



## INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN CONTEXT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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### ABSTRACT

When India first gained its independence in 1947, its foreign policy was pro-Soviet and hostile to Western interests. However, during the course of the Cold War, India's foreign policy evolved to the point where it is now an essential strategic partner for the West and provides a counterbalance to China. India has established itself as a significant actor in international affairs as a result of the enormous growth in its worldwide influence that it has achieved over the past six and a half decades, mostly via the use of diplomatic and commercial channels. Over the course of its history, India's foreign policy has been shaped by a number of different influences. Going through the politics of international relations is like walking through a minefield; the slightest misstep may lead to catastrophic results. In the course of protecting India's interests, the country's foreign policy should take care not to foster hostile relationships with other countries. These objectives and priorities are important to India's foreign policy objectives and priorities. Having said that, the concept of foreign policy is one that is fluid and adapts to new circumstances in light of developments both at home and abroad. Despite this, there are a few ideas and objectives that are resilient in the face of swift transformation. National security is an example of one of these key notions. There is no way that any nation can put their national security at jeopardy, regardless of the circumstances. As a consequence of this, foreign policy is the means through which a nation's national interests may be brought to fruition. It is pointless to pursue a foreign policy that does not serve the nation's interests.

**Keyword:** *Economy, Power, Diaspora, Strategic, Vibrant, Diplomatic.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian government's foreign policy continued to play the role it has played in the past in 2012, namely that of an instrument that enabled the country to maintain a calm and secure environment conducive to the change of its society and economy. India must negotiate the potential shoals that may lie in its way and locate the suitable channels for a safe and speedy trip in order to get at its intended destination, therefore the growth and development of the globe is of the utmost significance to the country. India has increasingly plugged itself into those groupings for the purpose of having a constructive and productive dialogue in order to keep up with the new emerging trends in global politics. These countries have gathered together to form regional and intra-regional groups in order to deal with the new and complex problems of security, climate change, trade, and investment. India has done this in order to keep pace with these trends. While doing so, it continued to place the same emphasis, as it had in the past, to the bilateral path in promoting contacts in its perimeter and further afield, II. The 10 nations that make up the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Southeast Asia

have come together to form a powerful and effective organisation. This is Asia's newest zone dedicated to shared prosperity.

### **Meaning of Foreign Policy**

The connection between nations on issues of global importance, such as disarmament, peace, climate change, decolonization, and justice, is referred to as foreign policy. A nation's strategy for promoting its national interests in international affairs is known as its foreign policy. Examples of foreign policy actions include rejecting or accepting international treaties such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as seeking a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).<sup>3</sup> It was formerly believed that a country's foreign policy was solely determined by its own national interests, with no other factors whatsoever being taken into account when engaging with other nations. Many individuals have various conceptions of what constitutes matters of national interest. Extreme realists connect the concept of national interest to the notion of national power, whereas extreme idealists connect the concept of national interest to the pursuit of a universally acceptable moral goal, such as unending peace or human unity. The national interests of a developed or rich country would be protected in their existing state as the country worked toward even more development. In the case of a nation that is either economically developing or still in a state of underdevelopment, the nation's best interests include maintaining its political sovereignty and working toward a faster rate of economic expansion in order to raise the living conditions of its people within the context of today's globalised society. A country's commitment, existing objectives and goals, as well as the standards of appropriate behaviour that it upholds, are all included in its foreign policy, which incorporates more than simply the international programmes that the country pursues.<sup>4</sup> As a consequence of this, India's foreign policy is shaped not just by India's domestic issues but also by those of the worldwide community. Some of these elements are subject to change over time, while others have an effect or influence on foreign policy that is more permanent in nature. Grasping international behaviour requires a solid foundational understanding of foreign policy. Without initially having an understanding of state foreign policy, it is difficult to appreciate the exchanges that take place between states. As a consequence of this, the study of foreign policy is considered to be one of the most important subfields of international politics. A nation's approach to dealing with its surroundings beyond its borders is referred to as its foreign policy. It encapsulates the essence of a nation's approach to international affairs. Instead of relying just on stated objectives or intended courses of action, an examination of a nation's foreign policy need to be predicated on its actual patterns of behaviour. The process of determining certain objectives and making efforts to influence the actions of others in order to accomplish those objectives is what we mean when we talk about "foreign policy." These goals are attainable if one has access to sufficient power. As a consequence of this, the national interest and power are the most basic components of an overall foreign policy. Every state has some kind of relationship with every other state, and such relationships require them to behave in specific ways toward one another. As a consequence of this, the formulation of a modern government's foreign policy is an endeavour of critical importance. According to Professor Mahendra Kumar, a political theorist and author of the book "Theoretical Aspects of International Politics," "The goal of a state's foreign policy should be to govern the behaviour of other nations rather than simply to modify their behaviour. Regulation entails shaping the actions of other nations so that they more closely align with one's own interests, to the greatest extent feasible".<sup>5</sup> In the words of George Modelski, "the system of actions created by communities for modifying the behaviour of other governments and for adapting their own activities to the international environment" is the definition of "foreign policy."<sup>6</sup>

## **Determinants of India's foreign Policy**

### **a. Geography**

Napoleon was quoted as saying that the topography of a country is the primary factor in determining its foreign policy. The size, location, and terrain of a nation, among other factors, are fundamental factors that influence its foreign policy. In 1903, Lord Curzon, who was serving as the Governor General of India at the time, made the prognostication that India's geographical location would eventually propel it to the forefront of the forefront of world affairs. Nehru referred to India as the key centre of South, South-East, and Western Asia in the year 1948. It can be thought of as a bridge to Asia (Fadia, 2014).

### **b. History and Political**

Tradition The influence of history and custom may be seen throughout India's foreign policy. According to what Nehru had to say about the matter, "a country's foreign policy eventually comes from its own history, usages, and ambitions and more specifically from its recent past." Palmer and Perkins note that the foundations of Indian foreign policy may be traced back to the country's civilisation, the legacy of British foreign policy, the history of the independence movement, and the impact of Gandhian philosophy (Fadia, 2014). It is accurate to say that India promotes the peaceful resolution of conflicts in accordance with the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence. Because of her history as a colonial power, India has, ever since it gained its freedom, maintained a position of solidarity and support for movements toward independence all over the world.

### **c. Economic Development**

The degree to which a country is dependent on its economy is another element that determines its foreign policy. If a nation's economy is healthy, then that nation will be able to engage in trade and diplomatic relations with other countries without incurring any commitments. The majority of the world's nations are interdependent on one another in some form or another. The growth of India, which is still a developing nation, is impossible to achieve without the financial and technical aid of other countries. With the support of foreign nations, India established a number of steel mills, including Rourkela (in collaboration with Germany), Bokharo (with assistance from the Soviet Union), and others. Since 1990, India has based its economic growth on the principles of liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation. As a direct consequence of this, the government of India was forced to relax some of the market's restrictions in order to make it more accessible to businesses from other nations.

### **d. National interest**

It refers to the interests of a nation that its leaders desire to safeguard and advance in their dealings with other nations. According to what H. J. Morgenthau said, any foreign policy that functions according to the criteria of the national interest is acceptable. Jawaharlal Nehru is credited with making the statement that "to the interests of India, for that is my first responsibility." On another occasion, he stated that "whether a country is imperialistic, socialism, or communist, the foreign minister of that country thinks solely of the interests of that country." (Fadia, 2014).

### e. International Milieu

This is one of the factors that determines foreign policy from the outside. International Milieu signifies international environment. In order to circumvent the potential outcomes of the cold war, Nehru instituted the nonalignment policy. India, a nation that just recently gained its independence, need assistance from every possible source in order to realise its potential for economic growth. Nehru was aware that associating with one power bloc would reduce the likelihood of receiving support from another; hence, he believed that it would be preferable to steer clear of power blocs and maintain a position of neutrality. Indira Gandhi was not willing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) when other countries that possessed nuclear weapons attempted to create nuclear apartheid by drafting the treaty. In the future, as a direct result of these events, India became a nuclear weapons state after carrying out two nuclear tests. India's Look East Policy was shaped in part by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War. There are a number of examples that are comparable to one another that indicate how the international environment affects India's foreign policy.

### Objective

- (I) The primary goal of foreign policy is to safeguard the country's territorial integrity and people's interests from both within and beyond the country. In general, nations want to maintain the status quo for this purpose. When a state follows a policy that attempts to change the status quo, it is labelled as revisionist, and other members of the international community view it with distrust. It must safeguard the interests of its residents both inside and beyond the state in order to maintain its prestige
- (II) A foreign policy's second goal is to maintain ties with other members of the international community and to pursue a policy of confrontation or collaboration with them in order to further its own interests.

### Evolution of India's Foreign Policy

India became the largest democratic state in the world when it attained its independence in 1947, following in the footsteps of the United States of America. 8 India is the country with the second most people on the planet, after only China. People who speak sixteen primary tongues and adhere to six of the world's most prominent faiths make up this population. After it gained its independence, India was certain that it did not want to be controlled by any of the armed groups. After World War II, the world was split into two military blocs, one headed by the capitalist United States and the other by the communist Soviet Union, and each was responsible for its own governance. The United States of America and the Soviet Union held opposing ideologies, which contributed to the escalation of tensions between the two superpowers, which came to be known as the Cold War. 9 India has always adhered to the principle that it should pursue a policy of peace and nonviolence in all of its dealings, both internal and international. Non-alignment is the cornerstone of India's foreign policy, which simply means that the country does not affiliate itself with any of the existing military alliances. Because to India's foreign policy, the country was able to pursue a peaceful approach while also operating independently and without being subject to pressure from either of the military blocs. After being a colony for such a long period of time, India wanted to devote its resources to reestablishing and growing the country rather than developing its military. As a direct consequence of this, India chose to pursue a policy of non-alignment. The

history of a nation and the current conditions within that nation all have a role in determining its foreign policy. 10 Multiple factors of this kind have had an impact on the views and goals that guide India's foreign policy. Every nation's leader and the person who serves as that leader's foreign minister have some say on the country's approach to international affairs. Jawaharlal Nehru held the positions of Prime Minister and Foreign Minister simultaneously for close to 17 years. It was the beginning of India's freedom throughout these years. 'Foreign policy is a policy inherent in the circumstances of India, inherent in the past thinkers of India, inherent in the whole mental outlook of India, inherent in the conditioning of the Indian mind during our struggle for freedom, and inherent in the circumstances of the world today,' Jawaharlal Nehru said in a speech to the Lok Sabha not long after India gained its independence. Nehru made these remarks shortly after India gained its independence. This encompasses virtually all of the essential aspects of international relations, such as geographical circumstances, economic compulsions, cultural norms, political traditions and aims, as well as the domestic and international environments.

### **Foundation Of India's Foreign Policy**

During the time that India was ruled by the British, its northern neighbours were Afghanistan, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet, while its southern neighbour was Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). During the year 1947, British India was split up into its current-day counterparts, India and Pakistan. Concerns regarding religion, society, ethnicity, and language all had a role in the break in relations. These pressures also put a strain on the economic and cultural links between the two countries. Both West Pakistan, which is now known simply as Pakistan, and East Pakistan were established as a direct result of the division of India into western and eastern areas (now Bangladesh). After the country gained its independence, the government of India made efforts to establish a secular state in which national identity would take precedence over regional, religious, and cultural identities. Movements for regional autonomy in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, and Assam were seen as dangers to the unity of India and received support from India's neighbours Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and subsequently Bangladesh. These movements took place in the states of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, and Assam. Furthermore, despite the fact that Congress leaders adhere to the idea of secularism, the Indian government was pressured into associating Indian greatness with Hinduism as a result of religious conflicts and the increasing influence of political groups representing Hindus. 11 The inability of Indian administrations to avoid anti-Muslim communal violence has resulted in strained ties with the Muslim countries that are India's neighbours. During their entire rule, the British colonial authorities considered the greater part of South Asia to be a strategic entity, and they made every effort to prevent other troops from entering the region. In order to ensure the safety of this vital region, the British rulers created a barrier consisting of buffer states that encircled India. They did this in an effort to cut India off from Russia and China, which were waging an offensive against India from the north. In order to defend India against attacks coming from the south, the British rulers sent naval forces. After India gained its independence, the country's governing bodies continued to follow this strategy by establishing a stance in both cultural and geographical dimensions. 12 This geostrategic perspective has a threefold impact on India's interactions with the rest of the world. First, India made an effort to thwart any action taken by its neighbours that it regarded as being detrimental to its own security interests. This was accomplished via the use of treaties, alliances, threats of force, and economic embargoes. Only Pakistan and China have been successful in thwarting Indian expansionist ambitions. Instead of viewing their country as a regional enforcer that, because to its size and military strength, imposed onerous restrictions on its neighbours, the ruling class in India viewed themselves and their country as a regional

peacekeeper whose actions were solely defensive. Second, despite the fact that it had already established a powerful position in the region, India's security was put at risk because of the action of nations from outside the region in the South Asian area. India fought any efforts made by other forces to interfere or establish a presence in the region, regardless of whether or not New Delhi's neighbours asked for India's assistance in doing so. As a direct consequence of this, India has been very critical of Pakistan's alliance with China, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the provision of military assistance by the United States to Pakistan, and the deployment of the United States navy on Diego Garcia. 13 In spite of having signed a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971, India has never agreed to Moscow's demand that it establish a Soviet navy base in the area. The measures that India is taking to bolster its military in order to preserve its territory are extremely important, and the nation's security worries have become intricately entwined with its foreign policy. Relations with Pakistan, China, and the United States have been strained as a result of India's secret nuclear weapons programme and the development of its ballistic missile capability. 14 India's refusal to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968 was motivated by Pakistan's similar stance as well as India's belief that the treaty discriminated against the development of peaceful nuclear technology by non-nuclear weapons states and failed to prevent the qualitative and quantitative vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons among countries that already had nuclear weapons. Pakistan's similar stance was also a motivating factor in India's refusal to sign the treaty. Despite India's rejection to sign the pact and its denunciation of the accord as "perpetuating nuclear discrimination," 174 other nations agreed in 1995 to prolong it indefinitely. This was done despite India's criticism of the deal. 15 The former Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was quoted as saying that India's foreign policy should "seek for peace and secure emancipation of oppressed nations, the eradication of racial discrimination, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries." 16 He also addressed issues pertaining to the defence of national and personal freedoms, as well as the fight against global ills such as sickness, poverty, and illiteracy, which affect a substantial section of the human population. However, he never wavered from the position that maintaining peace should be India's top priority in its foreign policy. One of the most important aspects of India's foreign policy is its commitment to the principle of non-alignment. Nehru was certain from the very beginning that India's participation in any one power bloc would not be in the country's best interests. He proceeded by saying that joining a power bloc would be the single worst thing that could happen to India. This strategy comprises a reluctance to adopt the precise policy of a power bloc, as well as a reluctance to join a system of pacts or alliances that bind India to one side or the other of the conflict. It requires evaluating each topic simply based on the qualities that it possesses in and of itself. This policy adheres to the more conventional understanding of the term "neutrality policy." It also does not indicate taking a passive role in the situation. It's a really energising and upbeat neutrality. It involves adhering to a policy that is separate and distinct from that of the government. Under this strategy, there is no commitment to provide assistance to any countries that are part of a power bloc on any issue. Asia will play an important part in the implementation of this agenda.

## CONCLUSIONS

One of the most important developments that has had a considerable impact on the formation of Indian foreign policy is the creation of regional parties in Indian politics. By utilising the political climate as it exists at the moment, they have been successful in their efforts to coerce the government into basing choices about foreign policy on restricted regional interests. 27 The authority of the central government to direct foreign policy has been undermined, putting the safety of the country in jeopardy (E.g., Sri Lanka, Teesta River dispute). The fact

that there is political disagreement in India on significant aspects of its foreign policy has been a cause of concern. Even though there are certain formal institutions that are responsible for formulating policy, such as the Cabinet, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and various types of defence and intelligence organisations, the majority of decisions regarding foreign policy are made on the spur of the moment. Political parties are able to exploit the lack of consistency and cohesion in policy positions almost always, which allows them to take advantage of gaps in decision-making. According to a journal located in the United States, India has disregarded a worldwide plea for an oil embargo to be placed on Iran, while on another topic, India has abstained from voting about Libya in the United Nations Security Council. Those in the United States who argued for broader strategic linkages were left dissatisfied, while others have already begun to complain that the United States is squandering important diplomatic capital on a partner that they cannot trust. Leaving aside the argument's validity for the moment, it is very essential that India moves from a reactive to an active posture in its decision-making, as this will provide legitimacy to the conclusions it reaches. Given India's expected relative ascent in the hierarchy of the international system, the nation will be confronted with.

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