

10. India's Relation with USA, Russia, China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangla Desh

(For Degree Part-III, Paper-VI, Political Science (Hons.) Students)

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Every country in the world has an omnibus duty to make a foreign policy to secure in a best possible manner, their national interest. Traditionally it has been regarded as one of the key features of international politics. The twin issues of 'sovereignty' and 'security' underpins the exercise of foreign policy in current times. However in the recent times with the onset of Globalization as preponderant force in the world politics, the sphere of foreign policy has been subjected to heavy scrutiny by various political philosophers. Kenneth Waltz, the founder of neo-realism, has categorically asserted that the decision-making in international politics, no longer a core concern of the state as their behavior could be explained through the interplay of power politics.

India's Foreign Policy

Though India formally emerged as an independent country in August, 1947 the basic principles of its foreign policy had been evolved during the period of colonial rule itself. However, it may be noted that India's foreign policy has not been static and has undergone changes according to exigencies of time and requirements of domestic as well as international situations.

Basic Principles of India's Foreign Policy (in nutshell)

- Non-Alignment
- Panchasheel
- Anti-Colonialism and Anti-Imperialism
- Opposition to Racialism
- Faith in Peaceful coexistence and Cooperation
- Special Bias for Asia
- Intimate relations with Commonwealth
- Faith in the UN
- Support for Disarmament
- Peaceful use of nuclear energy

- Special emphasis on Means¹

INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY FROM NEHRU TO NARENDRA MODI

INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER 1962

After India's defeat at the hands of China in 1962, our foreign policy came to be characterized by greater pragmatism and realism where an attempt was made to cultivate friendly relations with neighbours as well as two super powers during Lal Bahadur Shastri era. The emphasis was shifted towards collective decision making.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER INDIRA GANDHI

During her reign, the principle of collective decision making worked successfully for some years after which she asserted herself and started formulating foreign policy with the assistance of some of her trusted colleagues and friends. This period also witnessed a great tilt towards USSR and somewhat cooling of relations with USA.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER JANATA PARTY

The Janta govt. tried to develop very intimate relations with both the super powers and bring about greater balance and sobriety. A new chapter was opened in Indo-US relations with the visit of President Carter. The Janta govt. took a number of concrete steps to improve its relations with neighboring countries by coming to an understanding regarding some of the outstanding disputes. Another consideration, which compelled India to improve relations with neighboring countries, was that India needed markets for its rapidly expanding agricultural surpluses. The Janata govt. also tried to improve relations with China. In short, Janta Party followed a foreign policy, which was highly pragmatic and aimed at promotion of national interests.

FOREIGN POLICY IN POST JANTA PERIOD

The special tilt towards USSR was disappeared and coolness of relations with USA gave place to more mature relations. India's relations with neighboring countries turned sour but Indira Gandhi tried to improve it further during her second half rule. Another feature was bid to develop closer relations with Western Europe in order to reduce India's dependence on USSR for sophisticated weapons.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER RAJIV GANDHI

He followed the foreign policy of his mother and grandfather. He indicated his determination to work for narrowing international economic disparities, develop closer relations with neighbors, pursue policy of non-interference, peaceful co-existence and non-alignment, promise to pursue the concept of common regional development of South Asia, improvement of relations with China, USA, USSR, to carry on relentless crusade against arms race, to promote dialogue between North and the South to build a just world economic order.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NATIONAL AND JANATA (S) GOVERNMENTS

¹ Appadorai Arjun., India's Foreign Policy and Relations, Oxford, Delhi., 2015

The National Front govt., which came into power in November 1989, expressed its desire to improve its relations with its neighbors and with super powers. The Janta Dal (S) which came to power after the fall of V.P. Singh govt. continued the earlier policy without any change.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NARSIMHA RAO

Serious economic difficulties and domestic turmoil obliged India make adjustments in its foreign policy it tried to forge closer relations with USA and responded favorably to US proposals for military cooperation. Greater emphasis was laid on economic diplomacy. The new govt. also initiated moves to improve relations with the countries of Europe and settle outstanding issues with neighboring countries. Another notable change that comes to India foreign policy was the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, which hitherto was considered as heretical. The relevance of Non-alignment was greatly increased in the changed context according to Rao, in which independent decision making was very important. Indian peacekeeping forces took leading role in the socio-economic development of Somalia. India also moved closer to resolving boundary dispute with China.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT

The United Front govt. put forth *Gujral Doctrine* under which unilateral concessions were made to the neighboring countries with regard to travel and trade, without expecting reciprocity. Efforts were also made to promote free trade among the SAARC countries and to convert it into an economic union at the earliest. Another notable feature of the Gujral doctrine was to eliminate the basis for outside intervention in the region.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER ATAL BIHAR VAJPAYEE

India's foreign policy becomes more realistic than idealistic. With regard to neighboring countries it favored more intimate relations but did not approve of unilateral concessions. It insists on reciprocity. Under the new policy greater emphasis is being laid on security of the country. On this plea India conducted nuclear tests at Pokhran in May 1998. In short, of late, India has emerged as self-centered country, which is trying to pursue national interests single-mindedly².

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NARENDRA MODI

After 2014 elections and subsequently, too India has been ruled by the BJP government led by Narendra Modi. Government has vigorously pushed the policy of partnership with all kind of nations. It went ahead with the strengthening of relationship with Israel after several years of isolation, keeping in mind the Israel's expertise in intensive agriculture and hydrology, India wanted to have foreign policy based on realistic calculation of its various national interests. Similarly the government has sought to build a new relationship with Myanmar as it will help eradicate the several years of militancy in the North-East India.

One of the unique features of India's foreign policy pursuits during the past five years was the unprecedented diplomatic outreach across the continents and hemispheres, covering small, medium and big nations. There were a record number of high-level incoming and outgoing visits at the level of President, Prime Minister, Vice-President, External Affairs Minister and Ministers.

² Chander Prakash , International Relations, p.702

In some cases, including our neighborhoods, visits at the level of Prime Minister took place after a hiatus of ten to sixty years.

The concept of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas* as the basis of forging relations with other nations envisioned the entire world community a part of one single large global family and the members of the family must live together in peace and harmony, work and grow together and have trust in each other for mutual benefits. The country's top leadership engaged nearly all countries in the world cutting across time zones; this across-the-spectrum diplomatic outreach underlined the government's commitment to building relationships with countries, big and small, in the spirit of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* i.e. "the world is one family."

On the whole, India's unmatched accelerated diplomatic engagement in the last five years had several positive impacts. It helped a qualitative upgrade in existing bilateral relationships and enhanced coordination on a range of regional and global issues. It revitalized and reinvigorated relations and at the same time opened new doors for mutually nourishing partnerships in a wide array of areas. India under PM Modi, however, has appeared to drift away from its long-time ally Russia. Although New Delhi and Moscow have cordial relations, India is now closer to Washington than ever.

So far as the relationship with the neighboring Pakistan is concerned, 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. This action has been appreciated enough.

The look East Policy, initially adopted by the Vajpayee Government has been pushed vigorously now .Prime Minister Modi has also transformed India's "Look East" policy into a more aggressive "*Act East*" policy, which aims to connect India to East Asia through better infrastructure, trade and regional institutions. As a result, India has been more vocal about free maritime navigation and a rules-based order for maritime security, especially in the South China Sea, and has also signed a deal with Indonesia to build the Sabang port, located in the strategically important Malacca strait.

India is a politically stable country and its economy is steady. India is building up its military muscles slowly but steadily. As a large market India is an attractive destination for foreign investments, joint ventures, commodity exports. India's stature in international affairs has arguably grown considerably in recent years. Arguably India's time has come

INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Geographically, historically, culturally as well as economically no other two countries of the world have so much in common as India and Pakistan. In fact the two constituted a single economic and political entity for many centuries before 1947 when Pakistan was born. Since 1947 the relations between the two countries have been persistently strained. These issues are as follows –

- Dispute over sharing of river waters which was finally settled with the help of Good Offices provided by World Bank
- Pakistan's decision to join military alliances

- The attempt on the part of the Pakistan to pose as the spokesman of all the Muslims on the Indian sub-continent.
- The growing friendship between Pakistan and china
- The Kashmir question
- India's role during the revolt of east Pakistan and the independence of Bangladesh
- Decision of the Arab countries to provide Pakistan with \$1000 million for the purchase of sophisticated arms.
- Acquisition of Harpoon missiles by Pakistan
- India's support to the movement of democracy in Pakistan
- Pakistan's supply of military equipment and training to Sikh extremists
- Operation Rhino over Siachen glacier
- Wullar Barrage dispute
- Sir Creek boundary dispute in Kuchch region of Gujarat
- Pakistan's withdrawal from Commonwealth on Bangladesh's independence
- Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan
- Kargil war
- Failure of Agra summit
- Pakistan's growing links With Fundamentalists
- Trans-border smuggling of weapons and drugs
- Discriminatory trade barriers against India
- Treatment meted out to the minorities in Pakistan, and last but the most important
- Terrorism from across the border

But the scenario is not so gloomy. At present the atmosphere between the two countries are cordial. Several steps were taken by both the sides to lessen the tensions. Bus and rail links, India's grant of MFN status to Pakistan, several visits at the high level, track II diplomacy, and summits has greatly helped in the better understanding between the two countries.

INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

The two countries maintain very close economic links and the trade between the two countries have considerably increased over the years. Nepal is dependent on India for transit rights to the outside world. India concluded a treaty with Nepal in 1950 which inter-alia provided for the coordination of foreign policies of the two countries. It was in pursuance of these provisions of the treaty that India blocked the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal which strained the relations between India and Nepal. Nepal's open opposition to the annexation of Sikkim to India also generated some tension between the two countries. The question of displaced Nepalis from Meghalaya also caused some tension. In April 1987 Nepal introduced

work permit system to regulate and control the migration of Indians into Nepal. India's relations with Nepal severally got strained over the signing of the new trade and transit Treaty in 1989.

The leaders of the two countries agreed to provide for reopening of land customs stations for movement of goods between the two countries and to reactivate the 15 transit points which were in operation earlier. In December 1991 the Prime Ministers of 2 countries held a summit and concluded 5 agreements. The leaders of the two countries also reached an understanding on the tapping of potential of water resources for mutual benefit and agreed to work on a number of multipurpose projects.

Other points of tension are as follows –

- Nepal provides an easy route to smuggling activities which hampered India trade
- Problem of ISI base in Nepal
- Help provided to Naxalites in India by the Maoists of Nepal
- Hijacking of Indian Airplane IC-814 by the terrorists from Kathmandu

But accession of King Gyanendra on the throne that is known for his tough stand against Maoists and Nepal festival and at present restoration of democratic govt. in Nepal gave a boost to Indo-Nepal relationship.

INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

Bangladesh got independence in 1971 with the help provided by India. But soon this era of cordial relations came to an end with the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. The main issues which contributed to tensions in relations between the two countries are as follows –

- Clashes over undemarcated border
- Dispute over Farakka barrage
- Dispute over Moore Island
- Plight of minorities in Bangladesh
- Flow of migrants across border
- Bangladesh accused India of harboring and arming the tribal shanty Bahini guerilllas and was demanding internal autonomy from Bangladesh.
- India charged Bangladesh with providing sanctuary to TNV guerillas of Tripura
- Objection of the Bangladesh over the fencing of the undemarcated boundary by India
- Anti-Indian attitude of BNP ruled by Begum Khaleda Zia.

But things like BIMS-TEC Grouping, bus and rail service between West Bengal and Dhaka somewhat improves the relationship between India and Bangladesh.

INDIA-SRILANKA RELATIONS

In the political sphere India and Sri Lanka have maintained very cordial relations from the beginning. Two countries have also maintain close cooperation in the economic field too when India and Sri Lanka signed Free Trade Area (FTA) on 25th December, 2000. Both are members

of the NAM and share identical views on most of the international problems. The only irritant in the relations between India and Sri Lanka is the problem of the Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

Soon after attainment of independence Sri Lanka disowned the people of Indian origin settled in the country as a result of which large number of them were rendered stateless. The Indian govt. was also not willing to assume responsibility for these people. However the government permitted those Indian citizens to come to India who wanted to come on Indian citizenship but quite a sizeable number of them continued to remain in Sri Lanka.

In May-June 1987, following massacre of large number of Tamilians in Jaffna by Sri Lankan security forces, India air-dropped supplies to the suffering Tamilians which was not liked by the Sri Lankan Govt. however, the Sri Lankan govt. showed a spirit of accommodation which resulted in the signing of an accord between Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi and President Jayewardene on 29th July 1987.

It may be noted that India got involved in Sri Lanka on account of two reasons. Firstly, India was strongly opposed to extra-regional security links of Sri Lanka and the fear that outside powers may not get entrenched there. Secondly, it felt concerned about the ethnic rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka and the onerous pressure from the state of Tamilnadu to protect Tamils even by intervention.

In conclusion, one can say that India's assurance of sustained support to Sri Lanka in its struggle against the Tamil insurgency, separatism led by the LTTE, the extension of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, BIMS-TEC grouping between the two countries further contributed to the improvement of relations between India and Sri Lanka.

INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

The Policy of *Panchasheel* enunciated a new beginning of relationship between India and China wherein these two nations have to formalize their relationship on the principle of Five Principles, which are:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. Mutual non-aggression,
3. Mutual non-interference,
4. Equality and mutual benefit, and
5. Peaceful co-existence.

However, in the wake of Chinese aggression into Indian territory in 1962 severed the relation for many years. The most contentious issue has been to settle the border disputes between India and China. This continued for many years and only after the visit by Rajiv Gandhi, the relationship between these two nations got normalized. The trajectory of India-China relations, however, did not develop the way India would have liked.

During the visit of the Chinese President Xi Ping to India in September, 2014, India extended its hand of friendship and conveyed a clear message that the two countries must work together so that the 21st century could belong to Asia.

However the twin issues of *Belt and Road initiative* and *Doklam crisis* pushed back the relations where it existed during 1990s. India does not endorse China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which passes through the Pak-

Occupied Kashmir and thus raises the issue of sovereignty. The prolonged Doklam face-off between the Indian and Chinese troops in September, 2017 posed a serious threat to bilateral relations but was fortunately resolved thanks to skilful use of diplomacy.

Though India wanted a constructive engagement but China's strategy to isolate India in South Asia and its chauvinistic tendency to annex the land and territories has created a face-off on many occasions. China does not want to understand that India is not a India of 1962 and it had grown up both economically and strategically.

Further, China is also blocking India's Membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and protects Pakistan on the issue of terrorism by projecting it as a victim of terrorism and advocating that no country should be singled out while addressing the issues related to Terrorism. China on its part is apprehensive about India joining hands with USA, Japan and Australia to forge an anti-China alliance to counter it in Indo- Pacific region.

There are issues arising out of huge balance of trade in China's favour, and also unresolved border disputes. The understanding which emerged from the informal summit between PM Modi and President XI Ping in China in April 2018 has come to be known as *Wuhan Spirit*,³ the essence of which is that the two sides must enhance efforts to build upon the convergences and handle the differences through peaceful discussions, and that peaceful, stable and balanced relations between India and China will be a positive factor for stability amidst current global uncertainties, and further that proper management of the bilateral relationship will be conducive for the development and prosperity of the region, and will create the conditions for the Asian Century.

The recent COVID Crisis is going to have a deepening impact on China's relation with all other nations including India. It is clear that Chinese ambition to project them as superpower is amply reflected in its notorious tendency to violate the territories and the South-China Sea crisis would lead to a new norm of ties between India and China. It is true that China being the part of BRICS, economic agglomerate, has a beneficial impact but it all depends upon how it actually believes in the principle of reciprocity.

INDIA-USA RELATIONS

Being the world's two largest democracies, India and USA has many things in common. Initially during the cold war era, the attitude of USA was confrontationist and it objected India taking help from the erstwhile Soviet Union. This suspect grew further when India founded the NAM and USA's unilateral declaration that those who are not with us, are actually against us militated the relationship between India and USA.

There are many ups and down in the relationship between two great nations on the earth. Till 1960 India had maintained an attitude of neutrality with the USA. The relationship actually start moving in positive direction during the Rajiv Gandhi era and it had further been strengthened during the tenure of Manmohan Singh, as Prime Minister. The signing of INDO –USA Civil Nuclear deal in 2012 forged a new relationship and the travelling of their respective leaders had signaled a new era of relationship. Narendra Modi government had taken it to a new level by signing several military and economic deals with the USA.

³ Malhotra, Achal, **India's Foreign Policy: 2014-19: Landmarks, achievements and challenges ahead.** (<https://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?833>)

On the whole, the trajectory of relations with USA has been on the ascendency in the last few years except that some irritants have appeared in bilateral relations in the recent past. The US has accorded the status of Defence Partner which puts India at par with NATO allies. India has an increasing importance in the US priorities not only as a Market but the USA is also keen that India acts as a counter-weight to China in Asia. The USA would also like India to join hands with USA, Japan, Australia and others in the region to act as net security providers in Indo-Pacific Ocean in matters such as maritime security, freedom of navigation, piracy and disaster management. The unstated objective is to contain China's expansionist designs, particularly in South China Sea where China is undertaking construction activities on disputed islands.

In nutshell, recently Indo-US relations are improving leading to several official visits. Though there is the burden of history, the US is no longer looked upon as "interventionist" ⁴by India. One reason could be the presence of non-Congress governments in New Delhi. India is viewed as the largest democracy and emerging economic power, despite its numerous domestic problems. It is also seen as a reliable and potential partner in Asia if US relations sour with China.

Criticisms of India's Foreign Policy

- Too much importance attached to idealism
- Critique of India's non- alignment policy whereby she was looked upon with suspicion by both the super powers
- India's membership of the Commonwealth even after its independence from British rule
- Negation of the principle of Power

In conclusion it may be said that though Indian foreign policy had been condemned on various grounds, it cannot be denied that in the context of the conditions prevailing in the international arena this was the best policy. It has combined the twin principles of idealism and pragmatism. The governments which followed thereafter also persisted with the basic principles of India's foreign policy advocated by Nehru, even though they made necessary adjustments in these principles in keeping with the requirements of changed international conditions.

⁴ Kux,Dennis, Indo-US Relations: Past, Present and Future (http://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=722)

