

Indian Foreign Policy -Evolution and Development

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- Jawahar Lal Nehru was the architect of India's foreign policy. It was he who gave shape to the voice at that time to the idea of non-alignment and an organisational cohesion through the non-alignment movement. Non-alignment came to symbolise the struggle of India and other newly independent nations to retain and strengthen their independence from colonialism and imperialism.
- Another objective that of promoting world peace, was also facilitated by it. Nehru's passionate opposition to war and the threat of nuclear conflict which loomed large after Hiroshima is well known. Along with world leaders like President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt and Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia, Nehru fostered the non-alignment movement in order to promote the peaceful settlement of international disputes, economic development and decolonisation. An Asian Conference was held in New Delhi in April 1955 attended by about 200 delegates from various countries of Asia. But the most important was the Afro-Asian conference called by India and other Columbian powers in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955.
- A major function of Indian foreign policy was to promote and protect economic interests and to facilitate her on the path that she had chosen for herself. India also relied, especially after 1954, on the Soviet Union for building up her public sector industries. Something which US was reluctant to do. For military expenditure, India spread her net far and wide across the ideological divide. During this time India bought for its Airforce,

104 Toofani aircraft from France, 16 AN.12s and 26 Mi-4 helicopters from the Soviet Union and 55 Firchild Packets from the US, 230 Vampire aircraft were produced under licence from UK in India. The variety of sources from which defence equipment alone was acquired shows that India succeeded in maintaining sufficiently, friendly relations with a large number of countries. India and Soviet Union , signed major arms deal in 1963, August 1964, August 1965, and November 1965, and thus became the major arms supplier to India. The arms deals with the Soviet Union and the Green Revolution which led to India becoming self sufficient in food in a few year's time increased India's capacity to stand on her own feet and take a more independent stand in world affairs.

- From 1955, USSR was a staunch supporter of India on Kashmir and exercised its veto in the UN Security Council to forestall any resolution unfavourable to India on Kashmir. The Indo-Soviet friendship was strengthened when Russia supported India on the integration of Goa in opposition to US. When Indo-Chinese relations began to deteriorate from 1959 with the Dalai Lama seeking refuge in India, USSR remained reticent. This marked the strain relations between China and Soviet Union. The tensions in Indian foreign policy became evident when India failed to condemn the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, but repudiated US role in Vietnam. Later Prime Minister Indira Gandhi side tracked Soviet action against Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Indo-China relations- can be traced back to time when there were exchange of Buddhist missionaries between the two countries. India was the first country to recognise the Peoples Republic of China in January 1950. In 1950 Chinese occupation of Tibet caused some tensions with India. In 1954 India signed a treaty of friendship, India recognised China's right over Tibet, and both nations pledged to follow the principle of

Panchsheel, related to mutual recognition of each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, non-aggression, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence.

- In July 1954, the Chinese protested against the presence of Indian troops to Barahoti in the province of Uttar Pradesh. In April 1955, Nehru projected Chou En-Lai at the Bandung Conference and tried to befriend China. But there came a series of intrusions of Chinese troops to Indian territories. The Chinese occupation of Tibet posed a security problem to India. It built a major highway over the Aksai Chin Plateau in the Indian region of Ladakh. By 1958, China had occupied over 6000 square miles of Indian territory. Before launching a massive offensive against India on 20 October 1962, the Chinese troops sneaked into Chushul area of Ladakh and Kameng division of NEFA. By 24 October, Chinese were well across the McMahon Line by making inroads into the Indian territory. A state of emergency was proclaimed in India on 26 October 1962. The Chinese offered to withdraw its positions, but it refused to give up 12,000 square of Indian territory which included Aksai Chin through which the Chinese had built a strategic road linking Sinkiang with Tibet. After the ceasefire, efforts were made to resolve the Sino-Indian dispute. There are various opinions regarding fixing of responsibility for the Indo-China war. India's gravest threat to China stems from Tibet. By giving political asylum to Dalai Lama and to lakhs of Tibetans, it has incurred China's displeasure. Also China had opposed to the membership of India to the security council. China has bolstered Pakistan by supplying nuclear and missile technology. The principle motive behind China's assistance to Pakistan for maintaining military parity with India and behind supplies to India's other neighbours, particularly Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal is to undermine India's

position in its neighbourhood and to prevent India from emerging as a rival Asian power.

India's relation with Pakistan- Partition of Indian subcontinent has failed to solve the basic antipathy between India and Pakistan. The accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was anathema to Pakistan and it tried to infiltrate into Kashmir. The Kashmir issue still remains the bone of contention between the two countries. The Indus Basin water dispute also strained the relations between the two countries. But a compromise was effected by the two government on 19 September 1960, by signing the Indus Water treaty. In spite of the treaty, the basic tension between the two countries was not lessened. In August 1965, the Pakistan Government sent well trained infiltrators into Kashmir Valley hoping to win the local population in its favour. Pakistan adventure misfired. Despite the UN appeal on 2nd September 1965, for a ceasefire, the war carried on both the sides. Both sides agreed for ceasefire on 23rd September 1965, To break the stalemate, Premier Kosygin of the Soviet Union intervened and invited Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Ayub Khan to Tashkent .to work out modalities for a settlement. There was a ceasefire and the armies of both the countries were to be withdrawn by 25 February 1966 to the positions they held prior to 5 August 1965. Apart from the restoration of diplomatic relations, both parties pledged to promote friendly relations between the two countries. There has been numerous infiltrations and proxy wars, in recent years, and tensions still remains large between the two neighbours.

Bangladesh- When the British left the continent in 1947, East Bengal became East Pakistan-a part of Pakistan, but separated from the dominant West Pakistan by a thousand miles, a different language and culture. In 1956 Pakistan introduced a proper constitution in which both wings were

equally represented. The East Pakistan legislature voted unanimously for autonomy. Protests and strike became common with East Bengal. On 25th March 1971, Yahya Khan launched a ruthless military campaign . A large number of people of East Bengal took refuge in the Indian soil. Despite a wave of sympathy for the people of East Bengal, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi followed a cautious policy. On 4th December 1971, Pakistan officially declared war in India. On 6th December India officially recognised Bangladesh as an independent state. Bhutan followed suit. The Indian army led by General J.S Arora in collaboration with the Mukti Bahini swept through East Bengal and reached Dhaka, its capital, and enveloped the Pakistan army. On 16th December India and Bangladesh entered into an agreement to wage war against Pakistan under a joint command . On 16th December Lt General Jagjit Singh Arora, forced the Pakistan army to surrender. On 17 December the Indian Government announced a unilateral ceasefire. The Bangladesh war elevated India to a high position in the country of nation. However the Shimla Pact between India and Pakistan marked a first step towards the normalisation of relations between the two countries. After a long delay Pakistan recognised Bangladesh on 21 February 1974. The Indo-Bangladesh accord was strengthened and envisaged, expanding bilateral economic relations between the two countries.

- In the international sphere, globally, India opposed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 on the ground that it was discriminatory. The domestic crisis in 1966-67, which witnessed the sudden fall of agricultural production as a result of poor monsoons led India to turn to United States for food assistance. But India had to pay a heavy price for such assistance, it had to mellow the criticism of US in the Vietnam war. Also Indo-Soviet relations was disturbed in the wake of the

latter's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. However in January 1980 when Indira Gandhi assumed power, India changed its diplomatic stand, by echoing Soviet's position. Despite the establishment of intimate relations with the Soviet Union, India could not afford to neglect the United States in the arena of power politics.

- India's policy of non-alignment suffered a set back when she got herself involved in the civil war in Sri Lanka. The end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union saw India making a fundamental change in its foreign policy. In the orientation of new policy Rajiv Gandhi tried to improve relations with United States and China. In the 1990's India's dilemma in foreign policy was India's hesitation in condemning Saddam Hussain's invasion of Kuwait, because of its dominance in Arab world and it was a supplier of oil too. Further India later objected to the unwillingness of the nuclear weapon states to put embargo on nuclear weapons. However in May 1998 India, exploded five nuclear devices at Pokhran in Rajasthan. It antagonised the nuclear weapon nations and allies. Many sanctions by US followed after this, also World Bank and IMF announced suspension of credits. Pakistan also responded by carrying out six nuclear explosions. In May 1999, there was Kargil conflict. Tensions further increased between the two countries, and within two months the intruders had been dislodged by India. Later India tested many intermediate range ballistic missile like Agni II. In recent times there has been surgical strikes by India in response to Pakistan's bid to infiltrate near the border. At present too, the relations between the two countries are strained with India condemning Pakistan internationally with sufficient proof for the frequent terrorist attacks here.

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