



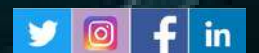
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**DIPLOMACY: POSITIONING INDIA IN THE EMERGING  
GLOBAL ORDER  
BY  
AMB ASHOK SAJJANHAR**

**ORGANISED BY CENJOWS  
22 JAN 2026**

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# **DIPLOMACY: POSITIONING INDIA IN THE EMERGING GLOBAL ORDER**

**BY AMB ASHOK SAJJANHAR**

**ORGANISED BY CENJOWS ON 22 JAN 2026**

The contemporary global environment is marked by unprecedented speed, volatility, and structural transformation. Echoing Vladimir Lenin's observation that "There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen," the world today is witnessing rapid geopolitical, economic, and technological shifts that challenge long-standing assumptions about order and stability. Statements at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting reflect a shared recognition that unpredictability has become the defining feature of global affairs. The post-1945 liberal international order, anchored in institutions such as the United Nations and supported by rules-based trade mechanisms like the World Trade Organisation, is under visible strain. The resurgence of unilateralism, the weaponisation of tariffs, and transactional approaches to diplomacy—particularly during the presidency of Donald Trump—have intensified uncertainty in global economic governance. Traditional alliances such as NATO face internal pressures, while conflicts such as the Russia–Ukraine War and the Israel– Hamas War underscore deepening geopolitical fractures. Technology has emerged as the central instrument of power, with artificial intelligence, semiconductors, rare earths, and digital infrastructure redefining strategic competition, while interdependence itself has been weaponised, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For India, these global disruptions coincide with regional challenges, including developments in Afghanistan, instability in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, tensions with China, and persistent security concerns emanating from Pakistan. Yet India has responded with a strategy rooted in economic growth, political stability, strategic autonomy, and multi-alignment. Rising from the world's tenth-largest to fourth-largest economy within a decade, India's sustained growth has strengthened infrastructure, digital governance, and poverty reduction, enhancing both domestic resilience and international credibility. Its leadership during the G20 presidency in 2023, particularly through the "Voice of the Global South" initiative and the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member, demonstrated its commitment to amplifying the concerns of developing countries. India simultaneously engages with diverse groupings—such as BRICS, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and G7 dialogues—reflecting a deliberate policy of balancing across geopolitical divides. This multi-alignment differs from transactionalism; it is a long-term, interest-based approach suited to an emerging multipolar system. While the current moment may be characterised as global disorder rather than an orderly transition, the complete abandonment of multilateralism remains unlikely, as cooperative frameworks remain essential for managing interdependence. India's path forward lies in sustaining high economic growth, deepening reforms, diversifying trade partnerships, strengthening

technological capacity, and maintaining credible deterrence. In an era defined by rupture and uncertainty, India is not merely adapting to change but positioning itself as a stabilising force and a bridge between North and South, East and West, thereby shaping the contours of the emerging global order.