

INDIA

Party Portrait

India's foreign policy continues to be dogged by a lingering "third worldism" and "anti-Western framework", in addition to conflict narratives shaped during the British colonial period and the Cold War. At the same time, with robust economic growth, military modernization, and rapprochement with the US, India increasingly sees itself rising to great-power status. Both India's past and present identity, however, seem to justify and suggest that a strategy of international restraint will endure. India's Middle Eastern policy, consistent with this broad global stance, can be characterized as "reactive and incremental", despite the country's substantial and ever-growing interests in the region along economic and security fronts.

Key Interests

- Seek new military equipment, expertise and funding to strengthen the government's domestic hold on power
- Secure energy supplies, including crude oil and natural gas
- Increase export markets for Indian goods and access to imports
- Ensure continued ability for Indian migrants in the Middle East to send remittances home
- Build alliances with Middle Eastern countries to balance Pakistan, including with Saudi Arabia
- Prevent Saudi Arabia from funding Sunni extremist groups in Pakistan

Sources of Leverage

Economic - India is a major trading partner for many Middle Eastern countries.
Military - India has consistently contributed forces to UN peace operations in the Middle East since the 1950s.

Regional Strategy

India tries to maintain a strategic balance between Saudi Arabia and Iran, between the US and Iran, and between the Israelis and the Arab Palestinians. India no longer attempts to take sides in inter-Arab disputes but instead developed relations with each country in a bilateral and separate fashion. In practice, however, it has favored one side over another. For instance, it still enjoys stronger relations with Iran over Saudi Arabia as the latter allegedly supports Sunni extremist groups and has strong ties with Pakistan. India maintains its position for anti-interventionism and non-coercive measures. For instance, Congress Party-led government strongly opposed NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya against Gaddafi by arguing that Libyan repression was an internal affair, and sided closely to Russian and Chinese positions.

Powerful Individuals

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval

Potential Negotiation Moves

Play Active Role - Assume more active role in regional multilateral organizations
Act as Mediator - Engage "good offices" in regional disputes, mediating dialogue and peace processes as a neutral broker

Internal Conflicts

Hindu-Muslim ethnic divisions continue to divide the country, particularly in the wake of the nomination of a controversial Hindu nationalist BJP candidate as First Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Kashmir stokes tension with Pakistan.

Memberships

IAEA, UN

Allies

N/A

Partners

FRANCE, IRAN, ISRAEL, SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES

Rivals

CHINA, RUSSIA

Adversaries

N/A

Active Armed Opponents

N/A

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

EUROPEAN UNION, JAPAN, UNITED STATES

Aid Donor

N/A