

Swing States of the Global South: Implications for Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The foreign policies of the global South were largely influenced by the Non-aligned movement till the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Aftermath, Non-alignment heavily faced criticisms in its relevance and it is also evident that non-aligned policy was not strong enough to fulfil the economic needs of the developing world rather it helped to maintain the political independence of the states. In contemporary global politics, most of the emerging powers are using the newly defined “Swing States” concept when they deal with global political issues. In a simple explanation, swing states reflect the countries that adopt issue-based stances in their engagements with international actors, without capitulating to polarization or alignment with major competitors. This concept has more significance to Sri Lanka, considering the changing geopolitical trends and internal context. The research explains how Sri Lanka could use the swing states’ policy to achieve its national security objectives. Amidst the unprecedented economic crisis, Sri Lanka faces challenges in balancing its economic needs and national security interests. Although, Sri Lanka may not possess the same level of capacities, which swing states hold, strategies used by those states can still leverage to negotiate with existing and emerging great powers. This research adopts a qualitative approach to explain how Sri Lanka can navigate international issues while increasing its bargaining powers by adopting a swing state policy. Considering the current global political trends, this paper will explain, the term swing states, countries that are considered as swing states and their characteristics, assessing how Sri Lanka could have benefited from boosting a trend toward more fluid and reversible alliances.

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