



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power

GLOBAL HORIZONS JUNE 2025

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Cover Images:

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a group photo with the leaders of the G7 countries and invited partners on the sidelines of the 51st G7 Summit, at Kananaskis, Canada, on June 17, 2025. Source: [Prime Minister of India](#)

NATO Secretary General, Mark Rutte welcomed the NATO Heads of State and Government for the 2025 NATO Summit, in the Hague, the Netherlands, on June 25, 2025. Source: [NATO](#)

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada, Mark Joseph Carney on the sidelines of the 51st G7 Summit at Kananaskis, in Canada, on June 17, 2025. Source: [Prime Minister of India](#)

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by

Nalin Surie

June was without doubt a frenetic month for the incumbent US Administration, and there would appear to be a method in the madness. Unpredictability, coupled with laying down arbitrary deadlines in public to be acted upon or postponed without much ado, created in US allies, partners and friends, uncertainty and breakdown of trust and the questioning of long held commitments. Personal aggrandisement seems to have become a major policy driver. But, whether the actions undertaken since the beginning of this year and more particularly during June, will end up strengthening US military, economic and technological power in a manner as to demonstrate that it remains by a wide margin the preponderant world power, or strengthen forces that have been put into play to weaken the Euro-Atlantic alliance, upend the multilateral trade, economic and financial systems and strengthen countries and forces that strongly oppose US unilateralism and hegemonic activities is perhaps the most vexing conundrum confronting Chancelleries and international businesses across the world. At the very least, the international strategic and economic order has begun to shift.

During the month, the Trump Administration can claim several successes. The US President spoke early in the month to both Presidents Xi and Putin. Following this, the US and China have worked out a trade agreement, but full details are awaited.

Russian bombardments in Ukraine intensified. The Nelson's eye approach by the US towards this remained in place. Is the intent to keep the Russia-China alliance from at least not further strengthening? Time will tell.

At the G7 and NATO Summits (June 17 and June 24-25, at Kananskis in Canada and The Hague respectively) President Trump drove the agenda. He left the G7 summit a day early, perhaps to address the Iran-Israel confrontation.

At the G7, Ukraine did not get the support it expected, but in the Chair's Summary (not Leaders' statement), the G7 "expressed support for President Trump's efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine"(!). They were also "resolute in exploring all options to maximise pressure on Russia, including

financial sanctions". A separate statement was adopted on Israel and Iran, but not on Ukraine.

Important G7 Leaders' statements of intent were adopted on critical minerals, AI for prosperity, common vision for the future of quantum technologies, migrant smuggling etc.

The NATO summit was held soon after the unexpected US bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities on June 22, even though talks between the US and Iran were to happen. But Iran had ignored the two week US ultimatum to give up all enrichment of uranium, and paid the price!

President Trump claimed that Iranian nuclear facilities had been obliterated by the US bombings. That assessment was challenged by experts, including the DG of the IAEA, who suggested that the damage done can be undone in several months. There were also reports that Iran had moved 400 kgs of enriched uranium before the US bombings.

Earlier, starting on June 13, Israel unleashed a massive series of aerial attacks on Iranian targets including scientists, military leaders, air bases, missile facilities/bases etc. Iran counter attacked targets in Israel with drones and missiles. Israel, though, soon established air superiority over Teheran etc. US warnings prevented Iran from attacking US bases in the Gulf, except for one notional attack on a US facility in Qatar for which advance notice was given! Regime change in Iran has not been ruled out by the US or Israel.

The long term strategic implications of bombing nuclear facilities were unilaterally cast aside. But, the good cop-bad cop routine between the US and Israel once again became obvious. The bottom line is that Iran cannot be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Europe shares this position.

Meanwhile, the US imposed cease fire between Iran and Israel on June 24 is holding, but negotiations between Iran and the US have not happened since US preconditions are not acceptable to Iran.

On June 30, the US lifted most of the sanctions against Syria, except for those on individuals and entities associated with the most severe actions of the former regime and those involved in harmful activities such as drug trafficking, WMD proliferation, terrorism, humans rights abuses and the actions of Iran and its proxies. The US expects the new regime of Al-Shaara to sign up to the Abraham Accords but that may require Israel agreeing, going forward, to not operate inside Syria. PM Netanyahu may well balk at that conditionality.

Israel's unrelenting campaign of destruction in Gaza continued and the humanitarian crisis there reached unprecedented proportions. The US continues to look the other way and Europe, the UN and humanitarian agencies looked on as mute spectators.

The US intention to maintain control and domination of West Asia remains firm.

The messaging will no doubt not be lost on those who wish or intend to displace the US from other regions where it has been and intends to remain dominant. The latter was clearly spelt out by US VP Vance in the three point Trump doctrine posted by him on June 24 on X. First, articulate a clear American interest. Second, try to aggressively diplomatically solve the problem, and third, when you can't solve it diplomatically, you use overwhelming military power to solve it.

President Trump received a hero's welcome at the NATO summit, so great was the desire of European NATO members to keep alive in the face of the Russia threat, at least for the near future, the Alliance and its Article 5 commitment to collective defence. For this purpose, the allies have agreed, as demanded by Trump, to "commit to invest 5% of GDP annually on core defence requirements as well as defence and security related spending by 2035". Whether the latter is doable given the state of the economies of NATO member states and the growing need for social welfare and other critical spending is very much in question. Spain has already made it clear that it is not on board for such a hefty increase in defence spending.

In so far as Ukraine is concerned, the very short NATO Hague Declaration has the Allies simply reaffirming "their enduring sovereign commitments to provide support to Ukraine, whose security contributes to ours". Assistance to Ukraine will be included in the 5% referred to above.

The Hague Declaration did reaffirm the "ironclad commitment" to Article 5, but before attending the summit, when asked, Trump had said "There are numerous definitions of Article 5, you know that right? But I'm committed to being their friend". This could not have been lost on the European, Japanese, Korean and other protected allies of the US.

The push back by US allies against its unilateral actions over several dimensions continued. Canada, under its new PM Carney, held a summit with the EU on June 23 in Brussels with a view to reinforcing their strategic partnership. A detailed joint statement to pursue bilateral cooperation was issued and an

agreement signed on an EU-Canada Security and Defence Partnership. Inter alia, fulsome support was expressed for Ukraine.

At the EU Council on June 27, the Europeans again doubled down on support for Ukraine and action against Russia.

More importantly, the Council re-stressed the “need for Europe to reduce its strategic dependencies, to increase its overall defence readiness and capabilities and to further strengthen its defence technological and industrial base”. Options for mobilising funds for European defence were discussed. Going forward, Europe will be increasingly judged by the implementation of its stated goals. The dilution of NATO will perhaps go hand in hand, unless there is a major outbreak of hostilities with Russia.

The European Council also adopted a meaningful Strategic Agenda 2024-29.

Japan too has shown its concern over the undue pressures being brought to bear on it by the US, be it on matters of trade concessions or defence spending. PM Ishiba absented himself from the NATO Summit and it has been reported that Japan had postponed the proposed 2+2 meeting of the Foreign and Defence ministers.

The US desire and intention to single-mindedly pursue its interests irrespective of the impact on allies/partners was also manifest in its relations with India. Trump and Modi were to meet at the G7 summit but could not, since Trump returned a day earlier from the Summit. The two, though, had a detailed phone conversation at President Trump's request on June 17, details of which were formally conveyed by the Indian Foreign Secretary to the media. It was made clear that notwithstanding US claims to the contrary, the latter had No Role to play in the cessation of armed action between India and Pakistan following the horrific terrorist massacre by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists in May. This became necessary since the US President has at every conceivable opportunity taken credit for that! What is worse, though, and what incensed public opinion in India, is that instead of holding Pakistan to account, President Trump invited the De-facto leader of Pakistan, army chief Asim Munir, to lunch at the White House on June 18. Iran was discussed. Trump tweeted: “they know Iran very well, better than most, and they're not happy about anything. They see what's going on. And he agreed with me”.

Pakistan does indeed serve many masters! And India will continue to fight this cancer of terrorism and its progenitors as it feels best, while keeping the international community advised as felt appropriate. At the same time, it bears recalling that the US has a long history of siding with Pakistan when it comes

to the latter's actions against India. And, the development of the strategic partnership between India and the US over the last twenty years has taken such deviations in its stride. The moot question is whether this Trump administration intends to derail that process. The signs so far, though, appear to be forward looking.

For instance, at the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting in Washington on July 01, US Secretary of State Rubio referred to the other three partners as "very important partners and allies of the US, and together we have a lot of shared priorities". The strong condemnation in the Quad joint statement of the Pahalgam terrorist attack was a gesture, although it does not name the perpetrators and their backers. It doesn't ask India to maintain restraint or offer good offices either. US Defence Secretary Hegseth told Indian EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar that the US hoped that it can "expand our shared defence industrial cooperation and coproduction networks, strengthen interoperability...and formally sign a new framework of US-India major defence partnership".

The US brokered peace agreement between the DRC and Rwanda was signed in Washington on June 27. It is a far reaching agreement and if sincerely implemented has the potential to restore normalcy in this very troubled region and end the vicious and long conflict that has cost a huge number of deaths and destruction. It will open up this mineral wealthy region for formal and legitimate development. The US will expect to be a major beneficiary, including in respect of rare earths production.

The US State Department also announced on the occasion of the signing that it would now focus on restoring normalcy in Sudan where the humanitarian situation continued to worsen and is among the world's worst humanitarian crises. For any real solution, the US will, inter alia, need to reconcile the competing interests of some of its Arab allies.

Political normalcy was restored in the Republic of Korea with the election on June 04 of Mr. Lee Jae Myung as President. This followed the political turmoil following the impeachment of his predecessor.

The halt to military operations following the Pakistan sponsored terrorist carnage in Pahalgam continued. India's campaign to educate international public opinion on what happened, India's reaction to that and Indian policy going forward if such incidents recur was sustained. Pakistani denials have no genuine buyers, except for those that wish to use that country for their own selfish interests.

PM Modi was invited by Canada to attend the G7 summit in Kananaskis on June 17 as an outreach partner. On his way to Canada, he visited Cyprus and on the way back, Croatia. The visits were meaningful. Cyprus is a friend of long standing; also a member of the EU. Croatia a new EU member and part of the former Yugoslavia, an old partner.

The visit to Canada permitted PM Modi and Canada's new PM Mark Carney to reset the important bilateral relationship that had been poisoned during Carney's predecessor's time in office. It was agreed to take calibrated and constructive steps to restore stability in the relationship. To start with, there will be an early return of High Commissioners to each others capitals. Trust and momentum in the relationship will be rebuilt. Future cooperation could cover clean energy, digital transformation, AI, LNG, food security, critical minerals, higher education, mobility and supply chain resilience. Stalled negotiations on the Early Progress Trade Agreement leading to a CEPA are to be resumed. These are important outcomes that would need diligent follow up and making up for lost time.

On the sidelines of the G7 summit, PM Modi also had useful first meetings with the President of Mexico and new Chancellor of Germany, both on June 17.

At the G7 Outreach meeting on June 17, Modi made two interventions. First on energy security and second on Technology, AI and energy. In the latter context, he suggested that the international community must work towards governance at an international level that addresses concerns related to AI, while also promoting innovation. Second, the importance, in the age of AI, of close cooperation in the areas of critical minerals and technology based on secure and resilient supply chains. And, third, the need to collaborate against deep fakes and clearly water mark AI generated content to prevent creation of possible widespread disorder in society.

In all his interventions, PM Modi also strongly warned his listeners against the scourge of terrorism. At the G7 outreach, he posited that "turning a blind eye towards terrorism for the sake of vested interests or extending support to terror or terrorists, is a betrayal of humanity".

On a different note, the resumption of dialogue with China continued. Chinese Vice FM Sun Weidong was in India for talks with Foreign Secretary Misri, and India's NSA Doval met his Special Representative counterpart, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in Beijing. Doval was in China for meetings of SCO Security Council Secretaries. And, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of the SCO Defence Ministers' meeting in Qingdao. The Kailash

Mansarovar Yatra also resumed during the month, marking cautious steps towards restoring a semblance of normalcy in bilateral relations.

Uncertainty and turmoil continues in international relations. India has so far steadily navigated the challenges but a firm hand will be needed on the tiller to sustain this trajectory and continue to secure the extended neighbourhood, while doubling down on economic and social development and cohesion.



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