

Changing Patterns of India's Foreign Policy During Pre and Post Globalization Era

Sumit Rana

Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, D.S.B.Campus, Kumaun University Nainital, Uttarakhand (India)

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*Corresponding Author

Email: sumitrana.jmu22[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In this article, an attempt has been made to assess the changing patterns of India's foreign policy during pre and post Globalisation. Foreign Policy is an instrument through which a country protects and promotes its national interest. There is broad agreement on the concept of National Interest; it comprises the obligation to defend the country's National Security, to maximize economic benefits for its citizen from international trade and commerce, and also to enhance the effectiveness of power potential through propagation of its core cultural assets. We can see the changing dynamics in Indian foreign policy from Nehru to Modi. Indian independence was achieved from a protracted anti-colonial struggle led by Indian National Congress (INC). Therefore, the Indian National Congress leader Pt. Nehru adopted non-alignment policy during Cold War era to protect the sovereignty and interest of India. Besides, Nehru believes in peaceful co-existence, friendship and cooperation. After Nehru, the other landmark foreign policy maker of India was Indira Gandhi. But unlike her father Pt. Nehru, her approach was more realistic than idealistic. Modi's 'act east policy' and the 'neighbourhood first' policy are some important contributions in the foreign policy of India. The present article makes a fresh analysis which would help to understand the challenges that a rapidly evolving and changing global setting poses.

1. Introduction

Foreign Policy is an instrument through which a country protects and promotes its national interest. There is broad agreement on the concept of National Interest; it comprises the obligation to defend the country's National Security, to maximize economic benefits for its citizen from international trade and commerce, and also to enhance the effectiveness of power potential through propagation of its core cultural assets. The tool of foreign policy is also used energetically to promote and export a country's ideologies agenda such as spreading communism or religious revolutionary fervor or, in more recent times, export of democracy. Beside it, the objective of Foreign Policy of a country is to create more space options for itself in the international arena¹.

After independence, India adopted the Policy of non-alignment in the world divided in two power blocks as USA and USSR respectively. Even after demise of the former Soviet Union and the end of cold-war, the basic postulate of India's foreign policy remained unchanged. There has been enough discourse regarding the significance of non-alignment as a viable strategy or foreign policy option in the changed international milieu. India never proclaimed to give up non-alignment². Rather it sought to justify its continuity as a principle of foreign policy and underlined that this policy is still relevant even in the post-globalization world, so all the successive Prime Ministers have adhered to the same principle which Pandit Nehru laid down in the wake of cold war politics after independence.

¹ V.P. Dutt; India's Foreign Policy Since Independence; national book Trust; New Delhi, 2007, p-1

² Ibid p-4

In the last seven decades since independence, successive Prime Ministers have conducted India's foreign policy in response to changing international milieu and the geopolitical dynamics. It is buttressed by the style of Nehru and Ms. Indira Gandhi in pre-globalization and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh and recently the stewardship of Sri Narendra Modi in post-globalization. It is against the background, Indian foreign policy also sets its own priorities and objectives in international politics. The chief architect of India's foreign policy Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's contribution is immense in outlining the broad contours' of the foreign policy. In subsequent years different Prime Ministers have tried to conduct the foreign policy along the principles laid down in the aftermath of the independence.

The objectives of the study were:

- To study the main trends of Indian foreign policy during pre-globalization period.
- To study the main trends of Indian foreign policy during post-globalization period.
- Analysis of the impact of globalization on India's Foreign Policy.

2. Indian Foreign Policy During Pre-Globalization Era:

India's foreign policy is fundamentally based on the principles of peaceful co-existence, friendship and cooperation among all the countries of the world irrespective of their political systems. The foreign policy is aimed at promoting international peace and security and maintaining good and friendly relations with all the countries of the world. India, which was colonial country under the mighty British rule, experienced the power politics of super powers during cold war period, and chose for herself the path of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. India, while conducting its external relations with super power distanced itself aligning with either of the blocs,

thereby pursuing independent foreign policy, and maintaining its sovereignty. India's policy also maintained aloofness in the politics of super powers without taking the side. Thus, India always took just and independent judgments depending upon the issues involved in the international arena. Therefore, India's independence in foreign affairs paved the way for the concept of non-alignment that became not only the guiding principle but also the corner stone of India's foreign policy³. It was this foreign policy that started off the non-alignment movements; which later on become one of the largest movements, the world has ever seen, comprising more than one-thirds of the world's total population, covering a board geographical and ideological spectrum. It was Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of India's foreign policy, who continuously held the External Affairs Ministry as well from 1947-1964, played a decisive role in shaping the India's post-globalization foreign policy. His contribution towards India's foreign policy formulation and implementation was memorable and highly appreciable. Nehru's authority on foreign policy matters was all in all and his word in cabinet discussion was final, to which several members of the Congress and his colleagues in the government supported actively. In short, Nehru's role in India's foreign policy matters was one-man nation.

Jawaharlal Nehru had a long tenure as Prime Minister of India and made substantial contributions to the field of international relations, which put India on the diplomatic map of the world. It was during his tenure as Prime Minister that India's foreign policy came under heavy influence due to certain developments of far reaching consequences such as the beginning of cold war and Sino-Indian war 1962⁴. These developments, no doubt greatly influenced the formulation of post-independence foreign policy on the lines of non-proliferation etc. now it is significant to understand these events, which had a great bearing on India's foreign policy during Nehru's regimes.

In the late sixties, the cold war conflicts between the two Super-Powers were gradually come down and the tension were diluted. Further there was also shift in the East-West relations from the tensions of the cold war to the compulsions, especially in the matter of military strategy. This period was marked by dilution of cold war and rise détente, which tended to be an era of peace and security in the world. The newly emerged independent countries formed under India's leadership, the third force called non-aligned group. This group in a way compelled the Super-Powers to adopt the policy of peaceful co-existence that were practicing the policy of conflict and contradiction.

The inclination of Rajiv Gandhi towards west to get the technological know, is a classic example for his differences with his predecessors who were inclined more towards East then West.

³ Norman. D.Palmer; Foreign Policy of the Indian National Congress, in K.P. Misra (Ed) Studies In Indian Foreign Policy, Vikas Publication, New Delhi, 1969, p-22.

⁴ N.M. Kilanani's Panorama of Indain Diplomacy, S. Chand and Co., New Delhi 1981 p85.

The regime of P.V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister of India was one of glorious and crucial moments in the history of India's foreign policy. It was during this period that he gave much importance to the economic development of the country, which is one of the pre-requisites of Sound Foreign policy. He was considered as the architect of Indian economic reforms introduced in 1990's. Therefore, the modern economic boom in India is largely attributed to the fundamental reform started by Prime Minister Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh the then Finance Minister. P.V. Narasimha took the reins of the country when the economy was on the verge of collapse due to low foreign exchange reserves and also when the country's foreign policy was in Shambles⁵. Soon after assuming the office, he introduced a number of reforms in the Indian economy to tide over the Balance of Payments (BOP) crisis. He was the only Prime Minister after Rajiv Gandhi who opened up the Indian economic policies to integrate with global economy. Although, the stage was set for liberalization in the early 1980's, it is only during P.V. Narasimha Rao's regimes that that the process of globalizing the economy began rapidly. He also improves India's relations with all countries of the world, including her immediate neighbours. He also signing of the peace talks with China with a view to ending the long-standing border disputes.

3. Indian Foreign Policy During Post Globalization:

The year 1991 was a defining moment in the history of India's foreign and foreign economic policies in the post cold war scenario. The collapse and disintegration of the USSR at the one end and the acceleration in the processes of globalization on the other, created a much larger space for India to maneuver at home and on global arena. India found itself automatically out of the perceived shadows of the "now former mighty USSR". In 1991, there was a change of Government at the Centre, which took some visible and tangible foreign policy and foreign economic policy decisions. One of the more pronounced shifts in foreign policy came through the "Look East Policy" initiated in 1991⁶. The other visible and tangible departure from the past was in the field of foreign economic policy as India decided to open its door for foreign investments and to deregulate and let its economy come out of insulation and face the challenges through globalization and be part of the global market economy. Several other important steps in the next two decades were made; these include for instance strategic partnerships with all major players such as USA, China, Russia and the EU.

After the greatest achievement of P.V. Narasimha Rao in the field of country's foreign policy, H.D. Devegowda became the Prime Minister in June 1996 by heading the United Front coalition government. The foreign policy plank of the United Front reiterates continuation of the policy as enunciated by his predecessor. I.K. Gujral was appointed the Minister for foreign affairs of the country. He was an able Statesman who could diplomatically handle the River Ganga sharing water issue and sorted out the Ganga water problem with Bangladesh and also dealt firmly with issue of signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). In fact, he was given free hand in dealing with

⁵ ibid

⁶ Subash C. Kyashap; (ed), National Policy Studies, Tata Mc-Graw Hill Publication company Ltd, New Delhi, 1990 p-250

external affairs matters Devegowda's tenure. It was during H.D. Devegowda regime that there was tremendous pressure from certain quarters to sign the CTBT⁷. However, India refused to sign the CTBT, since it was discriminatory. Further, India's stand was reiterated that the world required nothing short of a global nuclear disarmament to which India remained committed. It was also clarified that India would continue to pursue its nuclear policy despite pressure from the nuclear countries.

Another coalition government was formed under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998. As Prime Minister of India, he made significant contributions to India's foreign policy. The first and foremost development was carrying out of nuclear tests. It was a surprising development. In 1998, the NDA government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership shocked the world and many of his country's citizens by detonating five nuclear weapons in the desert of Rajasthan. It was important to note that the NDA government set the record by exploding the nuclear weapons at a time when 149 countries had signed a ban on nuclear testing. It also became the first non-congress government to depart from the decades of nuclear restraint. The impact of the explosion naturally altered the power equations in the South Asian region. Like China, Indian government also clarified that the nuclear weapon testing was not directed against any country but to protect its interest. The nuclear tests were the outcome of the hegemonic policy of the nuclear power countries that were involved in perpetuating their nuclear capability. Several international community's strongly criticized its actions. Besides, several countries including America and its ally Japan imposed economic Sanction on India for its nuclear explosions and going against the principles of NPT and CTBT. The nuclear tests brought structural changes in the Indian foreign policy.

The foreign policy of India under Manmohan Singh government became one of debatable issues in so far as the issue of voting against Iran on its nuclear program was concerned at the insistence of US. Because, the left parties who are partners in the UPA government strongly opposed India's move of voting against Iran in the International Atomic Energy (IAEA) meeting. Particularly the Communist Party of India (Marxist) held Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for taking a major step affecting the country's independent foreign policy and its Status in the non-aligned movement⁸. Infact, it was an embarrassing situation to the UPA government voted against Iran in the Security Council in order to appease the United States. By voting with US against Iran India became party to another "infamous exercise in intimidation and coercion" against a country with which it had friendly relations and vital energy stakes.

In the Dr. Manmohan regime the George W. Bush the American President during his visit in March 2006 to sign the "historic" nuclear civilian Agreement. Once again the signing of the nuclear Agreement between India and United States evoked strong protests and the issue not only became debatable but also controversial to the pro-left parties.

⁷ George Perkovich, India's Nuclear Bomb, the Impact On Global Proliferation, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000 p- 110

⁸ ibid

Because, the Left Parties, being supporters of the UPA government, strongly opposed the deal as "bad bargain" and termed it as detrimental to the country's commercial and strategic interest. Looking long back at his Successive ten years regimes, the result are mixed bag. Singh started his foreign policy innings on 2004 from where predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee left. In other words, there was no shake-up in India's Foreign Policy. Her chose not to deviate from the stand that Vajpayee pursued-policy of greater engagements-with regard to the US, China and Pakistan, the three countries critical in India's foreign relations. Singh actually expanded the scope of relations with each of these countries. India and U.S, for instance, opened a new chapter in their bilateral relations when they signed a landmark civil nuclear deal. Delhi also got a clean waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group de-facto recognitions as a nuclear power-with support from Washington.

4. Indian Foreign Policy During Narendra Modi's Doctrine:

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) formed the government in May 2014 speculating on the trajectory of India's foreign policy. A right – wing party, a majority of the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), ideologically led by Narendra Modi, fueled the notion that there would be a new direction for India's foreign policy. The Modi's government foreign policy is characterized by three broad blueprints: harsh on National Security, Accelerate the process of the second phase of neo-liberal economic reforms and Cultural Nationalism. India's national security rests on stability at borders and its ability to prevent terrorism from Pakistan and Afghanistan, economic reforms require investment and technology from powerful actors such as the US, Japan, China and European Union. Modi's first foreign policy approach came to the fore during his party's Prime Minister Candidacy in 2013 when he outlined the following points in "Network-18" event called Think India (Samvad Manch):

- a) Improving relations with immediate neighbours will be there priority as peace and tranquility in South-Asia is essential for realizing their development agenda.
- b) Significantly, he pledged to introduce the concept of Para diplomacy in India, where each states and city would be at liberty to form special relation with countries or federal states or even in cities of their interest.
- c) Bilateral trade dominates relations with most countries, with some important global powers, with which India forms a strategic partnership.

Before, he formally took office, Modi elected the Prime Minister, detailing his foreign policy by inviting the heads of states/Governments of all the neighbouring countries of India and doing so a manner that drew his criticism as a fundamentalist. Modi's swearing – in – ceremony was attended by almost all the SAARC leaders, including Naveen Ramgoolam of Mauritius, who holds the status an observer in the group. The guest list including Hamid Karzai from Afghanistan, Tarsharing Tobgoy from Bhutan, Abdulla Yameen from Maldives, Sushil Koirala from Nepal, Nawaz Shariff from Pakistan, Rajapaksha from Sri-Lanka etc are attended swearing ceremony of Modi in May 2014. Soon after the new government took office, important world leaders expressed a desire to work with the Modi Government to strengthen their

ties with India as it provided them with a larger market. All the Five permanent members' states of the UN Security Council sent their messengers to India within hundred (100) Days before the inauguration, which is important for India's long-term bid to gain permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

5. Conclusion:

In Pre-Globalization, India has produced several 'foreign policy PMs': Jawaharlal Nehru, who left an indelible imprint and legacy; Indira Gandhi, who blended Nehru's idealistic vision with realpolitik; and in the post Globalization, Narasimha Rao, who adopted policy to cope with the post-Cold War world; and

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who made India a nuclear weapons state and Manmohan Singh's Civil Nuclear deal. Modi gives the impression that he aspires to be a great foreign policy PM, perhaps greater than them all. Modi adopted multi-alignment policy in his tenure, which great success for India after Globalisation, India recognised as rising global powers, share responsibility for peace, stability and development in the ever changing international politico-economic order. As observed, there have been some key thrusts made by India in meeting its designed goals to be a global power and enhancing its strategic profile in the present international context of India's foreign policy. These initiatives have evoked worldwide responses and repercussions in different ways.

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