

Calibrated balance

Context:

- India's foreign policy approach.

What is new form of non-alignment?

- The External Affairs Minister has emphasized that India has never been part of an alliance system, nor will it ever be. This statement comes at a time when India- U.S. relations have been on the upswing.
- While complete non-alignment worked for India during the Cold War era between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the fact that India and China share a land boundary would always be a factor in a new cold war between the U.S. and China. India would inadvertently be pulled into the new cold war.
- Given the current multipolarity in the world, India would need to take a definite stand on issues thus requiring a **new approach to the non-alignment policy**. This would involve India not rejecting non-alignment in its entirety, but at the same time taking stands on issues without compromising on its independence.



What is India's approach?

- The assertion of India's strategic independence and resistance to joining any alliance comes as a timely reminder amid speculation that tensions with China will push India into a stronger alliance with the U.S.
- Despite multiple calls for India and the U.S. to jointly "counter" China, **India has rightly chosen not to raise its tensions with China in any forum other than bilateral talks with China.**
- A notable aspect of foreign policy has been **India's outreach to Russia** during the India-China tensions.

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- The Indian Defence Minister had recently visited Russia. The External Affairs Minister had participated in the Russia-India-China trilateral.
- India has also been seeking to **build coalitions with “middle powers”**, such as the European Union and Japan.

Conclusion:

- Non-alignment as a policy must be rethought, but India must be wary of alliance systems. India has thus far taken a carefully calibrated approach to the evolving situation in global affairs and should continue to do so.