MULTILATERALISM AND INDIAN DIPLOMACY
Multilateralism encompassing both regional and global cooperation constitutes the most perceptible trend of the post-Second World War international relations. Led by the leading integrational model of EU, Arab League, LAFTA, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, AU, APEC, Gulf Council, ASEAN, ECOWAS, ASEAN+3 and BIMST-EC are other examples of regional integration in the contemporary global politics. For effectively and properly dealing with the challenges of national security, Indian as a emerging regional power, has to mandatorily play an effective role in the global institutions of international governance. This implies India’s political and economic engagement with the world holistically, leveraging its vast market, human resource potential, scientific and technological infrastructure alongwith defence industrialization programmes. All these can provide new stimulus for this relevant and meaningful engagement with the world today.

Multilateralism both at the global and the regional level is in a state of flux. Many UN institutions are in crisis. The role of informal non-official communities and regimes in fleshing out the norms of global governance is ascending. The impact of informal institutions on formal institutions is also increasing. India needs to recognize that much of the today’s global norm-setting is done outside formal institutions by informal network of professionals. Hence, India should broaden its options so that its influence increases around the world. In this introductory background, this chapter attempts to take a holistic view of the problems and challenges confronting India in South-Asia (a geo-political reality, but last integrated for regionalization) and world at large. After evaluating India’s performance at various multilateral forums, the chapter then analyses diplomatic skills, taking stock of deadlocks and negotiations in order to explore what India could and should do to strengthen and smoothen the
working of its multilateral interactions in future to make it a viable instrument of national security where and when it is most urgently needed.

**South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC):**

From the time of its independence India has always been keenly and deeply committed to the idea of regional cooperation for the solution of common problems in various politico-economic and cultural fields. Nehru stressed the unity and solidarity of Asia repeatedly in his speeches and writings and was quite eloquent about India’s responsibility rather India’s “destiny” to play an active role in this respect because of its geographical and historical compulsions. He observed that “when we talk of Asia, remember that India, not because of any ambition of hers, but because of the force of circumstances, because of geography, because of history and because of many other things, inevitably has to play a very important part in Asia… Even if you think in teams of regional organizations in Asia…. You have to keep in touch with the other regions you may in mind, the importance of India cannot be ignored.”

Hence he called Asian Relations Conference (ARC) in New Delhi where he emphasized the fact that countries of Asia have to meet together on an equal basis in a common task and endeavour and observe that India should play her part in this new phase of Asian Development. However the ARC did not produce any concrete results and the delegates from some countries express their apprehension about brown domination. Nehru made some more attempts to forging unity among Asian countries without any worthwhile achievements. However, though he clearly emphasized the importance Asian Unity, he hardly made any specific mention of Asia as such. Obviously, South Asia was only a part of his larger perspective of Asian affairs sharing more or less similar problems.
but distinct from the region of the world. Moreover, during Nehurvian era, India was not materially in a position to take initiative for regional cooperation in a big way due to its own domestic problems.

In broader perspective, a major reason rooted in the South Asian regional reality promoted the adoption of an outward thrust by the countries of region in their economic linkages. Following the turbulent process leading to their freedom from the colonial rule after the Second World War, these countries could not find or perhaps were not interested in seeking common ground for cooperation among themselves, instead they looked to the former colonial power and developed countries for assistance, advice and trade. Economic cooperation, including trade among the South Asian countries has, since 1947, remained extremely limited.

Ultimately when the initiative for the formation of SAARC came from Bangladesh towards the end of 1970s, India neither took it seriously nor contributed much for transforming into a reality. However, India apprehended that a South Asian regional grouping could possibly become a cover for the building of an anti-soviet and pro-US South Asian front which India did not consider suitable for her regional and strategic interests. Secondly being a non-aligned state, India also feared that this was a move to isolate India. So, accepting the idea half-heatedly in principle, India stressed that bilateral contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations and decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity. Pakistan was not very much serious on this proposal because of its own calculations of bipolar politics in Cold War era. Other South Asian states feared being exploited by a principal partner-India. Zia-ur-Rahman’s proposal of May 1980 explicitly highlighted this fear when he said: “Any proposal for economic cooperation must consequently be formulated with the greatest care in order to ensure that the weak are not exploited and the strong do not dominate.” SAARC was at last established
in 1985 at Dhaka where all the seven countries of South-Asia: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri-Lanka and Maldives signed the charter. Incidentally, SAARC which is only about 25 years old happens to be the youngest regional organization. Besides, the Summit meeting which constitute the apex of the institutional framework, there is a council of foreign ministers, a standing committee comprising of the foreign secretaries and also a member of technical committees. Though the span of 25 years for an organization’s life is not long enough to judge its success, but the trends and actual performance indicate a degree of pessimism and scepticism.

The main factors which have obstructed the growth of regional cooperation in South-Asia, can be summarized as colonial legacies, problems of national integration, disparities in the level of economic growth, geographical diversities, size, population and power potential and the role of external powers. The most important factor in this respect has been the Indo-centric nature of this region which means that India is in the center of the region, sharing common borders with all the six countries while none of them above border with each-other. This has implications in terms of cultural identities, economic patterns and historical experiences. Conversely, there is a bit of India in every country of South-Asia, as against this there is hardly anything of significance which is common between them. The second characteristic of South-Asia has been its unbalanced and asymmetrical power structure. As a result of this South India has become “India-Centred” and India has often been perceived as a big brother bullying her smaller neighbours.

Undoubtedly the root cause of tension and conflict in South-Asia has been the colonial policy and the partition of India on religious bases into two independent nations. This has created a series of problems in the subcontinent. Left behind post-colonial ambiguous and undemarcated
boundaries resulted in several territorial disputes between the countries of this region. Further resultant of British colonial policy in almost every country, there are ethnic minorities which have their origin in another country of the region. Due to this in South-Asia, “domestic ethno political troubles and conflicts tend to spill over to inter-state relations…. The domestic ethno-political configurations hold the key to inter-state tensions and conflicts. These configurations are tissues made of linguistic, cultural and religious fibers, inseparable from one another.”  

These interstate disputes had adverse impact on regional cooperation in South-Asia. Sadly the position of South-Asia has been that of a hostage of political troubles among its member countries. The first such situation occurred when Sri Lankan President Premadasa threatened to boycott the summit scheduled to be held in 1990 in Maldives, unless the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) withdrew from Sri-Lanka in 1989. Premdasa did not attend the meet even when the IPKF withdrew from Sri-Lanka. Thus the SAARC process had a severe jolt as a result of Indo-Sri Lankan relation. The second crisis followed as a result of India’s reaction and refusal to attend next submit meeting in 1991 because India was upset at Premdrsa’s attempt to isolate her and raise bi-lateral issues in SAARC forum. Indo-Bangladesh relations too had their share. The summit had to be postponed in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid episode of 1992 because India made it clear that the atmosphere was not right for such conference. Indo-Pak relations perhaps have most serious challenge for SAARC meeting and have constituted the achilles heel of regional cooperation South Asia. Pakistan had lobbied at summits and the ministerial meetings that SAARC should take bilateral issues too and it also suggested amendment in the character of this purpose. Pakistan has been consistently harping on its stand that no worth while progress should be expected until India resolved the “core problem” of Kashmir to her satisfaction. India too has strongly opposed these attempts.
Indo-Pak relations have cast a permanent shadow over the full utilization of SAARC potential for regional cooperation as was evident from the fact that the two summits XI and XII became victim of this syndrome in the wake of the Kargil conflict and Pakistan’s continued support to cross-border terrorism. But despite some hiccups and roadblocks, SAARC has travelled a long way and has to some extent “belied the scepticism of its critics and has succeeded in evolving its own rhythm in forging a distinct regional identity.” There has been steady increase in the activities which indicate an overall progress in regional cooperation. The SAARC Secretariat at Katmandu is playing an active role in coordinating its activities. The Integrated Programme of Action, which enumerates 12 areas of cooperation ranging from agriculture, environment to women’s development is fully in place. A wide range of activities has been taken in nearly all areas of cooperation. Establishment of a three window South Asian Development Fund in June 1996 is a remarkable achievement of SAARC for accelerating the implementation of approved projects and programme of IPA. SAARC Audio-Visual programme is also fully operational and SAARC exchange of fellowships is also working well. SAARC has focussed its attention from various areas of common concern like eradication of poverty, girl child, youth, literacy, shelter etc. It has also evolved stands on international forms like UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and World Food Summit in 1996. Landmark achievement of SAARC have been the signing of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangements), establishment of SAARC Food Security Reserves, Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Convention on Separation of Terrorism and Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for Prostitution in member-states.
SAPTA, the most important achievement of SAARC which became operational in 1995 aims step by step liberalization of trade in the region through negotiation for exchange of trade concessions on tariff and para-tariff leading to the establishment of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). But the progress in this direction is modest (See Appendix-IV).

**India’s Contribution and Challenges :**

India has been taking active interests in the activities of SAARC since its inception. India’s contribution in terms of percentage was the highest i.e. 32% of the total- the rest shared by the other six : 23% by Pakistan and Bangladesh, Nepal share 11% and Bhutan and Maldives share 5% each.\(^1\) Till 1988 India’s contribution amounted to $ 118873.80. India also contributed maximum amount i.e. 15,32,200 metric tonnes of foodgrains to SAARC Food Reserves.\(^1\) India’s imports and export from SAARC has also increased significantly during the first decade of its existence. Percentage of share of SAARC in India’s total exports showed an increase while imports remained low. This gap between import and export has to be removed (See Appendix-VI).

In order to promote economic cooperation, India has taken a number of initiatives. It has doubled the ceiling for overseas investment in SAARC that is, $30 million for promotion of business opportunities. India has made efforts on its part to speed up momentum towards SAFTA. It had proposed a separate SAFTA treaty which was signed in Islamabad at XII Summit in 2004. The agreement ‘entered into Force’ on January 1, 2004. Undoubtedly India’s role in transition form SAPTA to SAFTA has been significant. Under the first two round of SAFTA negations, India offered maximum concessions covering 1000 tariff lines. It also offered the maximum number of traffic cuts with special concessions to the least developed countries.\(^1\) In the third round of negotiations held in 1998, the
number of concessions increased to 3456 tariff lines. More than half concessions were given by India. India already has free trade agreements with Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. These countries also had Preferential Trade Agreement with India.\textsuperscript{13}

An important aspect on Indian advocacy of South Asian cooperation is the Gujral Doctrine (forwarded by I.K. Gujral, the then External Affairs Minister of India). This doctrine comprises five principles for regional cooperation. It covers economic cooperation, cooperative security and non-interference and respect for each other’s sovereignty addresses India’s bilateral relations. These principles are:

i. With neighbours like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates what it can be good faith and trust;

ii. No South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region;

iii. No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another;

iv. All South Asian countries must respect each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; and

v. They should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations.

The adoption of this doctrine produced very tangible positive results. Agreement on Ganga water sharing was signed within the first three months in 1997 with Bangladesh; Chackma refuge resettlement process also commenced with the country. Mahakali River Agreement with Nepal was another achievement. It opened up the possibility of other rivers for joint economic exploitation. Direct land route for Nepal to
Bangladesh has become operational. Bhutan agreed to augment Ganga waters from its Sankosh River.

Although, above data indicates that India has been keenly enthusiastic about South Asian cooperation but a critical analysis its policy practice is reflected differently. India seems to be a reluctant power even though it is a regional power in economic, political and military terms. It continues to behave as a \textit{status quo} power in a dilemma over whether it should take the lead or not.

India’s Former Foreign Secretary touched upon SAARC in his speech indicating that there was more to it than country specific issues such as Nepal situation or Bangladesh security situation.\textsuperscript{14} Pointedly referring he explained, “Our approach to SAARC was the only one logically sustainable-we set aside our differing political and security perceptions for the time being and focus attention on economic cooperation. Our expectation was that the very dynamic of establishing cross-border linkages, drawing upon the complementarities that existed among different parts of our region would eventually help us overcome the mutual distrust and suspicion which prevents us from evolving a shared security perception”.\textsuperscript{15} But the record of SAARC founded in 1985, he said, has been “hardly inspiring”. The fact is that “SAARC is largely a consultative body, which has shied away from undertaking even a single collaborative project in its 20 years of existence.”\textsuperscript{16}

While the above pronouncements might not be an official statement of policy, it gave an inkling into the official Indian foreign policy perceptions. It appears that in official thinking, in future SAARC might be considered as a forum less relevant to India. A strong section of foreign policy think-tanks have also highlighted the growing irrelevance of SAARC to India as it is poised to grow as a strong global economic
player. There are very good reasons to draw such a conclusion. The growing India-ASEAN economic linkages, improved bilateral India-Myanmar and India-Thai relations as a result of India’s Look East Policy, and the continued stagnation in India’s relation with both Pakistan and Bangladesh are some of these. India’s problems in handling Bangladesh’s fixation with Indian hegemony and Pakistan’s six decade old Kashmir’s preoccupation and its undisguised sponsorship of anti Indian terrorism for such a long time has strengthened the spiralling doubts about the future of SAARC as a viable entity meaning big business. As the global trends confirm that almost all successful associations-ASEAN, European Union and Organisation of African States (OAS) became effective only when they had security as the first consideration, because nations respond to economic links only when they feel secure with each-other.

Nevertheless, SAARC countries have a direct bearing on our national security. In the uni-polar world, with the US flexing its muscles too often, regional grouping of nations has become an important concept in the balance of power equations for meeting out exigencies of strategic security. In the South Asian subcontinent, there are three aspects of strategic security very relevant to India. These three-Territorial security and Integrity, Economic Security, Energy Security- are core considerations. If we dream of India as major global power in 2020, in all these three aspects, a strong and vibrant SAARC can make a true volume addition. Considering territorial integrity in the classical sense, all the countries of SAARC may be viewed as providing depth to India’s strategic defence with member nations becoming valuable potential vanguards of security or dangerous launch-pads offensive. Any collective body, which aims at better relation among these countries, would automatically strengthen their sense of security in their relations with India, the lynchpin of the collective body.
If India expects to be liked by neighbours at all times on all issues it may never happen. But as in any mature multilateral relationship, there is a need for mutual space between the nation. To create this space India has to demonstrate both its sensitively to its national security as well as its readiness to respond to sensitivity of hypersensitive countries like Bangladesh. But we need to demonstrate what we say on two aspects. These are –

- We are sensitive to our security considerations without impinging upon the national sovereignty of our neighbours.

- And the neighbours can prosper alongwith India and have an share in India’s economic pie.\textsuperscript{17}

Our records of translating the platitudes and clichés that crowd our policy statements to meaningful actions is dismal. We have, as a nation for decades neglected responding to the security and economic needs of the country, which are closely connected with our relation with our neighbours. Our response to crisis had been only kneejerk at best. A sensitive and festering issue affecting the existence like national identity and illegal migration in the North-East had been used as a part of the political power gain. It has been handled in a slapdash fashion in fits and starts. Naxalite terrorism which is affecting 152 districts in 12 states is still treated as a law and order issue within the responsibility of the state government. This is one reason for the poor credibility India enjoys.

In the foreign policy pronouncements the needs for co-relation between words and action is more pertinent. If we can do that, SAARC will become a productive association of nations, if we cannot do so we can concentrate only on bilateralism and forget about SAARC as a viable entity. As has been said, “In a word, we are prepared to make our neighbours full stakeholders in India’s economic destiny and, through such
cooperation, in creating a truly vibrant and globally competitive South Asian Economic Community”. So Delhi has a challenge as to convince our neighbours that “India is an opportunity, not a threat, that far from being besieged by India, they have a vast, productive hinterland that would give their economies far greater opportunities for growth than if they were to rely on their domestic markets alone”.18

**Non Aligned Movement (NAM) :**

Non- Aligned Movement (NAM) that originated in the context of the cold war era wherein a few leaders from the developing world, concerned over being drawn into the power quagmire between West and the Eastern Bloc called for a movement where countries would not have to be aligned to either side. In its first maiden meeting in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955, several Afro-Asian countries from the Third World, who had nascently gained from the colonial powers since the end of the Second World War, discussed colonialism and influence of the West as common concerns.

India and NAM are interrelated from its very, reception. The term ‘Non-Alignment’ was coined by Jawaharlal Nehru in Colombo, Sri Lanka and the concept of NAM emerged through a gradual process. Nehru took the initiative to convene The Asian Relations Conference (ARC) in New Delhi from March 22 to April 2, 1947 under the auspices of Indian Council of World Affairs when India was still a British colony. In his address to the Conference attended by representatives of 30 countries including those of Asian Republics of the erstwhile USSR, Nehru issued clarion call to assert the rights of the Asian People. This first attempt to build an Asian solidarity was later extended to African Asian solidarity in Bandung Conference. This was the first gathering of its kind which pledged to work together for the colonial liberation, peace, cultural and
economic cooperation. The Bandung Conference enunciated Ten Principles (an elaboration of Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence announced by Nehru and Chou earlier) of peaceful co-existence of different social systems, respect for independence and sovereignty of nations, Non-interference in the internal affairs of the nations, cooperation with all nations on equal footing and preservation of world peace, disarmament and banning of nuclear weapons being the major issues.

Bandung to Belgrade (the first NAM Conference) was, therefore a logical process to project an alternative to Cold War policy and assertion of newly independent of their independent and sovereign rights.

From the Indian viewpoint, long before NAM was born or even conceived of, Nehru as the leader of interim Government of India said, “We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led, in the past, world wars and which may again lead to disasters even on a vaster scale…. We shall take full part in international conferences as a free nation with our own policy and not as a satellite of another nation.”

It is interesting to note that Non-Aligned Community is not a homogeneous group among the members of NAM. There are socialist countries, countries with one-party system, multi-party system, countries of parliamentary system of Western types and even monarchy. In some countries genuine democracies does not exist. Yet when all of them assemble at Non-Aligned Summit over ministerial meetings, they adopt political and economic declarations which are radical enough. How far all of them adhere to them is another matter.

India played a very significant role as the most active and dynamic leader of the NAM. But unfortunately, India does not have that prestige today and sometimes it seems that NAM is a forgotten word in the
dictionary of politics. The Government of India under the leadership of Nehru, did a remarkable job to support the struggle of Indonesian people. India sent food, clothes and arms to Jakarta by plane to defy the Dutch blockade. The radio-station of India was virtually functioning as the official broadcasting center of the Republican Government of Indonesia. After the seizure of Joggakarta (now Jakarta), Nehru called an Asian Conference in New Delhi to mobilize support for Indonesian Independence. In the meantime Government of India refused transit rights to the Dutch ships and planes through India. This together with many instances of support to other movements and just causes has been the glorious tradition of our country’s foreign policy, when India was not strong at that time. But today when we are much stronger with a number of highly qualified scientists and technocrats, the situations is not that glorious. For example, XIII Kuala Lumpur Non-Aligned Summit held between 24-26 of February 2003 which was held in the highly critical context of the threat of US war against Iraq became more of a routine and ritualistic summit. Though the main proposed agenda of the summit was the ‘Revitalization of the Movement in the Post-Cold War Era’. But then it has been essentially a repetition of all such conferences since the end of the Cold War at the close of the 1980s beginning with the Jakarta Conference in 1992, and seemingly this was obviously to counter Western propaganda that in the post-Cold War period Non-Alignment has ceased to be relevant and valid-a kind of reassertion of NAM’s own self-confidence in itself. This was actually unnecessary since Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao has said before in a speech in Tokyo in June 1992 : “The pursuit of nonaligned foreign policy is even more relevant today than even before. Nonalignment basically consists of the espousal of the right of nations to independence and development. Whether there is one bloc or more at a given moment, the urge for a nonaligned country would continue to be, to maintain its independence to take decisions according to its light,
not tagging along itself in advance to other”. He had then added, the “chimera of hegemonism must not be pursued”.

Another issue which NAM was unable to decide, especially in the context of U.S./U.K. would in effect be attacking Iraq with or without the backing of the United Nations and of course Pakistan being represented by Gen. Pervez Musharraf with only the Kashmir question in the mind introducing the new concept of conflict resolution along with other naïve and immature ideas expressed in the address of the Chairman PM Mahathir Mohammed which tried to mix up the NAM and the OIC approaches. As far as the issue of national security is concerned, part of the problems is not only a great diversity of national interests of NAM, but also the difficulty of formulating an agreeable consensus covering all the members. On the other hand, is the impossibility of evolving an alternative procedure acceptable to NAM.

One side reflection of India’s role in Kuala Lumpur : India should have as a pioneer of Non-Alignment, taking a leading role against the impending U.S./U.K. threat of Iraq but India did not; by merely denouncing the threat of war by a superpower, we should have like old European nations, (France, Germany, Russia) been against the war for peaceful settlements is simply not enough. We should have, particularly objected to ‘regime change’ in Iraq as a non-aligned state which is plainly outrageous, with many long-term consequences to many non-aligned states too.

Afterwards in his speech on March 12, 2003 in the Parliament, PM Vajpayee forcefully reaffirmed the NAM’s statement that it is opposed to a unilateral use of force (without saying who is doing it), but without the approval of the UN. He thought that it will not happen because if it does, it will undermine the UN and also create a grave crisis. More importantly, he
affirmed if a change (of regime) has to come about, it should be done by
the people of the country. No outside power has the right to do that.
However he evaded a straight answer to a hypothetical question whether
India would allow its facilities to be used in the event.

Under such circumstances the very rationale of NAM’s existence
has come into question. Many member states have argued against
disbanding the movement. They argued that the world has become more
hierarchical and inequitious and so it has become irrelevant and has
outlived its utility. But India’s stand on this context has been somewhat
different. India argues that these very reasons should be taken as impetus
for an attempt to redefine NAM, shifting its focus to tackling globalization,
fairer trade relation with the West, investment, debt, AIDS and
international crime. It should built itself as a forum for its members to
formulate policies and positions that they could seek to implement at the
UN and other international forums. India has been trying to utilize NAM to
forge a consensus and put greater focus on the issue of restructuring the
World Economic Order, besides countering neo-colonialism. However,
building consensus is no easy task in this movement, what to talk about
taking definitive action vis-à-vis particular international issues, with a
movement at best prefering to assert its criticism or support rather than
pass hard-lined resolutions, or take stern actions.

India with South-East Asia and the Far East:

India increasing engagement with Southeast Asian economics
has been an important factor, which may lead to reduced relevance of
SARRC as a regional trade association. Since India’s ‘Look East Policy’,
the total trade between India and ASEAN countries doubled. It emerged as
the third largest foreign investor in India offer the US and EU-Today
ASEAN has as much to offer, perhaps more to India as India has to offer to
ASEAN, and the relationship is seen mutually beneficial in largely economic terms.

The decade of the 1990s saw important changes occurring in India’s diplomatic philosophy. Economic supremacy based on modern liberal market system and pragmatic ideas were accorded a high value. India, thus, initiated a ‘Look East Policy’ to revitalize the civilizational and economic links with the rest of Asia, not only with ASEAN but also the China, Japan and South Korea in 1991. East Asia including Japan, China, South Korea and ASEAN is today India’s largest trading partner ahead of EU and the US. Moreover, given India’s good industrial and technological base, increasingly ASEAN business are undertaking FDI in India in crucial infrastructure sector related to roads, highways, telecommunication, ports and tourism.

However, rectifying the initially narrow width of the ‘Look East Policy’ essentially meaning Indo-ASEAN engagement, with the turn of the century, this policy became more comprehensive in its coverage both territorially in its ‘extended highbourhood’ to include not only ASEAN but also Australia and New Zealand and focused more intensively on expanding trade, mobilizing investments and sourcing energy, from the region. This is called first phase of the ‘Look East Policy’ which focused on developing commercial relations and institutional links with Asia.

In the second phase of the ‘Look East Policy’, India is aiming at political partnership, physical connectivity through road and rail links, free trade agreements and defence cooperation. Apart from it, BISTEC (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation) was formed in June 1997 and expanded to include Myanmar and became known as BIMSTEC. With the inclusion of Nepal and Bhutan in January
2004 the full name was changed to Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BBIMSTEC).

The sub-regional grouping, the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) was formed on 10 November 2000 in Vietnam. The MCC consists of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and India. Though close economic cooperation with Maekong countries is the main rationale behind this grouping, India also expects to strengthen its connectivity and influence. According to some analysts, BIMSTEC can acquire a profile larger than SAARC if its acts as a bridge between the more inward-oriented South Asia and more outward-oriented South-East and East-Asia.

Indian diplomats view the ‘Look East Policy’ as filling the gap created by failure of SAARC to develop into a meaningful regional organization. India does not want to pit BIMSTEC against SAARC. Its ready to more wherever it can on the issue of regional economic integration with Pakistan if possible and without if necessary, to find a successful alternative of SAARC. In fact, India aims to increase Asian regional trade linkages with Latin American and Middle-Eastern countries as indicated by the Initiatives to form similar agreements with the MERCOSUR grouping, GCC, etc. India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) have been discussing a trilateral free trade agreement which would also involve South Asian Custom Union and MERCOSUR.

With India planning to expand bilateral trade and investment linkages through economic partnership and preferential trade agreements with a number of Asian countries, the pace of India’s trade interaction with rest of Asia also in commercial services is likely to expand is the near future. The rest of Asia has an important stake in India’s successful adjustment to globalization and prosperity and provide global risk diversification. This does not necessarily mean that BIMSTEC and other
regional groups stand in opposition to SAARC. Infact, the Bay of Bengal community could complement the efforts at SAARC to promote a free trade area in South Asia.

**G–20:**

The G–20 (Group of 20), also variously (G - 21, G - 23 and G - 20+) is a block of developing nations established on 20th August 2003. The group emerged at the Fifth Ministerial WTO Conference held in the Cancun (Mexico), from 10th September to 14th September 2003. The G–20 accounts for 60% of the world’s population, 70% of its farmers and 26% of world’s agricultural exports.

India has been the active partner since its very inception, when Indian Foreign Minister along with those representing Brazil and South Africa signed a declaration known as Brasilia Declaration on June 6, 2003. This Brasilia Declaration stated that “major trading partners are still moved by protectionist concerns in their countries’ less competitive sectors and emphasized how important it is that the results of the current round of trade negotiations provide especially for the reversal of protectionist policies and trade distorting practices. Furthermore, India, Brazil and South Africa decided to articulate their initiatives of trade liberalization”.

The emergence of G–20 as a premier forum to discuss issues of global relevance has warranted a new highlight on the chronic ailments of our socio-economic framework. The issues on G–20 Summit find much consonance with the domestic agenda: corruption, climate, finance, food security and jobs among many others. Give the present conditionalities and situation of the global economy, the G–20 is becoming a super forum for knowledge-sharing, candid conversations and most importantly a space for innovation.
The Seoul Summit of G – 20 held in Nov. 2012 looked like an extremely factitious meeting of global economic powers which failed to smother out the differences over currencies, trade surpluses and deficit. The summit happened in an atmosphere that became noxious with major exporting economies such as Germany and China alongside the US Federal Reserves decision to busy $ 600 billion in treasury bonds over the next few months to try to jazz up the American economy. The exporters such as Germany contended that will have the effect of driving down the dollar, helping US exports even as the US was telling economies that has big trade surpluses to pool it.

Commenting on the trend PM Manmohan Singh said that, “The world economy is on the path of recovery but we should keep our focus on how to optimize global outcomes in an increasingly interdependent world as the Indian economy moves to a higher growth path and opens to the world own stake in a stable, inclusive, representative economy global financial economic system will only grow”. He added that India backs the proposal for the IMF to assume a role in the monitoring system known as the Mutual Assessment Process (MAP) that is designed to flag warning signals in the national economies before they affect global stability.

In the short history of the G – 20, India has utilized the opportunity to participate actively in private and public diplomacy and has often insisted on creating a level playing field. India has expressed in free convertibility of the Indian Rupee which will encourage free flow of capital and more volume of trading in Indian exchanges. Although China and India are the engines of growth, the biggest and most powerful locomotive is the U.S.A that has a giant economy. India has hence shown a leadership in supporting the U.S.A through G-20 for the larger and long-term economic growth through globalization.
India and the United Nations:

“To support and actively participate in the working of the United Nations” has been a fundamental principal of Indian foreign policy. India has always tried to uphold the spirit of the UN Charter and its character as an International Organisation working for the preservation of international peace and security. The Indian foreign policy supports and regards the United Nations both as an agency for securing world peace and as a global organization for promoting a spirit of friendship and cooperation among the members of the international community. It also regards the United Nations as an agency for international conflict resolution through peaceful means.

There is perfect compatibility between the ‘peace through peaceful means’ a dictum of Indian foreign policy and ‘the maintenance of international peace and security’ as the fundamental aim of United Nations, India stands for world peace and prosperity and accept the United Nations as an important instrument for securing both these objectives. In all treaties, declarations and agreements made by India in other countries, a firm faith in the UN Charter has always been reaffirmed. Tashkent Declaration, Indo-Soviet Treaty for Peace, Friendship and cooperation, the Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty, the Shimla Agreement etc, all contain specific provisions which reaffirm the resolve to expect the aims and objectives of the UN Charter as well as to follow peaceful means for the settlement of their disputes and problems. In the post-Cold War, Post – USSR, and post-Socialist Era of contemporary relations, India, as one of the non-permanent members (January 1991-December 1992) of UN Security Council got the opportunity to observe closely and participate actively in the process of high decision making. However, in 1996 India failed to win a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, while Japan got elected to it.
Historically, India regained Independence two years after the creation of the United Nations, yet it was one of the 51 founding members. The Congress party and Jawaharlal Nehru had a long history of interest in, and engagement with, world affairs. The ideals of world peace and global solidarity based on sovereign equality, mutual respect, and universal tolerance were immensely attractive to independent India.

There have been periodic misunderstandings and disenchantments, from the early referral of Kashmir to censorious remarks in the Security Council during the Bangladesh war and after the nuclear tests in 1998. India was soundly defeated the last time it competed for an elected Security Council seat; the failure to be a permanent member is a permanent sore; and the quixotic decision late in the day to field an Indian candidate for the post of Secretary-General last year has been followed this year by a campaign to have Hindi recognised as one of the UN.'s official languages.

Nevertheless, Nehru took the U.N. seriously and India was taken very seriously in the United Nations. It is hard to think of another country that, over the entirety of the issue, had more influence in driving the campaign against the criminal apartheid regime in South Africa.

A country's role, respect and influence in the U.N. cannot be divorced from its international political, military, economic, and ideational status. On the 50th anniversary of Independence, it was argued in Foreign Affairs that India was neither powerful enough to bully, rich enough to bribe nor principled enough to inspire. Today, India is a nuclear power, has achieved impressive economic growth for over a decade, is a powerhouse in information technology, and is regularly visited by senior world leaders.

Nevertheless, India is still distracted by the Kashmir dispute and restricted by Pakistan to sub continental status. Its per capita income is
stuck firmly in the middle of the developing countries' average. Its cultural chauvinists and economic nationalists are profoundly anti-national in the consequences of their religious and economic agendas. And its international influence is still below the peaks attained during the golden age of the 1950s.

India's most tangible contribution to the U.N. is in peace operations. Among the largest contributors in terms of numbers of missions, force commanders, and personnel, India is currently the third highest contributor, with 9,332 Indian soldiers and police on U.N. duty overseas. This sounds less impressive when we note that the two biggest contributors are Pakistan and Bangladesh. Is that the best company that India can aspire to in the world of today? Earlier, the U.N. deployed a contingent of 103 Indian police officers in Liberia as its first-ever all-woman peacekeeping unit whose performance has won widespread praise and acclaim in 2007.

Participation in U.N. peace operations is not a politically contentious issue in India, nor a constitutionally complicated exercise nor even a divisive subject of public debate. There are three broad reasons why India is asked to contribute troops to U.N. operations: the size and professionalism of its armed forces; the lack of such forces from most developing countries until recently; and India's influence in world affairs.

Conversely, the contribution to the proposed peacekeeping operation by India and to regional and international stability by the proposed mission, have been constant refrains justifying India's involvement in international peacekeeping. Part of the explanation for this has been a creeping apartheid in U.N. peacekeeping, where the poor countries contribute troops while the rich western countries provide
logistical support and dominate the senior policymaking ranks in the U.N. system.

Of course, India gains some credit for this, like being elected to the new Peacebuilding Commission. But have Indian policymakers done a hard-nosed evaluation of whether the credit ledger is overshadowed by the debit? Of the 2,379 U.N. peacekeepers killed until July 1, 2007, 123 were Indians — more than any other nationality.

Martin Plaut, the BBC's Africa analyst, has asked whether the pervasive presence of 50,000 U.N. troops across Africa meant that the organisation that had helped to end European colonialism in Africa was busy re-colonising the continent.

Thirdly, in public, governmental, and U.N. perception around the world, India becomes bracketed with poor countries with bloated and antiquated defence forces desperate to earn foreign money. Margarita Mathiopoulos, chair of the Transatlantic Forum of the Free Democratic Party of Germany and CEO of the European Advisory Group, referred derisively in the International Herald Tribune to "the usual suspects of U.N. peacekeeping, the impoverished Third World armies who only deploy their soldiers for their per diem."

An unfortunate historical failing of Indian diplomacy has been not to let national interests come in the way of abstract principles. We are easily seduced by words of praise and thrilled by a pat on the back. Such gratifying gestures are no substitute for rigorous calculation of national interests. In the rarefied U.N. atmosphere in particular, it is easy to be mesmerised by the phantom attraction of numbers, when what matters is the composition of voting blocs. Sometimes being in the minority can be a badge of honour and better serve the national interest.
India must look at the balance of composition of U.N. missions, and contribute only if there are at least some industrialised countries also willing to shoulder the burden. Only so will we begin to put a distance between the professional Indian military and the image of U.N. operations as something fit only for impoverished and amateurish contributors in it for the money.

Mobilising support from one's own region has a multiplier effect in U.N. diplomacy, while opposition from one's own region has a divider effect. India's U.N. diplomacy is constantly handicapped by the lack of South Asian solidarity, as seen last year in the competition for Secretary-General when New Delhi succeeded in cementing its reputation as a regional spoiler without victory for its own candidate. Conversely, had the government come to this decision earlier, it may just possibly have secured victory.

The candidacy also put a spanner in the works for some urgently needed reform efforts that India was spearheading. The most pressing and of immediate national benefit is restructuring the Security Council and reforming its workings. A second, probably more easily attained, is re-establishing the General Assembly as the primary organ, including the substantial rather than a rubber-stamping role in choosing the Secretary-General. The third and most important is reclaiming the organisation overall as the forum, voice and servant of the poorer and weaker majority instead of a tool of domination by the rich and powerful minority.

Should the U.N. remain reform-proof, the majority will have to contemplate walking away in order to take away from it the universal legitimacy that is hijacked to become the handmaiden of raw power. Can India be the champion to stop the organisation being "an after-sales service provider" for the U.S., as one American critic put it? Without
compromising core national interests, India should use its growing wealth and power to return the country and the world body to foundational values and ideals in the service of humanity.

**European Union (EU):**

EU has emerged as one of the major trade blocks is the world. Spectacular rise of Euro against dollar and clubbing of the regional economies, which were earlier too small to pose any competition to USA, Japan and erstwhile USSR, has given them a voice in the world forum on economic and security issues. Post-Second World War Europe, with the exception of Britain and France was dependent on USA for their security and defense. This suited USA and in the garb of providing nuclear umbrellas, she could locate her forces on mainland to counter USSR. NATO was therefore a logical outcome of this collective security umbrella. The emphasis now is to make Europe an economic block with high productivity and peaceful climate.

Traditionally, developing world has had greater trade and cultural exchange with some EU countries due to the colonial ties. About 35% of EU transactions are with the developing world. UK, France, Germany and Italy can apply some brakes on US hegemony, though normally only France has been voicing her independent opinion on international issues.

India has a fairly good export market in the EU. Growth of IT has already fuelled a demand for Indian professionals in UK, Germany and Sweden. Some erstwhile communist blocks countries are now part of EU and have large stockpiles of arms/spares, Ukraine being are such country. Also UK and France are permanent members of the UN Security Council. UK has a large South Asian population and thus has to need to the issues in this region. France has always cherished the values of liberty, freedom and independence and thus is a supporter of developing countries.
Improvement of relations and trade with EU is in the best interests of India. This will also help us to solve regional issues and garner international opinion in our favour.

**BRICS :**

BRICS is a unique grouping which shared opportunities and common challenges, formulised with the first meeting of Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and China in the New York on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006. In a short span of time, the grouping has come a long way and has evolved a number of mechanisms for consultation and cooperation in a number of sectors. South Africa joined the grouping at the third Summit in Sanya (China) in April, 2011. The fourth BRICS Summit was hosted in New Delhi as 29th March 2012 under the overarching theme of BRICS Partnerships For Global Stability and Prosperity. The Summit has imparted further momentum to the BRICS process.

The agenda-spectrum of BRICS meeting has considerably widened to encompass topical global challenges such as international terrorism, WMDs, climate change, food and energy security, MDGs, international economic and financial situation etc.

Four BRICS Summits and meetings of Foreign Ministers, Finance Ministers, Agriculture Ministers, Health Ministers, High Representatives on Security and Other Sectoral Meetings have further helped in deepening of cooperation amongst BRICS countries.

The Delhi Declaration, capturing the essence of discussion as well as putting forth common position of BRICS countries on various economic and political issues of global and regional importance was issued at the end of the Summit. The Declaration included Delhi Action Plan
which highlights the activities to be undertaken under India’s chairmanship of BRICS to further cooperation. Two agreements namely “Master Agreement on Extending Credit Facility in Local Currencies” and “BRICS Multilateral Letter of Credit Confirmation Facility Agreement”, were signed by the Development Banks from BRICS countries. The leaders also released “The BRICS Report” focusing on synergies and complementarities between the BRICS economies and highlighting their role as growth drivers of the world economy. An updated edition of BRICS Statistical Publication was also issued at the occasion.

The term BRICS is the ultimate double edged sword of ‘political economy’ which denotes a set of fast growing and increasingly influential economies also described as “rising powers” or “Second World”. But it imputes to them a sense a unity that on a closer inspection may not really exist. The BRICS Summit in New Delhi revealed the potential and flaws of both aspects of the term and why India ultimately has to be self-reliant. Being a member of the BRICS has not helped India avoid being the only major emerging market to experience declining foreign investment in the past two years and the Moody’s downgrading of its banking sector debt. On the question of BRICS unity, the long-term significance of the handholding that goes on at such summits is laughable at best. The rise in cross currency denominated trade that the BRICS have begun (Russia and China) started almost two years ago and the UAE and China this year is a very important trend and speaks to their common interest in diversifying away from US dollar dependence. But the simmering suspicions and even hostility between the BRICS themselves is a far larger story. Russia is boosting its military investments to defend its sovereignty. India and China have outstanding border disputes that China has categorically stated won’t be resolved any time soon. On the trade front, India has initiated anti-
dumping measures against China, while Brazil has joined the US and EU in a W.T.O. dispute against Chinese trade practices as well.

India, therefore, have to be much more rigorous and analytical in assessing the importance of the BRICS as the concept and the gathering. As Sanjany Baru of the IISS has written, “BRICS are in search of cement”. It is at best just another coalition-of-the-willing in a world of constantly shifting multi-alignment. Being the BRICS ultimately may not mean much more than being in the UN Security Council or any other high status grouping (despite the obvious difference that the UN as a legal body). One can be in the group, but that doesn’t guarantee that one will be influential or even that the group in a whole will be effective. Brazil is not a member of the UN Security Council either but manage to attempt mediation in the Iran Nuclear Dispute, has hosted the most crucial Environment Summits and is considered a “Sustainable Superpower”, given its massive investments in agriculture and economic diversification for its part. India’s substantial and consistent naval power and strategic geography mean that it should be leading in crafting a security framework for the Indian Ocean Sea Lanes. India should make it clear that it is the captain of the Maritime Silk Road.

**Indian Ocean Rim Association For Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC):**

Initially known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative is an international organisation with 19 member states. It was first established in Mauritius on March 1995 and formally launched on 6-7 March 1997. The association disseminates information on trade and investment regimes, with a view to helping the region’s business community better understand the impediments to trade and investment within the region. These
information exchanges have been extended to serve as a base to expand intra-regional trade.

The Indian Ocean region, which is among the most important trade routes, has been facing threats of piracy for a while and the countries in the Indian Ocean Rim have been at their wits end to find a permanent solution to the problem. For one, it's led to the Chinese and US navies making their presence felt in the region as they try to fight the menace that's cost millions of dollars in global trade. Maritime security and fight against piracy has hence become one of the chief matters of deliberation at the 14-year-old Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) meeting. While, it is not the Arabian Sea area alone where pirates are reeking havoc, Mozambique Channel on the south-eastern coast of Africa and the Malacca Strait near Indonesia too have been facing the scourge of piracy for quite a while.

"We will need consensus on piracy and try to ensure there is no further increase in the naval presence of these countries," said S M Krishna, External Affairs Minster. Krishna added that while China has a presence in the region with influence on smaller nations, India has cordial relations with the neighbour. "We have to partner China for mutual benefit. We have to work with like-minded countries," he said. He added, "India has a double concession treaty with Mauritius and India is working with them to check double tax avoidance." Hence, the 18-member countries have been expressing plans for deterrents and need for transparency among countries to fight the menace under the ‘chairmanship of India’ this time around. But, the group doesn't have the mandate to use force to deal with any issue.

The tsunami of 2004 that had killed about a quarter of a million people in the Indian Ocean region has had led to efforts at disaster risk
reduction at the global level. “This has had a positive impact with countries making joint efforts by setting up early warning system in case of disasters which could be put to use during oil spills or in case of any fall-out from any pollution at sea," said Sudhir Vyas, Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs. The group has been working to find ways to increase intra-regional trade too by facilitating business to business relations that too at a time when the trade with the western world has been hit due to the economic woes facing the West for over last two years or so now. The Indian Ocean group hopes to reconnect the old linkages, but it has not been easy to do so due to large difference in the economic development index of member countries.

"There has been more business interest between the countries, and they have been looking for efficient investment, tourism promotion and cultural engagement," Vyas added. Fisheries too has an issue of much interest with countries exchanging views to ensure no over-fishing doesn't take place and fishing remains sustainable. As part of this, a flagship institution, a fisheries support unit has been set up to study sustainable fishing.

The IOR-ARC meeting held in Banglore in Nov., 2011 adopted a Bangalore Declaration' on enhancing cooperation among the member countries in tourism, culture, education, skill development, fisheries, small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs), infrastructure, maritime transport cooperation and combating natural disasters. The regional group will also develop scientific and technical co-operation through an academic group which will promote student exchange programme, and research and setting up centres of excellence in various disciplines. With middle class driving tourism in today's world, the group is also working on ways to jointly promote the region as a tourism as a tourism destination.
Diplomatic Skills, Deadlocks and Negotiations:

The foreign policy of a country is also determined by the quality of diplomacy which depends on clear conceptions of national goals and the ability to use the tools of statecraft for their attainment. The diplomatic service of a country and its ability to accommodate harmonious and conflicting interest is of paramount importance.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Indian diplomatic circle was worried about the unipolar and quasi-hegemonic nature of the international system. Having lost a strong historical partner and the realising the lack of relevance of non-aligned ideology in real politics, Indian diplomacy felt that India had to open itself to world and redefine its content and style. This need necessitated devising new diplomatic strategic in order to keep India’s tactical space. After the nuclear test of 1998, New Delhi pursued a multi-faceted diplomacy in order to diversity foreign policy while engaging all great power. This imperative to retain strategic autonomy in diplomacy is widely recognised. The discourse on the ‘strategic triangle’ with Moscow and Beijing, although politically illusory, attested to this Indian posture. More concretely, the pacification of relations with China and the attempts to revamp Indo-Russian relations were parts of this multi-faceted diplomacy. However, both China and Russia became elements in the rapprochement strategy towards the US. But India, locked in the horns of dilemma, was finding it difficult to balance the rapprochement with the US, which was moving faster than its partnership with Moscow or Beijing and because of the complexity of its neighbourhood and extended neighbourhood security agenda, India is facing difficulty in following a balanced track of a multifaceted diplomacy, especially vis-à-vis Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan. Energy supply, membership of the UN Security Council and the desire to become a major player in Central Asia are among the agendas of Indian diplomacy today.
In this section two specific case studies have been taken to bring out the new challenges of today’s Indian diplomacy and how did it fare in those cases.

(A) Diplomatic Signals and Orchestration: India’s Use of Compellence in the 2001-02 Crisis:

In the winter to spring of 2001-02, the Indian government led by Atal Behari Vajpayee attempted to coerce the Pakistani Government of Gen. Pervez Musharraf into ending its support for cross-border terrorism after a brazen attack on India’s parliament. This case is a useful one to examine for the reason that there is a lively debate about whether India was successful or not in using coercive diplomacy during the crisis. For example, violence continued in Jammu and Kashmir and just because Musharraf pledged to stop terrorist groups from operating in Pakistan, it is difficult to find any indication that the Pakistani government took that pledge seriously in the years after the crisis.

Many commentators take for granted that the actual sending of signals was clear and they were effectively orchestrated into a coherent coercive message. Even though they believe the operation was not successful, Sumit Ganguly and Michael Kraig state that (Indian decision-makers) were also clear in terms of what they sought to accomplish and conveyed these goals in unequivocal terms to their Pakistani counterparts.

However the actual usage of compellence suffered because the NDA government engaged in a dual-track policy of direct coercion of Pakistan, while simultaneously engaging the US to put pressure on Pakistan. Ultimately, these two policy strands worked at cross-purposes to each other.
One of the more puzzling aspects of Operation Parakram was how the Vajpayee government seemed to oscillate between bellicose talk that promised war and then a more restrained rhetoric that suggested peace. This was apparent in three ways: (1) Indian demands changed during the first two to three weeks of the crisis; (2) the length of the mobilisation and poor civil-military coordination caused mixed signals to be sent to domestic and international audiences; (3) Indian policy-makers sent mixed signals about their resolve throughout the crisis mainly in an effort to both pressure Pakistan and reassure the US.

This, at several points in the crisis, had the government essentially working at odds with itself because keeping the US on board essentially meant that the leadership had to take seriously US concerns about the use of force and escalation, and temper their remarks or even in some cases retract them. Moreover, the US spoke with multiple voices; on the one hand, reassuring the Vajpayee government that it was doing all it could to put pressure on Musharraf to comply, while on the other reassuring Musharraf that it would do all it could to stop any Indian attack on Pakistan.

The role that the US played in the crisis is perhaps one of the most debated. Several observers feel that US pressure on Pakistan was the most effective way of getting concessions from Pakistan, while others feel that the US role was marginal at best or interfering at worst. In terms of effects, it seems true that US pressure did bring some benefits to the Vajpayee government: the US did place LeT and JeM on the state department's terrorist list, and it acted to seize the funds of these groups before Musharraf took similar action. Moreover, as many have commented, US pressure on Musharraf did help lead to the assurances he gave in his speeches in January and May.
However, in order to keep the Americans on board, the Vajpayee government had to take actions that essentially undercut its attempted compellence of Musharraf. This was fundamentally different from Kargil where military action and US diplomacy support worked hand in hand.\textsuperscript{25} In the case of Operation Parakram, while there is merit to the argument that it was only through US pressure that the Indian government could expect any action from Musharraf, it was very difficult to balance attempts to credibly threaten Musharraf with war with trying to convince the US that it was not going to rush into a war with Pakistan.

With regard to the difficulties of the dual-track policy, one incident that took place in January casts doubt on the Vajpaye government's credibility because of its actions taken to temper tensions to reassure the US government. First, on January 11 (the day before Musharraf's speech), the army chief, General Padmanabhan, made some aggressive statements about the readiness of India to absorb a first strike and launch a second strike in return. As far as can be determined, the general did this on his own in response to questions and without instructions or approval from the government.\textsuperscript{26} The general's comments were taken very seriously, and caused a drop in the value of both the Indian rupee and the government's security prices, as both domestic and international audiences became concerned about India's willingness to go to war.\textsuperscript{27} This was a particularly delicate time for US-Indian relations because Advani was in the US for talks with the Bush administration, and the following week Fernandes was going to visit Washington as well.\textsuperscript{28} So, in response hours later, Fernandes clarified that, 'In the prevailing situation on the sub-continent, we are pursuing the diplomatic efforts in the belief that they will yield results.'\textsuperscript{29}

In regard to me second point, the US's own use of mixed messages was particularly seen immediately before the two times the government came closest to war, in early January and again in May-early
June. The Bush administration engaged in serious shuttle diplomacy to get Musharraf to make public concessions to the Indian government (in particular the missions of Armitage, a few days before each of Musharraf’s speeches). As part of this effort, they also lobbied for restraint on the part of the Vajpayee Government in order to make it possible for Musharraf to take action and to make these promises. These efforts by the US and the step-downs by the Vajpayee government were quite public, because of the high profile of much of the shuttle diplomacy and the obvious interest both in India and abroad in whether things would escalate to war. Moreover, since Musharraf worked on his statements with US officials, it seems reasonable to conclude that he must have had assurances from the Americans that if he took these actions, India would not take any action. Additionally, the longer the Americans could drag out the crisis with assurances of "wait, give Musharraf a chance to do something", the chances of quick and easy victories passed because of the loss of surprise and the development of Pakistani defensive preparations.

This was even more apparent during the second high-point of the crisis when Armitage again visited the region in early June. Again according to some participants and analysts, the Vajpayee government was then thinking of going forward with military action. Armitage reassured the government and stated publicly that Musharraf pledged that he would 'stop permanently the cross-LOC infiltrations.' However, shortly afterwards Musharraf told Newsweek in an interview, that he assured President Bush. 'Nothing is happening across the Line of Control, but 'I'm not going to give you an assurance that for years nothing will happen'. There was no discussion of dismantling terrorist camps and again the Pakistani leader was referring to these activities as a freedom struggle and not as cross-border terrorism. In addition, the Indian government was puzzled and angered by the American decision to issue an evacuation
warning to its citizens on May 31 that was shortly followed by most other Western governments. It disrupted a large number of Indian business and economic transactions at the time and was widely seen as a form of US economic coercion.36

However, American assurances and the Indian willingness to ‘go along’ with them seem to have effectively eliminated the possibility of large-scale military action.37 Because of the coming monsoon season in late June, action would have to be taken in early to mid-June. By the end of the month, with the combination of a cabinet reshuffle and a series of statements that the mobilisation was to secure the election in J&K, it seemed the Vajpayee government had essentially abandoned any idea of coercing Pakistan.38 One can argue that the government's hesitation and a willingness to listen to American and Pakistani assurances had caused Vajpayee to make a 'Lord North decision': that by delaying on making a tough decision, events change and the decision is made for you.39

Because no fixed date was given, the Vajpayee government had to maintain constant pressure on Pakistan by continually sending strong signals of resolve and orchestrating diplomatic words and military moves over a protracted period of time. However, at the same time, they had to balance tough talk with restraint to keep the Americans happy, so they would be willing to also put pressure on Pakistan. If this was not complicated enough, the government also had to talk to its domestic audience about internal politics and to maintain the morale of deployed soldiers. In comparison with one of the only unambiguous successful cases of coercion/compellence, it must be remembered that the Cuban missile crisis lasted just under two weeks and even then it was difficult for the Kennedy administration to orchestrate its compellent strategy for this length of time. In the case of Operation Parakram, it was simply too much
to ask of any government to keep up this level of orchestration for 10 months.

(B) Geopolitical Reality of the Nuclear Deal and the Multilateral Diplomacy:

Much water has flowed down the Ganges ever since the talks began on the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement. It was hailed as a "historic moment" in India's engagement with the world for several reasons. There is no doubt that the deal has got many advantages for India but certainly not without attached strings, - 'both seen and unseen'. In fact, the problem is probably centered round the issue that, - the 'deal' pertains not only to our relationship with a country that is not known for its respect for the sovereignty of other nations but also to our energy security, our hitherto consensual foreign policy, and above all, our right to make independent decisions and pursue foreign policy.

The 'deal' is an extraordinarily complex issue to be simply pushed through in great haste. India should not get carried away by what appears on the surface of the 'deal'. Phrases like ‘historic opportunity’, 'strategic partnership', 'national Interest', 'responsible state', and 'energy security', have gained such enormous popular currency that everyone, either with the required clear understanding or not of deeper and highly complex implications that go with the provisions of the 'deal', - attempts to air opinions. However, going by the depth of the debate on the 'deal', - understandably the nation is looking forward to satisfactory answers to questions such as:

- How much nuclear energy is really required and how safe and affordable it is;
• Are there not cheaper alternatives, including non-conventional energy sources which can be tapped effectively at a fraction of the cost and can take care of our energy security needs?;

• Is it not possible for us to develop alternative fuel sources?;

• What has happened to our efforts to develop fast breeder reactors?;

• What about the utilization of our vast thorium reserves in producing energy to meet our energy needs?;

• Why Americans are so keen to provide us with the reactors and not reprocessing technology? and finally;

• If we proceed with the 'deal', how would it facilitate our getting access to other nuclear technologies and critical components?, before finalizing the 'deal'.

Above all, a government, that barely survives on the 'outside support' of the Left parties, being a coalition government, perfectly knowing well that the country is not convinced about the 'credibility' of the U.S., which is offering this 'deal', (in this connection, Tarapur experience is frequently reminded to the UPA government by one and all), and attempting to avoid gaining the 'sense of the House', fails to satisfy the country on its stand to finalize the 'deal' on various counts.

Certain of the significant advantages that accrue to India as given by the UPA establishment (excepting those who oppose the 'deal' from among the UPA group), the measures needed to be pursued henceforth to make the 'deal' a reality, are as given below:
• The first one should be for the DAE to negotiate and finalize an India-Specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA secretariat;

• Secondly, to negotiate with the Nuclear Suppliers' Group to receive exemptions from the NSG Guidelines that would allow India to import nuclear reactors and fuel: and to examine whether these exemptions are acceptable to India;

• Thirdly, to wait for the US Congress to approve the 123 agreement with India; and finally,

• India would go to the Board of Governors of the IAEA and present for its approval the 'frozen text' of the India-specific safeguards agreement worked out with the IAEA Secretariat.

All this would result in that-the 'deal would undo the iniquitous technology-denial sanctions imposed on India since 1970s and rewards India as a "responsible" nuclear weapons state (NWS), or, as the July 2005 agreement puts it, "a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology". To be more precise,-the benefits that accrue to India are:

• That, the U.S., will help India secure uninterrupted supplies of nuclear fuel as well as maintain a strategic fuel reserve for its safeguarded nuclear reactors;

• That, India would receive global civilian nuclear cooperation: (c) that, India would enjoy the right to retain nuclear weapons while being outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT);

• That, India gains access to high and dual-use technology, even as India is not a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR): and finally,
• India will be the only country, outside the NPT in the world’ to have both nuclear weapons as well as the benefits of trade available to a nuclear weapons state.

However, the opponents of the 'deaf are clear about the following 'possible' problems that India might get into once the ‘deal’ is finalized:

(a) That, as far as the U.S. is concerned, the 123 Agreements certainly subservient to the Hyde Act: whether advisory or non-binding, a US president can take advisory clauses to arm-twist countries to fall in line;

(b) That, entering into a 'safeguards agreement in Perpetuity' would amount to bearing the costs even if the 'deal' were to be terminated;

(c) That, apparently it amounts to India getting roped into the NPT through backdoor.

(d) That, the language in the Hyde Act is strong enough to be conveniently utilised by the U.S. to lake advantage of the "deal' suitably;

(e) That, the Hyde Act also demands India to pursue a "congruent" foreign policy with the U.S., aid also to work together on "key foreign policy initiative related to non-proliferation" and join hands in "sanctioning" states that sponsor terrorism;

(f) The Hyde Act also directs the U.S., administration to achieve a "moratorium on the production of fissile material";

(g) That, the U.S., should conclude a treaty banning production of fissile material;
(h) That, the U.S., should as well secure India's participation in the 'Proliferation Security Initiative' that which calls for stopping ships suspected of carrying nuclear material; and finally,

(i) That, America should work with India to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Since these conditional ties and such implications in the process of finalizing the 'deal' would certainly amount to interference in the foreign policy matters of India and thereby amount to jeopardizing India's sovereignty and integrity, the Left parties' exercising their option to keep the 'deal' on hold till it becomes totally acceptable needs to be treated favourably.\(^{42}\) Above all, a section of the Hyde Act contains some -

- That India will need to annually file a report on its nuclear energy programme and the same has got to be submitted to the U.S., Government each year for all the forty years of the agreement;

- That the Hyde Act grants the U.S., President the right to review the 'agreement' in case he/ she should sense 'inconsistencies' from the side of India;

- That the 'agreement' would stand terminated if India conducts a nuclear test,\(^{43}\) does it mean that the U.S., intends to prevent India from conducting another nuclear test?);

- That the Articles dial deal with 'reprocessing of the spent fuel,\(^{44}\)-with IAEA inspections, and more particularly those which permit the U.S. to call for IAEA inspections in India whenever it deems fit; and finally,
• The UPA Government's misplaced confidence, trust and interest in the questionable trustworthiness of U.S. government in delivering on the international treaties, agreements and commitments, coupled with their unwillingness to explore non-conventional energy sources at home and in the subcontinent, once looked at from the point of view of 'economic viability', apparently India can not afford to hastily push the 'deal' through and repent leisurely later.

In this context there is no gain saying the fact that all the stiff opposition to the 'deal' from all sorts of corners ever since the "deal" began to be discussed has, in fact, provided the Indian side to bargain hard from a position of strength.

However, as if it were to substantiate the fears expressed by the Left Parties, various other opposition parties and even some of those who are a part of the UPA coalition,\(^\text{45}\) began to realize the fact that the U.S. had succeeded in dictating a number of policy decisions to be invariably followed by India. This has ultimately been understood by large sections of the Indians, as if India were surrendering its sovereign authority in pursuing an independent foreign policy of its own to the U.S.

Rightly, fears were expressed by a large section of scholars that the agreement implied all potential to 'entangle India into a complex web of political, economic and military relationships as part of the strategic partnership, which in realistic terms, meant that what the American promise ultimately boils down to for India. In this context, as there were serious questions involved in finalizing the 'deal', over which the Congress party believed to have spent large sums of political capital, as was done by the American President, a committee consisting of members from the Congress and the Left was formed to resolve the issues involved in finalizing the 'deal'.

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Even as all the representing of the Left are opposed to the 'deal', the Congress representatives are divided on expressing support to the 'deal'. While some members were of the view that the Left support was essential for the 'deal', there were some who went ahead supporting the 'deal' in its totality. Anyway, the political fallout for the UPA government, more particularly to the Congress, in going ahead with the 'deal' always appeared expensive and ruinous, irrespective of either support or no support, (from quarters of whatever prominence it was forthcoming), as the 'deal' has begun to be analyzed from the point of view of geopolitical context more than from simple ‘energy’ angle.

Keeping aside the view that the Left parties are 'naturally allergic' to India getting closer to the U.S. by entering into a 'deal' of such strategic importance, their objections to India becoming a 'junior partner' and playing second fiddle deserve a closer scrutiny to arrive at more precise and balanced conclusions. In this context, following significant issues for India are noteworthy:

(a) Not being able to clinch the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline deal, (evidently more under the duress of the U.S.);

(b) Voting against Iran in the Security Council, by offering lame excuses even as the option to "abstain' was very much available;

(c) Permitting an American warship to enter the territorial waters being totally aware of the fact that it was carrying nuclear weapons,

(d) Not signing the 'deals' with Russia, though Russia was prepared to extend all support in erecting nuclear reactors on more favourable conditions, and being a longtime trust worthy ally (whether there is any linkage between the stalling of the new Russia-India intergovernmental agreement for more nuclear reactors and the
beleaguered status of the 123?, is answered in the affirmative by specialists in foreign relations);

(e) Permitting State Bank of India to curb normal trade with Iran (once again evidently, Washington was behind this decision),

(f) Taking a go-by e stand on 'non-alignment' principle which is regarded as the bedrock of India's foreign policy; and,

(g) Evincing undue haste in finalizing the 'deal' knowing a very large majority in the country does not accede to the views of the UPA establishment, and many more deserve careful scrutiny. Getting into more details on an issue like the uncompromising stand taken by the U.S., on Iran, just as what it did in the case of Iraq, wherein WMDs were never found, but an entire civilization was raised to the ground).

China was prepared to break the U.S.-Iran stalemate, on condition that the U.S. should be 'more active in the negotiating process with Iran,' go to prove that the UPA establishment functions more under pressure from the U.S. than on independent lines. However, China's motivations are no doubt largely governed by self interest, as Iran happens to be a major supplier of oil to China, and also as China has plans to invest heavily in Iran's oil and gas fields. Again, the Chinese offer to mediate was made just ahead of the U.S., National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) representing the consensus view of all 16 American spy agencies regarding the Iran issue.

As pointed out by an expert on foreign relations issues, "Coincidence or not, the NIE quintessentially echoed the line of thinking in Beijing. Two conclusions made by the NIE are simply staggering. First, 'Teheran's decisions are guided by a cost-benefit approach rather than a rush to a weapon irrespective
of the political, economic and military costs'. Secondly, "opportunities for Iran to achieve its security, prestige, and goals for regional influence might, if perceived by Iran's leaders as credible, prompt Teheran to extend the current halt to its nuclear weapons programme." In this context of the timing of the U.S., National Intelligence Estimate's findings being known to the world, the historic decision by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the flag-bearer of the U.S. regional strategies in the Persian Gulf for over three decades, to invite Iran for its summit in Doha on December 2 could not have been taken in isolation. The implications of the shifting templates of the Middle East's geopolitics need to be better appreciated by the UPA government.

 Apparently, the failure of the American policy in Containing Iran was seen by Russia and China much earlier, and the failure of India in this regard is prominent. Even while enhancing efforts for gaining access to all available sources of energy from all quarters, India should have realized that it has a congruence of interests with Russia and China in optimally exploring the primacy that Iran places on Asia for its energy exports. That is exactly why the Iran pipeline becomes crucial for India, and precisely for that reason, probably Washington desired to scuttle the project.

 Again, the developments in recent times on the hunt for 'energy sources' by various nations, including the U.S., has begun to focus seriously on the Central Asian region, much to the discomfort of Russia and China. Evidently, the spectre that began to haunt the U.S. is the possible emergence of an Asian energy club involving Russia, Iran, China and India. And hence the 'nuclear deal' and the talk of India's strategic partnership.

 Having Pakistan with them for all practical purposes in the name of 'frontline ally' in their war on terrorism, with assistance running into several hundred billions of dollars in money and also by supplying the most sophisticated weapons of various kinds, the U.S. has begun to concentrate on
'strategic and broad-based partnership with India, and the following facts testily
to the emerging stronger "bond between the U.S. and India, which does not
certainly augur well for India:

- In fact, India is apparently on a major course to ramp up its
  military infrastructure with a multibillion budget ready to
  purchase. -among other equipment, 1 26 multi-role combat aircraft;

- As many as 52 United States defence corporations, including
  Lockheed-Martin, Ratheon, Honeywell and General
  Electronics have set up offices in India;

- In recent times, it is known that, in Virginia an agreement
  relating to defence issues was concluded by the UPA
  government with the U.S. on 28 June 2007, without the
  knowledge of the Left parties on whose support the
  government survives;

- Is it not true that by offering the 'deal' the U.S. would indirectly
  be responsible for nuclear aims race between countries in Asia,
  which would escalate tensions;

- Probably the critics of the "deal' are closer to truth, as they
  suspect a bipartisan consensus in the U.S. to cap India's strategic
  programme.54

Also going by what is happening between India and Russia, one would
certainly jump to the conclusion that India is attempting to cultivate closer
relations with the U.S., and that too at the cost of sacrificing Russia and
antagonizing China.55 In fact, quadripartite consultations by Japan, the U.S.,
India and Australia, followed by joint naval war games held by the four nations
plus Singapore in the Bay of Bengal, probably triggered Russian concerns on the
position of India in the changing context of foreign relations.56 In fact, the Harbin
meeting, where the foreign Ministers of India, Russia and China met, had lent credibility to the view that India was trying to shift its foreign policy goalposts.

Again, the Indian silence on the Iranian issue, in the context of American threats to impose all sorts of sanctions, and India developing cold feet on the question of its membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which it joined earlier as observer also lent credibility to India's changing position on foreign relations.\(^{57}\) Significantly enough, Moscow also views with suspicion India's plan to join the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) gas pipeline project even as talks on the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline 'apparently' got bogged down over price issues.\(^{58}\)

However, it is a known fact that Washington has all along opposed the IPI pipeline and promoted the TAP project as part of its 'Greater Central Asia' plan hatched more precisely to sideline the SCO and reduce the influence of Russia and China in the region.\(^{59}\) At the same time, the Russian displeasure on various recent moves by U.S. to get India into its strategic orbit are expressed by its gestures like: (a) the failure on the part of both External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister of India to meet the Russian President though he was in town,\(^{60}\) (b) in a further setback, the Indian Petroleum Minister had to cancel his scheduled trip to Moscow in October 2007, to attend an annual energy forum after diplomats failed to fix a meeting with the Russian counterpart;\(^{61}\) (C) of late, even the Indo-Russian deal for Admiral Gorshkov, a 44,750 tonne Kiev-class aircraft carrier rechristened INS Vikramaditya, apparently ran into trouble.\(^{62}\)

However, there are some positive sides to India's defence deals with Russia like:

1. a deal to jointly develop a fifth-generation fighter aircraft by 2015 by investing $10 billion;
(2) to jointly develop and manufacture a multi-role transport aircraft;

(3) to induct the supersonic version of the jointly developed BrahMos, which is reportedly three times faster than the U.S., Tomahawk cruise missile: to consider the feasibility of developing the hypersonic version of the BrahMos, which would be five times faster;

(4) also to hire Russian nuclear-powered Akula submarine for a decade to train Navy officers prior to the commissioning of the indigenous nuclear submarine called Advanced Technology Vehicle.-which is apparently nearing completion;

(5) to acquire T-90 Main Battle Tanks (MBT) from Russia pending delivery of the indigenous MBT Arjun: etc., which go to prove that Indo-Russian relations are still strong to a large extent),

The U.S. is apparently offering its nuclear-powered warship USS Nimitz, which will be decommissioned soon\textsuperscript{63}, to the Indian Navy. All these facts put together go to prove that India is getting sucked into the American strategic orbit, either knowingly or unknowingly, and it is most important for India to protect its right to pursue its own independent foreign policy than allowing such a precious right to be hijacked by the United States in the name of projecting India as a 'strategic partner', and 'emerging global power' etc. This would certainly go to prove that India is allowing itself to be dragged into unchartered global war games without having, on one hand, the required potential for such games, and on the other, by sacrificing its age-old and time-tested fundamental principle of foreign policy, i.e., the policy of nonalignment.
It is a known fact that since the 1990s, the U.S government has been making overtures to the Indian government for a military alliance. And the present U.S. administration wanted India to be apart of its missile defence shield. Besides, since 9/11, the Indian and U.S. navies and Special Forces have conducted a number of joint exercises in the Indian Ocean and in the hills of India's North-east, mostly for political, economic and strategic benefits to be reaped by the U.S. at the cost of India. And in this context it should be realized that the Indo-U.S. Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (2007) is the cornerstone of such a strategic alliance, confirmedly driven by geopolitical and military concerns.

The 'deal' has got to be rejected in its present form, unless it is 'renegotiated' for many more other reasons like:

- that, the 'deal' is possibly another attempt by the U.S. to 'weaken the framework of international law', –consider for example.- its disregard for Kyoto protocols on climate change, for Geneva Conventions, for the United Nations; (As Financial Times Bureau Chief Edward Luce, who can hardly be accused of belonging to the loony Left, put it in a recent article: "For India's sake, the U.S. has driven a coach and horses through an international treaty that is a centerpiece of its foreign policy";)

- that, the U.S, demonizes Iran (a signatory to the NPT) and reaches out of India for a 'deal' (a non-signatory of the NPT);

- that, the "deal" will certainly ‘intensify instability of the South Asian subcontinent’, and also,
that, the U.S. administration to succeed in 'isolating Iran' and to 'secure India's full and active participation in United states’ efforts to dissuade, isolate and if necessary, sanction and contain Iran for its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction'.

All these and other related facts go to prove the geopolitical compulsions inherent to this 'deal'. To put this in a nutshell, the U.S. is becoming factor for instability in Asia enroute India. Also, the U.S. would want to 'contain' China via the same route as well. Would it not be extremely uncomfortable for India to pit itself against China? Would it be worth attempting as the U. S. supports Pakistan to the hilt against India and pits it also against China?

However, India has got to defend itself against overambitious China as well. As India has been claiming a larger role for itself in the Indian Ocean region, from the Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca, apparently the U.S. and its ally Australia initially resisted this move. However, India's aspirations to be a global player would require it to work for peace and stability on India's borders and in the regions with which it has close interaction, the Gulf, Central Asia, the Indian Ocean Region, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

This in turn entails maintaining an adequate level of defence preparedness to keep the probability of armed conflict low. In fact, policy makers are concerned about the anti-American stand of the Left as it might inadvertently put India into the hands of the Chinese, who have been closely watching with concern India's growing maritime clout. In fact, Beijing's first major protest against the Malabar series came when the exercise was conducted with the U.S. and Japanese warships in the South China Sea. India assured China that it was not its intention to antagonize
Beijing, and even engaged the Chinese navy, in a major confidence-building exercise. And yet, when the leaders of India, the U.S., Australia and Japan met in Manila and discussed the present quadrilateral exercise (in which Singapore also joined), Beijing issued a demarche, seeking to know-the purpose of such an exercise.

However, India has to tread a cautious path without getting swayed by the pressures that are going to increase on India due to:

(a) unprecedented economic activity in the Asian continent with nations recording high percentages of economic growths-especially in India and China;

(b) the strategic importance of the region becoming more prominent due to availability of abundant 'energy resources';

(c) the U.S. pursuing an aggressive policy of "containment" towards China and Russia, as both the countries attempt to keep the U.S. out of this region;

(d) as the U.S. pursues policies globally to sustain its 'unilateral Hegemony'; and finally,

(e) as a new system of 'global chemistry' is emerging due to unprecedented geopolitical changes taking place.

India has got to pursue its independent foreign policy without being influenced by any country', (as the case has been for the past six decades), more due to its emerging strategic importance. Evidently, the U.S., China and Russia are attempting to pressurize India into following a foreign policy,-that suits more their interests than India's. As America, Russia and China vie with each other to influence India's foreign policy to
benefit each one of them, there are certain emerging compulsions in the immediate neighborhood of India, which, inter alia, include:

- China vetoing in January 2007, an America-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution seeking to end repression and release political prisoners in Myanmar, that which has had very important adverse economic and security implications for India,\(^{68}\)

- China utilizing its political leverage to get exploration rights for gas and oil in the sensitive Rakhine (Arakan) Province of Myanmar, adjacent to its borders with India;

- China entering into an agreement with Myanmar for two major pipeline projects to carry gas and oil to the landlocked Province of Yunan;\(^{69}\)

- As it would be China exploring the estimated reserves of 13.4 to 47.3 trillion cubic feet of gas in the Bay of Bengal;

- As China has also sought to develop port facilities in Hambantota in Sri Lanka and in the Maldives and Seychelles;

- Pakistan's preparedness to provide naval facilities to China, in case of tensions escalating between it and India, at the Gwadar port, located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf in Baluchistan, being built with Chinese assistance;

- China's installation of radars in the Cocos Islands off the Andaman Coast, capable of monitoring Indian fleet movements and missile tests; and finally,
On and off, China questioning the status of Arunachala Pradesh as an integral part of India.

These and many other such issues go to prove that China's strategy is to build a 'string of pearls' and surround India, than India attempting to encircle China. The 'energy needs' being the driving force behind the foreign policies of various countries in modern times, India cannot afford to embrace the U.S. alone and antagonize other traditionally trustworthy and highly reliable allies. Knowing fully well that a resurgent Russia is central to maintaining peace and stability in the strife-stricken Central Asian region, and realizing the fact that India's borders are getting insecure due to various reasons as discussed above, India would do well in case it pursues a highly prudent, realistic and balanced diplomacy without becoming a ‘junior partner’ to anyone.

Apparently, the resilience of the Saudi-Iranian relationship, despite the American efforts to build an Arab front against Iran, goes to reveal that forces negating Washington's exhortations are gaining ground. Apart from this, the growing regional assertion by Saudi Arabia and Iran, the swift manner in which Russia moved in, especially after the release of the NIE report, for dispatching the first consignment of nuclear fuel for Iran's Bushehr atomic power plant, signifies the energy power game that is going in this most sensitive region of the globe. However, certain initiatives have been undertaken by other countries, ignoring the U.S. calls for stringent economic sanctions against Iran, which are as follow:

- Russia undertaking military exercises in the Mediterranean;
- Russia deploying 11 ships including an aircraft carrier with 47 planes on board;
• Russian navy using the Syrian port of Tartus as a supply base for its ships operating in the Mediterranean;

• Even China, signing a $2 billion deal with Iran to develop its Yadavaran oilfield; and,

• Iranians seeking even Japanese investments to develop their oil sector.

These developments indicate the emergence of a new geopolitical order in the Asian continent and accordingly India has got to reengage Iran, China, Russia, Pakistan and all other neighboring countries, without losing out on America. Thus, it is not 'containing' but 'engaging' each and every country should be the guiding principle of India's diplomatic policy. Without compromising on the basic principle of our age-old 'Non-alignment' and incessantly and tirelessly striving for the emergence of a 'multilateral world', India should pursue its diplomacy.

Last but not the least, India would do well to remember the prophetic observation of a highly distinguished Indian diplomat and Convener of the National Security Council Advisory Board, M. K. Rasgotra that,".. the 'Asian Century'- which is how the whole world speaks of the 21st Century with an ascendant China and a rising India -'is more likely to be an 'American Century in Asia. And as the 'American Century in Asia' is likely to loom large on this continent, according to an expert on Indian foreign policy matters, this notion of an 'American Century in Asia', is not just morally suspect, it is also a reflection of the inability of Indians to think strategically about the future evolution of Asia and to envision structures in which the region is able to deal with its economic and political problems without the destabilizing intervention or 'leadership' of an outside power.
Footnotes and References:

1. Jawaharlal Nehru: *India’s Foreign Policy*, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1961, p.22
3. Ibid, pg. 108
6. Ibid, pg. 195
8. Ibid, pg. 4
9. Ibid, pg. 6
14. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shyam Saran’s Speech on “India and its Neighbours” At a meeting organized by IDSA, New Delhi, quoted in Paper no. 1269, South Asia Analysis Group, 2005, pg. 1.
15. Ibid, pg. 1-2
16. Ibid, pg. 2
17. Ibid, pg. 5
18. Ibid, pg. 5

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19. See for example Brahma Chellaney: ‘In keeping with this long-standing independence, India is likely to retain the option to forge different partnership with varied players to pursue a variety of interest in diverse settings. ... A multi-aligned India pursuing omnidirectional cooperation for mutual benefits with key players will be better positioned to advance its interests and promote cooperative international approaches in the changed world.’ Brahma Chellaney, 'India as a Global Bridge Builder', *Asian Age*, Sept., 3, 2008.


21. Prof. P.R., Chari on this point.

22. Sumit Ganguly and Michael Kraig, no. 1, p. 298.

23. For the importance of the US role, see P.R. Chari et.al., no. 76; and Srinath
Raghavan, 'A Coercive Triangle', no. 1. For the Indian role, see comments by most of the BJP leadership in Alex Stoler, no. 17.


25. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

26. There is some speculation that while his briefing was cleared by the Prime Minister's Office, those particular remarks were not. See Celia Dugger, 'Indian General Talks Bluntly of War and a Nuclear Threat', *The New York Times*, January 12, 2002.


29. 'India Says it Won't Use Nuclear Bombs First if War Comes', Associated Press, January 12, 2002.

30. 'Musharraf Discussed His Speech with Powell - Boucher'. Press Trust of India, January 12, 2002; and Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, no. 69.

31. Praveen Swami, no. 63.

32. Alex Stoler, no. 17, pp. 26 -27.

33. Steve Coll, no. 38.


36. See P.R. Chari et.al., no. 76. pp. 170-171.

37. Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon no. 69, pp. 35-36.

38. ‘Indian Cabinet Reshuffle Viewed as Key to BJP at Polls,’ *Dow Jones Newswires*, June 25, 2002.

39. Named for the indecisive British PM during the initial stages of the American

40. The agreement is known as '123 Agreement' as it goes after Section 123 of the U.S. Atomic Energy Act (AEA) that governs international nuclear cooperation by the U.S.

41. As opined by A. N. Prasad, former director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, through the 'deal' the US has given with one hand and taken back with other hand, Outlook, 3 September 2007. p. 43.

42. In fact, attempts made to convince the CPI (M), CPI, Forward Bloc and RSP leaders through four rounds of talks have failed to convince them on the feasibility of the 'deal'.

43. Under Section 123a(4) of the U.S. Atomic Energy Act, every nuclear agreement with a non-nuclear weapons state must include a clause granting the U.S., the right to seek the return of nuclear material and equipment exported pursuant to the agreement, in the event of the recipient state exploding a nuclear device.

44. The reprocessing would have to be done only in dedicated facilities under IAEA safeguards. The U.S. has been skeptical of this, since plutonium which is obtained from reprocessing is used in bombs. India wanted the right because its indigenous three-stage civil programme envisages use of plutonium in the second stage. The reprocessing will now be subject to another agreement. For more details see, The Week, 5 August, 2007, p.56.

45. It was not just the BJP and the newly created UNPA that were criticizing the 'deal': the Left parties—not to mention new "partners" like the Bahujan Samaj Party—joined in to assail the agreement. And, it was not just the 'text'; it was also the "context" that was questioned.

46. Members like, Pranab Mukherjee, A.K Antony, Prithviraj Chauhan and Saifiiddin Soz pointed out that the support of the Left was essential, while 'Allies' like Laloo Yadav (RJD), T. R. Baalu (DMK), and Sharad Pawar (NCP) supported the above view. However, members like, P. Chidambaram and Kapil Sibal fully supported the 'deal'.

47. On the deeper strategic significance of the American move to anchor off Chennai of their USS Nimitz, see, The Hindu, 5 July 2007.

48. As of now, Russia is the only member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group that is involved in civilian nuclear cooperation with India. As reported in the press very recently,—"an intergovernmental agreement in pursuance of the January
2007 MoU had been fully prepared for signature during very recent Indian Prime Minister's visit to Moscow but, 'the Indian side, at last minute, decided not to sign it, even as Russia was ready to go ahead with it.' For details see, The Hindu, 30 November 2007.


50. Earlier China was instrumental in the company of other countries in favorably settling the 'nuclear arms' issue in the case of North Korea.

51. It is reliably known that China intends boosting up its bilateral trade with Iran to more than $100 billion annually in the near term, The Hindu, 27 December 2007.

52. According to acknowledged experts on foreign policy relating to this region, Saudi King Abdullah and the Iranian President together attending the GCC conference and the first ever invitation being sent to the Iranian President to participate in the Haj,-signals to the Muslim world that Riyadh would never like to be a party to isolating Iran. See for details, The Hindu, 27 December, 2007.

53. The U.S. apprehends that such an Asian grouping,-first proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2003, and would disrupt its strategy of global domination. In fact through a sort of lukewarm attitude towards the Iran pipeline, the UPA government has tacitly collaborated with the U.S., global strategy.

54. In fact, the bill that deals with the 'deal' states that, it is in the U.S. interest to enter into an agreement with a non-NPT signatory country if, among other things, "such cooperation induces the country (India, in this case), to promulgate and implement substantially improved protections against the proliferation of technology related to nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them, and to refrain from actions that would further the development of its nuclear weapons programme;" see for details, The Week, 24 December 2007, p.35.

55. Evidently, the atmosphere in relations between India and Russia began to vitiate almost imperceptibly after India struck the 'nuclear deal' with the United States^ for a detailed account in this regard see, The Hindu, 10 November 2007.

56. On this issue, as reported in the press, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov opined that India may get strapped to the "formation of a military-political 'triangle' in the Asia-Pacific region involving the U.S., Japan and Australia," Ibid.
57. In the run-up to a SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in August 2007, official sources in Delhi said India was reluctant to embrace the military, strategic and political agenda of the SCO but was eager to be a "hands-on-participant" in the grouping's trade and economic projects. It pressed its point by dispatching the Petroleum Minister rather than the External Affairs Minister to the summit.

58. India's plan to bring gas through international pipelines was reduced to mere pipe dreams in 2007. India has apparently lost even the Burma-India pipeline as well to China. For details see, Deccan Chronicle, 31 December 2007.

59. For its part Russia supported the IPI pipeline and offered to build it as well.

60. Earlier such meetings were a sign of special warmth and trust between the two countries.

61. This failure particularly underscored India's frustration at failing to extend its foothold in the Russian energy market beyond the Sakhalin-1 project.

62. The $1.5-billion deal seems unfinished with Russia demanding an additional $1.2 billion for refitting the carrier. And this in turn has raised doubts over the ties between India and its longtime defence partner; both countries share a defence relationship, which is pegged at a little over $1.5 billion. See for further details, The Week, 23 December 2007, p.40.

63. As a defence ministry source put it, "Deny it or not, ties with the U.S. are stealing march over our traditional defence ties. The cancellation of the $600-million contract for 197 Euro copters is indicative of the mounting US pressure," Ibid, p.42.

64. In fact, the U.S. State Department official Christian Rocca observed (in 2002) that, "Military-to-military cooperation is now producing tangible progress towards (the) objective (of) strategic, diplomatic and political cooperation as well as sound economic ties." See for details, The Hindu, 3 September 2007.

65. Evidently, the U.S. government makes short shrift of international treaties whenever they stop serving its own designs. In fact, in the very process of signing the 'nuclear deal' with India, the U.S. in undermining another "deal", the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty. See for details, The Hindu, 7 September 2007.

66. By offering the 'deal' and scuttling the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline, the U.S. would, instead of resolving burning disputes between countries in the region, intensify rivalry between India and Pakistan, and as well spoil the relations between India and Iran.
As pointed out by Ashley Tellis, an influential U.S. strategic expert and former RAND Corporation analyst, "accommodating India on the issue of nuclear cooperation" would "buttress its potential utility as a hedge against a rising China" and "encourage it to pursue economic and strategic policies aligned with U.S. interests," The Hindu, 1 September 2007.

Understandably, yielding to Chinese pressures following its veto, the Myanmar Government decided that the gas produced in its off-shore fields, in which the ONGC and GAIL have a 30 per cent stake, should be sold to China and not India; see for details, Business Line, 20 September 2007.

These projects are meant for developing two strategically located ports in Myanmar, Sittwe and Kyaukpyu.