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Lone Warrior, Regional Actor or Global Player? Statecraft and Indian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century[1]

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Thanks to a combination of high economic growth, steady integration into the international market economy, the emergence of globally competitive multinationals, and a vast enhancement of defence capacities, the international status of India has radically altered over the past decade. At home, India's leaders increasingly speak of their country as a global player, even while recognising the constraints of being a low-income country with poor infrastructure and mass poverty. The regime change in India following the parliamentary elections of May 2014 has quickened the pace of these developments. Five major changes – the centrality given to economic and technological development, the orientation of domestic and foreign policies towards this objective, the emphasis on national power including military power, stress on soft power, and a reduction in self-imposed constraints on actions that other countries may construe as inimical to their interests – have been reported in the press. The paper responds to these issues through an analysis of the evolution of India's foreign and security policy from the early days following independence when Jawaharlal Nehru gave it the stamp of his personality all the way to the multipolar world of the 21st century.

Keywords: Indian foreign policy, Narendra Modi, Jawaharlal Nehru, National Democratic Alliance (NDA), South Asia, multi-polar world

Introduction

Thanks to a combination of high economic growth, steady integration into the international market economy, the emergence of globally competitive multinationals, and a vast enhancement of defence capacities, the international status of India has radically altered over the past decade. At home, India's leaders increasingly speak of their country as a global player, even while recognising the constraints of being a low-income country with poor infrastructure and mass poverty. India's policy

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makers have long nurtured an internationalist ambition, evident in the role that India played as a founding member in major post-war international institutions such as GATT, subsequently the WTO, as an active participant within the United Nations, becoming a major contributor to the UN's Peace Keeping Forces and leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, this did not translate into India taking a leadership position within the region of South Asia. As India continues to seek greater influence especially in international negotiations to secure its interests in the realms of climate, trade, agriculture, energy, the importance of regional association gains added salience. Recent Indian policy towards South Asian countries suggests there has been a revival in regionalist initiatives but that ambivalence – between going alone or skipping over the region to reach out to extra-regional linkages – colour India's diplomatic relations.

The regime change in India following the parliamentary elections of May 2014 has quickened the pace of these developments. With Mr Narendra Modi at the head of the government, India's foreign policy has gained a new look.[2] Five major changes – the centrality given to economic and technological development, the orientation of domestic and foreign policies towards this objective, the emphasis on national power including military power, stress on soft power, and a reduction in self-imposed constraints on actions that other countries may construe as inimical to their interests – have been reported in the press.[3] The tit-for-tat strategy against Pakistan in contrast to the hesitant approach of the predecessors appears to be firmly in its place.[4] Over the past months, the Prime Minister, the ministers of foreign affairs and defence and other stakeholders jointly responsible for defining the trajectory of India's foreign policy have undertaken strategic visits abroad and come up with major statements about policy.

What might be the implications for the general profile of India's foreign policy over the next years? Will India strive to regain its place as the lone warrior for a just and moral world as in the glory days of Jawaharlal Nehru, revert to being the regional player of the Indira-Rajiv vintage, firmly if uneasily ensconced in South Asia, or will

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[2] 'In 100 days at the helm of the Union Government, Mr Modi has introduced a leitmotif, bringing style to the substance of foreign policy. Though most of the announcements made on his international visits were in continuation of those during the visits of previous Prime Ministers, it is Mr Modi's ability to re-energise them with his flourishes that distinguished his tenure'; Suhasini Haider, 'Foreign policy: Modi brings style to substance!', *The Hindu*, 3 September 2014, available at: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/modi-brings-style-to-the-substance-of-foreign-policy/article6374336.ece.

[3] Arvind Virmani, 'Recalibrating India's Foreign Policy', *The Hindu*, 29 December 2014, http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/comment-recalibrating-indias-foreign-policy/article6553306.ece. The author adds that 'Aggression along the border is being countered by bold moves like the decision to construct a McMahon highway in Arunachal Pradesh'.

[4] Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar said the Indian security forces should not hold back when being fired upon and must retaliate with 'double the force'. Underlining that the number of ceasefire violations across the LoC had decreased as compared to last year, Mr. Parrikar, however, noted that the violations had increased across the IB. Asked what had been his direction to the security forces, Parrikar, who was interacting with defence journalists the previous night, said, 'Our (NDA government) response is don't hesitate. React appropriately without holding yourself back', *The Hindu*, Jammu/New Delhi, 31 December 2014.

it seek to become a true global player? Is there any recognition at the higher echelons of India's foreign policy that the role of a global player comes with the rights and duties of this high office? There is a tendency in emerging economies to free-ride on the order-providing-activities of 'the West' but not contribute to these costs. India (like China) has to come to terms with the fact that in order to be a global player, one has to pay the membership fees of this exclusive club by way of contribution to global order, measures to check global warming and enhance the pace of the global market of ideas, goods and services, even at the cost of national self-interest, if necessary.

The paper responds to these issues through an analysis of the evolution of India's foreign and security policy from the early days following independence when Jawaharlal Nehru gave it the stamp of his personality all the way to the multipolar world of the 21st century. The toolkit that underpins this paper considers India's evolving foreign policy in the light of the constellation of political forces – national, regional as well as global – and several 'known unknowns' that affect India's foreign policy.

Domestic and international constraints on India's foreign policy

India's foreign policy can come across as enigmatic to those who are unfamiliar with it. Apparent contradictions abound. The country of apostles of peace like Buddha and Gandhi, India is a member of the nuclear club. However, despite the possession of a deadly stockpile of nuclear warheads and delivery capacity, India does not have an explicit doctrine of who these weapons are aimed against.[5] This lack of clarity over broader goals and strategy underscores the deployment of India's conventional forces and affects the global perception of India's foreign policy as a whole. The uncertainty of India's diplomatic and strategic objectives has not gone unnoticed by experts.[6]

The ambiguity of India's foreign policy leads to questions about India's position on specific issues as well as those of a general character of Indian foreign policy as a whole. Is it, steeped in the 1950s jargon of non-alignment, out of sync with India's growing economic presence in the global arena? Did the spectacular array of South Asian leaders at the inauguration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inauguration

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[5] If a doctrine is understood in terms of a cohesive construct that reduces uncertainty by pulling together clear objectives, an institutional mechanism for implementation and the capacity to match action to policy, then India's 'doctrine of minimum nuclear deterrence' is the epitome of ambiguity. Key statements such as 'India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike, but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail' may be subject to diverse interpretation. See: *Draft record of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine*, http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/Nuclear_doctrine_aug_17 (accessed on 1 June 2005).

[6] S.P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001, p. 2, describes India's foreign policy as Janus-faced, straddling between the single-minded pursuit of self-interests like any other nation-state and being a 'civilisational' state, committed to the ideal of a world community governed by democratic values and institutions. The spirit of Afro-Asian solidarity, voiced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the launching of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bandung in 1954, echoes this apparent duality of India's foreign policy.

signify a regional turn in India's foreign policy? In the same vein, one must ask – did Modi's trips to Japan, the United States and Australia and the establishment of the BRICS bank in rapid succession, and more recently, the invitation to the President of the United States to be India's guest of honour at the Republic Day parade – a highly symbolic act – indicate India's aspiration for a global role? Or is this all a balancing act, signalling different trajectories to different constituencies, while mystical India keeps her own counsel?

Students of international politics of India can get a heuristic grasp of this complex process in terms of a 'tool box' (see Figure 1), which takes into account the input and the processing of this input in the form of a two-level game where the national decision makers seek to identify an option that would be best placed for the domestic opinion and would be acceptable to the international arena.

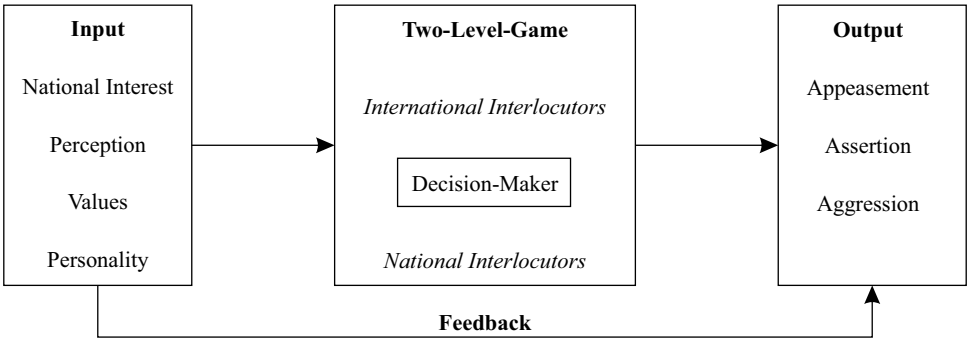

Figure 1. Tool Box: Domestic and International Constraints on Foreign Policy

Source: author's own compilation.

The alternative courses of action typically consist of capitulation to the demands being made on the country, the assertion of national interest in international organisations or war against the adversary. The national leadership considers these alternatives in terms of their implications for domestic and international politics and chooses an option that is saleable at home and acceptable abroad. The preferences of the national decision-makers are influenced by the interests of their own support base and by what are considered national interests, the symbolic value of the issues at stake, deeply held values that are culturally embedded and the personal propensity of leaders to take risks or to be risk-averse. The choices also seek to balance the costs and benefits derived from treaty obligations and the likely gain of the choices made. Whatever its own preference-ordering, the national leadership considers its own preference set in the light of its domestic and international implications and makes a strategic choice

in the light of a cost-benefit-calculation of the two sets of constraints. A feedback-loop connects the outcome of a given foreign policy decision for future sequences of the game.[7] The paper will draw on the tool box to analyse the unfolding of India's foreign policy under successive Prime Ministers from Nehru to the present day.

The evolution of India's foreign policy

Since independence, India's foreign policy has evolved through roughly three different phases. The first phase was the period of classical non-alignment when India sought to chart a middle course between the two rival camps – the Western and the Soviet Blocs – and sought to generate influence by playing a pivotal role between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The policy was jettisoned in the second phase under Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded her as Prime Minister in 1984 following her assassination. Both of them followed a policy that sought to portray India's status as the dominant power of South Asia. The third phase began with the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a multi-polar world. With the nuclear tests of 1998, the phase acquired its distinct character of a mixed strategy – of investment in nuclear weapons, carrying capacity, purchase of conventional weapons – and economic diplomacy, strategic alliances and negotiation with the United States, the EU, China and Pakistan, and international organisations such as the WTO.

Nehru being a Utopian visionary, realist congressman, patrician populist and authoritarian democrat, his foreign policy (1947–1964) presented a unique blend of strategy, vision and tactical errors, ensconced in the context of his understanding of Indian history. The first official declaration of a policy of non-alignment by Nehru took place in 1946. At the same time, similar moves were also made by Burma, Indonesia and Yugoslavia. 1950–1954 was the formative period. The policy of India gradually shifted into that of the pivot between competing sides in the intensification of the Cold War and the break-up of hostilities in Korea (June 1950). The Korean War as such led in turn to further intensification of the Cold War. The Western strategy consisted in containing communism by military pacts. The outbreak of the Korean War put non-alignment policy to a severe test but also offered an opportunity to demonstrate its utility. The policy of the non-aligned countries contributed in some measure to the

[7] See Subrata Mitra, *Politics in India: Structure, Process and Policy*, Delhi: OUP, 2014, p. 271 for an expanded version of this 'tool box'. The tool box draws upon the two dominant modes of thinking in international politics, namely: (Neo-) Realism and (Neo-) Liberalism (going back to the Kantian notion of perpetual peace) as well as constructivism, which seeks to bridge the chasm between the former two by suggesting 'that the structures of human associations are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and, that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature'; Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 1. See also Subrata Mitra and Jivanta Schoettli, 'The New Dynamics of Indian Foreign Policy and its Ambiguities', *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 2007, No. 18, pp. 19–34.

lessening of tension and to creating the necessary atmosphere for peaceful negotiations between the two blocs. Both blocs recognised the value of the peace efforts initiated by non-aligned nations, leading to the emergence of an Afro-Asian group in the UN. Since 1954, the consolidation of this policy took place in terms of its ideology and recognition by the two blocs. The full conceptual implications of the non-aligned policy emerged by the end of the period as a doctrine opposed to military pacts, committed to expanding the zone of peace in the world, as summed up in *Panchasheela* – the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence – consisting of 'mutual respect for other nations', 'territorial integrity and sovereignty', 'non-aggression', 'non-interference in internal affairs', 'equality and mutual benefit', and 'peaceful co-existence'. Later, the principles were incorporated into the ten principles in the final communiqué at the Bandung Conference, announced in a joint statement indicating agreement on the five principles issued by these countries.

The non-alignment movement (NAM) was never meant to be a uniform policy for all its adherents on all occasions. It represented a broad similarity in approach to contemporary international situations, expressed in similar policies on certain questions among these nations. Basically, it implied not aligning oneself permanently with either of the two superpowers and being non-aligned towards one another. It suggested a case by case approach: each time there was a crisis, a series of consultations was undertaken to decide how to vote in the UN, how to act with regard to the conflicting parties, what facilities to accord the aggrieved nation, whether to lend support to a UN intervention and to send troops for peace-keeping. It worked on the basis of a conventional anti-colonialism, which sometimes facilitated concerted action.

Nehru's foreign policy, a joint product of domestic policy and international context, was moderately successful in meeting his main goals: democracy, development, secularism, socialism, and peaceful conflict-resolution. The paradigm of non-alignment had seemed optimal in view of Nehru's commitments at home and abroad. China's friendship, however, came with a price tag spelt out by Mao, which was, first and foremost, the priority of the national interest of China. These were the national security and territorial integrity of China as well as to abolish all unequal treaties, liberate all of China's lost territories, such as Taiwan, Tibet, and Hong Kong, to readjust and legitimise the northern and southern territorial boundaries, to make China economically and militarily strong, to reassert China's historical and cultural greatness. In terms of its foreign policy, China wanted leadership of the newly emerging Afro-Asian and of the socialist bloc, which Nehru's India wanted as well. In retrospect, a conflict between these two emerging Asian giants was inevitable.

Unlike China, which was a revolutionary state led by a new leadership with a new set of revolutionary objectives and seeking a radically different profile in international politics, India was a 'successor state', one to which the outgoing British had transferred power. India was a status-quo power whose main objective was to secure the territorial boundaries that the country inherited from the colonial rulers. To meet this goal, India

was willing to go some way to accommodate China. The slogan *Hindi-Chini-bhai-bhai* ('India and China are brothers') was coined by New Delhi with the connivance of China, basically to accommodate the demands of China over Tibet. Shortly after independence and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, India withdrew its military and trade presence in Lhasa set up by the British, which had seen Tibet as a buffer between the colonial state and China. However, whereas India saw the McMahon Line, the colonial boundary between India and Tibet, as India's international boundary with China, the Chinese did not recognise it and demanded negotiation of the border. They also demanded political solidarity at the international level, privately viewing Nehru as a stooge of neo-imperialism. India, for them, had choices to make between continuing on the path of bourgeois-feudal democracy or a revolutionary break with the past. The radicalisation in India's domestic politics, particularly the growing splits within India's communist movement, opened a window of opportunity for China to export its brand of revolution.

Nehru's perception of India in the world arena was in contrast to that of the Chinese. Nehru wanted India to play a pivotal role between the United States and the Soviet Union, a posture which had yielded an enhanced profile to India in the Korean conflict. India could bolster her economic and political situation through foreign aid from the West and support from the USSR in the Security Council. With regard to China, this required from Nehru's India turning a blind eye to the steady incursion of the Chinese into Aksai Chin. However, when these incursions became public and the Indian Parliament demanded action, Nehru, following the so-called 'Forward Policy' sent Indian troops to occupy isolated posts located in areas that the Chinese claimed as theirs. Nehru's statement in Parliament that the Indian army was under instruction to 'throw the Chinese out' has been depicted by the Chinese and by scholars sympathetic to the Chinese view as evidence of Indian intransigence and aggression.[8]

There were important changes afoot in the diplomatic environment of South Asia. The dominant position that the USSR had achieved in 1966 as the peacemaker between India and Pakistan was challenged by an emergent Pakistan and the new US–China–Pakistan axis. China was challenging the USSR for leadership of the communist world and building an anti-India alliance with Pakistan. The Indian response had been to seek to counter-balance it with the Indo-Soviet treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation of 1971, which guaranteed mutual consultation in the case of attack on either of the two and to take appropriate measures to ensure peace with security of its partners. Indira Gandhi had, in the meantime, following the split of the Congress party in 1969, consolidated her hold over the party in alliance with the Indian Left and won a resounding victory in the 1971 parliamentary election.

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[8] See Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1970 on India's 'forward policy', pp. 173–174, 232.

When India entered the war in East Pakistan to fight the Pakistani army jointly with the Bangladeshi Freedom Fighters, the US–Pakistan–China axis swung into action, putting India under pressure to restrain Bangladeshi freedom fighters while manoeuvring to get the UN to send observers to East Pakistan. At this juncture, the USSR came to India's rescue, blocking the United States and China on the Security Council by applying the veto three times, holding the American Seventh Fleet in check and, according to some accounts, threatening to attack Sinkiang in China. At home, Shastri's policies – the 'nationalisation' of the security issue – were adopted by Indira Gandhi, who, following the military success of India, reaped great electoral dividends in terms of an important victory in the elections to regional assemblies in 1972.

In military terms, the war was a complete victory for India. The Pakistani army in Bangladesh capitulated and a total of 93,000 officers and enlisted men were taken prisoner. However, the political outcomes were not as clear. The 1971 war temporarily established Indian supremacy over South Asia. India signed a 25-year 'Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace' with the People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1972 and appeared poised to enter a period of undisputed Indian hegemony over South Asia. But this was not to be. The main reason for the ambiguous political consequences was that the Simla Agreement, 1972, between India and Pakistan did not paper over the wide gulf that separated the perceptions and policies of the two neighbours. India failed to secure a lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute. The territory on the Western front the India army had brought under its control was transferred back to Pakistan without, as some Indian commentators have alleged, any commitment from Pakistan to giving a semblance of permanence to the Line of Control.

In fact, the rump state of Pakistan regrouped its forces swiftly and maintained its pivotal role between the United States and China, securing support from both. When the United States and the USSR got engaged in Afghanistan, Pakistan became the main beneficiary of massive American support. Indira Gandhi, who got embroiled in domestic politics, followed by declaring a state of emergency ('the Emergency') and then her unceremonious ouster from power, ceased to be a player in regional politics for a while. The assassination of Mujibur Rehman in 1975 removed a source of support for India and swiftly brought Pakistan back in. The smaller neighbours took the initiative to launch the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, which India perceived more as an attempt to set firm limits to any hegemonic ambitions she might have developed as a result of 1971.

The only formal clause of the Simla Agreement (1972) that came across as in the interest of India was a provision for conflicts to be solved bilaterally, without any third party intervention – a tactic that Pakistan had often resorted to in the past against India. Both sides also committed themselves to refraining from the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any act detrimental to maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Line of Control (of 17 December 1971) was to be respected by both sides without prejudice to recognised positions of either side,

neither side was to seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations, both sides were to refrain from the threat or use of force in violation of this line.

In retrospect, the 'Indira Doctrine' appears to have been more rhetoric than reality. The gains of 1971 to India's international profile and her capacity were short-lived. Within two years of signing the Simla Agreement, Pakistan was busy mobilising support within the UN and among Islamic countries to bolster its claims to Kashmir and was engaged in buying arms from the United States. The American tilt towards China counterbalanced the enhanced stature of India as South Asia's dominant force and reduced the significance of the close ties between the regime of Indira Gandhi and the Soviet Union.

The assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 by her two Sikh bodyguards – seeking revenge against the attack on the Golden Temple in the holy city of Amritsar by the Indian army – put to test the survival of the attempt by India to work out a sphere of influence that would bring the whole of South Asia under Indian hegemony. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira's son and successor to the position of Prime Minister was a relatively new face in South Asian politics, and many expected him to bring a new era of peace, cooperation and progress to South Asia. The ascent of Benazir Bhutto to the office of Prime Minister in Pakistan – she was also a relatively youthful leader with modern ways – reinforced these expectations. Anointed with a massive majority in the parliamentary elections of 1985, Rajiv Gandhi set about putting India's political landscape in order. However, the grand initiative did not last beyond a couple of years. By the late 1980s, the regime was tainted by the Bofors scandal. The accusation of financial kickbacks by the Swedish firm to the Congress party were never proved but continued to sap the legitimacy and vitality of Rajiv's leadership. The old dispute with Pakistan on the status of Kashmir resurfaced, leading eventually to the massive mobilisation of the Indian Army known as Brasstacks. Nevertheless, the final blow came with the debacle faced by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) sent to disarm the Tamil Tigers and help Sri Lanka solve the ethnic conflict peacefully.

In 1984, upon taking up office as Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi expressed concern at the deteriorating ethnic situation in Sri Lanka and stated that India did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of that country. However, the steady flow of Tamil refugees into India put pressure on the government for a decisive reaction. The Sri Lankan government agreed to undertake secret talks with the Tamil 'terrorists' (under Indian persuasion), but by early 1987 there was still no progress in negotiations. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka imposed a military blockade of the Jaffna peninsula, and in response, India's air drop of food to Jaffna (violating Sri Lanka's air space) showed Indian determination to play the role of regional peace-maker. The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 specified the conditions needed to establish peace and normalcy in Sri Lanka, which under this agreement was to recognise Tamil as the official language, lift the state of emergency and search for military help from any other country. In return,

India was to ensure that India's territory would not be used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka and to provide military assistance in implementing the accord.

Accordingly, Indian troops (organised as the Indian Peace Keeping Force, IPKF, whose numbers would soon reach 70,000) were airlifted to Sri Lanka. The IPKF was despatched to Sri Lanka under the Indo-Sri Lankan accord (1987) signed by Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka. In retrospect, the move was deeply flawed because there was no consensus in the perception of the mission by the key players. Indian policy was dictated by the double commitment to the peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka – a process to be brokered by India and not by any other extra-regional force; the commitment of the Sri Lankan government was limited to using the IPKF to counterbalance the Tamil Tigers but not necessarily to a genuine federal power-sharing as in India. The Tamil Tigers themselves welcomed the IPKF as a short-term respite from the Sri Lankan army. The Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was not a party to the accord. The Tamil Tigers were only biding their time; once they thought the time was ripe, they turned against the IPKF. Fresh elections in Sri Lanka brought the Sinhala nationalist Government of Premadasa, which was strongly anti-Indian. Upon taking office, Premadasa asked Indians to leave, which India eventually did, having lost 1,100 men. 'The verdict on Rajiv's Sri Lanka accord can only be that it was a dismal failure'.[9]

An analysis of the limits to India's power under Rajiv reveals the structural constraints and policy shortcomings that have been characteristic of Indian foreign policy. There were four main factors at play. In the first place, Indian policy was identified too much with the personality of the Prime Minister and not seen as the cohesive outcome of institutional decision-making. Prime ministerial domination of foreign policy kept it from becoming professional. The Sri Lankan failure can partly be blamed on the lack of co-ordination between government and intelligence agencies (at one time, India had three Sri Lankan policies simultaneously).[10] Second, the doctrine of *Panchasheela* set an ideological limit to national power, offering a blend of liberal goals and enlightened self-interest in principle, but in practice, India's policy managed to combine the worst of both worlds. Third, India's international profile and size produce an asymmetry in her relations with her neighbours. India is too large compared to any given neighbour and yet not big enough to unambiguously dominate Pakistan or the combined diplomatic strength of the neighbours in regional and international

[9] The rivalry among India's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) resulted in three different policies towards Sri Lanka. This significantly lowered India's influence and reduced the overall effectiveness of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). See Nick Nugent, Rajiv Gandhi: Son of a Dynasty (London and New York: Barnes and Noble; 1990, p. 116.

[10] The botched attempt to send Indian paratroopers to 'arrest' Prabhakaran, who had been warned and had escaped, showed that the PMO, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Defence worked at cross-purposes (see footnote 10).

organisations. Finally, the considerations of domestic politics, countervailing forces and democratic restrictions constrained India's foreign policy, denying it cohesion and strength.

India's failure to maintain her 1971 dominance of South Asian politics on a permanent basis has both domestic and international explanations. The replacement of Indira with her inexperienced son and Rajiv's failure to develop a cohesive foreign policy were the main causes of India's decline. Indian foreign policy aimed at maintaining India's status as a non-aligned country, making short-term adjustments under extreme necessity but bouncing back to the lonely posture of the moralist, surrounded by interest-seeking, power-maximising nation-states. In their different ways, Nehru, Indira and Rajiv gave substance to this posture which became increasingly tenuous with time.

India's search for power in a post-Cold War, multi-polar world

The early 1990s introduced three major developments that radically affected the main parameters of Indian foreign policy. The end of the Cold War and the chaotic disintegration of the Soviet Union deprived India's stance of non-alignment of its main *raison d'être*. In a world no longer polarised along the lines of the capitalist Western Bloc and their socialist opponents, non-alignment made little sense. Nor could India rely on Soviet backing in the Security Council, armaments or softer terms of international trade. The second major change that sent India searching for allies in the Western world was the liberalisation of India's economy and its integration with the international market economy, opening up a new, competitive world full of challenges and opportunities for global alliances. Finally, the emergence of Hindu nationalism as a political force in India's domestic politics and in governance brought in long-time criticism of non-alignment as the core theme of Indian foreign policy.

A brief analysis of the key events during the Hindu nationalist-led NDA government (1999–2004) shows that the paradigm shift many expected of India's foreign policy did not quite materialise during Vajpayee's watch. Although it took a Hindu nationalist government to give the decisive push for the actual tests, the nuclear tests of 1998 were the culmination of a programme that had started long back, under Congress governments. More than the nuclear tests, the opening up to Pakistan, symbolised by the 'bus diplomacy', which saw Prime Minister Vajpayee riding a bus into Lahore in February 1999, being personally received by the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and the signing of the Lahore Declaration gave a more surprising twist to the new direction of Indian foreign policy. However, the rebound to the older way of suspicion and hostility came swiftly with the Kargil war, when Indian troops discovered, accidentally as it turned out, the presence of well entrenched Pakistani troops on India's territory in July 1999. The setback that Kargil introduced to India–Pakistan relations took a turn for the worse with the Hindu-Muslim riots in Gujarat, in 2002. The Kargil War, with the potential to spread into a regional nuclear war, inducted American intervention – behind

the scenes to accommodate Indian sensitivity to third party intervention in regional conflicts – and started the process of Indo-US rapprochement, which eventually led to the Indo-US Framework Agreement of 2006.

On the whole, during the watch of the NDA, the prospects of peace between India and Pakistan were at their highest since independence, though as Kargil shows, the future remained fraught with uncertainties. India's nuclear status invited sanctions and gave an opportunity to the trouble-shooters of the NDA to show that India could walk her way around it. The bus-diplomacy proved the point that once in power, extremists can become moderate. The perception of Vajpayee and evaluation of his foreign policy vary, but three legacies stand apart. In the first place, the bomb as symbolic search for power has now become accepted Indian policy. The second was the opening up to Pakistan by a Hindu nationalist government in terms of the bus diplomacy. At that time, it had come across as paradoxical, raising further questions. The third was the resolve to continue with the global economic diplomacy of the previous government.

In retrospect, the Lahore Declaration, unlike the Simla Accord, while still paying obeisance to bilateralism with regard to regional conflict, explicitly recognised Kashmir as an 'issue', recommended a composite integrated dialogue and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and the joint resolve to combat 'terrorism'. Most of these policies have been continued by the UPA government that succeeded the NDA in 2004. The UPA has managed to achieve policy continuity in spite of governmental change, secured a nuclear deal with the United States without having to sign the NPT, and continued the 'composite dialogue' with Pakistan, which has made a real difference in the level of hostility between the two neighbours. With Mr Modi at the helm of affairs, what kind of continuity and change might one expect of Indian foreign policy?

Challenges for Indian foreign policy in the 21st century

Some observers of the Indian scene have interpreted India's recent policies as indicative of her ambitions for great power status. At least in terms of rhetoric, quite discernibly, an attitude to that effect often lurks behind the moral postures and grandstanding by India's leaders when they are asked to comment on global problems. The three goals that Shivshankar Menon identified in 2007, then as the Foreign Secretary of India, can be taken as foundational of Indian foreign policy. These are, first: 'ensuring a peaceful periphery, second: relations with the major powers, and third: issues of the future, namely food security, water, energy and environment'.[11] We analyse below a few constraints on the evolving Indian foreign policy.

[11] Shri Shivshankar Menon, 'The Challenges ahead for India's Foreign Policy', speech by the Indian Foreign Secretary at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 10 April 2007 (https://www.indianembassy.org/archives_details.php?nid=910).

Global and regional security regimes

Under the impact of the new contextual and indigenous developments, India is re-examining its approach to international and regional organisations. Nehru was a great supporter of international peacekeeping and mediation initiatives[12] and a staunch advocate of Asian regional co-operation. It was he who organised the Asian Relations Conference even before India achieved independence. In the new scheme of things, with much of the world clamouring for mediation in Kashmir and India holding out, claiming that Kashmir is an internal problem of India, the Indian position needs to be looked at seriously afresh. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. A proper deal can expedite India's case for a seat on the Security Council. The problem is similar in nature though different in scale with regard to India's security links with her South Asian neighbours. Although the remote sources of India's insecurity often lie within the territories of her neighbours, India has so far refused to have the issues discussed as a common problem of South Asia, preferring, instead, to take things up at the bilateral level. There is a structural problem here that India needs to solve.

It can be argued that a regional body like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could perhaps facilitate India's room to manoeuvre. However, regional co-operation can work only when one of two conditions exists. The first is the presence of a benevolent, dominant regional power that can regulate regional behaviour, or the existence of a set of regional players with roughly similar resource endowments or similar threat perceptions by members of the region from outside the area. The leading role of the United States in the western hemisphere and the successful regional organisations in Europe and Southeast Asia are pointed out as examples of these conditions. Neither condition exists in South Asia.[13] A successful solution to the issue of joint management of security threats at the regional level will reduce India's security burden and increase her support from regional powers at the international arena, but, for reasons to be discussed below, India might not find it easy to move in that direction.

India and her South Asian neighbours

One of the main factors that have blighted India's chances of gaining a seat in the Security Council is the lack of support for the idea in her own neighbourhood. India's neighbours have been constantly wary of her intentions, seeing India alternately as a 'regional bully' or a 'vulnerable giant'. Why do the relationships between India and her 'small' neighbouring states not run smoothly and, instead, continue to be mired by mutual suspicion? What might be short-term and long-term departures from the low level equilibrium trap into which the relations seem to be permanently locked?

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[12] In fact, the Constitution of India mandates co-operation with international bodies, including the United Nations. See: Constitution of India, Article 51.

[13] Cohen, 2001, op. cit., p. 58.

The 'small' neighbours, namely Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, are comparable in terms of population to larger European states. The epithet 'small' is indicative of an approach that is part of India's problem in the region. In addition, there are historic and demographic reasons that contribute to the complexity of the problem. Soft borders, illegal immigration, terrorism, smuggling, drugs, water resources, and the treatment of minorities are among the factors that create pressures on India to intervene in what these countries perceive strictly as their domestic affairs. There are two relatively new positive developments in this regard. First, the revolution in economic policy that has swept over India makes it a far more attractive country for all of its neighbours and the more developed states of Southeast Asia. Indian management expertise, technology, and organisational skills are now widely exported to the rest of Asia, giving substance to the Indian claim that it is a major power. Second, India's democracy is having a great impact on many of its Asian neighbours. For the smaller states of the region, India is something of a model of how to peacefully manage a multi-ethnic, multi-religious state.

The evolution of India's relationship with her South Asian neighbours has gone through several phases. The first phase was that of the classic non-alignment during the tenure of Jawaharlal Nehru as prime minister, 1947–1964. During this phase, India hardly had a policy towards these countries. Despite the first Kashmir war of 1947–1948, India saw no need to develop a South Asian policy, pitching herself, instead, as a world player, engaged in bringing about peace and a just world. The penalty for this was paid by Nehru's successors, as relationships with Pakistan worsened, leading to a war in 1965. After the acrimonious exchanges with Sri Lanka with regard to Indian Tamils rendered stateless in the early 1960s,[14] the Shastri–Sirimavo pact saw the repatriation of two thirds of them to India – a move that planted the seeds of bitterness among the Tamil minority of Sri Lanka – and acted subsequently as a catalyst for Tamil discontent in India with regard to their compatriots across the Palk Strait. Indian victory in the 1971 war against Pakistan and the continuation of the 'Indira Doctrine' contributed to fear and suspicion among India's neighbours and added in no small measure to the founding of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the initiative for which was taken by Bangladesh, with the support of Nepal, as a measure to restrain the hegemonic ambitions of India. India's economic diplomacy in the region following liberalisation of the economy in 1991, the 'Look East Policy'[15] and founding of the BIMSTEC,[16] associate membership of ASEAN and efforts to accommodate the interests of neighbouring countries within the framework of the SAFTA are indicators that there is a realisation of the need for a coherent South and Southeast Asian strategy among Indian policy makers. This new realisation stems from

[14] This resulted from the Ceylon Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948, and the subsequent Sirima–Shastri Pact, which was signed indeed in 1964.

[15] The 'Look East Policy' is a generic name for a cluster of initiatives undertaken by the Government of India to strengthen Indian interests in Southeast and East Asia.

[16] Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

India's need for transport facilities across Pakistan and Bangladesh, for oil pipelines, management of international rivers, a concerted strategy to combat terrorists – many of whom use the neighbouring countries as bases for attacks on India – and need for support in international organisations.

The Ganges Waters Treaty with Bangladesh (1996) shows that a successful model of conflict resolution and a balanced relation with small neighbours is possible. Institutional solutions through intergovernmental negotiations have been found to strike a balance between the Bangladeshi complaint about the unilateral diversion of the waters of the Ganga by India to the detriment of Bangladesh and the Indian perception that Bangladesh over-pitched its water need and exaggerated the effects of reduced flows. Of course, it is not a straightforward issue of conflict over interests, because the tone one takes towards India is itself a contested issue in the domestic politics of Bangladesh – just as in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan – and that makes a negotiated settlement of bilateral conflicts so much more difficult.

In addition to the complex interplay of domestic politics and issues of bi-national relations, the South Asian security dilemma and the India–China–Pakistan strategic triangle is a second factor that deeply affects India's relations with her neighbours – particularly Pakistan. The problem arises from the fact that India needs to strike some form of balance with *both* Pakistan and China. Even if India were to arrive at a balance of force with Pakistan, in view of the fact that Indian strategists must anticipate the need to engage both in action at a given time, India will need to acquire an additional capacity over and above what the India–Pakistan balance of forces minimally requires. From the Pakistani point of view, since there is no guarantee that India would not mobilise the additional units putatively meant to meet the Chinese threat against Pakistan, Pakistan needs to provide for this contingency by acquiring a suitable counter-force. Thus, the probabilities of long-term stability under a balance of force breaks down, which leads to the competitive acquisition of additional military capacity. The problem is not insurmountable. If India's relations with Pakistan, the United States and China could reach some semblance of trust and normalcy, the rapidly spreading Indian market of goods, services and entertainment would do the rest in terms of creating a South Asian common market.

The Kashmir imbroglio is a good example of the cost of the security dilemma to both India and Pakistan, the former because of the steady attrition of the costs of internal war, and the latter because it hinders the potential for the benefits of trade and bi-national cooperation. In consequence, India is still at war in Kashmir, although at a reduced scale compared to the recent past. It is a war of attrition, which India cannot manage to win and Pakistan cannot afford to lose.

India under Modi appears to be aware of this. Speaking during the general debate of the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Narendra Modi aptly remarked, 'A nation's destiny is linked to its neighbourhood. That is why my government has placed the highest priority on advancing friendship and cooperation

with its neighbours'. Indeed, for India, achieving the objective of becoming one of the key powers in Asia depends entirely on India's ability to manage its immediate neighbourhood. India can become a credible power on the global stage only after attaining enduring primacy in its own neighbourhood.[17]

India and the United States: from ambivalence to engagement

The Indo-American rapprochement is a recent development. The Indian public and policy makers alike have problems understanding why the United States, itself a secular state and a democracy, has not been able to support India against Pakistan, and to a limited extent, against China. The fact that the United States has a firm policy of war against terrorism but condones cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan makes many question its real intentions in Asia.

India has remained ambivalent with regard to the United States in the recent past. Thus, during Operation Desert Storm against Iraq, the world was first treated to pictures of a smiling Indian foreign minister in Baghdad, then the grant of refuelling facilities to American aircraft, which were promptly withdrawn when the Indian anti-American lobby got wind of it. Americans, who had their fall-back arrangements anyway and had only needed an Indian show of support for propaganda purposes, were not amused. With regard to economic diplomacy, in WTO negotiations India often sides with China and Brazil against the United States on the issue of agricultural quotas. However, while the United States tacitly accepts the opposition, it finds India's moral grandstanding with regard to American dominance particularly irritating. On the other hand, Indian policy makers remember with particular resentment the long American support to the Pakistani position on Kashmir in the United Nations, the supportive rhetoric of the United States in the 1962 India–China war, which did not translate into actual support on the ground. The deployment of the *USS Enterprise* to the Bay of Bengal at the height of the India–Pakistan war of 1971 remains a reminder of American incomprehension of South Asian realities and insensitivity towards Indian sentiments. The increasingly visible and politically active Indian–American lobby in the United States and accommodation of American interests in the Indian Ocean are two factors that the current government appears to have taken on board with regard to the conceptualisation and implementation of Indian policy.

American perception of India during the Cold War (1947–1989) was influenced by what US policy makers saw as India's irritating show of neutrality and pro-Soviet leanings in real terms. Pakistan was portrayed as the linchpin of American alliances in South/Central/East Asia, and the USSR was seen as an Indian ally. The Indo-China war in 1962 did not in any way turn Indo-US relations in India's favour. The Vietnam War cemented the ideological distance between India and the United States. The events of

[17] See: Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedy, 'Neighbourhood First: Modi's Foreign Policy *Mantra*', *ISAS Brief*, No. 346, 3 October 2014, p. 1.

the 1970s, beginning with the Pakistan-brokered Nixon visit to China, the 'Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship' (1970), the Indo-Pak war of 1971 (where the US intervened in favour of Pakistan at a late stage), and finally, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) reinforced the distance between India and the United States. The end of Soviet rule in Afghanistan led to the US losing interest in South Asia, just as post-liberalisation India, an emerging market for the United States, became an interesting trading partner. Following the re-emergence of the Taliban and the need to counter-balance, India has emerged as a potential ally – a fact that has led to unprecedented levels of American support for India's nuclearisation.

In addition to their growing proximity, Indian diplomacy has increasingly sought to engage the allies of the United States, such as Israel, in strategic partnerships. In some cases, India has been able to engage powers which the United States sees as rivals, such as France, or hostile, such as Iran, in deals in mutual interest. Close on the heels of the approval of the Indo-US Nuclear Agreement, India signed a similar agreement with France. As for the nuclear ambitions of Iran, India has sought to maintain a middle position between herself and the United States, which wants it curbed altogether and has pursued the idea of an oil pipeline that would run overland across Pakistan. Even with China, despite some difference on the boundary issue, mutual trade is booming compared to the past.[18] India has started actively linking trade and diplomacy. The 2006 'Joint Statement Toward Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership' could counterweigh China's influence in the area. On a larger plane, India is active at the international level as well; it is involved with the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialog Forum (IBSA). Finally, the transformation of India's agrarian economy is opening up new vistas of challenge and opportunity, making it possible for her diplomats to work closely with counterparts from other countries.[19]

The 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns'[20] of Indian foreign policy

Despite the opprobrium and ridicule that the statement drew at the time when it was made, Secretary of State Donald Rumfeld's distinction between three levels of

[18] The Nathula trading post, for example, which was closed following the war in 1962, was opened again in 2006.

[19] The fact that India is engaged in hard bargaining with the EU for the export of India's agrarian products and trying to promote India's agri-business might come as a surprise to those who are accustomed to seeing India as a food deficit country with an inefficient agrarian economy. See box 7.4 'EU to request new WTO consultations on Indian wine and spirit taxes' Mitra, *Politics in India*, op.cit., pp. 300–301

[20] 'Known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns' are phrases from a response United States Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld gave to a question at a US Department of Defence news briefing in February 2002 about the lack of evidence linking the government of Iraq with the supply of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups. Rumsfeld stated: '[…] as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. And if

factors that impinge on foreign policy has a particular significance for this paper. The tool box that we have used for the purpose of explaining the foreign policy decisions made in a particular context or for predicting the likely choice of alternatives is based on concrete interests and constituencies in the domestic and international arenas. These are 'known' facts of politics that foreign policy analysis based on the tool box can draw on. However, beyond concrete interest-constituency constellations, there are issues that are still evolving, salient but lacking a specific constituency. The environment – highlighted in the 2007 policy statement of Shivshankar Menon cited above – is one of them. Issues of this genre belong to the 'known unknowns' of foreign policy. Beyond these are interests that are by definition of a kind that are kept off the public agenda because of their very nature. Corporate financial interests and their expectation out of foreign policy belong to this category. Both of these will be briefly illustrated below.

In an important article,[21] Uday Abhaynkar argues that India fights shy of taking a categorical position on global warming in spite of its significance for India's emerging economy – expected to pick up further momentum under the Modi doctrine of 'make in India':

> India is far more vulnerable to global warming than developed countries which are located in cooler temperate zones. So, it needs strong collective international action to limit climate change and global warming more than these countries do. Making the economy more energy-efficient, which will reduce carbon emissions, is in the country's own interest. Even the energy-guzzling U.S. produces four times more GDP per unit carbon dioxide emission than India does – many energy-efficient EU countries produce six times more. If 'Make in India' products require four times as much carbon-based energy, can they be internationally competitive? Moreover, unless India reduces carbon intensity, its rapidly growing imported oil and coal requirements will weigh heavily on external payments, and pollution in cities will worsen.

Abhaynkar argues that there is growing recognition of this problem among experts world-wide, including India. But, based on his evaluation of the unsatisfactory outcome of the recent climate negotiation conference in Lima, India has not developed a coherent strategy to link domestic action with an international agreement. The problem arises from the fact that instead of calibrating 'mitigation' – putting the entire onus of global warming on the developed West, which has been putting carbon emission into the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution – with 'adaptation' of its own technology, India tends to take the line that 'only developed countries should have binding international commitments' which 'does not get much resonance'. What further

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one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones' (Wikipedia).

[21] Uday Abhankar, 'India needs to take the lead', *The Hindu*, 31 December 2014, http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/comment-on-indias-climate-change-agreement-and-energy-efficiency/article6739278.ece.

weakens the case of India is that 'developing countries are often fragmented in these negotiations'.

The interests of corporate India – one of the main growth engines of India as an emerging market – remains outside the ken of mainstream foreign policy analysis. In an important article, Gaurav Dua[22] gives a succinct summary of the year 2014, lauds the positive steps taken by the government to promote India's economy and recommends further steps:

> Year 2014 turned out to be a landmark year for India. Post three decades, a single party gained absolute majority in the general elections, which signalled a change away from the era of coalition politics and towards a more stable political landscape. The new government, though criticised for moving slow on many of its electoral promises, has two important achievements to show within a short span of time. First, the government has taken steps to reenergise the bureaucracy to end policy logjam; and second, India's foreign policy has turned pro-active under the Modi regime and has put India back on global centre-stage. The god has also been kind. The sharp correction in commodities, especially crude oil prices, has dramatically improved the macro environment and eased pressure on India's fiscal health. Thereby, India today can look forward to a credit rating upgrade instead of a real threat. Hopefully, the government would also be able to form political consensus and push through some important policy bills in the Parliament, like amendments to the Land Acquisition Act, Goods & Services Tax, Insurance Bill, among others. Thus, the domestic environment is likely to be strongly supportive for the equity markets. However, the risk emerges from the expected changes in the economic order globally. Unlike the status quo in the past few years, the US economy is recovering and the Federal Reserve is scheduled to commence interest rate hikes in 2015. On the other hand, the rest of the world, including Europe, Japan and China, are still slowing down and would maintain close to zero interest rates and provide stimulus to support their economies. In such an environment, the US dollar could strengthen further and bond yields in the US would also firm up, which would result in flow of some money away from emerging markets (and other risky assets like commodities and bullion) back to the USA government debt in 2015; thereby causing uncertainty and volatility in the global financial markets.

There are concrete expectations from the government, and the steps that corporate India takes to lobby to promote its interests need to be brought into the analysis of foreign policy. The making of India's foreign policy – we learn from two important essays by Manjari Chatterjee Miller[23] – is fragmented, spread over the Prime Minister's Office, the National Security Council and the foreign ministry – with vast areas of

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[22] Gaurav Dua, 'Global sentiments likely to weigh on Indian markets in 2015', in economictimes.com, 1 January 2015.

[23] Manjari Chatterjee Miller, 'Foreign Policy à la Modi', *Foreign Affairs* (Council on Foreign Relations, Vienna), 3 April 2014, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2014-04-03/foreign-policy-la-modi, accessed on 29 December 2014; and by the same author, 'India's Feeble Foreign Policy: A Would-be Great Power Resists Its Own Rise', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92 No. 3, May/June 2013, Vienna School of International

autonomous decision-making left to the discretion of individual ambassadors.[24] This shadowy world of lobbying is possibly the next area of serious fieldwork that this field should attempt to penetrate.

Conclusion

With regard to profiling foreign policy, India, in international comparison, cuts a unique figure. As regards being a lone warrior, although one does not any longer find the Government of India playing the world's (moral) policeman like in the halcyon days of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, India's 'public intellectuals' are still caught in a time warp, taking positions on global issues like the United States, minus its fire power. Nor is India a purely regional actor as in the days of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi (or for that matter, contemporary European powers who act in concert as the EU – a quintessentially regional union). As far as being a global player is concerned, despite the attempt – in concert with the BRICS states to set up financial institutions to rival those sponsored by Western powers – India shies away from the obligations of global powers on global order, environment or the imperatives of globalisation, preferring haughty abstention to active and costly intervention. The closest one can come to the profile of India is to find her straddling all three categories,[25] with, perhaps, a preference towards the third category with a surreptitious imitation of arch rival China, under the Modi regime.

In the course of the six eventful decades since independence analysed in this article, Indian diplomacy has changed greatly in its tone and content. The shrill undertone of morality has now been replaced by a new pragmatism that keeps India's foreign policy nuclear, internationally engaged and non-aligned, all the same. Compared to the sharp moral reactions to world events, the general tone today is more nuanced. Rather than standing alone on issues that affect both long-held principles and material interests of the country, such as the failed attempts by the King of Nepal to scuttle the democratic unfolding of the country, India has chosen to act in concert with the UK and the United States. The country now refrains from direct interference while still making it clear that it stood by the democratic transition. Further, the approach to

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Studies, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2013-04-03/indias-feeble-foreign-policy, accessed on 29 December 2014

[24] 'As I found through a series of interviews with senior officials in the Indian government many of whom requested anonymity […] New Delhi's foreign policy decisions are often highly individualistic […] the province of senior officials responsible for particular policy areas, not strategic planners at the top'. Manjari Chatterjee Miller, 'India's feeble foreign policy', op.cit.

[25] 'At the global level we must devise instrumentalities to deal with imbalances built into the functioning of the international political and economic order. We should aim to expand the constituency that supports the process of globalisation. […] To meet these challenges and constraints, we must respond in a manner worthy of the Bandung spirit. Just as that historic meeting redefined the agenda for its time, we must do so once again here today.' Manmohan Singh *Bandung Address, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Non-alignment conference, 2004*, speech delivered on 23 April 2005.

international relations has become more complex, capable of conducting diplomatic business in spite of existing conflicts as one notices in the case of the Indo-Chinese trade flourishing despite differences over territory and the Chinese reservations about the Indo-US nuclear framework agreement and India's growing nuclear arsenal. In the third place, within the general norms of the five principles of co-existence, Indian diplomats have been busy negotiating the terms of trade in international organisations such as the WTO, often making alliances with like-minded countries. However, the apparently anti-Western rhetoric that sometimes characterises these dealings has not affected the support that India has got from the United States in difficult negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Administration or with the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

These significant changes in India's diplomacy have come about as a result of the contributions of successive generations of leaders, who have added their innate ideas and perceptions of national interest to the cumulating fund of Indian diplomacy. The main framework of non-alignment has remained, but the contents have been reshuffled, repacked, enriched and occasionally jettisoned by Nehru's successors. Their strategic moves have been influenced by the joint consideration of their perception of choices open to them in the international arena and the advantages that the given choice could deliver in domestic politics. Just as the decision of Indira Gandhi to intervene in Pakistan's internal conflict in 1971 at the risk of international opprobrium, particularly from the United States and its allies, generated great enthusiasm within India, so did the move of Atal Bihari Vajpayee to authorise the nuclear tests and the subsequent bus diplomacy with Pakistan. The alacrity with which the UPA government has pursued the nuclear deal and has attempted to balance the sentiments of articulate Hindu opinion in Jammu with the interest of the Kashmir Valley in direct trade with Pakistan across the Line of Control indicate the continuation of engagement and affirmation of national interest.

Analysed critically, the statement by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at the Asian-African Conference,[26] evocative of the heady days of the Bandung spirit not seen since the 1950s euphoria of Panchasheela and Afro-Asian solidarity, revealed an important and potentially enduring step in the evolution of Indian foreign policy. Once one gets past the familiar litany, one finds a fine balance of national self-interest and idealism. The idea of Afro-Asian solidarity can be pragmatically adapted to the imperatives of our times. The difference in tone and content of the new Panchasheela from the old was remarkable. Whereas its invocation during the earlier phases started, continued and ended with idealistic evocations of Afro-Asian solidarity and abstract goals of peace, an instrumental approach to abstract goals triumphed in Panchasheela redux. India needs to come up with a series of specific measures that should be at the top of the international agenda. These measures should include the demands to phase

[26] Manmohan Singh, speech delivered on 23 April 2005, Bandung Address, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Conference, 2004. See: Mitra, *Politics in India*, op.cit., p. 264

out trade-distorting agricultural subsidies in developed countries and to remove barriers to agricultural exports from developing countries; lowering of tariff barriers to other exports; balancing the protection of the environment with the development aspirations of the developing nations; urgent measures to generate additional financial resources for development especially for the least developed countries and the highly indebted poor countries. India has effectively couched the country's long standing goal of a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations with the right to veto under the rhetoric of the 'democratisation' of the United Nations and its specialised agencies. Played properly, the year 2015 can become a turnaround year for India's foreign policy to put on record its dexterity in conflating both roles – champion of the have-nots and an emerging 'have'.[27]

As for India's relatively small room to manoeuvre in foreign policy-making in cross-national comparison, one can sympathise with the mandarins of the South Bloc, the PMO or for that matter with Mr Modi himself. One can imagine them thinking wistfully and, perhaps, with a touch of envy, how much comparatively unfettered the policy makers of Brazil, Indonesia, Australia or Canada are – not to mention the arch-competitor China – when they sit down to negotiate complex international regimes, without a constant vigil on all fronts as India has to.[28] This unique entanglement of multiple factors is likely to keep India on the cautious path of tiny, measured steps, despite the aspirations of quick and comprehensive change that the current leadership projects. India-watchers – the habitual India-pessimists just as the neophyte India-optimists – can ignore this hard truth only at their peril.

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[27] W.P.S. Sidhu, 'India's year of working multilateralism. Five summits in 2015', *Live Mint*, 7 January 2015. Sidhu suggests that the five major international events scheduled this year 'have the potential to assist India attain its ambitions but, if not managed deftly, could equally stymie them'.

[28] India's relatively small diplomatic corps must constantly pay attention to the manoeuvres of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and China, even as they negotiate binding international treaties like that of climate change, which seriously limits India's capacity to play a leadership role. See: Uday Abhayankar, 'India needs to take the lead', *The Hindu*, 31 December 2014.