running on external fuel. This resulted in an economy that trembles every time a patron shifts priorities or when a project stalls. Pakistan has been structurally dependent for generations, bouncing between patrons but failing to build autonomous capacity underneath.

But economic fragility is one thing. Sometimes, the cost could be existential.

South Vietnam serves as the grim archetype. It grew entirely on the stilts of the US dollar for two decades. During the Cold War, the U.S. believed the North Vietnamese communist regime threatened all of Southeast Asia with a domino effect. Meaning that one country falling to communism would trigger the next. Therefore, to contain that spread, South Vietnam became America's functional buffer state.

In the early years, U.S. efforts focused on preventing the domino effect, but by the late 1960s, it became more about commitment to an unfinished battle. The U.S. collectively spent approximately $168 billion over the period of 1961 to 1975 in South Vietnam. This figure includes direct military costs and indirect aid in the form of weapons, training, and development. But this dependency also came with strings attached. Every strategic decision was filtered through America's Cold War priorities, not Saigon's sovereignty. The Vietnam War is still remembered as one of the most brutal conflicts of the 20th century. It inflicted catastrophic loss of life and lasting devastation on all sides. In 1973, the Paris Peace Accords resulted in the withdrawal of US troops from South Vietnam. Therefore, the entire nation built on stilts of dollar bills collapsed under its own weight, and the war ended with the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975.

But not every state trapped in functional power met that fate. Singapore offers a striking counterexample. Singapore was forced into independence through its separation from the Malaysian Federation in 1965. The situation was dire, and the new nation even had to import basic necessities from the neighbor that expelled it. It got worse when Britain planned to withdraw its military bases by 1971, which, at that time, contributed nearly 20% of Singapore's GDP.

But Singapore acted fast. It invested in small industries and attracted MNCs through economic reforms and tax incentives. Singapore leveraged neutrality in foreign policy to draw investments from all sides. It expanded the existing port and transshipment activities. The critical difference that makes Singapore unique is that it has never kept itself dependent on the functionalities it provides. The revenues from ports, manufacturing, and MNC investments were reinvested relentlessly, not in more infrastructure alone, but in Education, anti-corruption systems, rule of law, and technical workforce development. The nation grew on stilts made from its people as assets, not patron dollars. So when Britain left in 1971, and even if shipping lanes shifted tomorrow, Singapore would stand on the autonomous backing of its people, institutions, and economic environment as capital. It's the model for how countries should ideally operate by ensuring to earn from functional power, but reinvest in autonomous elements.

These examples and many others throughout history demonstrate that functional power is an easy and quick way to grow a nation. It delivers economic boost, security umbrellas, diplomatic backing and much more. There's nothing wrong with that because all nations use it to some extent. But it possesses some risks if the nation's relevance entirely depends on others' priorities. And if those priorities shift, the fallout hits the economy, security and governance hard. Even worse, it erodes the autonomy and sense of sovereignty, where nations must filter their policies and decisions through external interests just to stay relevant.

The historical trends suggest several observations worth considering. Nations seem to follow one of three paths when managing their functional power. First is to leverage profits from functional power to build autonomous capacity that is enough to sustain the country even if the functional relevance fades. Second is to keep renewing the relevance by staying indispensable or switching patrons. Third, relying solely on functional power to yield quick benefits, hoping it never crashes. These patterns reveal a fundamental truth that Functional power brings relevance fast, but never guarantees how long it will last. It's equivalent to renting relevance, not owning it.

Tracing the porous Indo - Bangla Border:

An Unfinished Post-1971 Challenge for India

— Pratik P. Chavan

Historical Context: Pre-1971 and the Radcliffe Line

Before 1947, the era when the British ruled India, Bengal, which historically included West Bengal, Bangladesh, and parts of Assam, Bihar, and Orissa, was a very prosperous region with a deeply interconnected social and economic life. Trade, cultural, and agricultural exchanges flowed freely across its regions, and movement was an ordinary part of peaceful existence. This continuity was disrupted by the Partition of British India into India and Pakistan.

The Bengal Presidency was divided into West Bengal and East Pakistan by the Radcliffe Line, without proper consideration of geography, livelihoods, or social ties. The boundary cut through villages, homes, farmlands, and river systems, leaving many families divided by a newly created international border. This Partition triggered mass displacement and inhumane violence.

The neglect of East Pakistan by the Pakistani state led to growing hatred among Bengali nationalists. This finally resulted in East Pakistan declaring independence from Pakistan on 26 March 1971, with help from the Indian Army and the Bengali nationalist organisation, the MUKTI BAHINI.

The prolonged instability and mass movement during this period laid the foundations for porous borders between India and Bangladesh.

From Refugee Movement to Infiltration

The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War resulted in massive refugee influx into India, especially in the border states. But within the span of one-year conditions seemed to be normalized, some of the refugees did return to their own country and the stability in this region increased but the cross-border infiltration did not end. Over the years, the so-called refugee crisis turned into chaos as the large-scale migration/infiltration turned quiet, small number of people would illegally infiltrate into India through multiple entry points. Thus, this temporary crisis now became a persistent structural challenge, making our border with Bangladesh more porous post 1971.

Causes for Illegal Infiltration

Illegal infiltration is driven due to various factors like economic, social and environmental. The economic difference between India and Bangladesh remains a major push factor, along with high population density and unemployment. In Bangladesh, the major economic centres are located in the deltaic areas, here the environmental factors like floods, infertile soil and river erosion decrease the availability of industries thus creating unemployment and intensifying the infiltration. These pressures are further increased by informal networks, family links across the border, and long-standing familiarity with the terrain, allowing people to cross despite legal restrictions.

Structural Challenges in present

Geography plays a vital role in keeping the Indo-Bangla border porous. Large stretches of the border follow rivers which over time change their course thus, creating char lands and making fencing and traditional surveillance methods difficult to practice. In some parts, the border cuts through villages, farmlands and houses and a strict enforcement can interfere in everyday life of the people situated there.

These ground realities make it very difficult to enforce strict surveillance in the border areas and turning our border with Bangladesh porous.

Demographic and Social Impact in India

Over the years, continued infiltration has had visible social and demographic impacts, especially in the bordering states like Assam, West Bengal and Tripura. Recently, Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma warned of "DEMOGRAPHIC TAKEOVER" in Assam and stated that the Bangladesh-origin Muslim population in the state could be close to 40% by the time the 2027 census is released, which endangers the rule of law and democracy in the state.

Growing pressure on land, jobs, and government welfare schemes has increased competition for already limited resources. Moreover, political ambitions of certain leaders help these infiltrators to cross the border and settle in the state easily, so that they can help that political personality to remain in power by fake-voting for them. At the same time, many undocumented migrants live on the margins of society, without legal protection, which makes them vulnerable to exploitation and social exclusion.

Security Challenges

The porous nature of the border has led to an increase in security concerns for India. Most people cross the border in search of employment and basic living, but the same illegal routes are misused for smuggling, cross-border crime and other illegal activities. The Indian Security forces have noted that less monitored border areas may be exploited by terrorist organizations potentially for movement or logistics.

The main challenge for the authorities is to distinguish economic migrants from potential security risks thus, complicating the regular border policing.

Governance Challenges

The government's responses have mostly been reactive than being preventive. Security measures like border fencing, aggressive deployment of Border Security Force (BSF) and increased patrolling have somewhat reduced infiltration, but the root cause is still not acted upon. Illegal infiltration causes burden on government run schemes. In some states this is leading to demographic hijack and affecting the power of democracy. Internal security is also compromised. In perspective of economic loss, there is loss of job for the people of our own country, who work as house helps, daily wage workers, etc.

Policy and Structural Solutions

Dealing with the issue of illegal infiltration from Bangladesh into India after 1971 requires patience and a long-term vision, rather than quick or politically convenient solutions. Strengthening border infrastructure is certainly important, but it cannot work in isolation. Real progress depends on honest and sustained cooperation between India and Bangladesh. Better use of data in policy making, and long-term strategies are needed to address the economic, social, and environmental pressures that force people to leave their homes in the first place.

A stable and functioning democratic system in Bangladesh is equally important, as political stability and economic opportunity reduce the need for people to migrate out of desperation. At the same time, political leaders on both sides of the border must place national interest above short-term political gains. Recognising the shared history of the region and the deep- rooted economic inequalities that shape migration is essential. Only through mutual understanding and coordinated efforts can the Indo-Bangla border be managed in a way that is both effective and sustainable.The Indo-Bangla border remains not just a line of security concern, but a reflection of unresolved historical, social, and regional challenges that demand thoughtful and sustained engagement.

Not So Globalised World

— Varad Khatkale

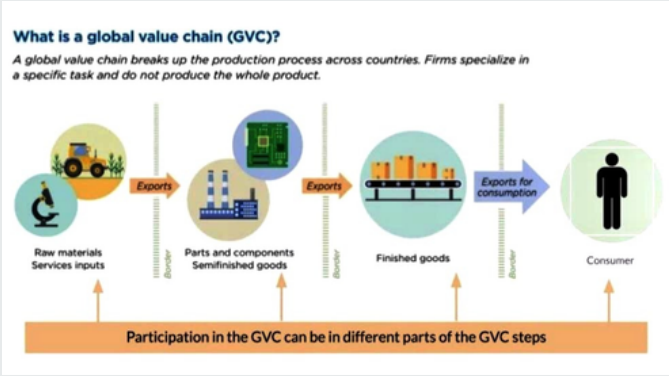
Starting with a scenario, consider you are having a factory that makes a product and there are three raw materials required for it. All the raw materials are not available at one place, and even if you get them, the price for them is very high, which is not feasible. But there are cities where you can get a particular raw material for cheap as it is abundantly available there. So, as a smart person, what will you do? It is quite obvious that you will import those raw materials from those cities and then make your product. The simple rationale behind this decision is that if you are getting raw materials for cheap, your end product will be priced less, eventually giving you an advantage in business.

Now, just scale this example up to the bigger picture. Imagine a company like Apple. They do the same thing—they basically consider buying different components required for the phone from different regions and assemble them elsewhere. It is cheap and thereby reduces their final cost. Although, in my opinion, the product is
still overpriced, but it's fine—that's a debate for another day.

The whole part that I have explained to you in the above two parts is basically the Global Value Chains (GVCs).

Formally, a GVC is making a product by spreading different production stages across different countries. They got popular in the world because of globalisation, free trade agreements, cheaper transportation, stable international relations, and advances in communication technology. Companies hence always preferred this way as it helped them reduce costs, increase efficiency, and scale production globally.

The biggest halt to this sound system is global fragmentation. Countries breaking alliances, FTAs, and getting into war-like situations make the situation worse for globalisation and thereby force companies to either reduce or stop production completely in that region. For instance, if the USA puts an immense amount of tariffs on China and bans the export of any software technology to China, this will impact companies like Apple, who design their products in America and then assemble them in China.



If the export is halted, then Apple has to reduce production in China and has to look for another country having good relations with the USA. So, the point is global fragmentation creates problems for Global Value Chains.

It is a significant loss for companies, but it also affects the economy of the country.

Job creation suddenly stops, thereby increasing joblessness. The core principle of the globalised world is utilising the best potential of a country, but due to these fragmentations, this potential essentially gets wasted.

Companies in the current time are focusing more on stability than securing profit margins and reducing costs because it takes a lot of investment to set up factories and services in a region, and if you suddenly have to stop your operations, this costs really badly. That's why companies are changing their approach towards GVCs.

If you look at these fragmentations, which are meant to happen anyway as we are living in a world run by humans, these events always give opportunities to new people or countries. So, if the US stops software exports to China, Apple and other companies will try to find an alternative to China.

This gives developing countries like India an opportunity to grab and boost their economy. If you look at most companies worldwide, they are now focusing on the China + 1 strategy, which means looking for other countries for production along with China. In simple words, don't put everything in China as it is risky—try other countries as well so that if something goes wrong, you still have a backup.

There are immense opportunities for India in these situations. They can actually bring a lot of companies to India for production and assembly, as labour is relatively cheap and there is ample skilled manpower available for companies. These companies will bring a good amount of jobs, which will reduce joblessness in the country. Youth will get exposure to different technologies, helping them to upskill themselves. This can slowly translate into the development of indigenous products, which eventually helps India become independent in innovation and technology.

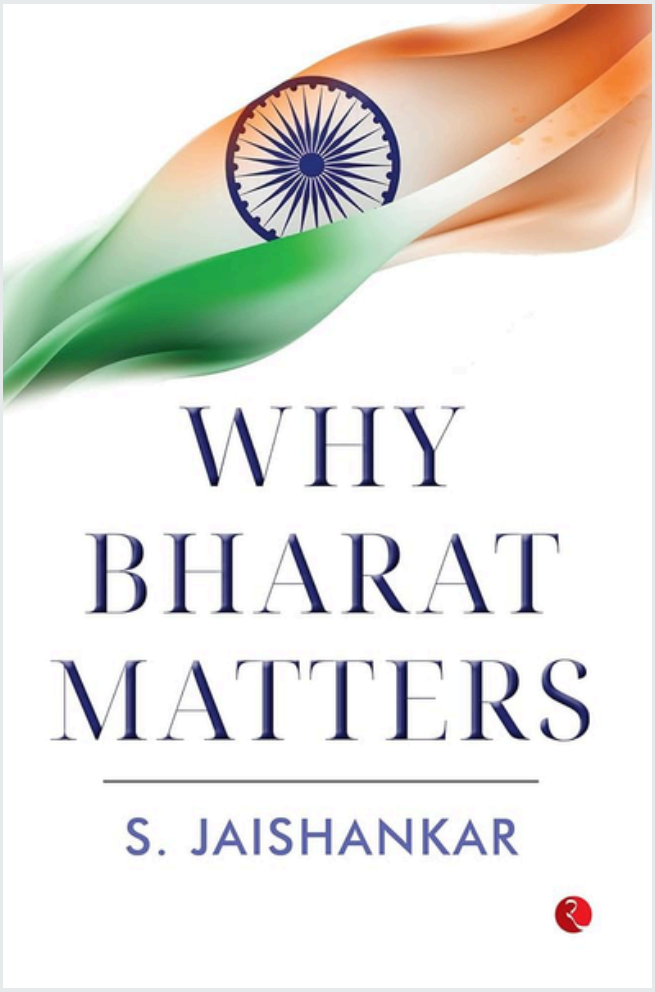
To summarise, the world order will continue to change and we have to adapt ourselves to the new world. Every time the world order changes, new opportunities will emerge. Our job is to grab those opportunities and capitalise on them.

Thanks for reading!!

Why Bharat Matters

Book Review

— Apurwa Kanitkar



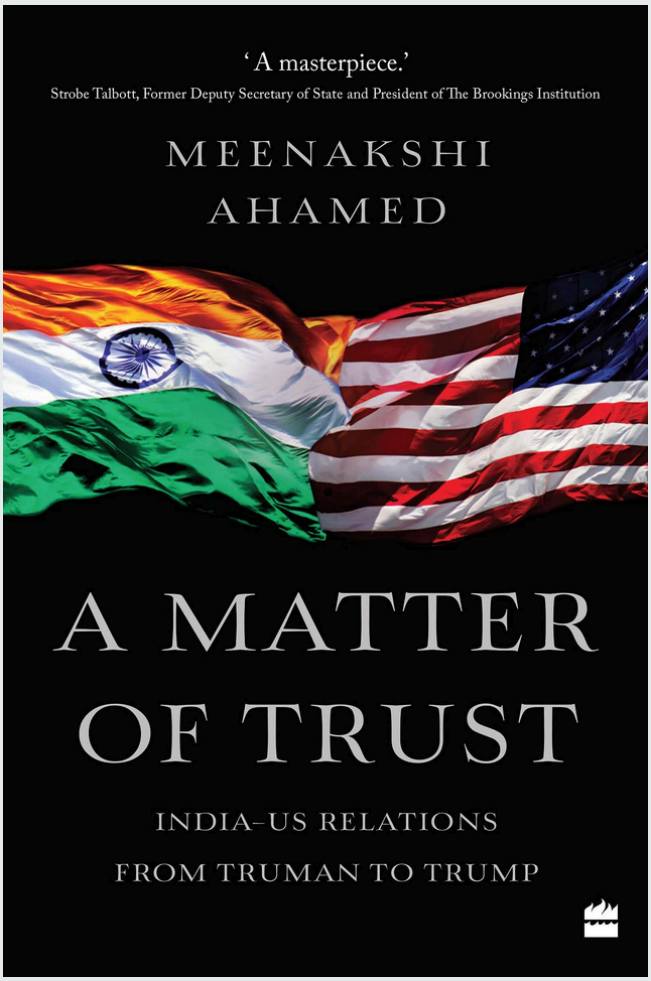
Why Bharat Matters by Subrahmanyam Jaishankar presents a culturally rooted view of Indian diplomacy. As a distinct and interesting factor, he highlights the antiquity of Indian diplomatic thought by quoting incidents and references from ancient texts like the Mahabharat and Ramayan. The book covers a myriad of aspects ranging from nuclear policy and crisis responses to the shift from older approaches to more assertive recent strategies. This shows that India is no longer a passive actor. It further explains India's rise in a multipolar order and its multilateral and plurilateral engagements. His writings are rich in insights for all diplomacy and politics enthusiasts. However, the diplomatic jargon can take time for non-specialist readers. Overall, it convincingly explains why Bharat mattered, matters, and will continue to matter.

A Matter Of Trust: India-US Relations from Truman to Trump

Book Review

— Chinmay Joshi

With its friendly tone and flow of information, this book keeps you hooked onto the story of how the relations between the world's oldest and largest democracies flourished over a span of close to 7 decades. This book carefully explains the "why" and "how" of certain policy shifts and undertakings in the way they did, focusing on simultaneous shifts in global order. Shifting between the prejudices of ambassadors, the massive egos of some presidents, and the continued persuasion of "non-alignment" by a few prime ministers, this detailed piece of analysis unfolds the fragile nature of this partnership. Overall, "A Matter of Trust" by Meenakshi Ahamed is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding India-US relations right from the postwar era to modern-day diplomacy.



THINK.
DISCUSS.
PROSPER.