

11. FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

Traditionally, foreign policy-making in European countries was the concern of concerned foreign office and the minister-in-charge. Secrecy was the motto of foreign policy-making. Neither the public opinion was allowed to be formulated nor even national parliaments normally debated foreign policies. But, in a parliamentary democracy as in India decision-making in foreign policy is highly diffused. It is difficult to decide as to who makes a policy decision, and at what level was it decided. Thus, it is necessary for us to know foreign policy decision-making process. When we use the term 'process' it can suggest that decision-making is a smooth flow amongst the predetermined participants. But often, foreign policy-making is a zigzag process. All participants do not necessarily participate in all decision-making. Yet it is accurate to say that foreign policy in India, broadly speaking, is finalised by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister.

Cabinet is the inner circle of the Council of Ministers. But even Cabinet is too large a body to take all policy decisions. The Cabinet has a sub-committee called Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which decides most of the issues affecting vital foreign policy and national security issues. Thus within the government it is this CCS that gives final shape to foreign policy and security related issues.

Foreign policy making is a highly complex and complicated process. It requires expert knowledge and its application. The simple reason is that since foreign policy is in relation to another state or states, their behaviour is not under the control of India. The Indian policy makers can only make an intelligent guess about the likely behaviour of another state in a particular case.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is the ministry in the government that is expected to provide intelligent, accurate answers to the questions above as it is supposed to be the storehouse of expert knowledge on foreign affairs. The Minister of External Affairs (sometimes called Foreign Minister) is the head of the MEA. He is the political appointee, member of the Cabinet, not necessarily an expert in foreign affairs

decision-making. But, all policy and decisions recommended by the experts in the Ministry are cleared, or modified, by the Minister before their implementation. Several policy decisions cleared by the Minister require final approval of the Cabinet.

The Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officials, selected through the competitive examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission, primarily man the MEA. The Foreign Secretary is a very senior and experienced IFS officer, and the permanent head of the Ministry. He is an important adviser to the Foreign Minister. There are two other senior officials to assist the Foreign Secretary known as Foreign Secretary (West), and Foreign Secretary (East).

These officials normally are very senior persons chosen to head the work in MEA. There are three additional secretaries to assist Foreign Secretary. The work of MEA is divided into 24 divisions. A joint secretary heads each division. There are 12 territorial divisions, dealing with a group of countries belonging to a limited region like Canada and America, Latin American and Caribbean countries, Gulf, East Asia etc. There are eleven functional divisions like Protocol, External Publicity, Historical, Policy Planning, and the UN etc. There is one administrative division, which does a kind of house keeping work of the MEA itself.

Parliament is a representative body of the people. Thus, the ultimate control over the government policy-making including foreign policy rests with the Parliament. On several foreign policy-related issues as listed in the Union List, the Parliament has exclusive power to enact legislation. For instance these include, diplomatic, consular and trade representation, war and peace, the United Nations, citizenship, naturalisation etc.

The Parliament has the power to approve treaties. But it is the Union Government, which determines the basic contents of treaties and seeks final approval of the Parliament. During Nehru's time, parliament was able to exercise its influence over India's China policy. It was under the pressure of the Parliament and the President that Nehru was forced to relieve Krishna Menon of his Defence portfolio.

In a coalition government that we are familiar with since 1996, it is prudent for the PM to take people's representatives into confidence. During the Gulf War II by the US—led alliance against Iraq in March 2003, the NDA government was keen to pursue what Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee called 'middle path' of not offending the US by not taking any hard line against the war but at the same time asking Iraq to fully cooperate with the UN in destroying the weapons of mass destruction. However, the Parliament insisted on a resolution condemning/ deploring American military intervention in Iraq.

Second, Parliament has control over the money that is spent to run the foreign policy and national security establishments in the country. But parliamentary control over the funds appropriated is perfunctory. The budget and appropriations for individual ministries like External Affairs and Defence are often rushed through in the Parliament.

The third area of parliamentary influence is through debate over the policy issues. All the parliamentary devices of generating a discussion in the Parliament, like calling attention notice, adjournment, questions etc., are also available in foreign affairs to the Members of Parliament. However, the discussion and debates in the Parliament over the foreign policy issues is always perfunctory. There are two main reasons for the lack of interest amongst the MPs beyond their general rural background and lower level of general education in international affairs. One reason is that in reality Parliament is a large body—Lok Sabha consisting of over 500 and Rajya Sabha consisting of 250 people—such a body cannot effectively make policy, let alone decide.

If the large number is one reason for the Parliament's inability to formulate nation's policy, the second reason is that they do not have basic political interest to pursue foreign affairs and defence matters in the Parliament. The question is by performing good role as an effective MP in foreign affairs, he is not going to get a few additional votes in the next election. On the other hand, if he is effective in getting an arms depot in his constituency or an ammunition- manufacturing factory, he can generate employment for the people and get additional votes from his grateful voters. By

and large, the MPs lack knowledge and information necessary to effectively discuss and suggest even alternate policy options to government. This is not an insurmountable problem; if given an expert advice, they can discuss foreign policy effectively. But the political will always seems to be lacking.

Yet, Parliament exercises broad influence by determining the general parameters of policy beyond which a government cannot proceed. Occasionally, their influence on the foreign policy directions of the country is much more than that. But for long there was no strong link between the MEA or foreign policy formulation and Parliament despite the fact that the foreign minister is a member of the Parliament. The only link has been through the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on External Affairs. Such a committee also exists relating to Defence.

FACTORS CONTROLLING FOREIGN POLICY

There are several factors that have influenced, and continue to influence, the shaping of India's foreign policy. Some of these factors are of permanent nature while others change with the time. In this section, we will discuss major determinants of India's foreign policy, viz. geography, history and culture, domestic situation, external environment, etc.

GEOGRAPHY

India's geographical size and location have played vital role in shaping its foreign policy. India is very big in size; it is the seventh largest in the world with nearly 3 million square kilometres of territory. On its north, its boundaries are associated with the world famous Himalayan mountain range. It has 15,000 kms long land boundaries with Pakistan in the West, Bhutan, China and Nepal in the North, and Bangladesh and Myanmar in the East. Afghanistan and the former Soviet Union are in the immediate vicinity of Jammu & Kashmir.

India has 7,500 kms of coastline touched by the waters of the Indian Ocean on three sides of its territory. Most of India's foreign trade is routed through the Indian Ocean just as the Indian harbours witness dense traffic of merchant ships proceeding from or towards Europe, West Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asian regions; hence geopolitical and geo-strategic significance of the ocean to India's external relations. As you will recall,

the Indian Ocean brought the colonial rule of the French, British, Dutch and the Portuguese to India and East Asia during the 17-19th centuries. Clearly India's foreign policy has perceived the need to ensure that its northern frontiers along with territorial waters in the Indian Ocean remain peaceful and free from foreign military build up. India's vast coastline necessitates not only a powerful navy, but also friendly relations with other naval powers present in the Indian Ocean. These include Britain as well as the United States, which have a powerful naval base at Diego Garcia.

The location of the country is also notable. Belonging to South Asia, India lies in the heart of the biggest continent, Asia. Although India was victim of Chinese and Pakistani military attacks, it is in its interest that the channels of communication are kept open. India therefore seeks that problems with these neighbours are amicably settled. In keeping with the fact that India is the gateway of both South-East Asia and the West Asia, India's security and vital interests are closely knit with the peace and stability in the larger region of Asia. As such, India keeps close relations with regional powers such as Iran, IridonesiayMalaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam, etc. India has followed the Look East Policy and is developing economic as well as strategic relations with the ASEAN countries.

HISTORY AND TRADITION

India's foreign policy provides a mirror to its historical heritage. India never mounted aggressive campaigns outside the country for territorial expansion. Indeed it was targeted in a series of invasions and alien rule, although notably the ruling dynasties made the country their "home and adapted themselves to local customs and traditions. The British colonial empire was consolidated through deliberate policy of pitting the native kingdoms against one another in battles that bled winners and losers alike. This experience as a victim of wars has turned India's foreign policy anti-war in nature. Moreover, the legacy of the non-violent freedom struggle launched under the leadership of Gandhi and his lieutenants was bound to be evident in its foreign policy.

Particularly, the values that have helped in shaping India's foreign policy are tolerance, non-violence and universal brotherhood. Most of the leaders of freedom movement were educated in Britain or were exposed

to the system of liberal education. They valued liberty, equality and democracy. These ideals are embedded in the Indian foreign policy. While cooperating with liberal democratic countries, India did not oppose the socialist countries either. The policy of non-alignment is not only an outcome of keeping aloof from bloc politics, but is also in accordance with the goals and ideals of freedom struggle cherished by our people.

The impact of the British rule in India and the influence of national movement and freedom struggle are clearly evident in the shaping of India's foreign policy. The British rule in India had a two-fold impact on India's foreign policy. Firstly, it gave a stimulus to the national movement for freedom which in turn led to India's support for the freedom of dependent peoples; secondly, racial inequality that existed during the British rule made India commit itself to root out the evils of racial discrimination.

These idealistic notions notwithstanding, the realist legacy left behind by ancient scholars of statecraft like Kautilya too have an important bearing on the country's approach towards safeguarding its vital interests by coercion if necessary. Leaders of India like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi candidly acknowledged the limitations of idealism to guide state policy at critical junctures. The action that India took in Goa (1961) and Bangladesh (1971) situations symbolised pragmatism.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The possession of raw materials and natural resources and the compulsions of economic development also determine the course of a country's foreign policy. Low economic profile could impinge on a country's ability to play an influential and effective role in foreign affairs.

Despite progress made in the fields of agriculture, literacy, science and technology, there is no denying that India lags far behind in development. The bulk of its growing population finds it difficult to cater to basic necessities like food, shelter and clothing. After Independence, it was clear to our leaders that the country needs help from foreign governments in respect of transfer of funds, import of equipment and finished goods, export of Indian commodities and goods, training of technical personnel, etc. In an ideologically polarised world, India needed friendship and goodwill from both

the free market economies in the West as well as the Socialist world led by the former Soviet Union. By adopting the policy of non-alignment, India hoped for assistance from both the camps. As a parallel to that external policy, India has adopted a mixed economy approach that combined public sector with heavy state investment in infrastructure areas while a strong private sector flourished in an array of other areas.

India's economic linkages with the erstwhile colonial ruler, the United Kingdom guided Nehru to forge friendly contacts with that country both bilaterally and within the Commonwealth grouping. Vast portion of India's trade involving export of raw materials like cotton, tea and import of heavy machinery and technology has been with the United States and West European countries. These countries have come forward with generous grants and loans for various projects, apart from facilitating multilateral funding through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The former Soviet Union too emerged as a key partner in defence and other aspects of foreign trade on favourable terms.

Also notably, heavy dependence on oil for industrial and economic needs has brought special focus on relations with oil-rich Arab countries in West Asia, apart from working for stable supplies and prices of oil in global market.

At a different level, the economic conditions of the country provide inputs to India's foreign policy to argue for easing of economic disparities between the developed and the less developed countries and for greater economic relationships among the developing countries themselves.

NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

The personal qualities of leaders guiding the destiny of a nation at a given time tend to shape that country's foreign policy in a particular direction. The country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who steered "India's policy for more than one and a half decades, was widely regarded as internationalist in outlook, with a preference for enlightened, rather than narrow or self-centred, approach to problems. He was indeed regarded as among the tallest of visionaries in his times. Understandably, therefore India's foreign policy during his tenure was more committed to the collective good

of the comity of nations in relation to concerns like world peace and disarmament. Panchsheel was a typical representation of the Nehruvian outlook to approaching problems with other countries.

Quite contrasting is the case of the influence of his daughter, Indira Gandhi. By nature she came out as a strong and decisive personality. Her proclivity to be pragmatic and sensitivity to the imperatives of vital national interests left an imprint on reorienting the foreign policy along the lines of realism, more than idealism. This is how India's policy with reference to the liberation of Bangladesh, non-accession to Non-Proliferation Treaty, and strengthening of ties with the former Soviet Union may be viewed. Again, the reputed qualities as a moderate of Atal Behari Vaj payee are said to have influenced the policy of engagement with Pakistan and the United States.

DOMESTIC MILIEU

No country's foreign policy can be immune from the influence of the dynamics within. Indeed it is an important determinant of foreign policy. The domestic milieu refers to, inter alia, the nature of governing system, the political culture including the policies of political parties, public opinion, etc. tradition, structure of government and enlightened leadership.

Independent India is a living example of 'unity in diversity'. Having won freedom from British after non-violent struggle, India chose a democratic system that could offer adequate representation to diversities of all kinds—regional, religious, and cultural. The executive is accountable to people's representatives who are chosen in periodical exercise of franchise. India's political system was based (and is still based) on Westminster model of parliamentary democracy. However much the executive would like to view foreign policy as its prerogative, parliamentary control over the executive has opened channels for influencing the country's foreign policy. In general, fortunately, India's foreign policy reflected the national consensus cutting across political differences between the ruling side and the opposition. Non-alignment policy is a clear example here. This, however, is not to say that the parliament and prime minister always looked eye to eye on all foreign policy issues all the time. Even during the time of Nehru, who had exercised more discretion than any

other prime minister, parliament sought to assert itself in respect of his policy vis-a-vis the boundary dispute with China and the Goa question in the late 1950s. Recently in 2003, again, India's approach to the Iraq problem was very much dictated by the sentiments articulated in parliament in as much the government agreed to become party in "deploring" the American military action against Iraq.

The political parties too at the time of elections take positions on-foreign policy matters in their respective manifestoes. There are varied views expressed by the BJP at one end and the Communist Party (Marxist) at the other concerning globalisation^%World Trade Organisation and several other issues. Similarly, some of the regional parties like those in Tamil Nadu (DMK, AIADMK, MDMK, etc.), and Jammu and Kashmir (the National Conference) for instance have come to determine the country's policy toward Sri Lanka and Pakistan respectively.

Public opinion ventilated through media and other channels and the activities of interest/ pressure groups like the friendship societies or the business associations have gained importance as determinants of India's foreign policy. The two most notable examples of the role played by the television and print media in making India respond the way it did related to the hijacking of Indian Airlines plane to Kandahar in 1999 and the official announcement of decision not to accede to the United States request for sending troops to post-war Iraq.

India's foreign policy faces five important challenges in the years to come: (1) the creation of an area of peace and prosperity in the South-Asian Subcontinent; (2) the construction of a stable architecture for peace and cooperation in Asia; (3) the peaceful management of Asia's maritime commons; (4) a new internationalism that will be shaped by a deepening integration with the global economy and an effective contribution to the management of global problems; and (5) a clear line between celebrating its own democratic values and imposing them on others.

The word 'new' in the title of this analysis refers to the substantive changes in India's foreign policy orientation in recent years. While the notion of 'non-alignment' continues to animate the domestic and international discourse on India's foreign policy, Delhi's

international engagement has significantly evolved over the past two decades. India's perception of itself and its role in the world have been dramatically transformed.

If change, indeed, has been the central theme of India's foreign policy in recent years, nowhere is it more evident than in its relations with the great powers. During the Cold War, India steadily drifted towards the Soviet Union and its relations with all the other major centres of power -the US, Western Europe, China and Japan- remained underdeveloped. However, from being 'estranged democracies' just a few years ago, India and the US are now locked in an unprecedented engagement, at once intense and expansive. After the prolonged chill in India's bilateral relations with China from the 1960s to the 1980s, Beijing is now India's largest trading partner in goods, and while it is building strategic partnerships with the EU and Japan, India has also managed to hold on to its special relationship with post Soviet Russia.

Nevertheless, while change has been the trend of the times, the foreign policies of large countries like India are always rooted in a set of core values. These do not change with the usual turnover of governments and leaders and nor do they alter much over time. India's commitment to internationalism, independence of judgement in the conduct of external relations, support for world democratisation and contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security are enduring legacies of India's national movement and enjoy strong bipartisan support.

India's foreign policy in the 21st century will remain rooted in these core values, but it must necessarily adapt to changing external circumstances and its shifting domestic needs. Its main purpose, however, will remain the same: the creation of a favourable external environment for the rapid improvement of the living standards of the Indian people.

Despite considerable change in Indian foreign policy in recent years, there is much impatience among the friends of India in the West, who consider that India must do a lot more on the world stage and do so swiftly. Unlike autocratic and authoritarian societies, where a strong ruler can rapidly turn the fundamentals of a nation's foreign policy on their head, the adaptation of democracies to external and internal change is

incremental and slow. While change occurs slowly, India compensates by ensuring that, as a large and diverse democracy, its foreign policy is both credible and predictable. Despite the large multiparty coalitions that have governed India in the past two decades, India has managed to re-direct its internal and external orientation on a sustained basis.

Looking ahead, it is possible to delineate five major challenges that confront India's foreign policy in the early 21st century.

The Subcontinent as an Area of Peace :

The first and most important challenge for India is the creation of an area of peace and prosperity in the South-Asian subcontinent. Since the late 1970s, the north-western parts of the subcontinent have seen disturbances and violent conflict that has affected not only India but also the entire world. India's ability to cope with this turbulence has been undermined by its tense relations with Pakistan; India is determined to work with its neighbours in the region as well as with the world's major powers to defeat the scourge of violent extremism that has taken root in the subcontinent's north-west.

India has devoted much energy -both diplomatic and political- over the last decade to transforming its relations with Pakistan. Three prime ministers, representing three different political trends -Indur Kumar Gujral, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh- have persistently attempted to normalise the country's ties with Pakistan. The effort has begun to pay off. India and Pakistan are now implementing a road map for the comprehensive normalisation of bilateral trade relations. They also signed an agreement in September 2012 to liberalise a four-decade-old restrictive visa regime.

India is committed to supporting the Afghan people's efforts to reconstruct their war-ravaged economy. Its interest in the security of the Afghan state is reflected in the strategic partnership agreement signed a year ago.

The quest to normalise India's relations with Pakistan and to deepen its strategic partnership with Afghanistan are part of a single vision that seeks political stability, economic modernisation and regional integration in the subcontinent's north-west.

India has been eager to work with the other major powers in promoting regional connectivity -as reflected by the notion of a 'new silk road'-. Peace and prosperity in the north-west of the subcontinent depend on India's success in reclaiming the region's role as a bridge between the different parts of Asia. India is also unilaterally opening its markets to its other neighbours in the subcontinent, contributing to the internal stability and prosperity of Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives.

India has demonstrated its political will to lead the subcontinent in a positive direction. It nevertheless has a long way to go before it can transform South Asia into a peaceful and prosperous region.

A Stable Architecture for Peace and Cooperation in Asia :

The second challenge for India lies in making an effective contribution to the construction of a stable architecture for peace and cooperation in Asia. The idea of Asian unity and solidarity deeply influenced the Indian national movement in the early decades of the 20th century, while promoting political solidarity and economic cooperation within a newly liberated Asia was one of independent India's diplomatic initiatives. These ideas were far ahead of their time in the 1940s and 1950s.

More than six decades later, many of those ideas have become a reality. Asia has never been as integrated within and with the world as it is today. This has generated unprecedented levels of prosperity and the continent is once again becoming an important driving force for the world economy. Asia's extraordinary accomplishments in the last few decades, however, could easily be reversed if the region falls prey to great-power rivalry, national chauvinism and unbridled arms races. India needs to help prevent such an outcome by accelerating its own economic integration in the region, deepening its bilateral and multilateral security partnerships, promoting an inclusive political and security order for Asia and finding a balance between the interests of the major powers. Above all, India must help Asia rediscover the "universalism" of Rabindranath Tagore and other pioneers who made the region aware of its shared cultural identity but refused to define it in opposition to the West.

Securing the Maritime Commons :

The emerging negative trends in Asia express themselves most clearly in the maritime domain. The intensification of territorial disputes over small islands has begun to threaten Asian waters. China's growing assertiveness and America's 'pivot to Asia' are likely to herald a tense period in the region's international relations. At precisely the time when Asia needs to strongly adhere to the principles of the Law of the Sea, the legal framework for maintaining good order at sea appears to be breaking down. Competing interpretations of the principle of freedom of navigation are threatening the vital lines of communication linking the different parts of Asia and connecting it to the rest of the world.

Meanwhile, as the role of seaborne trade in the economic life of Asia rises, all the major powers in the region, including China and India, are strengthening their maritime capabilities. The rise of new naval powers in Asia is bound to generate inevitable friction with the US, that has long been the dominant maritime power in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. India does not agree with the proposition that the maritime politics of Asia are a zero-sum game. Nor does it see an inevitable confrontation between China and the US in the Indo-Pacific.

India already cooperates with the US in wide-ranging maritime security activities. It is also planning to initiate "a maritime dialogue with China and to build on the first steps towards a coordinated anti-piracy policy in the Gulf of Aden. India has supported the proposal of the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for a trilateral engagement between Washington, Beijing and Delhi and hopes that sooner rather than later China will agree to begin talks in such a trilateral framework. Strong and sustained cooperation between the US, China and India holds the key for the peaceful management of Asia's maritime commons.

Although some will be tempted to see such cooperation as an attempt to impose a 'Concert of Asia', since not everyone in the region agrees that a concert of great powers, of the kind developed in Europe after the Napoleonic wars, is the best remedy for the region. Nevertheless, trilateral cooperation between the US, China and India must be seen as one of the many

mechanisms that, combined, may contribute to peace and stability in the region.

India's New International Role :

There is considerable interest in the US and Europe on the kind of global role that India might undertake in the 21st century and the contribution it should make to resolve the many global challenges now facing the world. In India too there is an intense debate on the meaning of Delhi's emergence as a responsible power in the 21st century. India's new internationalism is likely to be shaped by two factors. The first is India's deepening integration into the global economy. Two decades ago the rest of the world was not critical to India's inward-oriented economic strategy. After two decades of reform, more than 40% of India's GDP is now linked to international trade. India needs massive amounts of imported energy and mineral resources to sustain the high growth rates that are so vital to its people's well-being. This is only one example of India's increasing interdependence with the rest of the world. In turn, this makes India's commitment to internationalism less of an ideological conviction and more of a vital self-interest.

Equally important is the second factor. India's growth is not merely an additional factor in the world economy. India's advancement will have systemic consequences for the world in a number of issues - from energy security and global warming to the management of maritime commons and global governance. Put simply, India cannot prosper without an effective contribution to the management of global problems and, consequently, this raises India's stake in the development of multilateralism.

To be credible and effective, the multilateral process must become more representative and take into account the changing global distribution of power. The current gap between the international expectation of India's global role and what Delhi is prepared to do is indeed real; but India, in its own interest, is likely to contribute more vigorously to the construction of global norms and enforcing them.

India's Democratic Values :

One of India's greatest political successes since independence has been the zealous guarding of its democratic values. Since the end of the Cold War and more recently in the wake of the Arab Spring, many

questions have arisen on what democratic powers must do to help others move towards political pluralism, the rule of law and representative government. However, India draws a clear line between celebrating its own democratic values and imposing them on others, for democracy is not a gift one people can bestow on another. It is necessary to pause and reflect on the recent experience in the use of external force to promote internal change in various countries and the costs and benefits of international intervention. As in the provision of medical care, so in the case of the use of force to promote democratic transformation, the guiding principle must be a simple one? do no harm.

Use of force, in extraordinary circumstances, has been very much part of the history of international relations. But the use of force has been successful only when it has been accompanied by mature political judgement and the recognition of the limits to power. No single power or group of nations today have the power to successfully change other societies along pre-determined lines. The democratic powers should allow others sufficient time and space to come to terms with the imperative of political freedom in the quest for economic and social modernisation. The agenda for freedom is best served by deepening democracy in countries like India. India is indeed ready to share its experiences and to offer its support to those who seek it.

India today impinges on the world in unprecedented ways. At the same time it is increasingly dependent on the rest of the world for its own security and prosperity. This sets the stage for an ever larger and expanding role for India on the world stage.

ROLE OF GEOPOLITICS IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY INDIA'S NORTHEAST

The far-flung Northeastern region (NER) is linked to the Indian mainland by a narrow strip of land that is the most striking feature of India's geographical landscape - pernicious fallout from the troubled Partition. The NER is a victim of bad geography. But from a geo-economic standpoint, a difficult geography can spring up commercial surprises with developmental spin-offs. The region is at the crossroads of India and southeast Asia. It is a bridgehead between India and the vibrant economies of southeast Asia, including

southern China. It shares borders with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan and makes up close to 40% of India's land borders with its neighbors.

It is widely known that the reasons behind the 1962 China-India border conflict were: the - problem of entropy in China under Mao's watch, China's ploy to divert India's attention in the wake of Ne Win's coup and to make deeper inroads into Burma, India's diplomatic goof-ups, and China's tearing hurry to harness the then prevailing geopolitical conditions to its benefit. But not many are aware of the fact that China was long aggrieved of the involvement of Indian traders in routing opium to China at the behest of their colonial masters, and also out of their own interests. The windfall from the opium trade was ploughed into Indian cotton mills and banks. Following the Opium Wars, a century of humiliation befell China.

China seeks territorial gains from India in 3 Himalayan sectors; Eastern (Asaphia sector of Arunachal and the Fingers Area of northern Sikkim), Central (Bara Hoti sector of Himachal), and Western (Trig Heights and Demchok area of eastern Ladakh). China claims Arunachal on historical grounds. India established a presence in Tawang in 1951, when Maj. Bob Khathing's forces evicted the Tibetan troops based there. But substantial deposits of oil in Arunachal can give its claim a new dimension, since the state's oil is ideally located to supply Tibet and Yunnan. The 1962 war was fought on the eastern and western fronts. Though India got a drubbing on the eastern front, the Battle of Rezang La in the western front proved to be an inflection point as the Indian forces held back Chusul from slipping into Chinese hands. Again in the fall of 1967, Indian troops repulsed intrusive attempts by the Chinese at Nathu La and Cho La in northern Sikkim, which was then a protectorate of India. The Wangdung incident of 1986 was the last time China tested the waters with India. The borders have fallen, silent since. But this does not imply that India should lower its guard or go slow on defense preparedness.

China will not repeat a 1962-like stand-off for the foreseeable future, simply because of the risks involved. The costs will far outweigh the gains. What is predictable about war is its unpredictability. War can begin with promise but end in disgrace. China is on

course to becoming a global power. Until China attains that status, it would not risk losing what it has gained, as any prosperous nation becomes wary of losing what it has. The next onslaught on India would inexorably escalate into a no-holds barred conflict. China's actions would polarize world opinion against it, and Beijing would be hard pressed to legitimize its actions. China is bogged down with maritime disputes in the South China Sea and challenged by the US's pivot policy. It will not militarize the border dispute with India anytime soon. Beijing has shown a willingness in building military-to-military relations featuring lasting stability and friendly co-operation. Both sides are set to resume the 'Hand in Hand' joint military exercise this year. The Chinese Development Bank has stepped in to invest in Indian companies to offset some of the trade deficit that India is facing. China's main intention is to prevent India from becoming a combative regional power. Denial of Chinese visas to Indian citizens of Arunachal, border transgressions, and blocking ADB loans for development projects in Arunachal are attempts to raise the stakes of India's sovereignty on Arunachal, which China calls southern Tibet.

What is unnerving for India is China's plans to build dams in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra, which could be convulsive for the NER. Although China's stated position is that the projects are only run-of-the-river power stations which will have 'no impact on downstream flows', the lack of a water-sharing treaty or a mechanism to verify Chinese claims belies such assertions. The mere existence of a Joint Working Group for exchange of data on water flows will not allay Indian apprehensions of flooding and erosion during the monsoons and leaner flows during the dry months. Both sides must chalk out a water-sharing treaty. The Chinese approach should be to ensure that the river water flows are maintained in accordance with the socio-economic needs of the people downstream and sustenance of livelihoods. What is far more alarming is the Chinese plan to divert the course of the Brahmaputra to the arid north as part of the proposed South-to-North diversion project, which for now remains shelved. Another major concern is that of an enlarging Chinese footprint in northeastern India's neighborhood. Since the signing of a defense pact in 2002, China has emerged as a key source of weaponry for Bangladesh. China is involved

in developing ports, power plants, bridges, and road links between Kunming and Chittagong Hill Tracts through Myanmar. Due to its economic heft, Beijing has greater leeway in wooing Dhaka, than Delhi, in getting ahead with its strategic agenda in the sub-continent. Dhaka has in the past sheltered northeastern rebels for whom China is a reliable source of arms. The ruling dispensation in Dhaka has cracked down on Indian militants, assuaging most of Delhi's security concerns. But the trend may differ with a change of guard and Bangladesh could turn into a conduit for Chinese weapons. Since last summer, Beijing has stepped up its probes for diplomatic presence in Thimphu. Beijing's boundary deal with Thimphu could move the border closer to India's, at the tri-junction in the strategic Chumbi Valley. China is the largest investor in Myanmar and is reportedly developing a naval base in Sittwe. By some accounts, China is believed to have installed surveillance facilities in the Cocos Islands, to track India's missile and rocket launches along its eastern coast. China has supplied arms to both, the Tatmadaw (Myanmar army) and ethnic rebel groups like the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and Kachin litispence Army (KIA), some of which have been sold to the northeastern rebels. It has now emerged that China has transferred PTL02 wheeled tank destroyers and man portable air defense systems (MANPADS) to the UWSA. What is particularly disturbing is the prospect of such weapons pouring into the NER.

Bangladesh is ringed by the northeastern states. For the NER, Bangladesh serves as an outlet to the sea and for Bangladesh, NER is the gateway to a large market. The region, though a veritable transit hub for trade and tourists from mainland India to southeast Asia, has remained a laggard in terms of development mainly due to transportation bottlenecks. Overland connectivity of the NER with Kolkata through Bangladesh can Unlock the geo-economic potential of the region. A large section of people hobbled by poverty in the region are trapped in the politics of non-engagement with Bangladesh due to the lingering fear of a flood of infiltrators into India, as there is no bilateral mechanism to turn back such migrants. First, the influx of Bangladeshi migrants is a hot-button issue, especially in the political discourse of Assam. The presence of 'settlers', a euphemism for illegal Bangladeshi migrants,

is an accepted fact, but their numbers are disputed. The notion of an existential crisis, in which the indigenous people of the NER are swamped by a rapidly increasing 'settler community', may be overblown, but cannot be debunked outright, as the mechanisms to detect and deport the settlers remain toothless. Bangladesh will consider accepting deported nationals only when there is an economic incentive from India in doing so. This is possible when the Indian economy is integrated with Bangladesh in a way that the bilateral trade becomes fairly balanced. Second, there is a sense of exasperation and despair in Assam that in the planned land swap deal with Bangladesh, the state will have to part with some of its land even though India will end up gaining more territory. The issue must be resolved within the ambit of an acceptable solution to those concerned, in keeping with the sentiments of the Assamese people, the larger national interests at stake and the geopolitical realities of the eastern sub-continent. Third, Delhi is fretful of the northeastern militants recouping lost ground in Bangladesh if the BNP makes a comeback in the upcoming polls. Fourth, there are other related concerns like that of Islamic radicalism, gun running, and fake Indian currency rackets. However, Delhi is working to win bipartisan support in Dhaka for co-operation in these areas.

Resolution of the vexed border problem between India and Bangladesh could yield commercial dividends for the NER by way of access to ports and land routes of the neighboring country. India has agreed to sell power to Bangladesh and jointly develop power projects and rebalance the bilateral trade. India has also opened up the land routes for Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan and has sought transit rights through Bangladesh to third countries as well as the NER through 15 road and railway links. The bridge on the river Feni will open up the Chittagong port to the NER. Bangladesh is a member of the "Next 11" group of emerging economies, which will contribute to global growth and is recognized for its potential to re-integrate the eastern sub-continent. Delhi has identified joint exploration and development of oil and gas projects in Bangladesh, including the setting up of a gas-based power plant, and talks are on for the development of a Myanmar-Bangladesh-India gas pipeline. The NER will expectedly be a major beneficiary of the enhanced economic engagement. In the area of

security co-operation, both sides have deepened military contacts by jointly holding the "Unity" series of military exercise. In conclusion, it needs to be stressed that the success stories of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) are worthy of emulation in the NER.

PRINCIPLES AND DIMENSIONS

India's foreign policy aims to safeguard and further national interest in terms of protecting the country's political independence and promoting its external security. As a country that freed itself from colonial rule, India naturally wants to follow such foreign policy that would not compromise on its existence as a free country or give scope to other countries to dictate as to how it should conduct itself. With the help of a successful foreign policy, India would like to prevent or resist threats of military attacks from foreign quarters. India's need for national security is placed in the wider and wiser backdrop of the need to jointly work for security of the whole world. In other words, it does not want other countries to be insecure while working for its own security. India has always desired friendly relations with all countries, especially the major countries as well as countries in its neighbourhood. In short, India's foreign policy seeks to promote world peace, work for avoidance of dangerous wars like the two World Wars during the first half of the 20th Century. India wants to promote harmony and cooperation between the countries that have ideological, political and other differences.

As a country that suffered colonial rule and became free after long peaceful struggle, India's foreign policy is committed to strive for bringing an end to colonialism everywhere. Accordingly it has supported freedom struggles of the peoples of Africa and Asia. As an extension of this goal, India has been interested to direct its foreign policy towards realisation of equal rights of all peoples and nations without discrimination. Therefore, India opposed the abhorrent policy of apartheid in South Africa; it sought to protect the right to equality under law to all people of Indian origin wherever they are.

India's foreign policy has another important goal, viz. to promote the economic development of underprivileged nations and their peoples. For this

purpose, its foreign policy seeks to develop beneficial relationship with the industrially advanced countries with a view to securing necessary assistance! India's policy aims to cater to not just its own development needs but also those of the newly independent poor countries in the Third World. A more equitable economic and social world order that would help in eventually eliminating disease and deprivations has been a vital goal of India's foreign policy.

India believes in working for reduction and final elimination of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction. India's foreign policy principles as enshrined in Panchsheel (1954) emphasise the imperatives of non-aggression, non-interference, and peaceful co-existence among countries. In short, through foreign policy India wants to be seen as peace-loving, mature, law-abiding and trust worthy country while trying to benefit from friendly contacts with other countries in the society of nations.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Underlining India's development-centric foreign policy, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has enunciated the five core principles that animate the country's engagement with an increasingly globalised world, which include prioritising the economic aspirations of the over 1.2 billion Indians. Steering clear of grandiloquence, India's prime minister has unveiled a pragmatic vision of the country's foreign policy that seeks to blend the economic imperative of unleashing prosperity without compromising on core values of democracy, pluralism and secularism.

First, recognition that India's relations with the world both major powers and our Asian neighbours are increasingly shaped by our developmental priorities. The single most important objective of Indian foreign policy has to be to create a global environment conducive to the well-being of our great country. Second, that greater integration with the world economy will benefit India and enable our people to realize their creative potential.

Third, we seek stable, long term and mutually beneficial relations with all major powers. We are prepared to work with the international community to create a global economic and security environment beneficial to all nations.

Fourth, we recognize that-the Indian sub-continent's shared destiny requires greater regional cooperation and connectivity. Towards this end, we must strengthen regional institutional capability and capacity and invest in connectivity. Fifth, our foreign policy is not defined merely by our interests, but also by the values which are very dear to our people. He lauded the Indian model of foreign policy, which is underpinned by strategic autonomy, non-alignment and the resolution of issues through diplomacy, for pursuing economic liberation of the country within the framework of time-tested principles of liberalism and democracy. India's experiment of pursuing economic development within the framework of a plural, secular and liberal democracy has inspired people around the world and should continue to do so.

The last decade has witnessed major diplomatic triumphs for the country: the sealing of a path-breaking India-US nuclear deal which paved the way for the country's global nuclear rapprochement, an eventful tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2010-2012), the sealing of FTA with the 10-nation ASEAN and at least half a dozen countries, are just some of the achievements that have raised India's global stature and has made the country a key player in shaping global debates on a gamut of cross-cutting issues.

NON-ALIGNMENT

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was created and founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War. During the early days of the Movement, its actions were a key factor in the decolonization process, which led later to the attainment of freedom and independence by many countries and peoples and to the founding of tens of new sovereign States. Throughout its history, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has played a fundamental role in the preservation of world peace and security.

INDIA AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

India played an important role in the multilateral movements of colonies and newly independent countries: that developed into the Non-Aligned

Movement. Nonalignment had its origins in India's colonial experience and the nonviolent Indian independence struggle led by the Congress, which left India determined to be the master of its fate in an international system dominated politically by Cold War alliances and economically by Western capitalism and Soviet communism. The principles of nonalignment, as articulated by Nehru and his successors, were preservation of India's freedom of action internationally through refusal to align India with any bloc or alliance, particularly those led by the United States or the Soviet Union; nonviolence and international cooperation as a means of settling international disputes. Nonalignment was a consistent feature of Indian foreign policy by the late 1940s and enjoyed strong, almost unquestioning support among the Indian elite.

The term "Non-Alignment" was coined by V K Menon in his speech at UN in 1953 which was later used by Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru during his speech in 1954 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In this speech, Nehru described the five pillars to be used as a guide for Sino- Indian relations, which were first put forth by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. Called Panchsheel (five restraints), these principles would later serve as the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement. Jawaharlal Nehru was the architect of the Non-Alignment Movement. The five principles were:

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

Jawaharlal Nehru's concept of nonalignment brought India considerable international prestige among newly independent states that shared India's concerns about the military confrontation between the superpowers and the influence of the former colonial powers. India used nonalignment to establish a significant role for itself as a leader of the newly independent world in such multilateral organizations as the United Nations (UN) and the Nonaligned Movement. The signing of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation between India and the Soviet Union in 1971 and India's involvement in the internal affairs of its smaller neighbors

in the 1970s and 1980s tarnished New Delhi's image as a nonaligned nation and led some observers to note that in practice, nonalignment applied only to India's relations with countries outside South Asia.

CAN INDIA REVIVE NONALIGNMENT?

India's foreign-policy establishment is in the process of disinterring a long-dead grand strategy from its Cold War grave. "Nonalignment" - the doctrine that calls upon India to refuse staunchly any strategic alliances with other actors - has re-entered the broader foreign policy discourse, with the center-left championing such policies in the guise of promoting "strategic autonomy." The credo was touted in an independent report titled Nonalignment 2.0, which offers the vision of "allying with none" as a grand strategy for India in the coming years.

At first glance, nonalignment presents an attractive option for a rising India. It promises freedom from entangling alliances as well as the chance to advance Indian exceptionalism against the Machiavellian imperatives of traditional international politics. Most importantly, it holds out the prospect that India can chart its own path free from machinations of external actors, an understandable objective for a country scarred by its colonial past.

But in light of India's growing strategic vulnerabilities, a return to nonalignment is misguided and potentially dangerous. The doctrine has three major Weaknesses that would leave India perilously vulnerable.

First, nonalignment struggles to reconcile competing strands of realism and idealism. On the one hand, Indian policymakers acknowledge the nation inhabits a Hobbesian world characterized by troublesome neighbors and endemic geopolitical competition. Despite avowed recognition of the dangerous environment, the doctrine counsels India to rise above conventional international politics, to avoid behaving like other great powers as it becomes one and instead blaze new paths for the conduct of powerful nations.

Advocacy of moralpolitik in an amoral world is grounded in nonalignment's fervent but suspect belief in the power of example. According to its proponents, India's developmental and democratic successes within would help inspire a following abroad, thus bequeathing

an exemplary power allowing India to gain in global stature and influence. This coruscating idealism, however, is at odds with the reality that great-power competition will be alive and well in the future global system. If power politics is in no danger of extinction, then the critical task facing India is maximization of national power through smart choices at home and abroad. Expansion of India's material power in the realms of economic growth, technological advancement, and institutional capacity could make all the difference - with the benefits of example accruing thereafter for free.

It's clear that consolidating material success cannot be subordinated to the chimerical pursuit of an ideal international order, in which India's exceptionalism has room to flourish, so long as the tyranny of great-power competition remains untamed. In this respect, India's new advocates of nonalignment are akin to an older generation of idealists in the United States. From the moment of its founding, the American nation, too, entranced by the Enlightenment and republican ideals, sought to promote a *novus ordo seclorum*, an ongoing quest for new order for the ages, permitting the country to preserve exceptionalism in the face of all international pressures toward conformity. While many Americans would like to believe that the United States is unique in its global behavior, the truth is that the country behaves more or less like the great powers that preceded it.

CONSTRAINTS OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION WOULD ENSURE THAT INDIA SUFFERS THE SAME FATE.

Although states differ in details of how they conduct themselves, with history, domestic politics and strategic culture accounting for much of the variance - there's little doubt that India, too, would eventually succumb to protecting its own interests, if it doesn't do so already. If the demands of national power came into conflict with the obligations of principle, India would unlikely sacrifice tangible gains to meet certain ideational aspirations. India's switching to a more accommodating posture towards Burma's military rulers to curb Chinese influence is just a recent example. Nor should India be enjoined to do so, as the nonalignment advocates might suggest, because such actions could be devastating for a still-weak country struggling to thrive in the cutthroat world of international politics.

A second and more problematic flaw in nonalignment as a grand strategy is its conviction that refusing to align with other great powers remains the best organizing principle for India's foreign relations because it preserves the nation's "strategic autonomy." This attempt to equate nonalignment with preventing loss of sovereign agency confuses ends and means. If nonalignment were primarily about the end, states seeking to avoid strategic policies that were defined elsewhere from their own capitals, then all states would necessarily be nonaligned.

But when nonalignment is defined as a means "the avoidance of sharp choices," as Nonalignment 2.0 aptly puts it then it becomes more dangerous, thanks to India's strategic circumstances. In the north, China is a rising geopolitical competitor whose potential threat to Indian security interests is only complicated by two countries' burgeoning bilateral economic relationship. In the west, Pakistan continues to pose dangers to India because of a peculiar combination of increasing state weakness married to a propensity for perilous risk-taking.

Together, these threats to Indian security suggest that India should invest in preferential strategic partnerships with the enemies of its enemies 'because such affiliations could help mitigate the perils posed by India's immediate 'adversaries. Oddly, however, nonalignment supporters take the opposite tact, running away from preferential partnerships in a quest for strategic autonomy. Accordingly, they fundamentally misread what success requires, especially when political competition coexists with economic interdependence and containing adversaries is not a realistic option.

The strategy of nonalignment might make sense if India could muster the necessary resources to cope with its strategic challenges independently. Yet the doctrine's third weakness consists of its failure to assess whether the transformative reforms necessary to build India's comprehensive national power can in fact be consummated, considering the current circumstances of India's domestic politics. The realities of Indian politics suggest that the successful "internal balancing" require[^] for the realization of genuine strategic autonomy could fall on hard times. India's capacity for resource mobilization is undermined by the disarray of its two national parties, the continuing ebb of power away from the national center and towards the states, the rise of powerful regional parties, and the advent of populist

politics focusing on economic redistribution rather than growth. Accordingly, India's national security managers ought to treat the doctrine's exhortation to eschew preferential strategic partnerships with a friendly power like the United States with skepticism. Ultimately, nonalignment fails to recognize that when internal balancing is impeded, external balancing becomes imperative. At a time when the growth of Chinese power continues unabated and different threats posed by China and Pakistan continue to grow, New Delhi must give serious consideration to accelerating the growth in its own national capacities through tightened affiliations with a small number of friends and allies. Instead of avoiding coalitions, New Delhi should thus enter into preferential strategic partnerships taking the form of high-quality trading ties, robust defense cooperation and strong diplomatic collaboration. To be successful, India needs these ties with key friendly powers throughout the world especially the United States because neither its example as a successful democracy nor its efforts at internal balancing are likely to produce the security necessary to its well-being. India's strategic challenges are grave and increasing. India must recognize that the strategic solution to the country's predicament cannot consist of simply resurrecting nonalignment in a new guise.

NONALIGNMENT 2.0

NonAlignment 2.0 is an attempt to identify the basic principles that should guide India's foreign and strategic policy over the next decade. The views it sets out are rooted in the conviction that the success of India's own internal development will depend decisively on how effectively we manage our global opportunities in order to maximize our choices—thereby enlarging our domestic options to the benefit of all Indians.

The purposes of the present strategy document are three-fold: to lay out the opportunities that India enjoys in the international sphere; to identify the challenges and threats it is likely to confront; and to define the broad perspective and approach that India should adopt as it works to enhance its strategic autonomy in global circumstances that, for some time to come, are likely to remain volatile and uncertain.

PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

Peaceful Coexistence or Panchsheel was born in response to a world asking for a new set of principles for the conduct of international relations" that would

reflect the aspirations of all nations to co-exist and prosper together in peace and harmony. Fifty years later, on the golden anniversary of Panchsheel, the chord that was struck in 1954 still rings pure and true in a world yet seeking the lodestar that will guide it into the harbour of peaceful co-existence.

Panchsheel, or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, were first formally enunciated in the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India signed on April 29, 1954, which stated, in its preamble, that the two Governments "have resolved to enter into the present Agreement based on the following principles: -

- i. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
- ii. Mutual non-aggression,
- iii. Mutual non-interference,
- iv. Equality and mutual benefit, and
- v. Peaceful co-existence."

Two months later, during the visit of Premier Zhou Enlai to India, he and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru issued a Joint Statement on June 28, 1954 that elaborated their vision of Panchsheel as the framework, not only for relations between the two countries, but also for their relations with all other countries, so that a solid foundation could be laid for peace and security in the world. Panchsheel, as envisioned by its creators, gave substance to the voice of newly established countries who were seeking the space to consolidate their hard won independence, as it provided an alternative ideology dedicated to peace and development of all as the basis for international interaction, whether bilateral or multilateral. At that time, the two Prime Ministers also expressed the hope in the Joint Statement that the adoption of Panchsheel "will also help in creating an area of peace which as circumstances permit can be enlarged thus lessening the chances of war and strengthening the cause of peace all over the world."

This vision caught the imagination of the peoples of Asia and the world. Panchsheel was incorporated into the Ten Principles of International Peace and Cooperation enunciated in the Declaration issued by the April 1955 Bandung Conference of 29 Afro-Asian countries. The universal relevance of Panchsheel was emphasised when its tenets were incorporated in a resolution on peaceful co-existence presented by India,

Yugoslavia and Sweden, and unanimously adopted on December 11, 1957, by the United Nations General Assembly. In 1961, the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Belgrade accepted

Panchsheel as the principled core of the Non-Aligned Movement. Down the years, the ethos of Panchsheel continued to be reflected in world events even if there was no conscious attribution, finding expression in the position of the developing countries in the North-South dialogue, and in other groupings.

The timeless relevance of Panchsheel is based on its firm roots in the cultural traditions of its originators, two of the world's most ancient civilisations. The linkage that was established by the spread of Buddhism in China laid the historical basis for the formulation of the principles of Panchsheel by India and China.

Panchsheel was developed in the context of a post-colonial world where many were seeking an alternative ideology dedicated to peace and development of all. Fifty years later, the world is now searching for an alternative to the adversarial constructs that dominated the Cold War era. Countries all over the world are focusing on creating extended and mutually supportive arrangements, and attempting to define a new economic, social and political world order in the context of globalisation, non-traditional security threats and the quest for multi-polarisation.

Panchsheel can provide the ideological foundation for this developing paradigm of international interaction, allowing all nations to work towards peace and prosperity in cooperation, while maintaining their national identity, spirit and character. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said that "those who desire peace for the world must know once for all that there can be no equilibrium or stability for either the East or the West unless all aggression, all imperialist domination, all forced interference in other countries' affairs end completely." Today, Panchsheel can help the world move away from the traditional concepts of balance of power and competitive security, the consequent searching for an enemy, and the predication of activities on conflicts rather than cooperation.

However, in today's world, it is not enough that Panchsheel be promoted as an alternative ideology that empowers the less-developed. It should be made clear that Panchsheel is an ideology for the entire world, and

is as relevant to the developed countries of the globe as it is to the less-developed. What should be stressed today is that the principles of Panchsheel are not just empowering principles, they are also guiding principles that enshrine a certain code of behaviour. Their essence is the non-use of power, the approach of tolerance, "of living one's life, learning from others but neither interfering nor being interfered with", and the obligation to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It may not be out of place in a world searching for moral certainties to emphasise this message of Panchsheel.

WHAT IS GUJRAL DOCTRINE?

Former Prime Minister, Late Mr. I.K. Gujral propounded the Gujral Doctrine when he was the Union Minister of External Affairs in 1996-1997 in the H.D. Deve Gowda Government.

The Gujral doctrine was a five-point roadmap which sought to build trust between India and neighbours, of solution to bilateral issues through bilateral talks and to remove immediate quid pro quos in diplomatic relationship between India and her neighbours. The 'Doctrine' emphasized on the importance of unilateral accommodation for friendly and warm relations with India's neighbours.

The five principles are:

- 1) With neighbours like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity,
- 2) but gives and accommodates what it can in good faith and trust.
- 3) No South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region.
- 4) No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another.
- 5) All South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty-
- 6) They should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations.

The essence of Gujral Doctrine has been that being the largest country in South Asia, India can extend unilateral concessions to neighbours in the sub-continent.

APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE

- 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: This doctrine 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”¹¹ 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.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE DOCTRINE

The logic behind the Gujral Doctrine was that since India had to face two hostile neighbours in the north and the west, it had to be at total peace with all other immediate neighbours in order to contain Pakistan's and China's influence in the region. Its significance lies in the insight that for India to become a global power in sync with its stature, it needs a peaceful neighbourhood.

The positive aspects of the Gujral Doctrine can be enumerated as follows.

- It recognised the supreme importance of friendly, cordial relations with neighbours.
- It helped achieve a fundamental recasting of South Asia's regional relationships, including the difficult relationship between India and Pakistan.

- Further, the implementation of these principles generated an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation between India and these countries.
- The Gujral Doctrine was accepted 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 became a new and important principle of India's foreign policy.
- It was implemented by different regional powers like USA, Russia, People Republic of China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Germany etc.

CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF THE GUJRAL DOCTRINE

The Gujral doctrine postulates that reciprocity among asymmetrical partners in South Asia needs to ensure equity rather than absolute equality in terms of any quid pro quo. India's sheer physical size and weight of numbers and its economic and military power in relation to its smaller SAARC neighbours, not excluding Pakistan, can be intimidating. Hence, it may not pay to insist on strict parity on all things and at all times. The smaller partner must feel emboldened to accept a fuller relationship at a pace and level at comfort that it may be allowed to determine.

If India follows such a path, it will be serving, not abandoning, its best interests. What matters is the end result. Confidence-building may take awhile but is worth the political investment. One can give today to get tomorrow or trade a 'concession' in one sector to make again in another area. The process is as important as the event and, at the start, perhaps even more important to get things moving.

The Gujral doctrine implies a process, not an objective. It aims at confidence-building, changing mindsets, placing procedures and even issues against a larger and longer perspective of national interest.

CRITICISM OF THE GUJRAL DOCTRINE

1. The Gujral Doctrine had a debilitating impact on R&AW's ability to conduct intelligence operations in Pakistan. Strategic affairs specialists point out that on Mr. Gujral's directions, the Pakistan special operations desk of R&AW was shutdown, leading to a major gap in India's intelligence capabilities. Analysts blame this as one of the key factors that

led to the intelligence failure before the Kargil war commenced.

2. Over the years, particularly after a series of terrorist attacks, the Gujral Doctrine came to be criticized particularly I.K. Gujral's decision to dismantle India's military ability to launch covert strikes against groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

2014: INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES

India starts 2014 on a note of promise. Internal political transformations are taking shape, and this can only have a beneficial impact on our economy and on our foreign policy.

Our primary focus should be on our South Asian neighbourhood particularly on the instability emanating from the violence in Bangladesh and Afghanistan. We, along with a number of our SAARC neighbours, will see new leadership emerge; India's attention must stay on these new players, internal and external. We must also be seen as a credible leader in multilateral fora, be it in the Indian Ocean Rim, SAARC or BRICS. All this must be performed within our capabilities but without compromising on pressing domestic issues such as poverty alleviation or reviving economic growth.

SAARC

Every SAARC country will have had national elections by 2014 except Sri Lanka. It is a new democratic start for the region, and an opportunity for India to accomplish the following this year:

Bangladesh

1. New Delhi must ratify the Land Boundary Agreement for India's own security which will decriminalise the border, cut down smuggling and human trafficking, legalise the inflow of daily workers into India (through work permits), abate terrorism and put an end to the people living in limbo for the last 40 years in the enclaves and the adverse possessions of over 3,000 acres of land that have to be exchanged.
2. Anticipate an increase in terrorist activities after the Bangladeshi national elections. It will be state-tolerated if the BNP-aligned political formations are dominant, and if the incumbent Awami League goes ahead with elections (boycotted by the opposition), more violence will surely follow. We must support going ahead with constitutionally-mandated elections so as not to interrupt the

strengthening of the democratic process in Bangladesh whilst acknowledging strongly that the Awami League is a secular party which India would prefer to see winning the election.

3. Sign the Teesta Waters Agreement to build the policy base for water-sharing agreements in South Asia, and as a precursor for India-Bangladesh-Nepal and Bhutan jointly demanding a discussion on water-sharing with China.

Sri Lanka

1. The Indian Prime Minister must visit Sri Lanka at the earliest opportunity, probably after our own national election so he can resume a more normal relationship with credibility.
2. Revive the process for the conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) which will bring in bilateral exchange of investment and services expanding exchanges beyond tariff reductions for trade in commodities.

Pakistan

New Delhi must anticipate increased terrorist activity as the U.S. military drawdown from Afghanistan approaches. To counter this India must:

- Improve surveillance and interdiction capability on the India-Pakistan border, as also against Pakistani terrorists trying to infiltrate the India-Bangladesh and India-Nepal borders.
- Accelerate psychological warfare to counter Pakistan's attempts to subvert Afghan political stability or its economy to the detriment of Afghan and Indian interests.

Afghanistan

1. Step up military training and assistance to Afghan Army and Police in consultation with the U.S. and Afghanistan's regional stakeholders.
2. Incentivise Indian business, both private and public sector, to invest substantially in Afghanistan through
 - Increased loan and grant assistance from Exim Bank
 - Increased aid programmes that specifically target women's education and entrepreneurship,

especially investing in the development of artisanal skills for livelihood and export

- Indian investors should form syndicates with Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese and U.S. companies for investment in Afghanistan

North East/Myanmar

1. Build the Seven Sisters' Corridor to speed up connectivity and development in our North East and develop linkages with Myanmar; use Thailand and Japan as infrastructure and business partners
2. Develop border trading posts on the India-Myanmar border, formalising the large informal trade
3. Bid for infrastructure projects in Myanmar jointly with Japan and the U.S.

Finance

1. Expedite a quantitative increase in Exim Bank's book size - a bold move that will encourage Indian investment overseas, especially in Myanmar and Afghanistan.
2. Strengthen Ministry of External Affairs by increasing its budget, expanding recruitment, broadening its economic agenda and introducing lateral entry for specific expertise in international law, environmental and human rights.

Soft power

Use Doordarshan as a tool and asset of Indian foreign policy by:

1. Giving Doordarshan autonomy from Prasar Bharti
2. Taking Doordarshan global by launching an international channel to compete with CCTV9, A1 Jazeera, BBC, and establishing bureaus in 17 capitals and financial centres around the world, to project India's unique qualities and soft power.

P-5

The U.S.

Re-build and energise bilateral through technology and innovation linkages. Develop an India-U.S. Technology Agenda, involving the private sectors of both countries, resolving visa issues and promoting, inter alia, technology transfers vs. the current licensing model.

China

1. Ease restrictions on Chinese companies to build infrastructure in India as a reciprocal measure to

China opening itself to greater Indian exports - starting with pharmaceuticals - for a more balanced and sustainable trade relationship

2. Encourage more cultural exchanges with China, with a focus on languages.

Russia

Revive and nurture the strategic relationship

- in the context of Afghanistan, Iran, China
- increase economic content beyond defence, space and nuclear

Iran

India's source of energy, and access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Tehran's own strategic space and partnership with New Delhi has expanded thanks to the P5+Germany and Iran agreement of November 2013 on Iran's nuclear programme. India can now:

- Energetically upgrade the Chahbahar port, as also the road connecting to the Zaranj- Delaram highway (with its connectivity potential to Central Asia).
- Increase import of gas from Qatar, Iran and other Gulf countries from the current 13.4 million metric tonnes, build LNG terminals at Indian locations beyond Hazira and Dahej at Gujarat.

Latin America

1. Start negotiations for FTAs with Mexico, Colombia and Peru. The three nations account for \$10.5 billion in trade with India. But India's exports are just \$5 billion, are disadvantaged in tariff compared with the 50 countries that already have FTAs with the Latin trio.
2. Become a member of Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The IDB disburses over \$ 11 billion annually for development projects in Latin America - contracts open only for member countries, which puts India at a disadvantage to the West, Latin America, and Asian members such as China, Korea and Japan. 2014 offers a window to purchase shares, available this year due to the break-up of countries in Europe.