



Challenges to Indian foreign policy

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Abstract

Increasing globalization and interdependence between nations across the globe has enhanced the need for healthy diplomatic relations amongst all countries. Today, a sound and strategic foreign policy is crucial for having a voice in international platforms, for effective trade and investments, and for achieving consistent domestic progress. India's foreign policy has developed greatly since independence. Policies for forming global interactions progressed from being principled to goal-driven and objective orientated. The current international environment is challenging. We are living through the greatest shock to the international system since the Second World War. What began as a health emergency has expanded into an economic disruption, a geo-political shock and a social challenge of unprecedented magnitude. How we deal with these immense difficulties—and whether we are able to transform some of them into opportunities—will influence our future trajectory as a nation. One of the widely accepted notions of foreign policy is that it is dynamic, constantly evolving and a nation with national interests as its guiding principle, will have to keep it refined, broadly flexible in line with the changing global equations and scenario. Promoting national interest is the basic objective of foreign policy. From this perspective this paper tries to analyze the India's foreign policy. In 21st century, world's scenario has been changed to a great extent. What changes and challenges come in the way of India's foreign policy; this paper discusses upon them.

Keywords: globalization, international, environment, opportunities, domestic

Introduction

Every sovereign country has its foreign policy. India too has one. Foreign policy refers to the sum total of principles, interests and objectives which a country promotes while interacting with other countries. Even though there are certain basic features of a foreign policy it is not a fixed concept. The thrust of foreign policy keeps on changing according to changing international conditions. India's foreign policy is shaped by several factors including its history, culture, geography and economy.

“Foreign policy is an instrument at the disposal of a country to protect and promote its national interests. The core of the national interest is constant — defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty, enhance the economic and social well-being of the people, promote opportunities for profitable trading relations with other countries, and exploit the ‘soft power’ through propagation of the cultural assets. While the national interest would be forever, its content will vary with time and circumstances. It follows that the policy has to be flexible and must keep in tune with changing international, as well as national, environment”. This paper is a modest attempt to analyze India's foreign policy as an instrument for protecting national interest, what success it has got and what challenges it is facing in the 21st century.

India is a nation on the move. It is evolving and progressing along multiple axes at a very rapid rate. The fundamental challenge facing Indian foreign policy is to ensure that India engages with the international community in a manner that is both consistent and responsive to contemporary realities. In other words, our foreign policy has to be one of continuity and change. The current international environment is particularly challenging. We are living through the greatest shock to the international system since the Second World War. What began as a health emergency has expanded into an economic disruption, a geopolitical

shock and a social challenge of unprecedented magnitude. How we deal with these immense difficulties— and whether we are able to transform some of them into opportunities — will influence our future trajectory as a nation. We are a country with global interests. We have one of the largest and most able Diasporas. Our economy, and therefore our material well-being, is plugged on to global supply chains. We are a powerhouse in the services sectors. We look at the world as a borderless economy with an interlinked marketplace.

Changing paradigms

Changes which took place in 1989-91 were clearly looking at the global level. World was passing through the age of ideological, militarily and economical changes. It was time to the end of cold war and the collapse of USSR. In such circumstances it was a major challenge to India to make coordination with international situation. Economic liberalization became compulsion rather than necessity for India. In context of foreign policy, the major challenge for India, to list out the new subjects according to new world circumstances because those subjects which were key determinant to India's foreign policy in post independent period, became irrelevant after the end of cold war. The end of the Cold War saw India replace the idealism in its foreign policy with a pragmatic approach as it sought to develop new and meaningful relationships that would aid its global ascendancy. In post cold war period India adopt realistic aim and objective based, result oriented and positive foreign policy.

The end of cold war generated new challenges and created many options for foreign policy makers of India. In a unipolar world, there were so many challenges came in the way of policy makers in terms of foreign policy. The

challenges included balancing the relations with global powers, building a new partnership with regional organization, expanding the influence in Asia, Africa and Latin America, making NAM more relevant according to new conditions, enhance India's economic and energy security, to deal with environmental and human security threats, UN reforms and permanent membership of Security Council and active pursuit for multipolar world.

India and its relation with power blocks

The collapse of the USSR, this was close ally to India during cold war; one of the greatest challenges that India faced to make a balance relation with super powers. India needed to determine its policies towards the other global powers like America, China, Russia, Japan and European Union. India's main foreign policy objective is to achieve global power status. The dynamics of India's relations with each of the other five powers will determine its global power status.

It was major challenge for India in the 21st century to keep the United States (US) as the focal point of its new foreign policy. The Indian delegation pointed out that, after the end of cold war, India was willing to diversify, and also to expand economic, technological, cultural and educational relations with US. The main reason for this is that close relations with the US will help to convince the international community that India is truly a global player. India and the US have been cooperating recently in several areas including in defence and the technology. The highlight of their cooperation in recent times has been the civil nuclear energy cooperation deal that has been signed between both countries. The 123 nuclear treaty was historical event in confidence building for both countries.

So, it is evident now that the US-India relation has progressed remarkably in the post-cold war period. 9/11 terrorist attack reinforced a perception of a broader political and strategic similarity of interest pulling India and the US together. Some another pull factors, such as, belief in democracy and democratic values, peace building and cooperate with United Nations are also bring India and the US very close.

Besides the US, China is another superpower and playing an important role in world politics in general and particular in Asia. China's rise poses challenges to India to achieving its foreign policy objectives. India and China found themselves as a rivalry, competitor and cooperator in twenty first century.

Both Japan and Russia are strategic partners of India. Russia has been an important supplier of defence equipment and technology and will grow in importance to India. Relations with Russia continued to mature and involved a long-standing multidimensional approach involving security, military, and economic links.

Another domain of opportunity for the Indian foreign policy is growing interaction with European Union (EU). India has a strategic partnership with EU. The most significant aspect of this partnership is that India is only the fifth country besides the US, Canada, Russia and China with whom the EU has established such equation.

Challenges to foreign policy from third world countries

India acquired a new face in the beginning of twenty first century with her vibrant economy and geopolitics. India becomes a big trade and strategic partner with superpowers.

At the same time India's position at an economic and strategic nexus in Asia, Africa and Latin America was also gaining significance.

As Asia consists of several regions, India's foreign policy is formulated according to the engagement with each region. Although India expands her influence in South Asia but one major challenge remains, that is, to manage the uncertainties with her immediate neighbours. A solution of border disputes between India and its neighbours such as; China, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is major challenge to India's foreign policy.

Many country of South Asia, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal, have recently adopted democracy and the international community looking towards India far help to promote democracy in this region. The future of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) seems increasingly uncertain. Because India is larger economy than the other South Asian countries, and they have a fear that India's giant economy will grasp their own economic system, and India will play hegemonic role in region. India should have to be more innovative in its foreign policy in South Asia and exercise its economic diplomacy and soft power to engage with these countries.

India's relation with South-East Asian countries is consequence of Look East Policy, which was adopted in 1991. The Look East Policy now provides the direction for India's foreign policy towards East Asia. The Look East Policy focusing on India's engagement with ASEAN countries to include economic, security and political cooperation. After successful exercise of the Look East Policy, India adopts the Look West Policy for engagement with West Asian countries.

For engage with African continent, India adopted Focus Africa Policy. In Africa, India will continue to leverage on the economic development aid it provides to these countries to gain access into key oil and gas sources. In Latin America as well, India will look into sourcing key resources from the regions it seeks to develop economic ties with Brazil.

India's efforts to be a permanent member of sc and un reforms

The founding fathers of the United Nations established the organization with the purpose of maintaining international peace and security, of developing friendly relations among nations and of taking other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace". xiii India one of among the founding fathers of UN.

It's a challenge to nations that UN can work as an independent organization. India made an effort to do so. Organizational and institutional restructuring and reform of the UN is core objective of India's foreign policy in 21st century. India convince to other countries including P5 nations since post-cold war period for decentralization and democratization of UN. Another challenge to India's foreign policy, that is to achieve the permanent membership in UN Security Council. "India formed a group with Germany, Japan and Brazil called G-4, who were equally strong contenders for permanent membership of the Council and vociferously campaigned for more representation to developing countries".

Challenge to keep NAM relevant

Non-alignment is the doctrinal foundation of India's foreign policy. The end of cold war and emergence of unipolar world politics has forced India to bring changes in her foreign policy. With the end of bipolar world order the policy of non-alignment have lost their relevance and significance. It is challenge to India's foreign policy planner to make NAM more relevant than it was ever before. NAM is second largest organization of the world and India realized that it can play a creative role in international politics. NAM facing fundamental problem and challenges but by redefining and modifying the objectives of the movement and its role it can overcome these challenges.

Three e-concerns of India's foreign policy

Three E-concerns mean India's efforts to economic, energy and environmental security. These securities are the demand of the age to become global power. These are, in 21st century, those components which will help to expanding India's global status and to achieve this security are another challenge to its foreign policy. Due to the shift in priority from military competition to economic competition, strong economic ties become necessity of states. India, with the superpowers and also with third world countries, has turned to a primarily trade-driven relationship. India has big economic ties with US, Britain, Russia, France, China, Japan and EU.

Planning Commission's Integrated Energy Policy document asserts that India would need to sustain an economic growth rate of 8-10% over the next 25 years, in order to eradicate poverty and meet its human development needs. This would require augmentation of primary energy supplies by nearly 4 times, and an increase in power generation from current level of 1, 60,000 megawatts to about 8,00,000 megawatts by 2030-31. Economic growth is based on energy; so energy security is another factor which clearly influences India's foreign policy.

Another area of critical importance in foreign policy in 21'st century is environmental security. The environmental degradation is questioned to human existence. India is aware about the environmental issues. Global warming and climate change requires all societies to work together. While the major responsibility for the accumulation of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere lies with the developed countries, its adverse effects are felt most severely by developing countries like India. On the issue of climate change and global environmental degradation, India adopted the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" enshrined in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Human security framework and India's foreign policy

The concept of human security emerged with the end of the cold war. The first major statement concerning human security appeared in the 1994 Human Development Report, an annual publication of United Nations Development Programme. Human security is not just protecting people from various threats but also empowering people and enhance individual's capabilities and capabilities are people's freedom to do so what he like valuable.

India has taken, not theoretically but traditionally, human security as the paradigm for its foreign policy and has taken a leadership role in operationalizing it. India's foreign policy framework has

maintained a distinctive focus on peace, security, development, international cooperation and peaceful co-existence since her independence. The human security agenda has offered a chance for India to contribute a leading role on the international platform.

Countering Terrorism

Countering terrorism is one of our most important challenges. India has suffered and continues to suffer from cross-border terrorism. We have been consistent and energetic in our efforts to seek action against those who control, support, fund and shelter terrorists. Our efforts to isolate terrorists and their sponsors have led to increased global support. Our task is, however, far from complete and we need to ensure that the world follows an undifferentiated and unambiguous approach to terrorism. We also need to ensure that politicisation of global mechanisms such as UN listings is avoided, and that the international community finalises a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Conclusion

Foreign policy is changeable; it changes with time and circumstances. With the end of cold war, world politics became totally change and many challenges emerged in front of nation-states in terms of their foreign relations. India's policy planner brought changes in foreign policy according to changed world scenario. With her long-term and short-term national interest, India's foreign policy becomes closer to realistic approach.

Since the end of cold war, India has been deepening its relations with super powers. US become focal point of India's foreign policy. The end of the Cold War and the growing impacts of globalization are also making India redefine its position and role both at the regional and at the global level. Since the economic liberalization of the 1990s, which lead to current growth rates of 8-9 percent annual, India's global presence has been steadily visible. Economic development would require energy security. Improving energy security and energy conservation should be top priorities of India with addressing environmental safety net. So, there are so many foreign policy challenges for India and many changes are viewing in its foreign policy since the end of cold war period. But main challenge is to attain global power status and make India a major player in international affairs. Foreign policy designers brought many changes to attain this goal.

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