

INDIA WILL NEVER BE A PART OF AN ALLIANCE SYSTEM: JAISHANKAR

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India's Foreign Policy evolution and changes

S. Jaishankar

Non-alignment is an old concept today, but India will never be a part of an alliance system, according to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

Speaking about the consequences of global shifts, including the United States and the assertiveness of China, he said they were opening spaces for middle powers like India, Japan, the European Union and others.

“Non-alignment was a term of a particular era and geopolitical landscape. One aspect was independence, which remains a factor of continuity for us,” Mr. Jaishankar said at a virtual conference organised by CNBC-TV18 on the “Geopolitics of opportunity: as the world rebalances, how should India capitalise?”

“The consequence of repositioning of the United States, that the big umbrella is now smaller than it used to be, has allowed many other countries to play more autonomous roles. It doesn't affect us as much because we were never part of an alliance system and we will never be. But countries who depended more on the U.S. are finding they have to take a call themselves on many issues,” he noted.

India must now take more “risks”, as the world expected it to take a more proactive stance on the “big issues” of the day, including connectivity, maritime security, terrorism, climate change and terrorism, he stated.

While he didn't comment on the ongoing tensions over the Line of Actual control (LAC), the Minister said that India had moved slowly in comparison to China on the economic front, and that China's economy was now five times that of India's despite them being the same size in 1988.

“In comparison with China and with South East Asia, we could have done better. We didn't intensively industrialise and push manufacturing, we opened up much later, a full decade and a half after China, and then didn't commit to full reforms the way China did,” Mr. Jaishankar said, speaking with Singapore-based academic C. Rajamohan and businessman Sunil Munjal.

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