STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

Why is India reluctant to join Board of Peace (BoP) announced by Trump on Gaza?

International Relations

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BACKGROUND

Donald Trump officially unveiled his "Board of Peace" on January 22, 2026, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, an initiative initially aimed at overseeing the reconstruction and governance of Gaza, but with stated ambitions to address global conflicts more broadly.

While numerous countries, including regional Middle Eastern powers like Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, and the UAE, along with Indonesia and Pakistan, have joined the board, India notably skipped the charter announcement ceremony.

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Delhi is currently evaluating the invitation extended to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to join the board, with official sources indicating that India is "considering various aspects" due to the sensitive issues involved. India's decision-making process is influenced by several factors:

India's concerns

1. **Concerns about the United Nations:** There are apprehensions that Trump's Board of Peace could undermine or attempt to bypass the United Nations, an institution India has consistently supported. Trump himself has suggested the board could eventually rival or even make the UN obsolete, although he also mentioned working in conjunction with it.
2. **Palestinian Cause:** India has a long-standing foreign policy of supporting the Palestinian cause and has provided humanitarian aid. Joining the board presents a dilemma, as some view it as an opportunity to directly assist the Palestinian population, while others, particularly Left parties in India, warn that participation could betray Palestinian rights and lead to the commercialization of Gaza's reconstruction.
3. **US-India Relations and Tariffs:** The invitation comes amid existing strains in India-US relations, partly due to tariffs imposed by the Trump administration on Indian imports. There is a perceived implicit threat

that refusing the invitation could provoke a negative reaction from Trump, as seen in the case of France.

4. **Broader Mandate and Kashmir:** While the board's immediate focus is Gaza, Trump has indicated its mandate could extend to other global conflicts. Some analysts in India have expressed concerns that joining the board could potentially open the door for Trump to involve himself in the Kashmir conflict, an issue that has previously strained his relationship with Prime Minister Modi.
5. **"Pay-to-Play" Structure:** The board's proposed "pay-to-play" structure, including a reported $1 billion price for permanent membership, has raised questions about influence-peddling.

Despite its absence from the launch, India is not outright rejecting the proposal. Diplomatic sources suggest that India is carefully assessing the implications, particularly concerning accountability, decision-making, and consistency with existing UN processes. The presence of several regional powers on the board may also exert pressure on India to consider its position.

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