

India's Diplomatic Dilemma

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India's Diplomatic Dilemma: Multilateralism vs Strategic Autonomy

Background

The **India-Pakistan conflict**, especially over **Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)**, has resurfaced in global discussions following **Operation Sindoor**. This underlines not only the **persistent hostility** between the two countries but also exposes the **ineffectiveness of both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy** in resolving the issue.

Historical and Diplomatic Challenges

- Post-independence, the Kashmir issue was internationalised due to India's appeal to the **UN under Article VI**, rather than as an act of aggression under Article VII.
 - This allowed the introduction of **self-determination** into the discourse, complicating India's territorial claims.
 - **UN representations** still describe the **Line of Control** with disclaimers, affecting India's diplomatic assertions.
 - The **Simla Agreement** aimed for bilateral resolution, but **Pakistan's push for internationalisation** has stalled progress.
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Terrorism and the Global Response

- India's push to prioritise terrorism in global forums has faced resistance.
- The **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** proposed by India has not progressed, partly due to disagreements over the **definition of terrorism**.

- Despite global concern post-9/11, legal consensus remains elusive. India's earlier support for liberation movements is often used against it.
 - Even large military operations, like those in Afghanistan, haven't led to long-term counter-terror success.
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UN and Strategic Limitations

- The **UN Security Council** has passed many anti-terror resolutions, but **enforcement and clarity remain weak**.
 - India's **surgical strikes and military restraint** complicate its legal justification under international law.
 - The **UN Counter-Terrorism Committee** avoids taking clear stances on sensitive issues, undermining India's case.
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Hyphenation and Nuclear Instability

- International discourse still views India and Pakistan as a **"hyphenated pair"**, especially in nuclear matters.
 - While India maintains a **No First Use** doctrine, **Pakistan's threats of escalation** continue to destabilise the region.
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The Way Ahead: Strategic Autonomy

- India now focuses future talks with Pakistan **only on terrorism and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK)**.
- **Multilateral platforms like the UN have failed** due to outdated frameworks and global power politics.
- **Operation Sindoor** has reaffirmed India's need for **strategic autonomy**, emphasising **national security** over external validation.

Conclusion

The Kashmir issue reveals the **inherent limitations of global diplomacy** when confronted with deep-rooted historical and ideological disputes. With **multilateral institutions failing** to deliver meaningful outcomes, **India's best path forward lies in pragmatic self-reliance**, strong defence, and a firm stance against terrorism.



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