

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar at Bloomberg's 'New Economic Forum', Singapore

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Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar at 'New Economic Forum', Singapore

- **India-China relations passing through a bad patch, China has violated bilateral pacts**

India-China relations are currently passing through a “particularly bad patch” and India’s interests are better served with a closer relationship with the US and Europe. The downturn in ties was due to China’s actions that had violated bilateral pacts, and that he had conveyed to his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during recent meetings where New Delhi stands on the relationship with Beijing.

- **China doesn’t have a credible explanation and India has communicated China’s mishandling of relationship clearly**

“We are going through a particularly bad patch in our relationship because they have taken a set of actions in violation of agreements for which they still don’t have a credible explanation and that appears to indicate some rethink about where they want to take our relationship, but that’s for them to answer”. When asked about “Is China aware of how it mishandled its relations with India” Shri Jaishankar replied “I don’t think the Chinese have any doubt on where we stand on our relationship and what’s not gone right with it. I’ve been meeting my counterpart Wang Yi a number of times. As you would’ve experienced, I speak fairly clear, reasonably understandably [and] there is no lack of clarity. So, if they want to hear it, I am sure they would have heard it.”

- **India is having a better relationship with US, UK, Europe, and ASEAN. US is now a more flexible partner.**

India’s interests are better served “with a much closer relationship with the US, with a much stronger relationship with Europe and the UK, with a...re-energising of our relationship with ASEAN, especially Singapore”. “I think there’s no question the US has been strategically contracting for some time. Don’t confuse it with the decline of the US, I think that’s ridiculous. But relatively and absolutely, American power or American influence is not what it used to be,” he said. The US is now a “much more flexible partner, much more open to ideas, suggestions, and working arrangements than in the past”, and this reflects a changed world.

- **China will not replace US, world is more multipolar now with strategic partnerships like QUAD.**

China has been expanding, though the nature of its growing influence is very different from that of the US. “We don’t have a situation where China necessarily replaces the US.” The world is more multipolar now and a lot of countries, including India, have “come much more into play” as part of a rebalancing of power. The overall landscape has become “more volatile”, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad is a good example of countries coming together on a set of concerns or issues.

- **Post COVID there is a need for more reliable and resilient supply chains**

Shri Jaishankar acknowledged that some of the positioning by India is “about China”, and the steps being taken by the country are “partly a hedging strategy” and “partly autonomous partnerships” that are issue-based. The Covid-19 pandemic had accelerated this trend because it had raised questions about the old style of globalisation and highlighted the need for more reliable and resilient supply chains. In this context, he pointed to the Quad initiative to produce and distribute US-developed Covid-19 vaccine made in India with Japan’s financial assistance and Australia’s logistics support. This initiative reflects decentralised globalisation, more resilient supply chains, more trust and transparency, and more flexible combinations producing solutions for a particular challenge, he added.