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Q5(a)

Peaceful co-existence remains the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 2 · 10 marks · Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy

Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy: India's position on the recent crisis in Afghanistan, Iraq and West Asia, growing relations with US and Israel; vision of a new world order.

Core demand of the question

- Peaceful co-existence remains the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. Comment
- Keep the answer within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Panchsheel made peaceful coexistence a named Indian doctrine with China in 1954.

NAM and the UN carried the same language of sovereignty and non-interference.

Wars and border crises show the cornerstone can crack.

1998 and later US and Quad ties add realist insurance.

The phrase remains official; the practice is coexistence plus capability.

Introduction

Peaceful coexistence is the claim that unlike systems can live without war if sovereignty is respected. India wrote it into Panchsheel and still recites it. Practice has added harder balancing.

Body**The cornerstone as doctrine**

- The 1954 Panchsheel agreement with China listed mutual respect for territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference, equality, and peaceful coexistence.
- [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) carried the same vocabulary into Bandung, NAM, and the [UN Charter's](#) friendly-relations language.
- The idea was a reply to Cold War bloc war and to colonial intervention, not a vow of passivity.

Continuity

- India still prefers diplomacy, UN process, and strategic autonomy over joining NATO.
- Neighbourhood First, Act East, and Global South voice keep coexistence as the public grammar of a civilisational State.

Strain and update

- 1962 with China, 1971 with Pakistan, Kargil, and 2020 Ladakh show that coexistence is a preference, not a guarantee.

- Nuclear tests in 1998, later Quad consultations, and logistics pacts with the United States sit beside Panchsheel talk.
- Realists such as Morgenthau would call coexistence a policy when power allows, not a law of nature.

Judgment

- **The cornerstone remains the official first stone. The building now has more steel:** deterrence, minilateral groups, and issue-based alignment.

Flow diagram

Panchsheel 1954 -> Peaceful coexistence
Peaceful coexistence -> NAM UN diplomacy
Peaceful coexistence -> Deterrence Quad after shocks
NAM UN diplomacy -> Indian foreign policy
Deterrence Quad after shocks -> Indian foreign policy

Conclusion

Peaceful coexistence is still India's declared cornerstone through Panchsheel, NAM memory, and UN diplomacy. It has not been the only tool since 1962. Autonomy plus deterrence is the working mix.

Facts & figures

Panchsheel 1954

India-China statement of five principles, including peaceful coexistence, later cited across NAM.

Bandung 1955

Asian-African Conference that universalised coexistence language for newly independent States.

UN Charter

Sovereign equality and peaceful settlement that Indian diplomats treat as the legal home of the doctrine.

Ladakh 2020

Border crisis with China that forced India to pair coexistence talk with military and Quad hedging.