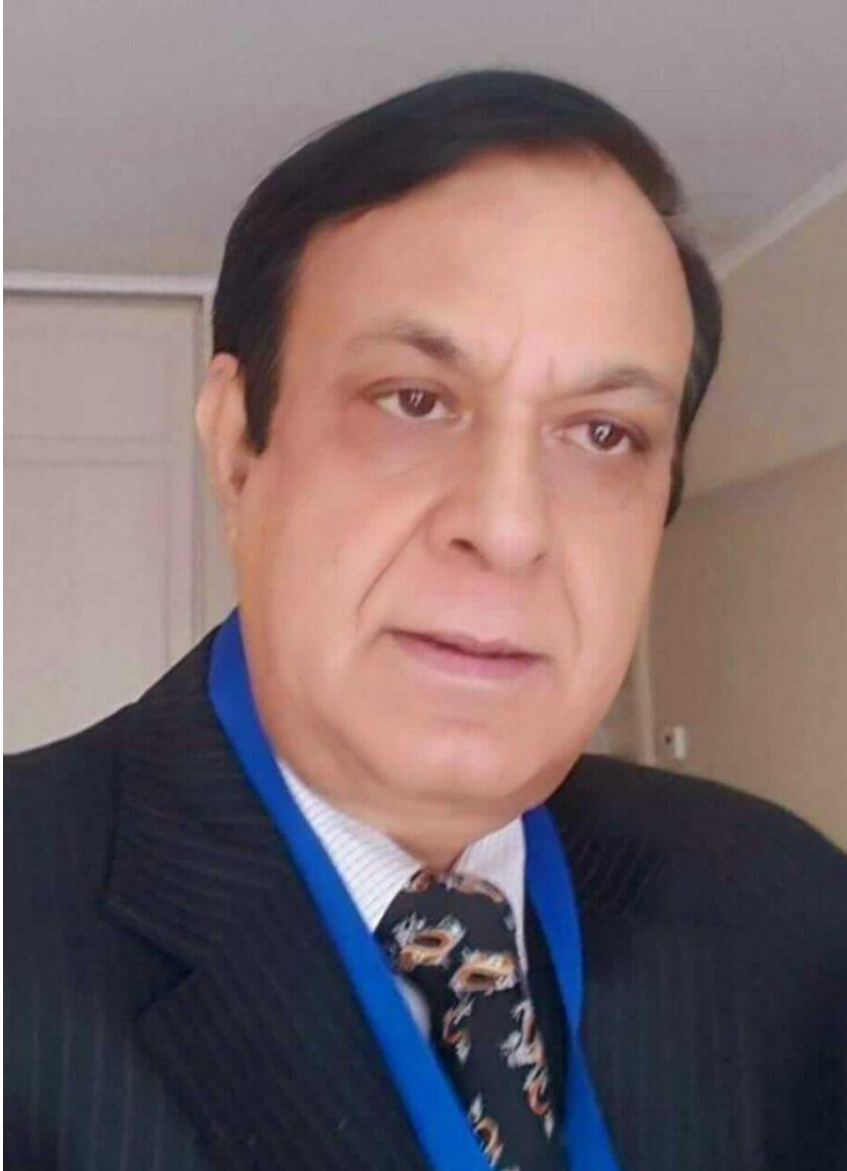


**Part 2: India's National Security in a Multipolar World: Challenges and Strategies: Exclusive Interview with Maj. Gen. B.K. Sharma, AVSM, SM \*\* By Neeraj Mahajan ([Taazakhabarnews.com](http://Taazakhabarnews.com))**

*India has a multifaceted and significant role in a multipolar world to maintain its strategic autonomy, and take decisions based on its own national interests rather than*



*being swayed by any particular bloc or power. As Director General of the United Service Institution of India (USI), India's 156-year think tank Maj. Gen. B.K. Sharma, AVSM, SM\*\* (Retd.) has profusely contributed several books and research papers at international and national conferences and speaks at policy think tanks and academic*

**Neeraj Mahajan** is a hard-core, creative and dynamic media professional with over 35 years of proven competence and 360-degree experience in print, electronic, web and mobile journalism. He is an eminent investigative journalist, out of the box thinker, and a hard-core reporter who is always hungry for facts. Neeraj has worked in all kinds of daily/weekly/broadsheet/tabloid newspapers, magazines and television channels like Star TV, BBC, Patriot, Sunday Observer, Sunday Mail, Network Magazine, Verdict, and Gfiles Magazine.

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*Commissioned in the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment, Gen Sharma Commanded a Mountain Division on the China border and served as a Senior Faculty Member at the National Defence College served at the UN Peacekeeping in Central America and was Defence Attaché in Central Asia. He received three military awards from the President of India for distinguished national service and courage. He received a nation-building award from the Confederation of Educational Excellence. Gen Sharma shared his perspective on India's national security, strategic partnerships, and emerging threats as well as challenges and opportunities in an exclusive interview with Taazakhabar News. Let's dive into his insights and expertise on this critical topic. Excerpts from an exclusive interview with Editor, Taazakhabar News **NEERAJ MAHAJAN**.*

**Is the rise of regional powers like India, Brazil, or Turkey altering traditional strategic balances?**

Definitely. India's naval and nuclear rise reshapes South Asia and the Indian Ocean. Brazil tests U.S. dominance in South America, while Turkey's Middle East ambitions redraw regional maps. These "swing states" shift global balances by asserting regional influence, compelling traditional powers to adjust strategies in a more decentralised world. These states assert their interests independently, often challenging the monopoly of Western consensus. India's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, Brazil's recalibration in regional politics, and Turkey's autonomous security calculus underscore that regional powers are no longer content with peripheral roles—they are active shapers of order.

**How significant is the role of economic interdependence in shaping strategic alignments today, especially between politically adversarial countries?**

Economic interdependence is pivotal—it stabilises and complicates. U.S.-China trade tempers conflict, yet tech rivalries expose vulnerabilities. Despite tensions, China

remains the top trading partner for many of its rivals. The U.S. and China are decoupling in high-tech domains but remain economically entangled.



EU-Russia energy ties endure despite sanctions. Sanctions and supply chains are strategic tools, but overreliance risks coercion, as Europe learned post-Ukraine. In multipolarity, economic ties both deter hostility and redefine leverage. This duality—rivalry amidst dependency—demands new strategic frameworks that reconcile coercive diplomacy with economic realism.

**Do you believe military doctrines and defence strategies adapt fast enough to the realities of a multipolar world, where threat perceptions are more ambiguous and non-linear? How do hybrid threats—cyber warfare, misinformation, proxy wars—shift traditional notions of friend and foe?**



The character of warfare is evolving rapidly. Multi-domain operations and grey-zone conflicts are blurring the lines between peace and war. The proliferation of disruptive and niche technologies is fueling asymmetric warfare, reshaping deterrence doctrines, and complicating traditional notions of security. Defence budgets worldwide are witnessing a sharp uptick. Force modernization, forward deployment, and aggressive maneuvers—particularly in Baltic States, the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula—are escalating risks of deliberate or accidental confrontations, amplified by strategic mistrust and rising hyper-nationalism. Contested borders in South Asia manifest in the form of a collusive hybrid threat from Pakistan and China to India; with most nuclear arms control treaties either defunct or under strain, atomic weapons have re-emerged as central to strategic doctrines. Trends such as the U.S.'s development of low-yield nukes, Pakistan's full-spectrum deterrence, China's nuclear expansion, and North Korea's saber-rattling signal a dangerous revival of nuclear brinkmanship. The spectre of nuclear proliferation in West Asia, involving Israel and potentially Iran, raises the threat of a regional Armageddon.



Military doctrines often lag behind the fast-evolving threat spectrum. Traditional kinetic-centric paradigms struggle to address hybrid warfare: cyberattacks, deep fakes, drone swarms, and disinformation campaigns. The battlefield is now cognitive and transnational. Threats are no longer about flags and frontiers but about vulnerabilities across digital, social, and psychological domains. Hybrid threats blur friend-foe lines—adversaries can cooperate economically while clashing covertly—demanding agile, networked defences. Doctrinal flexibility and red-teaming are vital.

**What is meant by the future of dysfunctional multilateralism? How do you see the future of global institutions like the UN and its subsidiary institutions?**

We enter an age of dysfunctional multilateralism—where global institutions remain structurally significant but politically paralysed. The UN Security Council reflects outdated power equations hostage to geostrategic rivalries. Reform is overdue but unlikely in the short term. Ironically, amid escalating crises, the United Nations—the

primary custodian of global peace and security—remains paralysed, undermined by veto politics and power rivalries.



Its inability to enforce effective conflict resolution or institutional reforms has made it a bystander in shaping the global order. Likewise, undermining WTO WHO. UNHRC, COP21, ICC and ICJ have become a new normal, thus seriously impinging on their efficacy and relevance. Regional organisations are mired in internal contradictions between the member states, making consensus-based decisions complicated propositions.

**How will the evolving polarised geopolitical scenario impact India? How should India navigate its strategic interests in a volatile and uncertain world?**



Based on its achievements, India has emerged as a credible global power. As the world's largest democracy, the fifth-largest economy (soon to be third), and the fourth-strongest military, India is pivotal in the evolving global order. It champions strategic autonomy and has become a leading voice for the Global South.

India's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 (a developed nation) and its emphasis on Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance), especially in high-end technology and defence, underscore its aspirations. While India's stature and influence will continue to grow, it will remain a non-hegemonic power, committed to fostering a multipolar world and contributing constructively to global challenges such as climate change, health security, cyber threats, disruptive technologies, and peaceful conflict resolution.

India must pursue strategic hedging and balancing, deepening ties with multiple poles without formal entanglement. Our interests lie in stable multi-polarity, not bloc rivalry.

**Finally, what should be the key focus areas for defence think tanks today to ensure they contribute meaningfully to policy in this complex and unpredictable world order?**



Think tanks must serve as bridge-builders—translating complex trends into actionable insights, scenario-based foresight, and long-term strategic visioning. Their role is pivotal in insulating policy from reactive myopia. Policymakers are saddled with hectic routines, dealing with many complex issues and marathon meetings. Consequently, they do not get time for long-term strategic planning.



Think tanks can employ multi-domain experts skilled in critical and lateral thinking to examine complex and time-consuming issues and formulate coherent and cohesive assessments and long-term policy alternatives. These vital inputs can help policymakers review and refine strategies, structures, systems, and skills. In advanced countries, policymakers and think tanks work in close tandem. Ironically, in India, think tanks are underutilised and face financial constraints. This lacuna needs to be addressed earnestly.

*This is a reproduction of an interview of DG USI by the Editor of the Taazakhabar News.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Neeraj Mahajan, “India’s National Security in a Multipolar World: Challenges and Strategies”, *Taazakhabar News*, [https://taazakhabarnews.com/indias-national-security-in-a-multipolar-world-challenges-and-strategies/#google\\_vignette](https://taazakhabarnews.com/indias-national-security-in-a-multipolar-world-challenges-and-strategies/#google_vignette)

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