



India and the New Eurasia

This editorial is based on [“In light of China-Russia alliance and Ukraine conflict, India and the new Eurasia”](#) which was published in The Indian Express on 19/01/2023. It talks about the Changing dynamics in Eurasia and challenges for India.

For Prelims: Eurasia, AUKUS, Belt and Road Initiative, South China Sea, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

For Mains: Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Geopolitical developments in Eurasia, China's increasing influence in Eurasia

"New Eurasia" is a term that has been used in various contexts, but it **generally refers to the idea of a new political, economic, or cultural alignment in the region of Eurasia.**

This can include **ideas such as a re-emergence of Russia as a dominant power** in the region, the integration of various countries in the region into a larger economic and political bloc, or the emergence of new cultural or ideological trends in the region.

The concept of New Eurasia is often associated with the idea of a "Eurasian Union" comprising of former Soviet republics. However, the meaning and scope of the term can vary depending on the context in which it is used.

What is the Changing Geopolitics between Asia and Europe?

- India's mounting security challenges from China on the Himalayan frontier and India's continental strategy will become tougher in the coming era.
 - On the other side, the possibilities for strengthening India's strategic capabilities in partnership with the US and Europe as well as Japan, South Korea and Australia have never been that stronger.
- Japan is **determined to build strong military partnerships with Europe.** For Japan the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific is indivisible.
- South Korea is also **joining the party by raising its profile in Europe.** For example, it is selling major weapons platforms in Poland.
- Australia **has joined the US and UK in the [AUKUS](#) arrangement and** is equally eager to bring Europe into the Indo-Pacific.
 - Together Japan, South Korea and Australia are bridging the divide between Asia and Europe which was once seen as separate geopolitical areas.
- Moreover, the partnership between Asia and Europe has increased by [Russia's war in Ukraine](#) and due to the alliance between Russia and China.

What are the Challenges with Emergence of Eurasia?

- **Increasing Economic Influence of Countries:**
 - One major shift has been the **increasing economic and political power of countries like China and Russia.**
 - China's **Belt and Road Initiative**, a massive infrastructure project spanning multiple countries, has **allowed the country to expand its economic influence** and secure access to natural resources.
 - Russia, meanwhile, has used its energy resources to gain leverage in the region and assert itself as a major player in international affairs.
- **Increasing Tensions between Various Countries:**
 - The ongoing conflict in Syria, for example, has led to a breakdown in relations between Turkey and Russia, and has also strained relations between the United States and other countries in the region.
 - Additionally, the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the territorial disputes in the **South China Sea** have led to increased tensions between neighboring countries.
- **Political Changes:**
 - Political changes in the region, such as Brexit and the rise of populist movements in Europe, have also had an impact on the dynamics of Eurasia.
 - Some experts argue that **these changes could lead to a shift in the balance of power in the region**, with potential implications for international relations and trade.

What are the Implications for India due to the Emergence of New Eurasia?

- **Harder to Balance Maritime and Continental Powers:**
 - Before now, India could **easily cooperate with the maritime coalition** (the **Quad** in the **Indo-Pacific**) and run simultaneously with the continental coalition led by Russia and China.
 - However, the conflict between the **US, Europe, and Japan on the one hand and China and Russia on the other will bring challenges for India** in balancing its relation with these countries.
- **Security Challenges from China:**
 - One of the main challenges is **China's territorial claims and military expansion in the Himalayas**, which has led to increased tensions between the two countries.
 - Additionally, **China's economic and military rise has led to concerns** about its ability to project power in the Indian Ocean region, which is of strategic importance to India.
 - Furthermore, China's growing influence in neighboring countries through the Belt and Road Initiative has led to concerns about encirclement and potential threats to India's security.
- **Cooperation between China and Russia:**
 - It has the **potential to alter the balance of power in the region in favor of China and Russia**, which could have negative consequences for India's security and strategic interests.
 - Additionally, the **growing cooperation between China and Russia could lead to increased military and economic coordination**, which could further challenge India's position in the region.
 - Furthermore, China and Russia's close relationship could lead to them jointly opposing India on key issues such as **counter-terrorism, UN peacekeeping**, and regional stability, which would limit India's ability to advance its own interests on the global stage.

How can India Protect its Interests in the Era of Emergence of New Eurasia?

- **Building Stronger Economic Ties:**
 - India **should work to strengthen its economic ties with other countries** in the region, particularly with those that are not participating in the **Belt and Road Initiative**, in order to create alternative options for trade and investment.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:**
 - India should **engage in diplomatic efforts to build stronger relationships** with other countries in the region, in order to counterbalance China and Russia's growing influence.

- This could include building stronger ties with the US, Japan and other countries in the region.
- **Military Cooperation:**
 - India **should strengthen its military cooperation with other countries** in the region, particularly with those that share its concerns about China's territorial claims and military expansion.
- **Maintaining Strategic Autonomy:**
 - India should **maintain its strategic autonomy by avoiding being drawn** into aligning with any specific bloc or power structure.
- **Investing in Domestic Production:**
 - India **should focus on investing in domestic production and technology** to reduce dependency on imports and enhance self-reliance in critical areas.

What should be the Way Forward?

- **Ensuring Continental and Maritime Interests:**
 - It is quite clear India will not have the luxury of choosing one over the other, it would need to acquire strategic vision and deploy the necessary resources to pursue its continental interests without ignoring the interests in the maritime domain.
 - This will require a more assertive push for the continental rights (transit and access), working with the partners in Central Asia, with Iran and Russia and a more proactive engagement with economic and security agendas ranging from the [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#), [Eurasian Economic Union \(EAEU\)](#) and the [Collective Security Treaty Organization \(CSTO\)](#).
- **Centrality of the Central Asian states:**
 - China strives to secure long-term strategic gains on continental Eurasia, but its maritime expansionist gains are relatively easier to reverse.
 - Like the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) centrality is key to the Indo-Pacific, centrality of the Central Asian states should be key for Eurasia.
 - India should focus on building strong economic and diplomatic ties with the Central Asian states.
 - This could include increasing trade and investment in the region, as well as promoting cultural exchange and collaboration on regional security issues.
- **Expanding Economic and Trade Relationships:**
 - India can also **seek to expand its economic and trade relationships with countries in the region**, through initiatives such as the [International North-South Transport Corridor](#) and the [Chabahar port project](#).

Drishti Mains Question

Discuss the key challenges and opportunities for India in the context of the New Eurasia.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. The new tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario. **(2021)**