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UNIT 1

INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY FRAMEWORK
From the time India first attained independence in 1947, its foreign policy during the Cold War period evolved from maintaining non-alignment to a slight tilt towards the USSR 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 time.

**Evolution of India’s Foreign Policy**

**Panchsheel**

- The five principles of peaceful coexistence or Panchsheel was evolved during talks between India and the People’s Republic of China in 1954. It formed the basis of the non-aligned movement (NAM) and it was 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 were believed to serve the need of the newly decolonized state which was to address rather than getting engaged in hostility with the neighbors.

- 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 Southern 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 in 1962.

- 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 in 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 erstwhile 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 September 1st, 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. Original idea was to maintain distances from power blocs.

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. It’s 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, climate change, WTO issues and bringing about NIEO (New International Economic Order), NAM and G-77 will have to work together.

Cold War Era and India

During the cold war, India’s policy was that of a country inclined towards self-interest rather than seeking alignment with any of the major power blocs. But taking benefits from both. 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 Nehru’s bias towards soviet planning also played a decisive role! 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 Vishakapatnam 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’s 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 cooperation 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, Gujaral 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.

**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:**

- 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.
- 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).
- No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another (Third Principle of Panchsheel- Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs).
- 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).
- 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**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- “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**

- It, thus, recognises the supreme importance of friendly, cordial relations with neighbours.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Gujral Doctrine was generally welcomed and appreciated not only within the country, but also by most of the neighbours and major powers.
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.

- It can be implemented by different regional powers like USA, Russia, People Republic of China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Germany, etc.
- 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.

- In its Nuclear Doctrine, India has clearly laid down that the final decision to use nuclear weapon will lie with the civilian leader. It also laid down complete chain of command in this regard. In its Nuclear Doctrine, India has clearly laid dawn that the final decision to use nuclear weapon will lie with the civilian leader. It also laid down complete chain of command in this regard.

**Objectives**

- 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.

- India aims at convincing any potential aggressor that:
  - Any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall involve measures to counter the threat, and
  - Any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in retaliation with Nuclear Weapon.

- 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 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.

Indian Foreign Relations Development under PM Modi

India is rising in a world system that has been largely favourable to its rise, but one that India was not involved in creating. According to PM Modi, the present international environment represents a rare opportunity for India, which it must use to “position itself in a leading role, rather than just a balancing force, globally.”

India is not yet fully in a position to lead, or set the rules of the international order, but it is taking steps to seek full membership of the most important global governance platforms. India is already a member of the G20, the East Asia Summit, and the BRICS coalition, a testament to its status as a large country with a fast-growing economy. New Delhi also naturally aspires for permanent membership on the UN Security Council. It has also been actively lobbying for full membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as well as the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Missile Technology Control Regime.
These efforts could bear fruit as early as 2016, although there has been opposition from China and – because of the Italian marines controversy – Italy. All the while, India has been trying to bolster its leadership credentials, whether through international relief efforts in Yemen and Libya, reminders of its history of UN peacekeeping, or the public reclamation of its contributions to the World Wars. The successful outcome of the COP21 climate summit in Paris and India’s constructive role have also gone some way towards shedding its reputation as a multilateral ‘naysayer’ and ‘obstructionist’.

India has only just recently embarked upon institution building of its own. The International Solar Alliance represents one such effort, as do the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and BBIN. While India will continue to lobby consistently for inclusion in multilateral security institutions, its presence in the evolving international economic and trade order will still require a clearer articulation of its trade policy, one that gives greater priority to India’s concerns on services, intellectual property, and labour mobility. India has clearly expressed broad comfort with the international order and has actively been lobbying for a seat at the global high table. Learning to lead, however, will be harder. As the prime minister himself has noted, it will require a change in mindsets.

**Government’s priorities:**
- Neighbour First: Prioritizing an integrated neighbourhood
- Domestic interest: Leveraging international partnerships to promote India’s domestic development.
- Act East: Ensuring a stable and multipolar balance of power in the Indo-Pacific
- Counter Pakistan: Dissuading Pakistan from supporting terrorism.
- Global Role: Advancing Indian representation and leadership on matters of global governance.

**Steps taken with this new approach:**
- Warmed up to America
- Sustained the old friendship with Russia
- Deepened strategic partnership with Japan and Australia
- Boosted India’s neighbourhood policy
- Wooed international business leaders
- Reconnected with India’s diaspora
- Championship of reforms of UNSC
- Stress on environment
- Initiative to get closer to France, Canada, Germany, islands state and Africa

**The purpose is to promote India’s domestic agenda of development, prosperity and peace:**
- Help secure capital
- Open up export markets
- Access Technology
- Create Employment opportunities abroad
- Assure raw materials
- Ensure India’s security
  - Territorial security and integrity
  - Cross-border Terrorism
  - Energy Security
  - Food Security
  - Environment Security

**Dialogue**
- SCO meeting at Tashkent
- India-Africa Forum Summit 2015
- FIPIC summit 2015
- BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit 2016, India-EU Summit
Agreements
- COP – 21 Paris
- Chabhar Trilateral Agreement
- MTCR

Challenges for the World
- Protectionist and beggar-thy-neighbour policy
- Economic slowdown in world
- Syrian Crisis
- Increasing assertiveness of China
- Backlash to globalization and integration

Achievements
- Strengthening foothold in Iran and Afghanistan
- Deeper relationship with middle-east
- Reconnected with India’s diaspora
- Exclusive focus on NRI welfare
- Operation Rahat
- Emerged as top FDI recipient nation

Infrastructure- UAE has pledged $ 75 billion. Other countries have committed on projects like high speed railways, Chennai metro, Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, India-US Infrastructure Platform, Korea has promised $10 billion.
- Make in India- Japan has launched a $12 billion facility, Russia to jointly produce KA 226 helicopters
- Skill India- Canada, Australia, Japan, Germany etc. cooperating to achieve the ambitious target of skilling 400 million Indians. India-US Innovation Forum
- Energy Security- Investments in oil and gas sector in Russia. Civil nuclear pacts with Australia, Japan, France, UK and Canada for technology and uranium supply
- Plugging tax loopholes- recasting of tax treaties with Mauritius, Singapore, Cyprus etc.
- International Day of Yoga

Perception of India
(See Figure No. 1)

View of India's Influence

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Figure - 1

Changing Stance of India’s Foreign Policy

- India has challenged conventional thinking even though the effects of these actions in the longer term still need to be assessed.
- Working backwards chronologically, India’s recent decision to skip the much-hyped ‘Belt & Road Forum’ (BRF) in Beijing, was contrary to India’s traditional reluctance to publicly confront China’s hegemonic ambitions.
India clearly articulated objections to OBOR and CPEC (China-Pakistan economic corridor) on the basis of sovereignty. India laid out why it believed OBOR to be exploitative, colonial in its lack of transparency and the way it created unsustainable debt in “partner” countries and caused environmental damage.

While some nations were gearing up to praise China’s massive utilisation of excess capacities, India’s reaction proved to be a dampener for the Chinese.

For some in India, signing up for OBOR would have been less painful, and apparently pragmatic. The PM Modi government concluded its unusual reaction was in keeping with India’s traditional opposition to China-Pakistan activities in POK. And that going by Sri Lanka’s experience and perhaps even Pakistan’s, the openly mercantilist policies of China need to be publicly opposed.

As it turned out, the EU too backed away from a trade statement using similar arguments. Political ties with China have gone steadily downhill in the past couple of years, though interestingly FDI from China has risen significantly in the PM Modi years.

China has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sources of FDI into India — it was 17th largest in 2016, up from the 28th in 2014 and 35th in 2011.

Matters have not been helped by China stymying India’s bid for NSG membership and protecting Pakistan-based Jaish terrorist Masood Azhar from sanctions. Early this year, foreign secretary S Jaishankar promised China would get a lot more attention from India, in order to put the relationship back on the rails.

India has paid much greater attention to its near neighbourhood, sans Pakistan. Bangladesh has been the template for a new kind of engagement. While neighbours traditionally get a large chunk of Indian assistance, it was largely unstructured.

India has now decided to focus on around 20 visible projects for Bangladesh, which will utilise the $4.5 billion in LOC assistance. India will follow a similar approach in Sri Lanka, which recently saw a second PM Modi visit. India has also worked hard to create a Saarc minus Pakistan, in order to beat its clasp on India’s neighborhood outreach.

In 2016, the BRICS summit saw the revival of BIMSTEC, while a sub-regional cooperation initiative, BBIN, is slowly coming together, creating transport and power networks in the east.

Earlier this month, India launched the south Asia satellite that signalled cooperation without a direct quid pro quo. One of PM Modi’s signature initiatives has been westwards, in his new ‘Link West’ policy, to mirror the ‘Act East’.

Strong economic imperatives, infrastructure investment and India’s desire to play a greater security role over shared concerns over threats like the terror group IS drive India’s outreach. This is also intended to wean these nations away from Pakistan as India peddles a “better narrative”.

The India-Pakistan relationship is in deep freeze, with little daylight visible. Again, PM Modi used surprise as a tactical weapon. After a series of terror attacks against Indian defence installations from across the border, India retaliated with surgical strikes on terror launch-pads in POK.

The upfront announcement of the strikes highlighted a “proactive” stance on terror. To Pakistan, India signalled that the calculus of terror under a nuclear umbrella would not work. India made its response unpredictable and raised Pakistan’s costs.

On August 15, from the Red Fort ramparts, PM uttered the forbidden “B”-word, speaking of the “oppression” of the people of Balochistan.

Pakistan choked in anger and later arrested Kulbhushan Jadhav, a former Navy man, as an alleged spy. After a military court announced a death sentence on Jadhav, India adopted a creative and bold approach — upending decades of conventional wisdom yet again by going to the International Court of Justice and pulling off a vital win.

**Virtues of Soft Power**

‘Soft power’ refers to the ability to persuade others to do something using neither force nor coercion. While conventional, hard power relies on the State’s military and economic resources, soft power works on persuasion, aiming at furthering a country’s ‘attractiveness’. It is based on three main categories of a country’s resources - culture, political values, and foreign policies.

A major thread that has linked India and Nepal for centuries is under stress. Some refer to it as religious, but the ties that link people to people in the two countries have a strong civilisational and cultural underpinning. However, this soft diplomacy is increasingly weakening.
Soft power is a concept developed by Joseph Nye of Harvard University to describe the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than by coercion (hard power), which is using force or giving money as a means of persuasion.

Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction.

A defining feature of soft power is that it is non-coercive; the currency of soft power is culture, political values, and foreign policies.

A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries admire its values, emulate its example; aspire to its level of prosperity and openness.

Soft power is a staple of daily democratic politics. The ability to establish preferences tends to be associated with intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority.

**Interplay between hard and soft power**

- Hard and soft powers are related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one’s purpose by affecting the behavior of others. The distinction between them is one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources.

- Command power- the ability to change what others do can rest on coercion or inducement. Co-optive power- the ability to shape what others want, can rest on the attractiveness of one’s culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic.

- The types of behavior between command and co-option range along a spectrum from coercion to economic inducement to agenda-setting to pure attraction. Soft power resources tend to be associated with the co-optive end of the spectrum of behavior, whereas hard power resources are usually associated with command behavior.

- Hard and soft power sometimes reinforces and sometimes interferes with each other. A leader who courts popularity may be loath to exercise hard power when he should, but a leader who throws his weight around without regard to the effects on his soft power may find others placing obstacles in the way of his hard power.

**Limits of soft power**

- Limitation or attractions do not add up to power. Some imitation or attraction does not produce much power over policy outcomes, and neither does imitation always produce desirable outcomes.

- For example, armies frequently imitate and therefore nullify the successful tactics of their opponents and make it more difficult for them to achieve the outcomes they want. But attraction often does allow you to get what you want.

- The deliberate acts of command and control are ignoring the second or “structural” face of power, the ability to get the outcomes you want without having to force people to change their behavior through threats or payments.

- All power depends on context- who relates to whom under what circumstances but soft power depends more than hard power upon the existence of willing interpreters and receivers. Moreover, attraction often has a diffuse effect of creating general influence, rather than producing an easily observable specific action.

- Goodwill may not ultimately be honored, and diffuse reciprocity, is less tangible than an immediate exchange. Nonetheless, the indirect effects of attraction and a diffuse influence can make a significant difference in obtaining favorable outcomes in bargaining situations. Otherwise leaders would insist only on immediate payoffs and specific reciprocity, and we know that is not always the way they behave.

- Soft power is also likely to be more important when power is dispersed. A dictator cannot be totally indifferent to the views of the people under his rule, but he can often ignore popularity when he calculates his interests. In settings where opinions matter, leaders have less leeway to adopt tactics and strike deals.

**Why is soft power diplomacy important?**

- Soft power is the ability to influence other actors through persuasion to produce the desired behaviour as opposed to ‘hard’ power which relies on threats. An analogy commonly used is that of sticks- hard power and carrots- soft power.
Growing interdependence and globalisation is a factor in ‘soft’ powers growing importance. Given the concept of a growing ‘world without borders’ this implies the increasing cross-border flows of images, information, ideas and even people. This makes it easier to achieve common goals through cooperation and working together as opposed to competition.

Globalisation is also seen to have impacted our understanding of cultures and values of other states- cities such as London have over 300 languages being spoken. Theoretically, this increased understanding of one another which puts an emphasis on cooperation. The recent legacy of the use of ‘hard’ powers has made it increasingly unpopular.

However, in most circumstances hard and soft power operates in tandem. The idea of ‘smart power’, is gaining importance which means soft power backed up by the possible use of hard power.

Case study of Nepal

What has India done?
- India blocked the efforts of a large but disorganised section of the Nepali populace that wanted contentious issues like the shift from a monarchy to a republic and the adoption of secularism as state credo instead of continuing as a Hindu state to be settled through debate, and if necessary a referendum.
- While aligning with the Maoists who were waging war against the state, dispensing with the monarchy, and asking its long-term ally, the Nepali Congress to support the Maoists, India miscalculated the impact these shifts will have, not only on Nepal’s politics, but also in the society.
- India is unclear about how to repair the damage which the diplomacy has done to its soft power and the resultant confusion in the bilateral relations.
- Unlike the EU and major western donor agencies which campaign for the right to conversion, China discourages these activities.
- Indian officialdom, given its past alliance with the EU in transforming Nepal into a secular republic without involving people, is obliged to maintain silence on the matter.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised course correction by visiting Nepal twice after assuming office.
- However, China has gained over India in Nepal under his watch. The current anti-India sentiment in Nepal, which will also reflect in the mandate, is to a large part due to the 2015 economic blockade, the Modi government imposed on Nepal, which had yet to recover from a devastating earthquake.

How is China Proceeding?
- China seems to have picked up a thread that India abandoned when it began to pursue a radical path in Nepal from 2006.
- India’s preference for radical political agendas have undermined, and even demolished, the institutions that facilitated cultural linkages between the two countries. This has contributed to the distrust between Kathmandu and New Delhi.
- China’s keen interest to develop Lumbini and build a railway line to Sigatse in Tibet via Kerung is an attempt on the part of Beijing to leverage soft power in bilateral relations, for it recognises that Buddhism can be a binding thread between the two countries. A trip to Lumbini is now mandatory for the ever-rising number of Chinese delegations.

Conclusion
- Soft power has always been a key element of leadership. The power to attract, to get others from what you want, to frame the issues, to set the agenda, has its roots in thousands of years of human experience. Skillful leaders have always understood that attractiveness stems from credibility and legitimacy. Power has never flowed solely from the barrel of a gun; even the most brutal dictators have relied on attraction as well as fear.

Relevance of Non-Alignment India
- Indeed, Nehru had upheld the non-alignment to project India’s great power aspirations. In fact, non-alignment was the only and best principle available to Nehru in the post-Independent India confronted with precarious domestic and external environment. Internally, India was confronted with settling the fate of some five-hundred odd princely states. Coupled with this, was the linguistic movements that shook the very fabric of the nation. With the Pakistani invasion on the northern frontiers, the question of Kashmir loomed large. Also, the establishment of a Communist regime in China followed by its invasion of Tibet created a grave situation in the north. Above all, the emergence of bipolar politics
in the post-War era put India in a precarious situation. After the hard earned independence, Nehru’s primary concern was economic rejuvenation to propel India to the ranks of a great power status. And for India’s rise the preeminent necessity was peace in the external frontier. In this context, Nehru propagated non-alignment that gave freedom of action to pursue national rejuvenation. This rationale also drove him to join hands with China knowing fully well the irredentist aspirations of the newly emerged Communist government.

- With the Chinese foreign minister’s in June 2014 visit to New Delhi and interactions with the US president coupled with Prime Minister Modi’s visit to Japan have all infused a new dynamism in Indian foreign policy. Along with it has emerged a new momentum in India’s neighbourhood with the renewed focus on revitalising the SAARC process. In the new context, however, have emerged questions on the efficacy of strategic autonomy and non-alignment in Indian foreign policy. There is a thinking that PM needs to jettison the redundant policy of non-alignment that the UPA government professed in the post-Cold War garb of strategic autonomy.

- However, prior to any re-thinking on India’s foreign policy, it is necessary to shed the myopic and divisive categorization of Indian foreign policy into pro and anti-Nehruvian positions. Also, it is necessary to understand that in the present geo-political order where the US and China have distinctly emerged as rivals, India has greater room for manoeuverability. Further, India does not require playing the role of a swing power akin to China in the 1970s and 80s. The reason is germane to the altered nature of global politics. India does not confront the ideologically pitted Cold War politics of the US and the USSR. Further, in the deepening trends of globalization, the economies of the US and China is deeply entwined precluding strict division of the global politics along pro or anti-US axis. Furthermore, the countries like the US, Pakistan and China have now come around advocating a common mission to end terrorism and focussing on economic integration and common prosperity.

- The global thrust on economic integration has certainly accrued greater space to India that the non-alignment actually stands for. It allows India to reach out to both the US and China without fear of taking sides and draw in the benefits from both of manufacturing, investments, trade and commerce. It has also enabled India to rope in Japan in developing its backward northeast region much to the irritation of the China. In fact, both Japan and China are competing to strengthen economic ties with India. This gives India leverage to bargain for the best economic deals conducive to its national interest.

- In this emerging geo-political order where there is a common synergy among nations on growth and development, India under Modi does not require to jettison the non-alignment principles but to focus on fulfilling the two goals of domestic economic reform and external stability underscored in the principle. Simply put, non-alignment is essentially a route to great power status - a strategy that is independent of external forces by prioritizing national interest and ensuring strategic maneuverability. In fact, China appropriated the same strategy in 1982 under Deng Xiaoping, underlined in the ‘independent foreign policy of peace’ and which resonates predominantly its foreign policy today.

- Clearly, non-alignment was born out of the difficult external and internal security conditions. However, this great power aspiration floundered on the 1962 debacle. This however, does not signal the failure of non-alignment. Rather, the quest for great power status failed because there was a disjuncture between theory and praxis. The weaknesses in the domestic front coupled with the external volatility of Cold War politics had derailed Nehru’s great power vision. Today India is better positioned. It is the third largest economy in Asia and fourth in the world. Also, externally, India does not require to take sides and instead engage both the US and China. More importantly, there is an alignment today that was absent in Nehru’s time between Modi’s dream of making India strong and prosperous and the external environment wedded to the principles of growth and prosperity.

**Model Questions**

Q 1. Implementation of BCIM economic corridor could unleash forces of development in India’s North-East region. In the light of above statement, comment on the advantages of BCIM corridor for India. Also highlight the apprehensions due to which India is hesitant to join the project.

Q 2. The remarkable positive change in India’s foreign policy towards neighborhood is fraught with problems such as lack of trust and conflict between local political parties of the neighbouring countries on the one hand and geopolitics of regional and global powers on the other, which would delay the efforts to bear fruits. Do you agree? Give reasons.

Q 3. Vision of new world order has emerged as the major objective of India’s foreign policy. What are the challenges faced in this regard and what are the recent steps India has taken to achieve this?