

## The Global South's Assertion in Geopolitics

### Why in news?

Several countries in the Global South are finding neutrality and strategic autonomy as a viable option in a changing world.

### How about the current picture of geopolitics?

- **The USA's Wishlist-** The United States advocates for
  - Curbing China's rise
  - Weakening Russia's capabilities
  - Securing Europe behind U.S. leadership
  - Building satellite alliances with countries which conform to U.S. interests and values
- **Rise of China-** Given its phenomenal economic reach during globalisation, China began building institutions to counter the West.
- It looked for accommodation with the U.S. in its "**Peaceful Rise**" project.
- As the U.S. found this unacceptable, China turned from partner to competitor to threat.

### What does Global South mean?

- The term "Global South" was first coined by a social activist **Carl Oglesby** in 1969.
- Global South is used to describe countries whose economies are not yet fully developed and which face challenges such as low per capita income, excessive unemployment, and a lack of valuable capital.
- Although the majority of Global South countries are indeed located in the tropics or Southern Hemisphere, the term itself is **strictly economic**.
- Hence, **Australia** is "down under" but not part of the Global South.

### Who are the major players in the Global South?

- **Russia-** Russia, with its vast natural resources and military capability, has shown capacity to assert its will in global geopolitics.
- Russian aggression against Ukraine has been a geopolitical watershed.
- The developing Sino-Russian strategic partnership without limits is the clearly defined enemy other for the West.
- **China-** China's expanding military footprint and 'grey zone' policies of violation of maritime zones in the South China Seas have antagonised several countries.
- **India-** India has used its leverage to negotiate with multiple sides.
- India increased oil purchases from Russia, shrugging off western pressure.
- India has a military Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with the

U.S.

- At the same time it has developed the International North South Transport Corridor connecting Russia and India via central Asia.
- It participates in military exercises such as the U.S.-led but also sends a military contingent for the Vostok exercises with Russia and China.

### What about other countries in the Global South?

- **Russia-Ukraine War-** Most of the countries oppose the sanctions regime and advocate neutrality because
  - Many in the South are dependent on Russian energy, fuel, fertilizers, wheat, commodities and defence equipment.
- **Apprehensions on West-** Many countries of the South believe that they are unlikely to get western help when they need it the most.
  - It includes recent experience of refusal by the West to grant a one-time exception for patents for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Alliances-** Most of the Southern countries would not like to be a part of security or military alliances with either the West or the Russian or Chinese sides.
  - For example, the security pact that China in 2022 offered to 10 Pacific island nations was not favoured.
  - They neither agreed to China's 'Common Development Vision'.
- There has been an unprecedented pushback from the South that wants to make its own strategic choices.
  - For instance, the South Africa described the U.S.'s "Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act" that punishes African states and leaders who engage with Russia as offensive.

### What about the South's choice in geo-economics?

- The fear of the U.S. strategy of freezing dollar reserves has made the South cautious.
- The U.S. trade policies of 're-shoring' and 'friend-shoring' is leading the South to gradually find ways of bypassing the dollar in bilateral trade by using local currencies.
- Currency swap arrangements are used by China, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)+ 3 countries, etc.
- Multilateral institutions, ranging from BRICS and the African Union, to ASEAN, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, have given it new confidence.

### References

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-global-souths-assertion-in-geopolitics/article65928035.ece?homepage=true>
2. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/global-south-countries>

### Quick facts

## **China's "Peaceful Rise" Policy**

- The policy states that China will develop economically by taking advantage of the peaceful international environment, and at the same time maintain and contribute to world peace by its development.
- The policy was articulated in 2003 to counter international fears about Beijing's growing economic and political might.

## **Reshoring**

- Bringing production back home to reduce the potential for disruption of supply chains.

## **Friend-shoring**

- Limiting the trade of key inputs to trusted countries in order to reduce risks to the supply chains on which the US and its partners rely.

