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A Wobbly Walk

Recently, Indian Prime Minister Modi visited Russia for a bilateral meeting with President Putin.

What were the main outcomes of Prime Minister Modi's visit to Russia?

- Reaffirmation of India-Russia ties
- Modi received Russia's highest civilian award
- Announcement of a bilateral trade target of \$100 billion by 2030
- Assurance from Putin that Indian recruits in the Russian Army can return to India
- However, there were no announcements of new military purchases given the delay over delivery of previous deals & international gaze.

How was the visit received internationally, particularly by Ukraine and the West?

- US State Department and Ukraine were openly critical of the visit on its timing and optics
- Seen as conflicting with NATO and Western alliance leaders' summit in Washington, USA over attempts to (unsuccessfully) isolate Russia
- Criticism intensified due to a devastating missile attack on Ukraine during Modi's visit

What attempts were made to balance the visit's perception?

- Modi's statement that there is "no solution on the battlefield" to the Ukraine conflict
- Decision to travel to Vienna after Moscow
- Focus on economic and trade relationships rather than military deals

What challenges does India face in maintaining its stance and relationships?

- Balancing relationships with Russia, the US, and Europe
- Asserting India's independent foreign policy stance
- Convincing the West that forcing India to choose sides is futile
- Limiting potential damage to ties with the US and Europe
- Navigating an increasingly polarized world while maintaining strategic autonomy

Can you answer the following question?

India's recent diplomatic engagements, particularly Prime Minister Modi's visit to Russia, highlight the challenges of maintaining strategic autonomy in an increasingly polarized world. Critically examine India's approach to balancing its relationships with major powers and suggest strategies to effectively navigate these complex geopolitical dynamics.