

## **INDIA'S CHANGING FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 2014**

***Prof. Sudarshan Gajanan Patil***

*Assistant Professor, Matoshree Velbai Devaji Hariya Mahavidyalay, Shahad Ulhasnagar, Maharashtra*

### **Abstract:**

*India's foreign policy is currently focused on improving relations with the neighboring countries in South Asia; engaging extended neighborhoods in the Southeast Asian region and other major global powers. India's foreign policy, ever since independence, remained focused on the principles of peace, non-violence, non-alignment, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, anti-war etc., which are derived from the faith and ideals of human goodness, innate equality of the people, universal brotherhood, unity in diversity and secularism. However, in recent times, especially since 2014 commerce, trade and security have taken prominent positions. In this article I attempt to write for the purpose to review India's changing policy on these issues.*

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### **Introduction -**

India's relations with some of its neighbouring countries have always been problematic. India views China and Pakistan as its biggest security challenges in the region. This aspect of India's foreign policy has remained unchanged for the past few decades. But security analysts say that unlike his predecessors, PM Modi has chosen to be more assertive when it comes to national security. As an example of this assertiveness, they point to India's "surgical strike" against suspected militant hideouts in Pakistan in response to a deadly attack on Indian troops in Kashmir in February.

Modi's China policy, meanwhile, hasn't succeeded in resolving the tensions and mistrust between the two nations. In April 2018, the Indian prime minister met with Chinese President Xi Jinping at a bilateral summit in Wuhan. The meeting was touted as a milestone in India-China relations; however, it failed to deliver concrete results.

Overall, observers argue, Prime Minister Modi has changed India's diplomatic outlook in several ways. He has reset his country's relations with the West, especially the US, in a bid to counter China's growing influence in Asia. Modi has also taken a more aggressive stance toward Pakistan's alleged terrorism backing, and has increased engagement with partners in East and Southeast Asia. Modi has also forged stronger alliances with countries in the Middle East. Experts say that should Modi be re-elected, India would follow the same foreign policy direction as it has pursued in the past five years, albeit more vigorously.

### ***What Is a Paradigm Shift?***

The term paradigm shift refers to a major change in the worldview, concepts, and practices of how something works or is accomplished. A paradigm shift can happen within a wide variety of contexts from scientific research to industry.

Paradigm shifts in industry often happen when new technology is introduced that radically alters the production process or manufacturing of a good or service. These shifts are key drivers in many of the processes that a society

undergoes such as the American Industrial Revolution.

paradigm shift an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way

### **How is new India along with legendary external affairs?**

India has in reality shunned the Non-Aligned Policy. India has entered QUAD, the alliance of four democratic countries in the Indo-Pacific. The other countries apart from India are the USA, Japan and Australia.

1. India has become aggressive in its China policy by competing with China in taking countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc. out of the Chinese sphere of Influence.
2. India has started flexing its military muscle in foreign policy by sending warships to South China sea in a tit-for-tat move on Chinese ships prowling in the Indian Ocean.
3. India is also developing countries in Africa so that India also benefits in Africa financially. This has resulted in India catching up with China in Africa.
4. By being aggressive, Russia is not fully passing on to the Chinese sphere of influence.
5. India is adopting a tit-for-tat foreign policy. China sold fighter jets to Pakistan to check-mate India. India immediately sold anti-Ship Brahmos missiles to Chinese arch-enemy Philippines. This move will hurt China in the South China Sea.
6. India is not succumbing to Chinese bullying, rather it is facing head-on at Ladakh.
7. India is not overly focusing on Pakistan. We need to grow beyond the Pakistani focus and compete with bigger powers like China or even Russia.
8. We are reducing our dependence on various foreign powers for arms, so that we can have our independent foreign policy.
9. COVID has hurt India like every other nation. But India by becoming a major vaccine producer, exporter and donating the vaccines has successfully projected soft power all throughout the world.
10. India has helped countries like Sri-Lanka and Maldives during their economic crisis thereby increasing India's influence.
11. India has even made the Taliban in Afghanistan attack Pakistan. Taliban attacked Pakistan through the Durand line around the same time when India donated food, medicines and COVID vaccines to Afghanistan.

### **Issues from which you can review India's changing foreign policies**

#### **The Trump triggers**

To illustrate the concept of foreign policy stances adjusting to paradigmatic changes, the outcome of the American election in November 2016, which resulted, contrary to all polling and analytical predictions, in the victory of Donald J Trump, makes an excellent case study.

Trump's pronouncements in the lead up to the vote seemed to suggest that once in office he would deviate from policies pursued by his Republican and Democratic predecessors. His questioning of the value of military alliances, highlighted by his comment on the obsolescence of NATO, given its inability to combat terrorism effectively, and his call for proportional parity in financial and military contributions to fund NATO, raised alarm bells in a Europe already grappling with economic, political and security crises.

Trump rejected globalisation and promised to bring back manufacturing jobs to the U.S. by repudiating extant international trade agreements. Apart from threatening to impose tariffs of up to 45% on imports from China and 35% on those from Mexico, he also promised to pull the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and possibly withdraw from the World Trade Organization

(WTO).

As part of his anti-immigration tirade, Trump proposed the termination of the H-1B visa programmed of which the Indian IT industry has been the greatest beneficiary.

### **Move further from traditional policies**

We have moved forward from our traditional foreign policies, namely Non-Aligned Movement and Panchsheel treaty to a more proactive trade and security-oriented foreign policy. 'Act East' policy, 'neighborhood first', 'link West' and 'Connect Central Asia' policy are practical manifestations of it. The paradigm of the world order has changed completely today with the end of colonialism and disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the world today is not strictly bipolar or unipolar.

### **neighborhood first policy**

Indian foreign policy has more emphasis has been given to our immediate neighbors. Indeed, maintaining relations with immediate neighbors has been a priority for the Modi Government. India has entered into several Memorandum of Understanding and agreements to encourage cooperation in regional issues like trade, connectivity, infrastructure and transit facilities among the member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

### **'Fast track diplomacy',**

which means adopting a policy that is proactive, strong and sensitive; and 'Para diplomacy', where states and cities are encouraged to forge special relations with other countries or federal states of another country or even cities of their interest in order, India has pursued a very dynamic and unique policy to pursue its desired goals. However, the main objective of its foreign policy has been promotion of trade; maintaining security; promoting transit facility among member states; sprucing infrastructure and enabling connectivity etc.

### **Enhance global cooperation**

This included the setting up of a special fund of one billion dollar for adaptation of climate change vis-à-vis clean energy; establishing a 'trade office' in India; forming 'Pan Pacific Islands e-network' to reduce physical distance between the islands through measures like improving digital connectivity, extending visa on arrival at Indian airports for all 14 Pacific Island countries, space cooperation in space technology applications for improving the quality of life of the islands. Besides, The Prime Minister also visited the Central Asian countries to enhance cooperation in areas of security, nuclear energy, economic and trade cooperation.

### **Healthy and developed linkages**

Greater people-to-people contact; better connectivity; and commercial linkages within the region are the core issues discussed in the Saarc summit. To play a more proactive role in the Southeast Asian region, India follows the 'Act East' policy. Similarly, India has also initiated the 'link West' policy to ensure energy security, trade and employment linkages with the West Asian countries.

### **Cooperation with organization**

The present Government has also pursued more proactive policies in regional organizations such as SAARC, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) to create an option beyond the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for their cooperation and development. The Prime Minister, in his SAARC summit in Kathmandu focused on greater people-to-people contact; better connectivity and commercial linkages within the region. India has also played an important role in ASEAN and BRICS in recent times.

With European countries, India has increased collaboration in the cultural, economic, social, technological and military realms. India is promoting its ambitious Make in India programme in a bid to make the country a

manufacturing hub in the US, Russia, Germany and China with cooperation in areas of natural resource, trade and terrorism.

Hence, it makes sense to approach nations, big and strong, with open arms in the pursuit of the interest of the nation. Globalization and liberalization are the realities of the present times and India is currently more focused on crucial areas like trade, economy, energy, security, terrorism.

From these issues, we are concerned that India has only left its history of moral politics and linked itself to the global situation. We can hope that this change of India will be the first step towards the path of future superpower.

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