

Changing Trends of India's Foreign Policy in the 21 Century-An Analysis

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Abstract

India's foreign policy in the twenty-first century has been dominated by the pursuit of an enabling environment in its neighborhood and throughout the world that enables its economy to grow, society to develop, and soft power to flourish – as this country of 1.3 billion people seeks its rightful place in the comity of nations. After almost three decades of reforms and opening up to the rest of the world, India now confronts new security challenges and the need for more money, technology, ideas, and creativity to drive its transformation. India's significant global influence is readily seen in its dynamic foreign policy orientation and a number of innovative joint initiatives with other countries. In the early 1990s, then-Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao launched a new chapter in the Indian foreign policy paradigm known as the 'Look-East Policy.' The Look-East Policy reflects a deliberate reorientation of India's worldview and positioning in the fast expanding global economy. Since the Policy's establishment, India and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) have taken many bilateral, regional, and sub-regional efforts to ensure the Policy's success. The current article aims to highlight some of the emerging trends that India's foreign policy is expected to encounter in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the study analyzes the changes that have shaped the substance and trajectory of India's foreign policy in the contemporary era.

Key words: India, foreign policy, Look East Policy, ASEAN, Indo-Pacific, regional security order.

1. Introduction

Foreign policy is an umbrella term that refers to the collection of values, interests, and goals that a nation advances in its interactions with other countries. While foreign policy has some fundamental characteristics, it is not a static notion; the focus of foreign policy changes in response to changing international circumstances. Several elements influence India's foreign policy, including its history, culture, geography, and economics. The goals are more or less clearly defined interests that are expressed in the context of the conduct of relations with another state. The precise role of national interest in foreign policy formation is a source of intense dispute among academics. According to one school of thought, foreign policy is and should always be motivated by national interest. Hughes, a former US Secretary of State, famously remarked that foreign policy is not abstract ideas but the outcome of real national interest concepts. Additionally, H.J. Morgenthau believes that foreign policy should constantly strive to protect national interests. Its aim is to protect the national interests of other countries, which may or may not be articulated in this manner while making foreign policy; a nation's decision-makers are always influenced by national interest considerations. Indian foreign policy must eventually come to grips with Jawaharlal Nehru's remarkable legacy. Even more difficult is the task of disentangling Nehru's contributions from India's never-ending political contestations as the country's first Prime Minister. However, Nehru's many

fans and detractors seem to agree on one point: Nehru was an 'idealist' in his handling of India's foreign affairs. By pronouncing the "Third World" united, Nehru's administration ushered in a new era of foreign policy. This was a powerful tool in the Indian state's arsenal for bargaining with the two blocs. India also recognized that maintaining an autonomous stance would benefit not just its own interests, but also those of other Third World nations. As a result, non-aligned strategy retains significance as a foreign policy tool as well as a framework for engagement with capitalist and communist nations. India, along with other Third World nations, began establishing a single platform and coordinating efforts to protect their interests in the 1950s. India gained independence in 1947 and entered the community of sovereign nations, qualifying it to engage in international politics and relations as an actor. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, left a lasting mark on the country's foreign policy. The circumstances that influenced the formulation of India's basic foreign policy principles in the late 1940s and early 1950s were the Cold War, bipolarization, formation of military alliances, ideological struggle, arms race, imperialism, colonialism, and racism, all of which no longer exist in today's world. The Cold War came to an end. Following the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the globe has become unipolar, with the United States of America (USA) as the only dominating force; economically, the world has become multipolar, with Germany, Japan, and the United States of America (USA) as economic powers. Ideological obstacles seem to have vanished with the fall of the communist bloc. Imperialism and colonialism are history, and racism is likewise on the decline. These changes on the world stage require a re-evaluation of India's Foreign Policy and diplomatic strategy. India continues to be concerned about South-East Asia, China, and increasingly even other South Asian countries.

2. The New Foreign Policy Strategy of India

In his 1944 book *The 'Discovery of India'*, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, forecasts that the Pacific would eventually replace the Atlantic as the world's nerve center. India will certainly have a major influence on the Pacific, despite the fact that it is not a Pacific country. In addition, India will become an economic and political center for the Indian Ocean area, as well as Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Her role is economically and geopolitically significant in a region of the world that is projected to expand in the future. In addition, Nehru said that India will be required to play a major role in Asian and Indian Ocean security problems, especially in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

According to the statement, India's "Look East" strategy is altering the geopolitical and topographical situation in the region in the future. In this environment, India must play a key role in addressing its neighbors' challenges and opportunities in terms of geography, history, politics, economy, and institutions. India has the capacity to nurture and manage a stable, peaceful, and prosperous South Asia, which would have a significant impact on South-East Asian perceptions of India's ability to play a role in Asia. India's ability to demand respect across Asia is hampered by its poor relations with Pakistan. The 'Look East' strategy was conceived by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. In Finance Minister Manmohan Singh (current Prime Minister of India), he chose an unorthodox and innovative technocrat who is a politician as well as an internationally renowned economist who was crucial in bringing the "Look East Policy" to reality. On March 18, 2006, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at the 16th Asia Society Corporate Conference in Mumbai, "I must give credit to our East and South-East Asian neighbors for shaping our own thinking on globalization and how he plans to deal with it." Some of you may recall that in 1992, our government launched India's "Look East" strategy. This was more than an external economic policy; it was a strategic shift in India's vision of the world and its position in the growing global

economy. It was mostly about reaching out to our area's civilized Asian neighbors. I've always seen India's destiny to be inextricably linked to that of Asia, especially Southeast Asia."

In the face of economic liberalization and changes, India focuses on building a self-sufficient socialist society in order to develop a modern economy based on free markets, allowing for greater international trade and investment. India has arrived at a critical juncture in its economic integration with the rest of the globe. The economy of India will influence its foreign policy. In a word, India's Look East Policy is the political nexus of economic determination and global standing. "We believed that if we were going to promote New India, we had to start with Singapore," Finance Minister Madhavsingh Solanki and Manmohan Singh said on a visit to ASEAN countries in 1991-92. During his official visit to India in 1994, Singapore's Prime Minister, Goh Tok Chong, said, "I saw the country's potential; I returned to Singapore determined to spark off an India Fever." Despite the fact that many people doubted India's commitment to economic openness, I never lost faith in it." ASEAN has been a major backer of India's "Look East" strategy for fundamental geopolitical reasons. India, on the other hand, has remained cautious, rejecting ASEAN overtures while sticking to policies that ensure estrangement. "India was then considered as the balance to Communist China," stated Ambassador K. Kesavapany, a Singaporean diplomat and academic. This was a remark on the region's different historical interactions and experiences with India and China after China's 1962 invasion of India. "ASEAN's farsighted assessment about political and strategic convergence, acceleration of economic relations and their future potential, and complementarities in areas that were hitherto not evident or remained unexploited," said then-External Affairs Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, highlighting the significance of ASEAN's decision for India. "As a step forward and a change from a derivative to a direct connection," Gujral said, "so that there are no distortions, misperceptions, ignorance, or intermediation." He also pledged to maintain our bilateral and multilateral engagement with ASEAN, as well as to enhance our understanding of and contact with particular ASEAN countries, organizations, and processes. India ratified the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Protocol in the year 2000. (Seanwzf). India was once again acknowledged as a summit level partner during the first summit in Cambodia in November 2002. Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong referred to India and China as the two wings of the ASEAN aircraft in his speech at the first India-ASEAN summit in 2002.

Atal Behari Vajpayee stated that India's participation in the Asia Pacific community is both a geographical and a political reality, and that the region is a focal point of India's foreign policy, strategic concerns, and economic interests in his Annual Singapore Lecture in April 2002. Furthermore, in a June 2002 welcome to India's External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, Singapore's Foreign Minister, Professor S. Jayakumar, said that whatever new equilibrium, security architecture, or geographical balance emerges, India would be a part of it. ... India's strategic importance cannot be emphasized. India's strategic engagement with South and Southeast Asia will alter as the larger political and strategic context in which they operate evolves. Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, as well as Myanmar and Thailand, have long maintained cordial relations with India, and the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Initiative brings these three countries, as well as Myanmar and Thailand, into an India-led sub-regional cooperation framework. The India-Indonesia relationship is once again cordial. In terms of ASEAN and its region, Malaysia and India have a strong relationship, and the overall economic and commercial relationship, as well as bilateral ties, is excellent. In terms of security, military, and defense, relations with other countries are also doing well.

ASEAN has ensured the survival of the "Look East" strategy as a consequence of India's integration into the Asia Pacific region, which will strengthen India's involvement with the region. The

subcontinent's links and development may put more strain on Sino-Indian and Indo-US relations. India has the potential and capability to play a major role in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and West Asia, all of which are vital to India's long-term growth and stability.

3. Factors Influenced by Indian Foreign Policy

India's main foreign policy goal has been and will continue to be to achieve strategic autonomy so that it may pursue its national interests. External security, internal security, sustainable economic development, energy security, marine security, and access to technology are among India's top security issues. This strategic autonomy is linked to the international system, and for India, one important issue is what sort of international system would be advantageous to it. India prefers a non-polarized and non-hegemonic world because it maximizes Indian autonomy. India's security issues, as well as its ties with the region and beyond, must be considered in the light of two global trends: hegemony and globalization. The United States is the most powerful military power on the planet and in the area. Globalization, which is fighting against this concentration of power, is resulting in networked interconnectedness, particularly in the economic sector, as well as a dispersion of power. It also has an effect on the state's ability to shape and mould the process since it is no longer the main player. The idea of "balance of power" was taught in India, however it no longer applies. We live in an era of "power of dependency," as shown by both worldwide commerce and the international economy. India has employed a mix of domestic and social policies, as well as foreign policy considerations, to solve its security issues. Economic modernisation has been generating policy momentum in the area of internal and economic security. Only inclusive growth, as well as aggressive investments in health, education, and infrastructure that connect market demands to skill development in the youthful population, can turn India's demographic into an advantage.

In order to improve external security, an emphasis is being placed on defense modernisation and weapon system upgrades, as well as an inclusive nuclear strategy based on minimum deterrence and a policy of "No First Use." As Asia's defense expenditure rises, the issue of how military modernisation impacts political stability will become increasingly more important. There have been attempts on the foreign policy level to improve regional stability and to extend India's outreach beyond South Asia into South-East Asia and Central Asia. Likewise, the United States and the European Union are forming stronger alliances. These policy initiatives are aimed at strengthening India's hard and soft power capabilities and capacities, ensuring strategic autonomy while also assisting in the country's ascension to great power status.

4. Strategies adopted Indian Foreign Policy for strengthening its position in international politics

According to some Indian experts, the BJP-led government's decision to conduct nuclear tests in 1998 propelled India to worldwide notice and into the first rungs of the major powers. In India's foreign policy, there has been a fresh aggressiveness after the nuclear tests. The Nehruvian perspective of global politics has not been abandoned by succeeding Indian administrations. However, with lofty aspirations and Nehru's strong self-image, there is a newfound pragmatism and confidence. India aspires to portray itself as a rising economic force, with a consistent 7-8 percent growth rate in recent years. Furthermore, India is rapidly shifting from the power of ideas to the new argument of bolstering economic and political power. Freed from the Cold War's structural constraints, India is attempting to form strategic political and economic partnerships on a bilateral, regional, and global level that offer significant security benefits. India's foreign policy, which was characterized by non-alignment during the Cold War, now seems to be following a strategy of neo-non-alignment, in which it engages many countries to fulfill its various

security needs. The key to India extending itself outside the area is regional stability, which must be maintained.

In order to accomplish its foreign policy goals in South Asia, it engages with its neighbors bilaterally and, more importantly, within a regional framework (SAARC). Relations with all of India's neighbors have steadily improved, which bodes well for the country. In the west, the peace process with Pakistan is yielding fresh rewards, while in the east; border negotiations and increasing trade with China are yielding new dividends and operational space for India. India's attempts to engage at the regional level have been particularly notable. It has applied for membership and participation (even if just as an observer) in regional organizations in Southeast Asia and Central Asia that aim to project India into the area and promote alliance formation. Both political and economic reasons have motivated these initiatives. With participation in ASEAN and the ASEM, India's "Look East" strategy has given it a significant presence in Southeast Asia (a region increasingly dominated by China). According to some experts, this not only affirms India's growing economic influence, but also serves as a welcome counterweight to China by the ASEAN nations. After all, China is a member of every regional organization, from ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum to the East Asia Summit (EAS), and it is extending its influence in Central Asia via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It's worth considering if India has de-hyphenated from Pakistan before becoming hyphenated with China. India does not see this as a counterbalance, but rather as a natural trade partner with an area with whom it has deep historical and commercial ties. This is also consistent with India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean, which defines maritime security as stretching from the Gulf of Hormuz in West Asia to the Straits of Malacca in Southeast Asia, as stated in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report. This vast maritime zone is home to some of the busiest oil and raw material sea routes in the world both of which are essential to India's long-term economic development and therefore related to her economic security. Furthermore, the economically powerful and visible Indian Diasporas, as well as a rising political awareness of India's impact in the United States and the United Kingdom, are gaining India valuable political and economic mileage.

As a result, even as India expands its regional influence, it adopts a new tone that is not just reflective of the Third World. It tries to define its national interest while simultaneously speaking out on development problems as a state in transition to a new identity and function. The problem for India is that it cannot be a regional or global player while remaining neutral; rather, as with Iran's vote at the IAEA, it will be increasingly pressed to adopt a political stance. India's foreign policy now shows an improving balance of idealism and pragmatism, and it remains committed to multilateral and rule-based global governance.

5.1. Perspectives and Prospects on India's Engagement with South-East Asia

The changing characteristics of the global environment have affected India's relations with the major nations and her neighbors. At different periods, military and domestic political factors have influenced the nature of policy toward certain regions. The connection between India and the Southeast Asian nations may be viewed via this lens. The connection between India and Southeast Asia has taken a circuitous route. While the need to resist colonialism drew nations together in the early twentieth century, East-West rivalry throughout the Cold War period led their political, security, and economic interests to diverge. The geostrategic and economic realities of the post-Cold War era have compelled India and Southeast Asia to establish substantial commercial and security links. Although the full potential of India-Southeast Asia relations and cooperation has yet to be achieved, ongoing efforts have given most analysts and observers cause to be hopeful. ASEAN's participation, as well as the Indian government's Look East policy efforts, has been important in this regard.

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South-East Asian nations on the Asian subcontinent constitute India's second ring of neighbors. As Stephen Cohen points out, India's neighbors have neighbors, and South-East Asian countries (along with Africa, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf) comprise India's extended neighborhood. "India is no stranger to Southeast Asian countries and beyond, given her deep historical, cultural, and naval connections with them," experts write. Following independence, India aspired to carve out a new Asian niche for itself. South East Asia piqued India's attention and pulled it in, especially while colonialism persisted in certain areas of the region. Prime Minister Nehru's vision of a revitalized Asia and India's important role in altering its fate was based on three assumptions, each of which foreshadowed current policy orientation. Nehru was the first to assert India's geostrategic significance in Asia, saying that it was situated at the crossroads of western, northern, eastern, and south-eastern Asia. Second, its historical and cultural roots were inextricably linked to Asia's general growth throughout time. Third, Nehru believed that Asia's decolonized and newly independent countries want to avoid great power competition and conflict, as well as the economic and political connections that tied them to their respective "metropolises." According to Nehru, if India concentrated on Asian solidarity and its expression via regionalism, institutionalization of cooperation, and mutual understanding, Asia might have a legitimate weight in world affairs. South East Asian countries viewed India as a vital ally in their struggle against colonial rulers in the same spirit. At home, India pursued a policy of "import-substituting industrialisation," with the government controlling the "commanding heights of the economy." Because of the pressures of the global and local contexts, India has had little contact with Southeast Asia. Neither the region nor the nation want to visit India. There have been a few weak attempts to engage India in contemporary security talks, but nothing significant has come of them. Seeing the benefits of a regional multilateral effort, South East Asian nations decided to establish a South East Asian association. However, the creation of ASEAN in 1968 and South East Asia's eagerness to seek regionalization undermined India's inward-looking mentality. Furthermore, ASEAN nations viewed India's active participation in the Bangladesh crisis as inappropriate interference in Pakistan's affairs. The ASEAN nations were concerned by India's close ties to the Soviet Union, as well as her warm relationship with Vietnam. According to scholars, three factors impacted India's general policy toward Asia in the post-Cold War era:

- As globalization gained momentum, India's wider economic interests facilitated regional cooperation.
- It was preferable to maintain political stability in the neighborhood in order to preserve democracy, pluralism, and human rights in general.
- With China's and the United States' political profiles steadily rising, India needed to define strategies that would aid in the subcontinent's strategic space in respect to extraregional powers.

Thus, India's strategic thinking found a valid foundation in its leaning towards Southeast Asian countries at this moment. Rajiv Gandhi's travels to the capitals of ASEAN member countries were a historic effort to build relations with the Southeast Asian states. In addition, his tour to reengage China (December 1988), Japan, and Australia signaled that India was being pushed to the East. The Look East Policy, initiated by India after 1991 under Prime Minister P. V. Narsimha Rao, was a forceful reaction to the country's expanded Eastward neighbors in the post-Cold War era. There are seven new security concerns after 9/11, particularly after Southeast Asia was identified as the "second front of terrorism," the security component has taken on a new level of significance in India-ASEAN ties. The Bali bombing in 2004 highlighted the murkier aspect of the relationship between transnational terror networks and its local affiliates. India and ASEAN countries have discussed the formation of cooperative working groups to

tackle this emerging danger. Indian officials have been outspoken in their advocacy for a more concerted effort to combat conventional and non-traditional security challenges. These security cooperation channels based on growing convergences, which were adequately articulated in Phase II of the Look East strategy (2003-04), were as follows:

- Maritime security, including fighting and controlling terrorism and transnational crime.
- Preventing the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, people trafficking, and small arms trafficking
- Instilling confidence, preventing and resolving conflicts
- Conservation of energy and the environment
- Advancement of democracy, human rights, peace, development, and disarmament.

5.2. Prospects

Southeast Asian countries and India are becoming cognizant of the importance of interconnectedness. Consistent attempts to participate in economic and political interactions will inevitably be complemented by security connections. In the second phase of the Look East Policy, India has focused on extending and strengthening previous efforts to strengthen military and security cooperation. This offers further economic advantages. Trade between India and ASEAN has more than quadrupled, rising from \$ 3.1 billion in 1991 to about \$ 12 billion in 2002. Southeast Asia contributed for 45 percent of India's foreign trade in the late 1990s. Southeast Asian nations are undergoing significant military modernization, making them an appealing market for Indian goods and services. To get into this market, India must expand its knowledge and participation at the level of its diplomatic missions in the area, as well as improve its bargaining and negotiating abilities. Because of China's increasing economic and geopolitical presence and influence in the area, Southeast Asia need a diverse engagement with India. With the United States ties with the area deteriorating, many think that India will offer more stability and security to the region.

In the near future, India and ASEAN nations must step up bilateral and regional collaboration to tackle shared security challenges that have the potential to shake the foundations of the polity. Because India's north-eastern area has been designated as a “corridor to South East Asia,” integration with traditional neighboring regions such as Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Thailand should be enabled via transportation networks, which would help to long-term peace and prosperity.

As a result, shifting political, economic, and security concerns influence any country's bilateral or multilateral policy relationships, and India-Southeast Asia relations are no exception. The potential of the ties must be carefully nurtured by policymakers and strategists, as Southeast Asia is likely to remain a viable foreign and security policy alternative for India in its drive to build geopolitical and economic supremacy in the coming years.

6. Look East as India's Foreign Policy: Implications for the North East

When President Barack Obama announced his support for India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, cheers erupted not just in the Indian Parliament but across the nation and the Asian region, according to Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak, Malaysia's Prime Minister. It was a clear acknowledgement by the US of India's global power, but it was also an indication that the Indian government's Look East strategy, with its unabashed move away from the West in favor of strengthening regional relations, is paying off handsomely. According to Obama, now is the moment for India to not just look East, but to engage East, deepening its economic and geopolitical integration with Asia while also solidifying its global position.

Look East Policy focuses on each of the five nations bordering India in the Indo-China region: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar, all of which have significant Buddhist traditions. As

a unique characteristic of ties with Southeast Asia in general, this land link might be projected as a method of access and exposure for students, scholars, pilgrims, and tourists. Look East Policy will provide a new dimension to the country's foreign policy. The constant meeting and mixing of individuals from various social origins contributes to the development of a liberal and cosmopolitan outlook on life. India is in an excellent position to catalyze a movement. While speaking at the 13th Annual Conference of the North East Region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (NERCPA), Chowna Mein, Arunachal Pradesh's Public Health Engineering Minister, said that the northeast has the ability to help India's Look East Policy. Mein further pointed out that when India began its Look East Policy in 1991, the emphasis was not on the physical closeness of its northeastern area to Southeast Asia. One of the major issues impeding regional economic growth is a lack of sufficient physical connection between the northeast and Southeast Asian regions. On Saturday, July 23, 2011, the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) opened its fourth centre in Tezpur, Assam, with the goal of conducting high-quality research and assisting policymakers in facilitating better economic integration of the Northeast with Southeast Asian, East Asian, and Far East countries as part of the 'Look East' policy. In the presence of Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and Union Minister for Statistics and Programme Implementation Pranab Mukherjee, Union Finance Minister and Chairman of the ISI Council, inaugurated the facility at Tezpur University. Srikant Jena, Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, T. C. A. Anant, Director of the ISI, Bimal K. Roy, and S. M. Bendre, Director of the ISI Northeast Center. During a short press conference, Mukherjee said that the success of the Look East Policy in the Northeast is determined by how fast the region can integrate and develop land, air, and economic connections with SAARC, Southeast Asian, East Asian, and Far Eastern countries. In this regard, the Northeast ISI center will not only aid in the facilitation of education, research, and academic activities, but will also assist in policy formation in light of the region's significance under the Look East policy. Mukherjee went on to say that the issue is how quickly we can enhance connection. As a result, the country's infrastructure and communications are expected to receive a one-trillion-dollar investment under the 12th plan. And the private sector is anticipated to provide 50% of this investment. He also recommended that, depending on the nature of the projects, different forms of funding be used. With Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Myanmar sharing 90 percent of the region's geographical area, the Look East Policy envisions the northeast having advantageous economic ties with Southeast and South Asian nations. The northeast, despite having vast natural resources and international boundaries with a number of nations, has yet to reap any advantages from the Look East Policy, according to D. Sinha, Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS). In terms of trade, each state in the area has a unique advantage. However, economic statistics show that the northeast remains unaffected.

7. Implications for Global Order

In a globalized world, India interacts with the rest of the world while simultaneously being engaged by the rest of the world. The relationship between India and the United States has seen the most significant changes. These two nations have gone from being 'estranged democracies' to being 'engaged democracies,' thanks to the end of Cold War rhetoric. The new dynamic in the India-US relationship is so fundamentally different that the US is engaging India as a completely separate entity from Pakistan for the first time in their bilateral relationship. Second, it is pursuing a Strategic Partnership with India, which recognizes India's present and future capabilities in the region and globally. Third, the Civil Nuclear Deal between India and the United States de facto recognizes India as a nuclear power and grants it exemptions

from the existing nuclear system. To put it another way, India has engaged on its own terms. As the US, Europe, and the EU engage the two rising powers – China and India – who are following two very different political and economic development models, India will have to define its foreign policy with care and moderation. The fact that India is the world's biggest non-Western democracy contributes to its strength and ideational closeness to the West. India has effectively combined its plurality and variety with institutionalized democracy, making it an example for others. India's strategic goal is to strengthen relations with its neighbors in the area as well as with important foreign players. The absence of a vibrant local neighborhood is India's problem. India's foreign involvement is motivated by a desire to see peace and stability spread over as much of the world as possible. One of the reasons India has taken part in UN initiatives to promote peace and peacekeeping is because of this. India aspires to a multilateral, multipolar, rule-based system. India's political and economic ties with current major powers and rising countries, on the other hand, would have a significant effect on global political and economic governance in the future.

India's foreign policy looks outside its borders to protect its economic interests, particularly access to raw resources and energy supplies, both of which may place it in direct rivalry with China, particularly in Central Asia and Africa. China and India together pose a new growing threat for other nations. Indian foreign policy today shows that it aims to increase its power and influence by enhancing bilateral cooperation with the United States, Europe, the European Union, China, and Russia, as well as engaging and participating in regional and international organizations and employing soft power effectively. Its increasing military cooperation with Israel, as well as its ongoing ties with the Arab world, demonstrate the delicate balance between its foreign and domestic security concerns. There is a growing body of evidence that civilisational nations such as China and India will play a role in reshaping global politics. India's security policy, on the other hand, is continuously developing. India's capacity to develop into a significant global player would be hampered by the lack of a coherent security policy. For a number of factors, the emerging international order will be Asia-centric and polycentric. Because India's interests extend well beyond the region, it is in its best interests for it to meld the Asia-centered century into a more cooperative environment. India must portray itself as a confident and vibrant nation willing to contribute more to global stability, security, and peace.

8. Conclusion

We now have a broad canvas of the evolution of India's foreign policy through the three historical phases. Policy has evolved and changed over the last seventy years, usually at a steady pace, but sometimes drastically to respond to fast changing global or regional scenario. Fortunately, foreign policy evokes greater consensus across the Indian political spectrum and therefore, has been easier to mould and change, than domestic policy on which governments of the day have faced vehement opposition. Foreign policy can only go so far and diplomacy can be that effective, to the extent of a country's political, social and economic health. India has been fortunate to enjoy good growth and prosperity for the last three decades. This has provided greater leverage to India's foreign policy, and allowed far greater resources to be allocated for the conduct of diplomacy, including consolidating and strengthening our diplomatic presence all across the globe. Under the present regime, India has clearly demonstrated its will to play a leading role in the global arena and be counted as 'pole' in its own right. Continued stability and prosperity at home and political consensus on broad foreign policy parameters, will help India reach this goal.

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