

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

From the time India first attained independence in 1947, its foreign policy during the Cold War period evolved from being pro-Soviet and antithetical to Western interests, to now becoming an important Western strategic partner and providing a counterweight to China. Over the last six-and-half decade India has massively expanded its influence worldwide, primarily through diplomacy and trade, which has seen it emerge as an influential power in global politics. There are many aspects that played important role in determining India's foreign policy over period of time.

Evolution of India's Foreign Policy

Panchsheel

The guiding principles of India's Foreign Policy have been founded on Panchsheel, pragmatism and pursuit of national interest. The five principles of peaceful coexistence or Panchsheel was evolved during talks between India and the People's Republic of China in 1954. The five principles which formed the basis of the non-aligned movement were laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Five Principles are:

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Mutual non-aggression against anyone
- Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affair
- Equality and mutual benefit
- Peaceful co-existence

These five principles was believed to serve the need of the newly decolonized state which had more pressing needs to address rather than getting engaged in hostility with the neighbors. The underlying assumption for the five principles was the development of new and more principled approach to the International relations by the newly independent decolonized states.

However, the history of the first major enunciation of the five principles is not wholly encouraging. China has often emphasized its close association with the five principles. It had put them forward as the five principles of peaceful co-existence, at the starting of negotiations that took place in Delhi from December 1953 to April 1954 between the delegation of PRC (People's Republic of China) government and the delegation of the Indian government on the relations between the two countries with respect to the disputed territories of Aksai Chin and South Tibet. The 29 April 1954 agreement was set to last for eight years. When it lapsed the relations were already soaring, the provision for renewal of the agreement was not taken up and the Sino-Indian war broke out between the two sides.

However, in the 1970s, the five principles again came to be seen as important in the Sino-Indian relations and more generally as norms of relations between states. They came to be widely recognized and accepted during the region.

After 60 years of its origin and working Panchsheel still remains a mere paperwork for China which was a major party to the agreement and more than anxious to sign it. A great tragedy is that the agreement is remembered not for its content, which concerns the trade relations between India and Tibet, but for its preamble which directly caused the destruction of an ancient, spiritual 'way of life'.

Another misfortune is that the idealistic five principles were never been followed either in letter or in spirit by China, particularly, "non-interference in other's affairs" and "respect for the neighbour's territorial integrity". Chinese intrusion into the Indian Territory after three months of the agreement was a testimony to this. Thus, in a way, the agreement opened the door to the China's military control of the roof of the world by the People's Liberation Army. This further translated into building a network of roads and airstrips heading towards the Indian frontiers in NEFA (North East Frontier Agency) and Ladakh. This was aggravated by the refusal of some of Nehru's advisors to bargain for a proper delimitation of the border between Tibet and India, against the relinquishment of India's right in Tibet (accrued from the Simla convention).

The policy is remembered more as a basis for NAM (Non Aligned Movement), established in Belgrade, in 1961 and a diplomatic spoof for the country hitherto incapable of sorting out her border tangle. On a more positive note, it can be concluded that the agreement proved to be of lasting significance as it was the first of its kind where India and China agreed for mutual tolerance and peaceful co-existence so much so that the five principles today form the centre-piece of their current CSBMs (Confidence and Security Building Measures).

NAM (Non-Aligned Movement)

On 1 Sep 1961 the heads of 28 nations gathered in Belgrade to launch the Non-Alignment Movement. Fifty years on, NAM has grown to more than 120 nations and represents a majority voice in the United Nations.

Members of NAM initially had disputes on some issues due to gap in the level of technological and economical development. The major difference was between Asian and African countries as the Asian countries rose and African countries went down. Also, the disputes between India and Pakistan questioned the very basic principle of NAM— peaceful coexistence. In the post cold war period NAM was considered as sleeping beauty.

But in today's world, NAM has got a great task of questioning the monopoly of America in UNO and world. Also, NAM has made significant discussions on several issues of world importance. The extent of its need, importance and fame of this movement can be approximated from the increase in its membership. Its most important achievement include postponing of wars, reducing their intensity and in some cases disputes were completely solved. NAM can be said to have played a vital role in maintaining world peace in this nuclear age. This brought cold war to ceasefire. It beefed up the role of UNO in which all countries have equal representation. Non aligned countries have been successful in establishing a foundation of economic cooperation amongst underdeveloped countries. South—South dialogue has been summoned from the non aligned countries' front.

Another noteworthy fact is that it has transformed from a political movement to an economical movement whereby the developing and underdeveloped nations are demanding a New International Economic Order. It's been increasingly argued that in order to control the situation, to protest against the monopoly of US in a monoaxial world, to induce forceful dialogue between developed and underdeveloped countries, protesting against neo-colonial exploitation, maintaining North-South dialogue, South-South dialogue, combating international terrorism, global economic crisis and bringing about NIEO (New International Economic Order), NAM and G-77 will have to work together

Cold War Era in India

During the cold war India's policy was that of a neutral observer inclined towards self-interest rather than seeking alignment with any of the major power blocs. This attitude led her to sign two of the most important foreign policy agreements, i.e., Panchsheel and NAM (Non Alignment Movement) during this period.

As was the case with many other countries U.S.-India relations during the cold war were colored by the bipolarity of the international system. Despite India being one of the main founding countries in the Non Alignment Movement it tended to, as did many post-colonial countries, lean towards more populist/socialist policies, creating tension with the United States.

Since the early 1950s, New Delhi and Moscow had built friendly relations on the basis of real politick. India's nonalignment enabled it to accept Soviet support in areas of strategic congruence, as in disputes with Pakistan and China, without subscribing to Soviet global policies or proposals for Asian collective security. From 1959 India had accepted Soviet offers of military sales. Indian acquisition of Soviet military equipment was important because purchases were made against deferred rupee payments, a major concession to India's chronic shortage of foreign exchange. Simultaneous provisions were made for licensed manufacture and modification in India, one criterion of self-reliant defense on which India placed increasing emphasis. In addition, Soviet sales were made without any demands for restricted deployment, adjustments in Indian policies toward other countries, adherence to Soviet global policies, or acceptance of Soviet military advisers. In this way, Indian national autonomy was not compromised.

Nehru obtained a Soviet commitment to neutrality on the India-China border dispute and war of 1962. During the India-Pakistan war of 1965, the Soviet Union acted with the United States in the UN Security Council to bring about a cease-fire. India benefited at the time because the Soviet Union came to support the Indian position on Bangladesh and because the treaty acted as a deterrent to China.

The friendship treaty notwithstanding, Indira Gandhi did not alter important principles of Indian foreign policy. She made it clear that the Soviet Union would not receive any special privileges- much less naval base rights- in Indian ports, despite the major Soviet contribution to the construction of shipbuilding and ship-repair facilities at Bombay on the west coast and at Vishakhapatnam on the east coast. India's advocacy of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace was directed against aggrandizement of the Soviet naval presence as much as that of other extra-regional powers. By repeatedly emphasizing the nonexclusive nature of its friendship with the Soviet Union, India kept open the way for normalizing relations with China and improving ties with the West.

When the Soviet Union disintegrated, India was faced with the difficult task of reorienting its external affairs and forging relations with the fifteen Soviet successor states, of which Russia was the most important.

Post 1990 Scenario

The post-Cold War era spawned a dichotomy within the international system. The global system had to reckon with unimpeded power and authority centered around one superpower of which there was no comparison in terms of pure military might. Besides this there was also the emergence of multiple economic power centers that were beginning to and still assert themselves internationally with different perceptions and different goals.

Globalization and the rapid emergence of market economies all over the world, from Southeast Asia to Latin America, resulted in the spectacular emergence of regional cooperation and integration. Closely connected with globalization was the widespread emergence of market economies. It was no longer possible for nations or national markets to operate as self-sufficient units.

The four most important variables that guided the framing of India's foreign policy after the cold war were:

- India' search for its due place in the international order which is largely dominated by the US;
- An accommodation with the global nuclear order as the international system comes to terms with 'nuclear' India;
- India's balancing act of tackling the challenge of global terrorism without alienating its Islamic minority;
- And India's search for energy security to ensure its current rate of economic growth.

Although a late-comer to liberalisation there was a growing integration of India's economy with the rest of the world. Indo-US relations saw a new high with the latter acknowledging India as one of the emerging powers and boldly declaring to forge trade ties and engaging in mutual integration and co-operation owing to the shared interests in the global arena. However Indo-Russia relations were cut adrift after the Soviet disintegration but were later renewed.

India was clearly aware of its responsibilities and of the key role it has to play in the development of regional cooperation as there was good reason to believe that economic and technical co-operation among the SAARC countries will lead to co-operation in other areas as well. Thus, Gujral doctrine became a prominent phenomenon in India's foreign policy whereby India adhered to its commitment for regional integration and co-operation in south and south-east Asia.

There was a remarkable re-orientation of India's policy towards the middle-east as there was increasing pressure on India to adopt a more visible role in Iraq and use its leverage on Iran to curtail the latter's nuclear programme. While there was a new found convergence in the relations with Saudi-Arabia, Indo-Israeli relations took a difficult turn. Regarding central Asia, India tried its best to play a fairly positive role owing to the former's increasing importance due to energy concerns. The expanding role of India in the East Asia has been evident in India's look east policy. India's relations with China remain volatile and friction-ridden because of past experience, war, territorial disputes, unparallel interests, conflicting world-views and divergent geopolitical interests.

Overall the Look East policy should reinforce and demonstrate India's commitment to this region which accounts for about one-third of India's trade and this commitment will not be influenced in any way by the improving relations between India and the US and EU.

The Gujral Doctrine

This doctrine was an expression of the foreign policy initiated by Inder Kumar Gujral, the Foreign Minister in Deve Gowda Government which assumed office in June 1996. The Gujral Doctrine is a set of five principles to guide the conduct of foreign relations with India's immediate neighbours as spelt out by I.K. Gujral, first as India's External Affairs Minister and later as the Prime Minister.

These Principles are:

1. With neighbours like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates what it can in good faith and trust.
2. No South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region. (Second Principle of Panchsheel- Mutual non-aggression)
3. No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another. (Third Principle of Panchsheel- Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs)
4. All South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. (First Principle of Panchsheel- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty)
5. They should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations. (Fourth and Fifth Principles of Panchsheel- Equality and mutual benefit & Peaceful co-existence)

Positive Application

1. Sharing of Ganga Water with Bangladesh: It is in pursuance of this policy that late in 1996 India concluded an agreement with Bangladesh on sharing of Ganga Waters. This agreement enabled Bangladesh to draw in lean season slightly more water than even the 1977 Agreement had provided.

2. Freezing of Border Dispute with PRC: The confidence building measures agreed upon by India and China in November 1996 were also a part of efforts made by the two countries to improve bilateral relations, and freeze, for the time being, the border dispute.
3. Increasing People to People Contact with Pakistan: Gujral advocated people to people contacts, particularly between India and Pakistan, to create an atmosphere that would enable the countries concerned to sort out their differences amicably. India unilaterally announced in 1997 several concessions to Pakistan tourists, particularly the elder citizens and cultural groups, in regard to visa fees and police reporting.
4. “Confidence Building Measures” Talks with Pakistan: The Gujral Doctrine assumed significance when at Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan in June 1997, the two countries identified eight areas for negotiation so as to build confidence and seek friendly resolution of all disputes.

Significance of the Doctrine

1. It, thus, recognises the supreme importance of friendly, cordial relations with neighbours.
2. According to Gujral, these five principles, scrupulously adhered to, would achieve a fundamental recasting of South Asia’s regional relationships, including the difficult relationship between India and Pakistan.
3. Further, the implementation of these principles would generate a climate of close and mutually benign cooperation in the region, where the weight and size of India is regarded positively and as an asset by these countries.
4. The Gujral Doctrine was generally welcomed and appreciated not only within the country, but also by most of the neighbours and major powers.
5. In the context of changed international environment in post-cold war world Gujral Doctrine become a new and important principle of India’s foreign policy.
6. It can be implemented by different regional powers like USA, Russia, People Republic of China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Germany, etc.
7. It had an heuristic impact.

Nuclear Doctrine

Since independence, global nuclear non-proliferation has been a dominant theme of India’s nuclear policy. India conducted first nuclear test in 1974 (Smiling Buddha) and then in 1998 and become a de facto nuclear power country. To alleviate the fear of the neighbour and show itself as a responsible nuclear power, New Delhi came out with its Nuclear Doctrine after Pokharan II. Since independence, global nuclear non-proliferation has been a dominant theme of India’s nuclear policy. India conducted first nuclear test in 1974 (Smiling Buddha) and then in 1998 and become a de facto nuclear power country. To alleviate the fear of the neighbour and show itself as a responsible nuclear power, New Delhi came out with its Nuclear Doctrine after Pokharan II.

India’s nuclear doctrine was perhaps the first of its kind among the known nuclear weapon states. The two pressing theme of India’s Nuclear Doctrine are (i) No first use and (ii) Credible minimum deterrence.

The document lays down that India will not use nuclear weapon unless and until nuked. It also says that India will not use nuclear weapon against any non-nuclear state, unlike any other nuclear power countries.

To ensure nuclear deterrent, India has been engaged in developing credible retaliating power by developing triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missile and sea-based assets. To ensure nuclear deterrent, India has been engaged in developing credible retaliating power by developing triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missile and sea-based assets.

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Objectives

- (i) In the absence of global nuclear disarmament India's strategic interest require effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability. This is consistent with the UN Charter, which sanctions the right of self defence.
- (ii) India aims at convincing any potential aggressor that:
 - (a) Any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall involve measures to counter the threat, and
 - (b) Any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in retaliation with Nuclear Weapon.
- (iii) The fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapon is to deter the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by any state or entity against India or Indian forces. Credibility and survivability are central to India's nuclear deterrent.

Energy Diplomacy

According to India's Planning Commission, the country faces formidable hurdles in meeting its current and future energy needs, if it wants to maintain its economic growth.

One of the most important priority of the Indian government is the eradication of poverty. To get there, however, India will need to grow at a rate of 8 percent per year for the full quarter-century. There is a fear that this noble goal is going to generate huge energy shortages, as India has been less successful in securing energy supplies from its neighbours or from Central Asia than China has been. Over the next 25 years, the Indian government's priority is the eradication of poverty. To get there, however, India will need to keep growing by 8 percent a year for the full quarter-century. There is a fear that this noble goal is going to generate huge energy shortages, as India has been less successful in securing energy supplies from its neighbours or from Central Asia than China has been.

The troubles of the energy sector in India are compounded by state control over the import, production and distribution of oil and gas products, which are coordinated by 4 different ministries. More than half of India's electricity is generated by burning poor-quality domestic coal, which is expected to run out in about 40 years.

Furthermore, a third of India's oil is imported from countries the US is at odds with, such as Sudan, Syria or Iran, whilst the gas is imported mainly from Iran, Bangladesh or Burma. India's dependence on imported oil, which currently stands at 60 percent, is expected to grow to 90 percent by 2030. That lifts energy diplomacy to the top of India's agenda, when it comes to dealing with countries from Central Asia, Middle East, Africa or Latin America. Furthermore, a third of India's oil is imported from countries the US is at odds with, such as Sudan, Syria or Iran, whilst the gas is imported mainly from Iran, Bangladesh or Burma. India's dependence on imported oil, which currently stands at 60 percent, is expected to grow to 90 percent by 2030. That lifts energy diplomacy to the top of India's agenda, when it comes to dealing with countries from Central Asia, Middle East, Africa or Latin America.

India is trying to build gas pipelines that are needed by its electricity generation sector in order to diversify away from coal. Its two projects are the IPI (Iran-Pakistan-India) pipeline, also dubbed "the peace pipeline", and the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) pipeline.

Due to practical difficulties (as pipe was supposed to pass through restive Baluchistan province of Pakistan) and US opposition to the project determined India to recently abandon IPI, of which only the Iran-Pakistan stretch, or about 1,100 km, is going ahead with construction. The failure of the IPI project has recently determined India to enter fresh negotiations with the Teheran regime for the construction of an undersea gas pipeline. This would have the advantage of bypassing Pakistan and doing away with transit fees.

India's ever-growing appetite for energy is quietly reshaping the way it operates in the world, changing relations with its neighbors, extending its reach to oil states as far flung as Sudan and Venezuela, and overcoming Washington's resistance to its nuclear ambitions. Hovering over India's energy quest is its biggest competitor: China, which is also scouring the globe to line up new energy sources. The combined appetite of the two Asian giants is raising oil prices and putting greater demands on world oil supplies.

"Mutual dependencies" is the buzzword of the day, signaling the way oil and gas links among South Asian countries stand to rewrite the enmities of the past. The foreign policy of India will have a lot to do with energy. That vision is not without its challenges.

On the one hand, India seeks to cast itself as the model of democratic pluralism, as in its bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. On the other, its hunt for fuel is pushing it to reach out to authoritarian governments like those of Sudan and Myanmar, which the United States has sought to isolate. In both of those countries, China's weight is also keenly felt. But India is quickly making inroads. It has persuaded a wary Bangladesh to agree, at least in principle, to a pipeline that would ship gas from Myanmar to India. Indian government has also sought to lure foreign investors to explore for reserves in the Bay of Bengal, off India's eastern coast.

India's basic approach to energy diplomacy, both oil and gas, has been to develop as many potential supply arrangements with as many potential suppliers as it possibly can, and to try to neutralise its potential competitors, principally China, with cooperation agreements.

To attain some amount of energy security, India has engaged itself in almost all regions in the world that are rich in oil and gas reserves, namely the Gulf, Central Asia, South America, Africa and even a few of the neighbours like Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The rising energy security needs set the pace for India to leave no stone unturned to pursue a hard diplomacy for a very warm relationship with Central Asian states. As the Middle East appears to be in a state of permanent turmoil, attention of the world has certainly shifted towards Central Asia.

Global Issues

Some important global issues which have engaged the attention of foreign policy makers of India in the past twenty years:

Disarmament

India's disarmament policy is directed at achieving a world free from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons; it advocates a universal, non-discriminatory disarmament in a time-bound, phased and verifiable manner; this approach is reflected in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan which India submitted at the UNGA in 1998.

While continuing to work for global disarmament, India has kept its nuclear options open. India has declined to put its signatures on the NPT as it considers the Treaty discriminatory and an instrument which has divided the world into two parts: the P-5s (USA, Russia, China, France UK) codified as legitimate nuclear powers, and

the rest of the world which has been denied the right to develop and possess nuclear weapons. India's refusal to subscribe to the NPT resulted in decades of isolation in the international non-proliferation community.

India's impeccable record as a responsible nuclear power has, however, reversed the process and India now enjoys the confidence of major international players. In this context, the issues which had arisen out of India's rejection of the NPT and development of its own nuclear weapons capabilities in defiance of international opinion, have more or less been relegated to background/resolved. Sanctions have been eased/lifted. The unflinching support from the USA and allies paved the way for the waiver by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2008 which in turn has made it possible for India to conclude civil nuclear cooperation agreements with global nuclear powers.

On its part, India has demonstrated its unequivocal commitment to non-proliferation through a series of steps and policy shifts. It has placed selected civil nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, signed an Additional Protocol with IAEA, brought export control laws in line with those of the NSG and has taken many other steps which bring most Indian policies in line with the NPT spirit without formal signing. India today is a *d'facto* Nuclear Power; true this is not yet formally acknowledged by the international community. There is a widespread recognition, however, of India's impeccable record in the field of non-proliferation, in recognition of which the international community is now ready to engage India in nuclear trade. No other non-NPT signatory country has been given this privilege. And this can be considered as an outstanding achievement in the foreign policy pursuits during the past two decades.

The core element in India's nuclear doctrine (revealed through a Government Press Release of 4th January 2003) is in building and maintaining a 'credible minimum deterrent'. It also envisages *inter-alia*: (i) "No First Use," i.e., nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces; (ii) Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. However, in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.

Climate Change

India considers climate change as a global problem demanding global efforts and global solutions. India ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1993) and Kyoto Protocol (2002). India's well articulated position is that the current state of climate change and global warming is attributable to the excess emissions of harmful gases by the developed countries during the period of industrialisation; this is often referred to as the concept of 'historical responsibility'. India further insists that the developing countries cannot be expected to forego its developmental efforts. India subscribes to the principle of equity and 'common but differentiated responsibility'. India would like the developed world to assist the developing countries through financial assistance and transfer of technology to meet the challenges of climate change. India does not want to be seen as an obstacle but as a part of the solution. India has thus volunteered to cut its gas emissions though it has no such obligations under the international treaties.

Terrorism

India has been a victim of terrorism for decades; this issue has therefore engaged the attention of India's foreign policy makers for past several decades. India has adopted a policy of zero tolerance to the scourge of terrorism and condemns it as well as religious extremism and fundamentalism in any form or manifestation. It underlines the challenge posed by terrorism to international security during bilateral meets and at regional and international fora. In 1996, India introduced at UN the Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and is now advocating its early adoption.

The progress unfortunately has been slow; meanwhile, India has accelerated its bilateral interaction and has signed extradition treaties with over 30 countries.

Global Governance

In India's assessment the contemporary structures of global governance including UN and international financial institutions such as World Bank, IMF, etc., have proved inadequate in dealing with the political and economic crisis of present days and therefore the international community deserves new structures of global governance to confront cross-cutting and trans-national challenges. India seeks UN reform, including reform of UN Security Council. In recognition of India's growing stature, several countries have explicitly endorsed India's bid for a Permanent Seat in expanded Security Council; India's election to Non-Permanent Seat of UNSC with overwhelming support speaks for itself. Objectively and realistically speaking it would be a long and difficult path to tread before the campaign for substantial reforms in the present structures of global governance could be attained.

Indians Abroad

There are more than 20mn Indians or persons of Indian origin living abroad all over the world. It has been the endeavour of successive Government to formulate such policies as would help derive economic and , where feasible, political benefits from their presence abroad. The welfare of overseas Indian community is now a very important element in India's foreign policy approach. India's overseas Missions and Posts have been adequately equipped to handle difficult situations impinging upon the safety and security of overseas Indians; the Government of India has never been shy of intervening at the highest levels whenever the situation has so demanded.

The main objective of the foreign policy of a given country is to secure its national interests. India is no different in this regard. There is, however, a qualitative difference. It is noteworthy, that the foundations of India's foreign policy are laid on certain core principles. These include for instance the five principles of peaceful co-existence (Panchsheel), independence of decision making, resolution of conflicts and disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, preference for constructive engagement over isolation of individual countries, support for multilateral approaches to global issues. India has followed these principles diligently and has scrupulously eschewed the philosophy of ' Sam Daam, Dand, Bhed' in pursuing its foreign policy objectives. In the past two decades, these core principles have provided a great deal of continuity. While adhering to these core principles, India has continuously adapted to the changing external circumstances and shifting domestic needs. Economic dimensions are now an important element in India's foreign policy. Currently as much as 50% of GDP is linked to foreign trade as compared to 20% in 1990s. Foreign investments, modern and advanced technology, critical raw materials, energy resources are required as important inputs for India's economic development. An important objective of India's foreign policy is thus to act as an enabler, and also to create an external environment which would be conducive for inclusive development within the country so that the benefits of growth can percolate to the poorest of the poor segments of the society.

India's international image and its stature as an important international player is indisputable. At the same time India is perceived by some as a soft power which prefers to punch below its weight. But India's approach can be seen as non-intrusive, non-prescriptive, non-interfering but firm and adamant when it comes to safeguarding its national interests. Occasional failures are bound to occur but by and large the track record of India's foreign policy mandarins can be rated as above board.

Key Debates

Does India have the Ability to Protect and Enforce Human Rights and Civil Rights?

Indian Constitution obliges the government to promote democracy and civil rights, support for such rights in other countries and it is a natural elements of India's foreign policy. Accordingly, India has supported democratic movements across the world, the most recent example being India's support for the assertion of people's rights

in Nepal. India is also likely to be engaged in providing moral and material support to political reconstruction of Nepal. India has also used its diplomatic influence with other countries in the region to persuade governments to recognise and respect the rights of aboriginal populations and minorities. India's support for the protection of the rights of the minorities. India's support for protection of the rights of the minority Tamils in Sri Lanka, for religious and ethnic minorities in Bangladesh and for restoration of democracy in Pakistan are pointers in this direction. India has been constructively engaged in restoration of democracy in Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, former Yugoslavia, and Cambodia, and has been supportive of restoration of the democratic process in a number of countries in Middle East and Africa. India's support for establishment of democratic rights and preservation of human rights is likely to become and remain a very important element of its foreign policy in the years to come.

Does India have the Ability to Safeguard Environment through Sustainable Development?

The transformation for India from an impoverished economy to a fairly developed one has entailed assimilation of technologies for environment friendly sustainable economic development. A number of countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia look forward to benefiting from the Indian experience.

With enhanced economic ability, India is now ideally placed to share its experience with other countries in this field. India is an active economic partner with a number of developing countries under the aegis of the South-South Cooperation Programmes, the G-15 process, SAARC, the Ganga Mekong Economic Cooperation, BIMSTEC, EAC and SADC. In years to come, India is likely to make enhanced budgetary allocations for both bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation with developing countries through its economic, scientific and technological aid.

Does India have the Ability to Contribute to Global Economic Development?

The primary reason for India being a favorite with the international community is the fact that it is seen as large unsaturated potential market as also an ideal place for safe investments with yields much higher than those in developed industrial economies. India's newfound status of a nuclear weapon power has created sufficient confidence across the globe that it is politically stable and is immune from military adventurism on part of powers inimical to India. Added to this perception is the realization that after China, India is the most promising emerging market. This has brought large-scale foreign direct investment into India, a process that will only grow in years to come. India's large scale requirements for investments in infrastructure sector including roads, powers, ports and also the immense possibilities of safe investments with high yields in India real estate, manufacturing, pharmaceutical and information and technology sectors, has made India a hot favourite with international institutional investors.

India is determined to make SAFTA a reality as soon as possible. India has also entered into free trade area agreements with countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand. Similar agreements are within the realm of possibility with India's tried and tested economic partners like Qatar and Oman. More countries in the littoral of the Indian Ocean could be added to the basket of free trade area in the near future. Many US academics have been known to toy with the idea of a US-India free trade area. The Idea is at once exiting and full of promise, but a lot would need to be done to make it a reality, given the divergence between short-term and medium-term objectives of US and Indian economies.

Regardless, India has a clear responsibility to share its newfound economic prosperity with its neighbours in South Asia. Bilateral economic cooperation with Bhutan, particularly in the power sector, is a clear example of what such cooperation can do to transform the economy of a small country. The possibility of economic cooperation with China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, holds tremendous promise but the success of such partnerships is uncertain on account of existing territorial disputes with Pakistan and China, and the inability of Saudi Arabia an Irania elite to forge relations with India independent of their perspective of Pakistan as an Islamic Country. The potential for economic cooperation with Central Asia and Africa is mense but is unlikely to yield spectacular results due to lack of access and physical distance from India.

The fact that India is already the world's fourth largest economy when measured in terms of gross domestic product, calculated on purchasing power parity basis, and among the world's five largest economies, ahead of France and Britain, when calculated in US dollar terms, is a clear sign that the Indian economic miracle has arrived and is here to stay. The confidence in the Indian economy is likely to become an increasingly important instrument of India's foreign policy in the years to come.

Does India have the Ability to Secure its Trade Routes?

If India is to expand its area of diplomatic influence and also acquire a proven ability to influence political and economic events in its sphere of strategic importance, it will need to acquire the means to protect the internationally recognized global trade links, especially the sea lanes through which flow goods and services which are critical to the international economy. India will also have to contribute significantly towards prevention of undesirable commerce such as drug trafficking, human smuggling and trade in arms. As India is located in one of the most heavily populated regions of the world, with more than its share of socio-economic strife, the concern relating to the arms and drugs nexus and illegal immigration, both into India and from India, is real. India will need to equip its intelligence agencies and the concerned law and order enforcement agencies with new knowledge based technologies including biometric identification systems and space based intelligence. If India is to discharge the responsibilities expected of a great power, India will also have to establish a large number of new ports to facilitate exports directly to key markets in Africa, Europe and US. It will have to continue to vigorously follow the 'open skies' policy and encourage both the public and private sector airlines to forge strategic partnerships with airlines in the Middle East where the fuel costs are less, and those operating in regions like South-East Asia, Europe and North America, where the bulk of global passenger and goods traffic ends or originates (so that Indian Airlines can also acquire an economy of scale). Modernisation of airports is also an imperative. These are goals which can easily be achieved over a decade or so.

Does India have the Ability to Ensure its Energy Security?

Ensuring energy security is India's single most important economic concern and is likely to undo her dream of being a global power. India is debilitated in a great measure by low domestic petroleum reserves and is required to import the bulk of its natural gas and crude oil requirements, a serious drain on its economy. Of late, the state and private sector oil companies are exploring for oil in the countries in Central Asia, Middle East and Africa. But these are humble beginnings and it could well take almost a decade for such initiatives to start yielding desirable results in meeting India's crude oil requirements.

India had about 120,000 MW of installed capacity for electricity production, with an ability to prudently about 70 per cent of installed capacity. This implies that India is able to produce only half of its realistic demand for 150,000 MW. During the last financial year, the shortfall in energy requirements was about 40 per cent of the total demand and peaking shortage was about 15 per cent. The shortages of such magnitude have a crippling effect not only on a day-to-day life but also on the potential for economic growth in the country.

There are opportunities for India to set up a number of thermal power stations running on a mixture of domestic and imported coal as fuel. This should not be difficult, given India's large coal reserves. There is also the untapped potential for installation of about 50,000 MW in the hydro power sector. The problem, however, is of long gestation periods, invariably attended by cost over runs. The solution lies in corporatizing the management of hydropower production with the government keeping away from the execution of such projects even while providing the private sector with security and assistance in the form of large scale credit and capital flows required for hydro projects. Bilateral cooperation with Nepal can help in meeting the demand for another 50,000 MW of electricity.

The nuclear power sector is in a dismal state both in terms of promise and performance largely because India does not have adequately enriched uranium, badly needed for operating its civilian reactors. The recent India-US deal would help in such a situation. However, to make the nuclear power sector more advanced, it is

imperative that while the reactors meant for military use are retained with the Atomic Energy Commission, those reactors, which are intended for production of nuclear power for civilian use, should be privatized and handed over to non government agencies. This will not only bring a measure of economic efficiency in the management of nuclear power sector but will also bring the Indian civil nuclear programme out from a cloak of absolute secrecy, to greater public scrutiny and create an informed opinion about the performance of the atomic energy sector in the country. It is obvious that in the absence of such scrutiny, the civilian atomic energy programme has lagged behind by at least four decades. Not only is nuclear power production uneconomical, we have consistently failed to address the shortcomings and mismanagement resulting from secrecy. The Indian leadership was not even aware of the extent of the problem until the realization that India did not have sufficient enriched uranium fuel to utilize in its existing reactors functional, let alone build new reactors, in the run up to the US-India deal. This factor constrained India's negotiating ability.

The cherished ideal of production of about 300,000 GW of electricity from nuclear technologies using thorium fuel is more than a decade away. While such a reality would be a real panacea for India's energy security, it is unlikely that current management practices in the atomic energy sector will bring this objective to an early realization. Clearly, there is a need to have more transparent management of the civilian nuclear energy sector, open to public and Parliamentary scrutiny, which would only be possible if the management of nuclear reactors for military purposes and civilian energy processes is segregated – the latter preferably being privatized.

Does India have the Ability to Ensure a Favourable International Information Order?

In the age of an information and communication revolution, both the quality and quantity of information is a key determinant in decision-making. While India is an undisputed leader in information technology, India significantly lags behind the rest of the world when we measure the quotient of information availability to general public, with access to computers and internet confined to a few million in a country which has a billion plus people. More importantly, the development of computer software technology in India and other Indian languages lags woefully behind that in English, leading to a situation where a majority of Indian citizens do not have access to either the same quality, or the quantity of reliable information as those in developed countries. This situation will need to be addressed.

From a foreign policy perspective, it is more important to ensure that we have the ability to provide correct information about India to the rest of the world. Assimilation of knowledge based tools in governance, including e-governance and e-commerce is a clear sign that we are moving in the right direction. Similarly, information technology is now also being integrated into other areas, which touch the life of Indians, as well as of the international community in its interface with India or Indians. The revolution in the television industry and the miraculous growth of Indian cinema and its influence across the world has contributed significantly towards making India an international favourite. India is more accurate and reliable than it was 10 years ago.

The information revolution has also helped India to address the cultural needs of the Indian diaspora abroad. We have also been able to contribute in a significant measure to preserve the universal heritage of mankind including ancient monuments and manuscripts as it also fosters a sustained dialogue with other civilizations, old and new. India's expertise in information technology and its application in all aspects of life are likely to be of enormous significance that will contribute towards making India a global power. The demand for Indian software personnel in key economies of the world is growing, as is the appreciation for their contribution to the growth of new technologies in countries like the United States of America. It has also led to significant outsourcing of projects from developed countries into India which has contributed both to income generation and implementation and assimilation of new IT skills in the Indian economy.

Does India have the Ability to Integrate its Diaspora?

People of Indian origin constitute one of the single most important ethnic groups in the world, besides China. The fact that ethnicities of Indian origin are quite diverse with a number of ethnic, linguistic and regional groups masquerading as a Pan Indian group in countries outside India, has been a problem faced by the Government of India in integrating the Indian diaspora with the mother country. However, over the last 60 years, just as a Pan Indian identity is being forged in India, a sense of Pan Indian cultural identity is also emerging within Indian diaspora abroad. The growth in the means of communication and transportation over the years, both in India and in the countries with a large presence of the Indian diaspora, has added to the government's ability to address the political, economic and cultural needs of overseas Indians. This process is likely to grow, with the government taking on greater responsibilities for overseas Indians.

The people of Indian origin abroad are likely to enjoy greater political powers through participation in Indian polity as also in being able to engage with the mother country through investments and technology transfer on account of specialized schemes tailored for them. It is important fact that the bulk of remittances from overseas Indians come from the more economically disadvantaged sections like skilled and unskilled labour and not the affluent sections. This migrant labour is seasonal and tries to maintain familiar emotional and cultural links with India. However, the process of liberalization of the Indian economy has now created a potential for economically well off Indians overseas to participate in the great Indian economic experience. It is, therefore, not surprising that a very large number of investments in corporate India come from affluent people of Indian origin living abroad. Such investments not only provide adequate returns but also help the Indians overseas in gaining a sense of security and connection with the motherland in case of instability or other problems relating to political and social rights in their country of residence.

Opportunities and Challenges for Indian Foreign Policy in its Emergence as a Great Power

Clearly, India has the potential to be a global power. Does India have the vision and the will to be a global power? At the time of independence in 1947, the leaders of the Independence movement had targeted the year 2000 as the date for realizing their vision to be a great global power. This vision guided India's Five Year Plans under the Mahalanobis mode, when economic development followed a socialistic pattern with a centralized public sector at the commanding heights of the economy. It is with the advent of the nineties that economic liberalisation started taking roots. But for the vision of the political leadership, the domestic opposition to economic reforms would have ensured that the process collapses even before it could kick-start. There is now, a broad political consensus among the mainstream political parties that the process of economic reforms, is irreversible. India's rise towards the great power status shall be based on the edifice of the economic reforms, which have been pursued relentlessly over the last decade.

India is almost a decade behind China in carrying out economic and technological reforms in its polity. It is evident that any blueprint to be followed for India's emergence as a great power will have to take into account the fact that India must catch up with China, both in terms of internal reform process and also the ability to project such power outside India. Just as China, in its pursuit to replace US as a pre-eminent global power, continues to implement economic and foreign policy reforms, India must ensure that it simulates the Chinese success and is not left behind on account of the tendency to acquiesce in status quo or lack of political will to pursue the reform process.

What is the Strength of India's Security Scheme?

While the newly acquired nuclear weapons state status provides a deterrent to potential adversaries, it is not credible deterrent. It is obvious to any discerning observer that use of nuclear weapons in a potential India-Pakistan war is not a policy option either for India or Pakistan. The fact that India and Pakistan share a

coastline, a shared boundary with heavily populated areas on both sides of the border, and waters of as many as six major rivers, any India-Pakistan war with use of nuclear weapons will result in total destruction of Pakistan and partial destruction of major Indian cities like Delhi, Bombay and Ahmedabad on account of radioactive fallout. It is unlikely that any responsible and sane regime, either in Pakistan or India will toy with the idea of nuclear engagement with the other country. This scenario necessitates that credible confidence-building measures be put in place between the two countries. The final outcome of these measures is likely to be no different from the results obtained in Europe after the end of the Second World War. These are freezing of borders at the existing Line of Control along the entire India-Pakistan Border, opening of the border with gradual withdrawal of the ground based armed forces and conversion of the international border into a soft border which permits free trade and transit to general population on both sides of the border. Conscious of these imperatives, the political leadership of two countries has initiated a process of confidence building measures. It should be possible for both countries to convert the entire India-Pakistan border into a soft border over the next decade.

The criticality of the nuclear deterrent vis-à-vis China, the only other country with which India has had an armed conflict, is more important. An increasingly powerful China is known to harness the so called 'Middle Kingdom Complex', an important determinant of its foreign policy. If India is unable to match China militarily, including the reach of its air force, navy and ballistic missile systems, and keep up with the economic strides being made by China i.e. about 10 per cent annual growth in GDP, China is unlikely to take India seriously. The only guarantee of stable India-China relations is a credible perception in China that India is equal to China, both militarily and as an economy. If this realization does not ink with the Chinese leadership, the tendency on part of the Chinese Government to keep pinpricking India is unlikely to subside. Over the next decade or so, the blueprint for development of Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, and its missile based defence and nuclear weapons are clear, i.e., to seek parity with China. This is a task in which a robust Indo-US relationship can help.