POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD
CHAPTER – VII

Foreign Policy in Post-Independence Period

Foreign policy is the totality of the state’s dealing with the external environment. Foreign policy of a sort will go on so long as there are Sovereign States. Foreign policy consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and the others. It involves the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behaviour pattern of a state while negotiating with other states to protect or further its interests.

While formulating the India’s foreign policy there were tasks required to be fulfilled since Independence have been;

(1) Restructuring the basic orientations of foreign policy in keeping with the totally transformed International situation. This has to be done in a manner ensuring fulfillment of India’s National interests in every aspects.

(2) Recasting relations with each of the super powers such as the United States, The Soviet Union and China.

(3) Coping with threats to India’s territorial integrity and stability generated by political developments among, and policies of India’s immediate neighbours.

(4) Diversifying political and economic contracts so has to ensure follows of technology, defence supplies, important raw materials and other such inputs as were needed to sustain our defence capacities.

(5) Examining and deciding on policy options responsive to trends of multilateral pressures in spheres such as Science and Technology, Space, Nuclear Capacities, Environment and Human Rights.
(6) Generating International Public opinion to support those steps which India would have to take to maintain territorial integrity and internal security.

(7) Creating new and positive equations with emerging centres of power and influence in the International Community. This included fashioning new patterns of relations with individual countries, establishing relations ab-initio with some countries and opening up contracts with regional groupings and multilateral organisations whose policies and activities could impinge on India’s interest.

(8) Redefining political elements in India’s strategic and defence requirements at the global and regional levels.

(9) Structuring policy responses to the United Nations and other such agencies. This was to be a complex exercise to sustain state’s Sovereignty while continuing to create an International consenses on issues of transnational concern.

(10) Above all, forging and recreating National consenses on India’s foreign policy in all its aspects.

Thus the main objectives of the foreign policy in brief have been;

(1) It seeks to protect the territorial integrity of the country and to protect the interests of its citizens both within and outside the country. (2) The maintenance of links with other members of International community and adoption of policy of conflicts or co-operation towards them with a view to promote its own interests. (3) The foreign policy seeks to promote and further the National interests of the country. (4) It aims at promotion of economic interests of the country. (5) It aims at enhancement of the influence of the state either by expanding its area of influence, or the reducing of other states to the position of dependency.
The origins of India’s foreign policy predate its achieving dominion status in 1946 and Independence in August 1947. These origins had their roots in the thought process of the leaders of India’s renaissance in the late 18th and 19th century, and of the leaders of its freedom struggle during the first decades of the 20th century. As a consequence, it became evident that if India were to find an appropriate place in the community of nations, it would have to redefine its geographical identity and cultural individuality.

The initial process of cross cultural and cross linguistic connections among colonial powers in India in the late 18th century such as the British, the French, the Portuguese and to some extent the Danish and the Dutch, made the Indian intellectual and economic elite aware of a World beyond what they knew. Their cognition was limited perhaps to Turkey at one end and Southeast Asia at the other, till the European powers came to India.

Rajaram Mohan Roy as well as Dwijendranath Tagore, the founder leaders of the Brahma Samaj Movement advocated India’s modernisation and its establishing relations with other socities to meet the foreign objectives. It could be said that this was the first phase of India, developing an International consciousness and aspiring aspirations to become a part of the modern World.

The second phase in the evolution of India’s International consciousness could be traced back to the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. By then several parts of India had become familiar with Europe in general and Britain in particular, over a period of nearly one hundred years. There was fundamental change in the attitude of the British
towards their Indian subjects after the Mutiny, not only in terms of political postures and administrative practices, but also in terms of cultural, intellectual and psychological attitudes.

Dadabhai Naoroji’s contributions to early under currents of India’s foreign policy were three fold: First, India should utilize the existing institutions and political processes to safe guard its interests to the minimum extend possible, as abrupt confrontation, given India’s situations at the time, would be counter-productive, especially when the protagonist was a stronger power. Second, he made India aware that the substantive motivation of Britain’s involvement was economic, and that economic arrangements resulting from Indo-British relations were disadvantageous to India. By doing this he emphasized the importance of economic and technological issues as factors that profoundly affected relation between the states and civil socities. Third, he underlined the importance of the media in creating public opinion, which in turn, could and would influence political processes.

Thus, number of personalities who influenced the evolution of India’s views on its foreign relations. These were the trends and events in the midst of which Indian foreign policy thinking originated. This was the background which set the stage for Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi to lay the foundation of the final stage of India’s relations with the other socities and countires.

One trend is routed in the school of thought led by Chanakya (Kautilya), who believed that politics was mostly a non-moral or amoral phenomenon. He was convinced that interstate relations were a matter of real politik. Second trend from Asoka the Great, who was influenced by
the teachings of Lord Buddha when his violently aggressive imperial policies reached a saturation point in the battle of Kalinga. These two trends have competed for dominance in India’s foreign policy right down to the present times.

Thus, Mahatma Gandhi’s views on politics and International relations were predicted on his firm belief in the inner goodness of human nature, individually as well as collectively. At least, at the collective levels this was an idealistic view of life, which did not conform to the realities of International politics. His contributions and influence nevertheless continued to provide moral fibre to our foreign policy and normative terms of reference which are being progressively accepted by the International Community. One only has to read the objectives of the United Nations charter to realize the logic of his vision in which he envisaged India playing a vital and prominent role.

Sadar Vallabhai Patel was one of those who insisted that India have a permanent professional foreign and civil services, in opposition to the demand from politicians that India need not have a permanent service. This was important because there were number of advocacies that India’s home civil service and Foreign Service should consist of political appointees from time to time. It is Patel’s profound political realism and farsightedness which imparted purposiveness and an institutional underpinning to India’s foreign policy.

7.1 Nehru Period:-

Jawaharlal Nehru was the founding architect of India’s foreign policy in more ways than one. He was the foremost among the leaders, who believed that the Freedom Movement of India could not be isolated
from the broader trends of International politics. Several factors were instrumental in shaping Nehru’s views on foreign policy. That he continued as the Prime Minister of India for nearly 18 years and decided to be in-charge of the foreign affairs portfolio during his entire tenure, was what enabled him to initiate India’s foreign policy and structure it over a period of time endowing it with an under current of continuity which will govern it at its most fundamental level.

Nehru viewed the World through the prism of political, economic and ideological contradictions that led to the two World Wars. Nehru was clear in his mind that there could be no imposed or uniform formula to manage the diversities of the complex World. The consequence of this Nehruvian perception of foreign policy was that International harmony, peace and stability could be achieved only through a process of reasoning rather than confrontation, a commitment to co-operation and an attitude that a difference in socio-political systems between Nation-state need not automatically result in adversarial stances or inter-action.

International relation and diplomacy, in his view, could no longer remain an esoteric exercise aimed at furthering the expansionist or acquisitive objectives of powerful countries against weaker ones. The central aim of India’s foreign policy, in Nehru’s view, had to be democratization of International politics. Nehru’s assessment was that India should keep away from cold-war power politics. It should remain committed to its own democratic terms of reference and National consolidation and co-operative with all countries regardless of their ideological or political affiliations.
The first presumption was that since India had no expansionist or aggressive designs against any other country, it would not face any threats to its unity or territorial integrity. The second presumption was that since India was not taking sides in the cold war and had decided to keep away from power blocs, cold war equations would not have any negative implications for India. The third presumption was that the just political and moral terms of reference articulated by leading powers towards the end of Second World War and the establishment of United Nations would provide both the political and the procedural basis for resolving conflicts and tensions through negotiations and peaceful means on the merits of any point at stake.

The intrigues of the departing British to encourage some princely states to India to resist accession to the Indian Union and the manner in which important World powers responded to Pakistani aggression in Jammu and Kashmir in 1947-48 made Nehru aware of the chemistry of power equations and competing strategic interests.

India played a significant role in resolving crises in the early 1950’s during the Korean War, and after the fall of Dien Bien Phu and French withdrawal from South-Asia. India became the foremost Asian country contributing to United Nations peace keeping operations in the Middle-East. Despite, the United State and Western democracies being disenchanted by India, not joining their Anti-Communist foreign policy and military stance. India was a recipient of economic and technological assistance from them as well as from socialist countries. India also played a leading role in creating the first Afro-Asian collectivity through the Bandung conference in 1955 which ultimately evolved into the Non-aligned Movement of 1961-62.
Nehru’s vision of World order, however, changed in 1956-62 period. This was when Nehru himself gradually acknowledged the compulsions of real politik and power equations affecting India’s interest and environment.

France, England and Israel invaded Egypt, capturing Suez-Canal in 1956. The event occurred soon after Nehru had forged the Afro-Asian Forum through the Colombo and Bandung conferences. India categorically opposed the invasion, siding with the Egyptian Government. Around the same time, however, Nehru chose to ignore Soviet Union’s suppression of the uprising in Hungary against Russian domination.

Soviet leaders, Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin have visited India in 1955. Nehru also had visited the Soviet Union marking the beginning of close political, technological and defence co-operation between the two countries. The Soviet leaders have also given their unqualified support to India on the Kashmir issue.

Pakistan had joined the Western system of military alliances against the Soviet Union between 1954 and 1955, and had also signed a bilateral defence co-operation agreement with the United States in 1954. They indirectly supported Pakistan’s stand on the Kashmir issue.

Nehru thus commenced his awareness of Non-Moral political, strategic and security that have an over-riding impact on International relations.

The United Nations under the United States’ influence refused to decide on the Kashmir issue on the merits of India’s complaint,
disillusioning Nehru and eroding his idealistic World view. This disillusionment was further accentuated between 1956 and 1962, when the Chinese clandestinely built the road across Aksai Chin, part of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, and followed it up by claiming large parts of Indian territory on the border particularly in the Northeastern state of Arunchal Pradesh.

Nehru was the first Asian leader to give formal recognition to the Ma-Tsc-Tung Government in China. He was the foremost advocate of Communist China joining the United Nations. Nehru’s expectation was that India and China as Ancient civilizational entities would structure a co-operative relationship which in turn would make both the countries informed and give a fillip to peace and stability in the Asian region and world affairs.

China’s assertive stanze on its territorial claims profoundly disappointed Nehru, especially in the context of his having agreed to the restoration of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. When Sino-Indian boundry talks held in 1959-1961 failed, leading to the war of October-November 1962, Nehru felt that the ideological and intellectual basis of his foreign policy was destroyed. In his pronouncements and writings between 1962 and 1964, he acknowledged that the calibrated synergy of political realism, which he sought to create in concluding India’s foreign policy was unsuccessful.

He also came around to the view that India’s interest could not be safeguarded purely on the basis of its moral influence and idealistic approach to International relations. He realized that economic and technological capacities backedup by necessary levels of military strength
had to underpin India’s foreign policy. He was, however, not left with enough time to translate or transmute these lessons and perceptions into action. He passed from the scene in May 1964, palpably disillusioned and disappointed.

The period of initial fashioning and formulation of the basic terms of reference of Indian foreign policy ended with Nehru’s death in 1964. Since India’s independence in August 1947, Nehru’s foreign policy had moved from its idealistic and equitable rational phase to more realistic moorings as he progressively adjusted to the emerging realities in World politics. The adjustments made were a response to the pressures born out of these trends on India.

However, it may be noted that India’s foreign policy has not been static and has undergone changes according to exigencies of time and requirements of domestic as well as International situations.

From the discussions made as above, it can be inferred of the basic principles of India’s foreign policy and they are:

1. Non-Alignment: The policy of Non-Alignment proved immensely beneficial to the Country. India not only kept the option open to develop its relations with various countries, but was also able to secure all types of aids from countries or blocks. No doubt, in the initial year, the country has to face lot of difficulties because the two Super Powers did not look at India’s Non-Alignment with favour and interpreted it as extending support to the rival power. However, slowly this hostility towards Non-Alignment died and most of the countries of Asia and Africa after their Independence preferred to adopt this policy. This policy apart from
serving the National interest of India, also went a long way in strengthening the cause of World peace.

2. **Anti-Colonialism and Anti-Imperialism**: This policy was largely the outcome of long sufferance as a colony under the British. Naturally, after Independence India showed full sympathy for all those people at the United Nations and played an important role in the promotion of decolonisation.

The Anti-Colonial and Anti-Imperialist stand of India was not confined to mere pronouncements. On the other hand, India tried to practice it and extended support to Indonesia, Libya, Tunisa, Algeria, Morocco, etc. India also supported the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and helped them to free themselves from the yoke of military regime of Pakistan.

3. **Opposition to Racialism**: India was the first country to highlight the problem of Racial discrimination at the International level and severely condemned the policy of racial segregation being pursued by the Government of South Africa. It sought International intervention to pressurise the White Government of South Africa to abandon the policy of racial discrimination. In 1952, India alongwith twelve other Afro-Asian states, raised the question of apartheid at the United Nations and asserted that its practice not only constituted a fragrant violation of the United Nations charter and the Declaration of Human Rights, but also constituted a serious threat to the World-Peace.

4. **Faith in Peaceful Co-existence and Co-operation**: India tried to promote the spirit of co-operation and peaceful co-existence among the states professing different ideologies. India cultivated very intimate relations with China, Nepal, Egypt, Yugoslavia etc., and played a leading role in the evolution of five principles (Panch-sheel) emphasizing mutual
respect for each other’s territorial integrity and Sovereignty; non-aggression; non-intervention in each others domestic affairs; mutual benefit and equality; and peaceful co-existence. The firm faith in these principles is evident from the fact that despite the Chinese betrayal in 1962, India has persistently expressed its faith in these principles.

5. Special Bias for Asia: India showed social bias for the countries of Asia and tried to promote unity among them by organising number of conferences. Even though India showed a special bias, it tried to create no separate block of the Asian nations. All those conferences of the Asian countries were to promote co-operation among the countries of Asia.

6. Intimate relations with Common-Wealth: India sought the membership of common wealth even after adopting a Republican Constitution because it thought the membership of common wealth shall be beneficial in the economic and other spheres. India played a leading role at the various common-wealth meets.

7. Faith in the United Nations: India as a proponent of peace has shown great faith in the United Nations. It has not only encouraged the settlement of disputes through peaceful methods but also extended full support to the United Nations actions. It has been contributing military as well as other personnel for implementing the decisions of the United Nations. India also contributed contingents to the United Nations Iran-Iraq military Observer Group (UNIIMOC) constituted to supervise ceasefire between Iran-Iraq. India is keen to make the United Nations more effective instrument for the preservations of International peace and security and pleaded for expansion of Security Council.

8. Support for Disarmament: India has been a staunch supporter of disarmament for two reasons; Firstly, India regarded disarmament as vital to end prevailing International tension. Secondly, it prevented unproductive expenditure on production of arms which can be fruitfully
utilised for development and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the people. India supported Nuclear disarmament though against NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty).

9. **Peaceful use of Nuclear Energy**: India is in favour of development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It has favoured transfer of peaceful nuclear technology to developing countries to speed up the process of their development.

10. **Special Emphasis on Means**: India lays great emphasis on purity of means. India has consistently held that the means for the attainment of national interest must be pious. India has always nourished very high ideals and has never aspired to acquire territory of other countries. This is evident from the fact that India returned to Pakistan her territory which she had captured during the 1965 and 1971 wars.

**7.2 Lal Bahadur Shastri Period**:–

Lal Bahadur Shastri was the unlikely initiator of real politik in Indian foreign policy. He brought the important principles of realism and practically to bear on India’s foreign policy and defence planning process.

It was remarkable that Shastri guided India through a war and its consequences and also dealt with international power politics with fineness and sophistication and a profound commitment to India’s national interests.

India was reorienting its foreign and defence policies on the basis of the lessons learnt from the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Soviet Chinese antagonisms in the aftermath of the Cuban crisis had heightened regional cold war tensions.
While he acknowledged the normative requirements of moral principles governing international politics, he had become equally conscious that international politics and inter-state relations were essentially a non-moral phenomenon rooted in the chemistry of power equations. It is in this context that he faced two conflicts with Pakistan between April and October 1965. It was the manner in which he faced and resolved these crises and safeguarded Indian interests that constituted his contributions to India’s foreign and defence policies. His contribution was of qualitative significance, impacting on orientations of India’s foreign policy for the remaining decades of the twentieth century.

India was in the process of fashioning new political equations with the other power centres of the world and was also engaged in strengthening its defence capacities to manage antagonistic relations with China. The situation was exacerbated by the growing nexus between China and Pakistan, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s foreign policy initiatives. By 1965, Pakistan and China had raised the levels of their foreign relations to formal arrangements for defence and strategic co-operation. Bhutto had ceded the Northern and Northwestern portions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to China, improving China’s strategic position vis-à-vis India, on India’s Northern border abutting the Ladakh region. Pakistan by 1965, interpreted the obligations of the Western powers towards it, because of the Pakistan’s membership of the SEATO and CENTO to mean that they were bound to assist Pakistan in case of an Indo-Pakistan military conflict. There was no formal questioning of this Pakistani interpretation by the United States and its allies in the NATO, the CENTO and the SEATO.
Pakistan had also successfully initiated the creation of political defence and economic co-operation mechanisms on the principle of Islamic solidarity, which ultimately evolved into the Organisation of Islamic conference. These initiatives were directed towards Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and the Countries of Gulf. Barring Afghanistan, all these Muslim Countries were already involved in economic co-operation and defence alliance arrangements with the United States. The evolving macro-level strategic environment also posed a threat to Indian security concerns. China became a nuclear power in 1964, after successfully conducting nuclear weapons tests and acquiring missile capacities. Parallel to this development, multilateral negotiations for the finalisation and the implementation of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty were reaching their critical stage. This treaty was discriminatory as it was drafted, stipulating prohibition against nuclear weapon capacity being acquired by those countries which do not possess nuclear weapons by a certain date i.e. January 1968, while leaving the freedom of option to all nuclear weapon’s states not only to retain but also to improve their weapons arsenal.

Meanwhile, Moscow, while taking full advantage of the increasing economic, technological and defence dependence of India on Soviet Union, was showing inclinations towards cultivating Pakistan also. This inclination was predicted on Bhutto’s populist foreign policy pronouncements which contained elements of leftist leaning. Moreover, another factor inspiring Moscow was the Soviet motivation to compete with China and the United States to gain influence with Pakistan as it was located at a geostrategically important point i.e. on Soviet Central Asia’s Southern and Southwestern flank. These changes in Soviet foreign policy
had occurred with Leonid Breznev and Alexii Kosygin replacing Nikita Khrushchev at the top of hierarchy.

With Bhutto’s increasing influence in his country’s power structure, Pakistan had become more active in asserting its claims on Jammu and Kashmir.

Prominent Jammu and Kashmir leader, Sheikh Abdullah was released by India had established contacts with the United States Government, with Pakistani authorities as well as with representatives of the Saudi Arabian Government. At this stage, he gave indications that he would welcome Pakistan’s and the United States’ intervention in Jammu and Kashmir reverse that state’s accession to the Indian Republic. In this context Sheikh Abdullah had met CIA official, Duane R. Claridge in Paris and later in Saudi Arabia.

The public knowledge has now became the reason for Pakistan being confident about getting United States support in case of conflict with India was the secret assurance given to Pakistan as early as 1962. The United States had informed Pakistan that its security guarantees to Pakistan against Communist aggression given in 1959 would be extended to cover conflicts with India also. Between 1963 and the beginning of 1965, Pakistan was assisted in building up its military strength, particularly its army and air force by the United States, which supplied to it the modern armaments and weapons, including Patton tanks and strike aircrafts.

There were also tentative attempts by the United States at weakening Afro-Asian solidarity and the non-aligned movement with
Washington encouraging an economically resurgent Japan to float the idea of an Asia South Pacific Co-operation (ASPAC) Forum to encourage economic interaction and political equations between Asian countries and the Countries of the Far East and the Pacific Region. The organisation was to be the constituent element of the policy for containing China and Soviet Union. The idea was formally proposed just before a scheduled conference of African and Asian countries in Algeria, late in 1964 or in the first half of 1965.

Lal Bahadur Shastri remained steadfast in India’s commitment to non-alignment and to its determination to become self-reliant as far as its economic development and defence preparedness were concerned. He was not responsive to the ASPAC initiative of Japan as he correctly perceived it to be a covert challenge to the non-aligned movement. He directed Indian negotiators involved in discussions on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to ensure that in its final form it met the objectives of genuine non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

Lal Bahadur Shastri’s foreign policy may be weighed on his ability to content Pakistan’s advancement under “Operation Gibrattar” by his swift reaction and the non-availability of China’s support to Pakistan as the China’s foreign and defence policies have always been Sinocentric.

Shastri’s reaction was decisive and strategically perceptive. Most importantly his decision had the high virtue of all military doctrines; a total element of surprise. Shastri ordered a direct attack on West Pakistan across the international frontiers, directing Indian forces to aim for Lahore and for major military centres in Western Punjab. Shastri’s calculation that pressure on West Pakistani territory would blunt the
thrust on the Pakistani attack on Jammu and Kashmir proved to be correct. Pakistan had to pull back its forces and divert them to prevent Indian penetration of Pakistani territory. Indian forces succeeded in moving into Pakistani territory all along the borders coming with in striking distance of Lahore. The Indian armoured forces neutralized and destroyed the main Pakistani armoured division at the battle of Assal Uttar, otherwise known as the Battle of Khemkaran.

By not taking any action against East Pakistan, Shastri avoided any provocation for a possible Chinese intervention in the conflict. This was a politically astute decision on his part, which effectively neutralized any Pakistani expectations of China's support. Shastri thus managed to shift the focus of the conflict from Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan's Metropolitan territories. Both the United States and Soviet Union became anxious to ensure a Cease-fire through negotiations. Washington's attempts did not evoke any positive response from New Delhi because American weapons had been used against India which was provided to Pakistan as a part of defence assistance against the assurances given that, those weapons would not be used against India.

Another factor which prejudiced India against United States mediatory efforts during the 1965 War was that Washington did not inform New Delhi about possible Pakistani intentions despite being aware of them. Pakistan's deployment of American Patton tanks in the Rann of Kutch and other military equipment of United States origin were brought to the notice of the United States Defence supply Mission in India. There was also a general intelligence assessment that the United States was kept informed Pakistani's intentions of a short and quick operation in Jammu and Kashmir to which the United States defence and higher political
establishments were not averse. The United States did not send any political signal to Pakistan 1965 to cease and desist from military adventurism against India.

Consequently, urgent and informal discussions between the Soviet Union and the United States, led Washington endorse a Soviet mediatory effort, with the United States guaranteeing that it would persuade Pakistan to be responsive to such an effort. Lal Bahadur Shastri responded positively to Kosygin’s messages which led to Indo-Pakistan meeting under Soviet mediation in Tashkent in the then Soviet Uzbekistan. Kosygin personally presided over this tripartite meeting. Negotiations were complex and tense.

While the Tashkent agreement ended the conflict and revived a tenuous atmosphere of peace between India and Pakistan, it clearly did not provide a basis for durable normalcy or stable solutions between the two countries. Taking all factors into account, Lal Bahadur Shastri’s achievements at Tashkent were (1) bringing an end of war (2) creating an international image of reasonableness for India (3) projecting India as a credible military power capable of safeguarding its national interests and sustaining Indo-Soviet relations, which were very necessary to protect India’s economic and defence interests in the cold war atmosphere.

Lal Bahadur Shastri’s approach was not aggressive, expansionist, acquisitive or competitive dimensions. He brought the important principles of realism and practicability to bear on our foreign policy and defence planning processes.
7.3 Indra Gandhi Period:-

Indra Gandhi marked a radical shift in India’s foreign policy orientation. She turned India from an idealistic player into a force to be reckoned with.

She took all major policy decisions in consultation with other prominent members of the Government and Party. With the passage of time she asserted herself and started formulating foreign policy with the assistance of some of close and trusted colleagues and friends. The process of developing close relations with Super Powers continued. As a result she was able to secure large financial and military assistance from USA. She also cultivated intimate relations with Soviet Union which culminated in the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in 1971. Though under Indra Gandhi also, the basic principles of foreign policy, as enunciated by Nehru were observed, but the policy grew certainly more pragmatic. This period also witnessed a great tilt towards Soviet Union and some what cooling of relations with the United States.

To sum up her career, India’s basic political achievement was a success in removing the political uncertainties in India. She dispelled negative progress and anticipations both domestically and in the international community. She changed the moorings of India’s foreign policy and security policy from idealism to practicality and political realism, while sustaining their basic ideological frame work. She sustained India’s position and influenced at the United Nations, in the non-aligned movement and other multilateral fora. She made India increasingly self reliant in the spheres of nuclear and space technology and other related fields involving high-tech know-how. She guided
India’s economic policies in a manner that made the country progressively self-sufficient in food-grains and in the Agricultural sector. She stabilized the Southeast Asian security environment ensuring India a position of strength.

The 1971 Victory in the War against Pakistan restored national self-confidence with regard to India’s ability to ensure its security. The trauma of 1962 has been remedied. Levels of national consensus on security and foreign relations had reached a stage, where the Government re-acquired a capacity for flexibility and forward planning in these spheres for the first time since the Nehru Era.

Indra, recast the terms of reference of India’s foreign policy according to the realities of international politics, power equations and regional complexities and attitudes. She structured India’s foreign and security policies in clearly Indo-Centric terms, avoiding getting involved in futile exercises in global prominence. She enhanced India’s defence capacities and self-reliance in the sphere of defence equipment in the maximum extent possible, while at the same time ensuring the flow of such supplies and technologist on the basis of carefully crafted political equations with important foreign countries. She galvanised India’s programmes of nuclear technology development both for peaceful and defence purposes. The 1974 Pokhran nuclear explosion was the first step towards India becoming a nuclear weapons power in May 1998. She faced external pressures and opposition to this Indian endeavour with resilience and courage.

She redefined the ideology of non-alignment more precisely in terms of the interest of the developing countries. The two foreign policy
decisions on which she could be faulted are: her ambiguous response to the Russian intrusion into Afghanistan and her giving active support to Sri Lankan Tamil militants.

History will judge her as a political leader who safeguarded Indian National Interests with determination and farsightedness.

7.4 Morarji Desai Period:-

Morarji Desai sought to base India’s foreign policy on Gandhian moral principles, without relating them to political realities. He aimed at structuring India’s security policies on the principles of non-interference and abjuration of the use of force. He rejected the over-riding considerations of real politik and power equations in the context of foreign relations and fashioning of India’s security policies. He sought to practice non-alignment in the strictest terms without taking into consideration the India’s political and security needs in the context of the unavoidable complexities of international politics.

Desai’s expectation was that the moral high ground which India would occupy by this process would result in an equally positive response from all the power centres of the World. This would result in India’s fundamental interest being safe guarded without being subject to strategic implications of the cold war and great power interaction.

At the most fundamental level, his contributions had a limited impact. The unavoidable conclusion is that his approach to foreign policy and security issues was unrealistic.
7.5 Rajiv Gandhi Period:-

Rajiv Gandhi fashioned a foreign policy without being burdened by too much historical memory or predetermined ideological considerations. Rajiv Gandhi continued the policy of Nehru and Indira Gandhi and reaffirmed his faith in the United Nations, the non-aligned movement and opposition to colonialism.

As regards India’s relations with two Super Powers, was based upon mutual co-operation, friendship and vital support when needed from the Soviet Union, with the United States, a multifaceted relationship attaching importance to our economic, technological and cultural cooperation.

Rajiv Gandhi also indicated his determination to work for narrowing international economic disparities, develop closer relations with immediate neighbours, pursue policy of non-interference, peaceful co-existence and non-alignment, promised to pursue the concept of common regional development of South Asia, improvement and strengthening of relations with China, United States and Soviet Union, to carry on relentless crusade against arms race, to promote dialogue between the North and South to build a just World economic order. He faithfully pursued these objectives and not only improved relations with United States of America and other neighbouring countries, but also made frantic efforts to promote internal peace, nuclear disarmament and greater economic co-operation between North and South.

From the above, it is felt that Rajiv Gandhi’s contribution to India’s foreign and security policies are: (1) Despite his lack of experience, he successfully safeguarded the basic elements of India’s
national interests in all its dimensions. (2) He successfully coped with the problems resulting from the transitions in World politics from 1985 to 1990. (3) He initiated diversifications of Indian orientations in foreign policy, anticipating the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new international power equations. (4) He introduced technological, economic content into India’s foreign policy, responding to international developments in these respects. (5) While attempting to bring about nuclear and general disarmament, he ensured for India the required nuclear and missile options to safe guard national security. (6) He initiated the normalisation of relations with China. (7) Despite the intractability in Indo-Pakistan relations, he managed to keep them stable and normal to the extent feasible.

It has to be acknowledged that he did not understand the physical complexities of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. But the solutions he attempted and which were psychologically backed up by the Indian armed forces might have been successful had he not lost power in December 1989. Had been re-elected, this criticism might not have been valid.

7.6 I.K.Gujral Period:-

I.K.Gujral was appreciated for his idealism and commitment to peace. But, he was over optimistic and was willing to make compromises with other countries in a one-sided manner.

Gujral reopened the dialogue with Pakistan which had broken down in January 1994, both at the political and official levels. He met Nawaz Sheriff during the SAARC conferences in Mali and Colombo, and ensured the resumption of high level bilateral contacts and institutional
negotiations between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan. He negotiated and signed in December 1996, an important agreement with the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Hasina Wajed on the sharing of waters of the Gangetic Basin below the Farraka Barrage. He was also instrumental in tariff and non-tariff barriers on Bangladesh’s exports to India.

Gujarat’s credibility with the Sri Lankan Government was high because of his past role in withdrawing the Indian Peace Keeping Force from Srim Lanka. He also oversaw the signing of an Indo-Sri Lanka bilateral trade treaty, which used the guiding principles of the South Asia Preferential Trade arrangements of the SAARC as terms of reference; consequently Indo-Sri Lankan relations stabilised. Because of Gujarat, the relations between India and Nepal; India and Bhutan became normal by his close contacts with both the countries.

7.7 Narasimha Rao Period:-

Narasimha Rao was one of the most effective and creative influence on Indian foreign policy after Nehru, inspite of tremendous flux that characterised the post Cold War Era.

Rao’s contributions to Indian foreign and security policies are :- (1) Because of the disintegration of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, Rao consciously developed equations with all the important centres of power in the World namely the United States, Western Europe and Japan while sustaining relation with the Russian Federation (2) He initiated entirely a new and expanded connections with the Countries of the Southeast Asian region, with South Africa and Israel, and the newly independent Central Asian Republics. (3) He retrieved India’s relations with Gulf Countries and Iran, which had drifted into the doldrums
because of the V.P. Singh Government policies during the Gulf War. (4) He took concrete steps to improve and normalize relations with China and Pakistan. He signed a landmark accord for maintaining peace and tranquility on the Sino-Indian line of actual control (LAC) in Sept 1993 in Beijing. This was meant to be the basis on which negotiations for the final settlement of the problematic boundary question were to follow. (5) He met Prime Minister Nawaz Sheriff of Pakistan seven times and sustained bilateral official dialogue with Pakistan from 1991 to Feb 1994 which resulted in a number of agreements on confidence building measures and countering cross-border narcotics smuggling and cross border crimes. (6) A fair amount of progress was made towards agreements for the mutual withdrawal of troops in Siachen and demarcation of the Sir Greek boundaries, but these could not be finalized primarily due to political compulsions in India and Pakistan. (7) Rao established personal equations with Yeltsin, President George Bush and President Jiang Zemin. (8) Rao was the creator of the required equilibrium in India’s foreign policy in the post Cold-War World. And more importantly this equilibrium was Indo-Centric, with a clear perception of national interests and priorities. (9) He improved the defence preparedness of the country, both in terms of its operational capacities and strategic clout. He gave further impetus to policies related to India’s move towards nuclear weaponization and enhancing its missile defence capacities. (10) He initiated an extensive and dynamic programme of economic liberalization, reforms and restructuring, which he managed by taking the unorthodox step of moving in Dr. Manmohan Singh, and economist and administrator of repute, as Finance Minister. A part of this programme was to give highest priority to economic objectives in India’s foreign policy, to mobilize flows of investment and technology from abroad to
India, and implement policies that would expand the Indian markets and improve India's access to foreign markets.

Rao participated in summits of the United Nations Security Council, the non-alignment movement, the common wealth and the SAARC. He advocated the objectives and the ideological basis of these multilateral organizations, should be redefined in order to make them more representative. He suggested expanded representation of member countries on the permanent seats in the Security Council. He continuously pointed out the irrelevance of older political and ideological terms of reference of the non-aligned movement in the post Cold-War World. He boldly recommended the need to formulate new principles and define new objectives for the Jakarta and Bogota Non-Alignment Movement summits in 1992 and 1995 respectively.

7.8 Atal Behari Vajpayee Period:

Atal Behari Vajpayee has managed India's foreign and security policies in an extremely critical period, but his performance has been characteised by adhocism ambiguities and contradictions.

The Bharatiya Janata Party led coalition Government under Atal Behari Vajpayee, while adhering to the traditional principles of Indian foreign policy laid special emphasis on :

1. Need to exercise nuclear option in the interest of national security. It affirmed its resolve to oppose all attempts to impose a hegemonistic nuclear regime by means of CTBT, CMCR and MTCR. 2. To pursue vigorously the matter of India's permanent membership of the Security Council. 3. To promote closer regional relations through development of South Asian Association for regional co-operation and impose bilateral
relations with neighbouring countries. 4. To persuade Pakistan to abandon its policy of hostile interference in our internal affairs by supporting insurgents and terrosist groups. 5. To improve relations with China by seeking speedy resolution of the outstanding border problem. 6. To support a United Sri Lanka so that the legitimate aspirations of Tamil people are fully accommodated. 7. To maintain warm and friendly relations with Nepal and to develop new avenues of fruitful co-operation with that country. 8. To improve relations with Mynamar and promote greater co-operation in the field of defence, security, economy and culture. 9. To further consolidate friendly ties with Bhutan. 10. To improve relations with Bangladesh and impress on the Bangladesh Authorities, the need to check illegal infiltrations into India.

In short the Bharatiya Janata Party Government has reiterated its commitments to peace among all countries and prosperity of the people of the World. It is in favour of India playing more effective role in the World affairs in keeping with its status.

Based on the above emphasis, Vajpayee followed a policy consisting of three elements. First, he refused to succumb to pressures generated by sanctions against India. Second, he initiated a series of high level diplomatic moves to persuade major powers and the International Community in general that India’s acquisition of missile capacities and nuclear weapons was not aimed at disrupting or destabilizing the international non-proliferation order. His enuanced advocacy was that India’s nuclear weaponisation apart from serving its primary security interests was also aimed at making international non-proliferation arrangements non-discriminatory. He reiterated India’s commitments to join in efforts at comprehensive non-proliferation and elimination of
weapons of mass destruction. The third element in this policy was a decision to reassure the World about India refraining from generating nuclear arm race. He unilaterally declared a moratorium on further nuclear tests. He also announced India’s adherence to the principle of “No first use of nuclear weapons”, adding that India would further negotiations aimed at various facets of non-proliferation.

He created institutional mechanism such as National Security Council, a National Security Advisory Board consisting of experts outside the Government and created the post of National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister, to constantly monitor developments in the security environment, make assessments and suggest policy options. These institutional arrangements created in 1999, are functioning even now in a smooth manner.

Vajpayee’s management of India’s relations with Pakistan had been a roller coaster ride. The nuclear tests in 1998 led to Pakistan conducting its own tests bringing out into the open its clandestine nuclear weaponisation programme. This strategic and security terms, has been a positive development, denying Pakistan the advantage of secrecy and ambiguity about its nuclear weapons and missile capacities.

Responding to an invitation by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Shariff, Vajpayee boldly decided to visit Pakistan by road in February 1999, in the expectation that Pakistan would deal with India in a more self assured manner following its nuclear tests. He also made a psychologically and emotionally important gesture by visiting, “Minar-e-Pakistan”, the tower commemorating the creation of Pakistan in Lahore and made a public speech there, affirming that India accepted
Pakistan’s existence as a Sovereign political entity and that there were no under currents in India’s policies to undo partition.

He made a memorandum of understanding with Nawaz Shariff for expert level consultation aimed at avoiding accidental nuclear confrontation and ensuring nuclear risk reduction, besides continuous bilateral discussions should be resumed to deal with all major issues affecting Indo-Pak relations including those related to Kashmir.

Inspite of his strenuous efforts to normalise the situation, the Pakistani armed forces indulged in a large scale intrusion across the Line of Control (LOC) in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir in April-May 1999. Indian armed forces had to under take a harrowing and difficult military counter-offensive to push Pakistan forces back across the LOC. He launched a diplomatic campaign to expose Pakistani duplicity and malicious intentions, a campaign in which he succeeded.

The major powers of the World led by the United States, backed India’s resistance to Pakistani aggression and pressurised Nawaz Shariff and General Pervez Musharraf to pull back in Kargil. This diplomatic initiative intensified the phase of India developing closer relations with the Bill Clinton administration in the United States.

Musharraf’s taking over the reins in Pakistan, through a military coup, created further tensions and complications between India and Pakistan, especially due to the fact that he was the military architect of Pakistani aggression in Kargil. Vajpayee’s Pakistan policy became impracticable and preachy. He invited Musharraf to a summit at Agra in 2001. Several initiatives to normalize Indo-Pakistan relation were taken
unilaterally by India, but all became nullified, because of Pakistan’s attitude of false propaganda and adamant attitude of settling the Kashmir issue.

The emergence of International terrorism, which posed a major threat to the stability and security of states, continuing tension with Pakistan, deliberately engineered non-implementation of World Treaty Organisations arrangements by advanced market economy countries.

His Pakistan policy has characterised by two features of hot and cold, and a lack of decisiveness in responding to Pakistan’s terrorist subversion of the Indian state.

The decision was taken between him and Musharaff, about jointly resisting terrorism and recommencing official level talks on all items on the Indo-Pak agenda after the SAARC summit in January 2004.

Vajpayee has transcended narrower political considerations and has laid claim to the Persona of a Statesman, a claim which cannot be denied.

7.9 Manmohan Singh Period:-

When the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government headed by Manmohan Singh came to power in May 2004, there were expectations that it would made a course of correction in foreign policy. But quite early, even at the time of the formulation of the common minimum programme (CMP or NCMP) it was evident that the UPA leadership was more likely to follow the National Democratic Alliance Government’s (headed by Atul Behari Vajpayee) new foreign policy than to bring in fresh thinking or make changes. On relations with the United States of America (USA), the CMP reflected the confusion of
the UPA leadership. The CMP gives the impression that the
independence of Indian foreign policy is subject to pursuance of relations
with the USA.

However, credit must go to the UPA Government for substantially
empowering the country’s relations with China and Pakistan. In both
these, the Government has been able to bring in new perspectives and
new ideas. Also welcome the spurt in the triangular relations among
India, Russia and China and their joint stands in favour of multilateral
approach to global issues and of demarcatization of international
relations. But on critical issues on which the BJP led Government made
fundamental changes, the UPA Government has faithfully followed the
path of its predecessor.

The UPA government has not clarified what its nuclear weapon
policy is. In the absence of any elaboration or policy statement as well as
the lack of any evidence of evaluation or fresh thinking on the issue, one
has to assume that it continues lock stock and barred the policy on
nuclear weapons made by the NDA government alongwith the
assumptions, doctrines and strategies. There has been practically no
decision in India on this matter after UPA government came to power.
Apprently, the endorsement of the United States nuclear doctrines and
strategies given by the NDA government is continued by the present
government. While it has been stated that there is no change from the
previous government’s stands of support to the United States’ National
Missile Defence, the government is less forthcoming than the United
States itself as to what stage the negotiations are.
Common Minimum Programme states, “Traditional ties with West Asia will be given a fresh start”. But the UPA government has given no evidence of any fresh start in its West Asia policy, especially with Iraq as well as its relations with Palestine and Israel.

Implicitly, the UPA government has followed the Iraq policy of its predecessor; while it has taken no initiative or done any fresh thinking on the issue, it continues to support tacitly and sometimes openly the American policy in Iraq. While continuing its confusion about the restoration of sovereignty to the Iraqi people, it is keen to co-operate with the installed government after the controversial elections in Iraq. In the International Conference on Iraq held in Brussels in June, India’s Minister of External Affairs thought it fit to legitimize the occupation and condemn the resistance.

It is true that the tone and frequency of lip service to the Palestinian cause have been changed to create an impression of great support. But the lack of enthusiasm shown by New Delhi, when the Palestinian President, Mahamud Abbas visited New Delhi was generally perceived as showing a doctrine of interest in the Palestinian cause.

On the other hand immediately after Arafat’s death the UPA government intensified its contacts and deepened its relations with Israel. The UPA government seems to have no problems with the ideological underpinnings that cemented India-Israel relations during the NDA regime. Perhaps more disturbingly it seems to approve of the role assigned to Israel in West Asia by the United States.
The United States has officially announced that it is its policy, “To help India to become a major World Power.” The meaning is clear. The United States wants India to be its permanent military ally. It can be proved from the statements of United States leaders that for their relations with India are essentially military and primarily to serve United States interests. Like BJP led government, the present led government also seems to have no problem with this and that seems to be why military relations between the two countries have been considerably strengthened under the UPA government. The UPA government has matched the NDA government or even advanced in subservience to the United States and is ready to serve the strategic objectives of the United States. “The current assumption is that India’s ambitions will mesh-in with United States objectives.” The United States (US) has decided that India should have a permanent place with it, by signing the new frame work agreement on defence co-operation. The UPA government has accepted the role of Regional Sheriff in Asia, promoting US strategic interest in the region. This is an agreement that subverts the interests of India.

India should promote multilateralism and keep a distance form and oppose the unilateralist agenda of the United States, as the CMP explicitly asks the government to.

The CMP of the UPA government is as follows with regard to foreign policy:

The UPA government will pursue an independent foreign policy keeping in mind its past traditions. This policy will seek to promote multipolarity in World relations and oppose all attempts at unilateralism.
The UPA government has not pursued an independent foreign policy except in a few areas. Strikingly though, the CMP seemed to admit that an independent foreign policy was qualified by and subject to relations with the United States, when it said, even as it pursues closer engagements and relations with the USA, the UPA government will maintain independence of India’s foreign policy positions in all regional and global issues.

In order to pursue an independent foreign policy as the CMP pledges, the UPA government will have to make substantial course corrections and changes. The UPA government’s foreign policy has considerably deviated from the path described in the CMP.

Major revisions and changes are required in three areas: Nuclear weapon policy, West Asian policy and most crucially, in the overarching India-US relations. The UPA government is steadfastly aligning itself with the USA. This is a clear contravention of the CMP.

The UPA government should have clarified at the outset whether the statement of nuclear deterrent in the CMP was in consonance with the nuclear doctrine fashioned under the NDA government. If the foundational purpose of Indian nuclear weapons by any state or entity against India and its forces what would be the minimum deterrent required for credible “Second” strike capacity for punitive retaliation against any state or entity which can include the US or NATO.

The vacillation and ambiguity from the beginning on “no first use” in the doctrine yielded virtual abandonment of the policy, making it conditional on number of variables. The UPA government has not clarified on this. The UPA government’s pursuit of its predecessor’s
nuclear weapon policy and its addition of new commitments to the US to gain admittance to the nuclear club have further compromised India’s national interests and strategic autonomy.

With regard to India’s participation in or collaboration with the US National Missile Defence, the UPA government has been less than forthcoming. There are adverse implications of India’s participation in this US programme. The American Missile Defence Programme will push nuclear arms race to a new and potentially more destabilizing stage. The strategic policy in the US is under going paradigm shift whereby it could consider resorting to the use of nuclear weapons in a pre-emptive mode.

India’s middle path policy on Iraq was the result of replacement of principles with all ill-conceived notions of pragmatism. The UPA government appears to have considerable confusion about evaluating the situation in Iraq while showing an indecent haste in engaging with the new government there.

The series of conflicting and ambiguous statements on “the restoration of Sovereignty” in Iraq raises questions about the UPA government’s assessment about Iraq and its occupation.

The UPA government should retrace its steps from the virtual support it gives to the US occupation of Iraq. It should take seriously the Iraqi people’s opposition to continuing occupation and refrain from describing the resistance only as the work of terrorist elements. The failure to adjudge the situation in Iraq is one of the reasons for the un critical acceptance of the US positions.
The UPA government’s policy towards Iraq, particularly the execution of its former President Saddam Hussein created the impression that India was trying to please the US. That neither the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh nor the Congress President Sonia Gandhi said, “One word to condemn the execution of a great friend of India”, when there were strong protests from the rest of the World, reflects badly on India’s foreign policy.

The USA, India and Israel were the three countries, which were targeted by the common enemy of terrorism i.e. Islamic militancy. An alliance among them was necessary. The UPA government has its own valid assumptions and convincing reasons for the kind of relationship, it has with Israel, or it has not shared them with the people of India. This naturally calls for a review of its policy on Israel with a view to refashioning it, based on principles and better assumptions of the West Asia situation.

The considerable boost that India gives through arms purchases to Israel’s economy has obviously adverse implications for the Palestinian cause because it is this economy which drives Israel’s War mission. While supporting peace efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, India should not hesitate to condemn Israeli’s continuing atrocities against the Palestinians. It should demand the dismantling of the Apartheid Wall decreed illegal by the International Court of Justice.

The CMP says,”the UPA government, will oppose all attempts at Unilateralism.” In the present World, Unilateralism actually means”the actions of the United States”. The mandate in the CMP is clear: The UPA government should oppose all unilateralist actions of the US. But there is
little evidence that the UPA government is willing to do so. Instead, it has endorsed most of the Unilateralist actions of the US government.

America’s conduct of War on terror after the September 11 attacks is a blatant display of Unilateralism. An ultimatum known as the Bush Doctrine was issued to the World in general and to the Taliban in particular which led directly to the invasion of Afghanistan and indirectly to an assault on Democracy at home and abroad.

US’s invasion of Iraq was the most arrogant display of Unilateralism and in blatant defiance of International Law and the U.N. Charter. From this, it is evident that Multilateralism and Unilateralism are just methods for the US, they use them a la carte, as it suits them. The United Nations is just an instrument at the service of the American policy.

If it is serious about opposing, “All attempts at Unilateralism” as the CMP lay down, it can begin by abrogating the impunity agreement, it has signed with the US on the International Criminal Court. That will show that India is not for the US, Unilaterally defined International Law and System against War Crimes and Genocide.

In the recent major initiatives taken by New Delhi in pursuit of its collaboration with the Unilateralist agenda of the USA, there is a marginalization of the Ministry of External Affairs. It seems to have little do withthese initiatives which have profound implications for foreign policy. The agreements entered into by the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister who is In-charge of Atomic Energy is also new commitments on foreign policy with apparently little involvements of the
Minister of External Affairs. The independence of our foreign policy is considerably circumscribed by conditions imposed by the USA on defence and nuclear policies. These conditions invariably serve US interests and purposes.

To compete with terrorism, the countries should think that a UN led global System should also be set up to deal with the new threats of terrorism and challenges on the basis of UN Charter and International Law, while establishing new security frame work.

7.10 India's Regional Relations under UPA Government:

The UPA government can claim substantial progress in relations with our two most important neighbours, Pakistan and China. It has also to be commended for the promotion of the triangular relations among Russia, India and China. This is perhaps the only area of foreign policy where it can be credited with pursuit of long-term interests and not following policies of the NDA government shaped by ill-conceived notions and built on false premises. In this area the government has followed the directions in the Common Minimum Programme.

In the middle of February 2004 India and Pakistan agreed on a road map to carry forward the composite dialogue to resolve all their differences. This was in pursuance of the decision taken after the meeting between Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf in Islamabad during the SAARC Summit on January 6. The road map was sketched keeping in mind the general elections in India expected in April-May and perhaps anticipating no change in regime.
The two sides agreed to hold expert-level talks on nuclear Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) as agreed in the Lahore Declaration of February 1999. This was the first time the Musharraf government incorporated in its official policy any element of the Lahore Declaration, which President Musharraf had earlier criticized for having only a ‘passing’ reference to Kashmir. On nuclear CBMs, the Lahore Declaration had said, respective governments ‘shall take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and discuss concept and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the4 nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict’.

The joint statement said that both countries were committed to promoting progress ‘towards a common objective of peace, security and economic development for their peoples and for future generations’. Both sides agreed that they would approach the composite dialogue with the sincere desire to discuss and arrive at a peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides.

Having moved to the brink of war in 2002-03, the two countries had to step back in order to make peace and make a new start to resolve their outstanding differences. In fact they had to step back to 1998 and pick up the threads from the composite dialogue interrupted by the Kargil war. It was a sad commentary on both sides that six precious years had been lost. They had come not only to the brink of war, but as many feared, to the brink of nuclear war.

The political climate in which Vajpayee and Musharraf met at the beginning of 2004 was much better than it had been in Lahore in 1999 or
Agra in 2001. Lahore took place barely nine months after the India-Pakistan nuclear tests. That summit did launch a bus service between Delhi and Lahore and it made some fragile attempts for nuclear confidence-building and transparency. However, the Pakistan army, in an effort to undermine the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif subverted the peace process by a border intrusion into Kargil. This led to a war in the shadow of the threat of nuclear weapons. Two years later, at Agra, both sides appeared to take hard positions with Pakistan insisting on finding solutions to the ‘core issue’ of Kashmir and India insisting on an end to ‘cross-border terrorism’.

While the Indian side could not claim to have done its homework for either Lahore or Agra, it did make systematic preparation for the Islamabad meeting. In November 2003 both India and Pakistan took steps to reduce tensions and normalize relations. The countries declared a ceasefire along the line of control, agreed to increase representation in the diplomatic missions of both countries and the resumption of travel links between the two. Then came the Islamabad SAARC Summit.

The UPA government followed carefully the time-table for the composite dialogue with Pakistan. In doing so it brought in some fresh elements.

However, at the end of the second round of the composite dialogue, a year after the process was launched it was evident that both sides were still sticking to their stated positions and divergent approaches. But they clearly expressed their commitment to continuation of the composite dialogue.
President Musharraf’s visit to New Delhi in April 2005 that began as ‘cricket diplomacy’ escalated into a virtual summit. The three-day trip was the first by the Pakistani leader to India after the formal summit in Agra in 2001 and also the first after the UPA government came to power. The engagement at the highest levels of the government might have shown little in terms of tangible progress on substantive issues, but it gave both sides a sense of satisfaction and generated a lot of goodwill in favour of peace in the subcontinent. It was a charm offensive by Musharraf from the time he virtually solicited an invitation to during, and after, the visit.

The highlight of Musharraf’s visit to India was a joint statement, which described the peace between the two countries as ‘irreversible’. It was no secret that both sides reaffirmed their standard positions. While the Indian side wanted to give more emphasis to the issue of terrorism, Pakistan wanted the focus to be on the ‘core’ of Kashmir. The joint statement adequately reflected the main concerns of the two sides. The statement pledged to address the Kashmir issue in a ‘sincere and purposeful and forward looking manner for a final settlement’. The two sides also reaffirmed the commitment made in the joint statement issued by Musharraf and Vajpayee in Islamabad in January 2004 and after the meeting of Musharraf with Manmohan Singh on 24 September 2004 in New York. Both these statements had committed Pakistan to stop giving aid and succour to terrorist groups operating from its territory. The joint statement said that cooperation between the two sides along the Line of Control would continue. It agreed to the setting up of more meeting points for divided families, increasing trade, facilitating pilgrimages to either country’s and cultural interaction.
Perhaps the most important element in the statement is the agreement on the basic approach to resolving the Kashmir issue. As Musharraf put it, there are three formulations on Kashmir – one that borders can’t be redrawn, as Singh has said; two, the LOC can’t be made into the international border, as Pakistan insists and Singh agrees; and three, the borders must be rendered irrelevant by making them ‘soft’ – a position first expressed by Singh. This means both sides have moved a long way from their stated positions and defined new parameters within which a solution must be sought. This is a major step forward.

With regard to Kashmir, there was an apparent change in the Pakistani position as to who represents the people there. From the earlier position of considering the All Parties Hurriyat Conference as the sole representative, it has moved to conceding that the elected ‘government does represent some sections of the people of Kashmir’.

Similarly, Prime Minister Wen Jinbao’s visit to New Delhi in April 2005 marked a high point in Sino-Indian relations, as the two countries agreed to upgrade their relationship to a strategic and cooperative partnership. Here again, the UPA government was building on the momentum created by the NDA government in relations with China especially from the middle of 2003. The state visit to China by Prime Minister Vajpayee in the middle of that year, the first in a decade by an Indian Prime Minister, represented a major step forward in New Delhi’s relations with its giant neighbour. Dramatic increases in bilateral trade set the stage for nine bilateral agreements covering trade, education, easing of visa restrictions and development projects. The artful language of the agreements suggested progress in the long-standing Sino-Indian border dispute.
The joint declaration on the principles for relations and comprehensive cooperation signified an important stage in the relations between the two countries. The declaration spelt out the framework for cooperation, which is to promote the socioeconomic development of both the countries, maintain peace and stability regionally and globally, strengthen multipolarity at the international level, and enhance the positive features of globalization. The declaration proceeded to set out the principles for cooperative partnership based on the ‘panchsheel’ principles and states that the common interests of the two sides outweigh their differences. ‘The two countries are not a threat to each other’, the declaration said.

In order to help resolve the border dispute the two sides decided to appoint a special representative each to provide a political perspective to the overall bilateral relationship to arrive at a framework for boundary settlement. In agreements signed during the visit, India for the first time referred to Tibet as the Tibet Autonomous Region, China’s official name for it. While India has always maintained that Tibet is part of the People’s Republic of China, the assertion in the joint declaration that India ‘does not allow Tibetans to engage in anti-China activities in India’, should have cleared any misunderstanding on the issue. On the other hand, India could take satisfaction from the official Chinese shift towards a recognition of Sikkim as an integral part of India. The change came in the agreement on expanding border trade through Sikkim.

As the Frontline editorially pointed out, these, broadly, are the principles, reasonable, non-chauvinistic, forward-looking political leaders
and intellectuals in India have been advocating for many years as the key to raising the India-China relationship to where it belongs’.

Rajiv Gandhi’s fruitful discussions with Deng Xiaoping, Zhu Rongji and other top Chinese state and party leaders during his visit to Beijing in December 1988 resulted in the establishment of two Joint Working Groups for negotiations on the boundary question and for promoting trade and investments, three Agreements on cooperation in science and technology, civil aviation, and cultural exchanges, and the reiteration of the need for a peaceful environment and Asian cooperation on the basis of the Five Principles of Panchsheel or Peaceful Coexistence.

While recognizing the Vajpayee visit in 2003 as a landmark in Sino-Indian relations, it should not be forgotten that when the coalition led by the BJP came to power, the self-styled Indian strategic community – consisting of both officials and non-officials – more or less accepted a ‘China threat’ theory. This concept was based on identification of China as a ‘Great Power’, its status as a nuclear weapon state, its permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council, its military expansion and its perceived hostility towards India. Other factors that contributed to the threat perception included China’s phenomenal economic progress, its military modernization, its supply linkages with Pakistan in nuclear technology, missiles and arms, and its active and growing presence in India’s neighbourhood, particularly Myanmar. While Defence Minister George Fernandes was the most outspoken proponent of the ‘China threat’ theory, he was not alone. Vajpayee’s ill-advised letter to President Clinton on nuclear tests reflected this.
Soon after the UPA government came to power, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a press conference made a reference to China policy and assured continuity. This received prompt favourable response from China which took the opportunity to reiterate China’s policy toward India as an ‘important neighbour’ with whom it would like to ‘continuously deepen a constructive and cooperative partnership’.

Prime Minister Wen Jiabao’s visit to New Delhi in April 2005 was widely hailed as a success. Indian officials claimed it would produce far-reaching and salutary results. It was recognized to be of significance not only regionally but internationally. While in the 2003 negotiations, Sikkim’s recognition as part of India was not only implicit, this time the Chinese side presented the Indian government with the newly-printed official map, which shows the state of Sikkim as part of the Indian Union.

While the Indian Prime Minister’s claim that India and China could together ‘reshape the world order’ might appear too tall, the strategic and global significance of a partnership between India and China could not be discounted. India and China agreed on the modalities to implement confidence building measures along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China boundary question noted that the ‘two sides are seeking a political settlement of the boundary question in the context of the overall and long-term interests’. The agreement expressed the conviction that an early settlement of the boundary question will address the basic interests of the two countries and therefore ‘should be pursued as a strategic objective’. Both sides should in the spirit of mutual respect and mutual understanding, make meaningful and mutually acceptable adjustments in their respective positions on the boundary question, so as
to arrive a package settlement in the boundary question. The boundary settlement must be final, covering all sectors of the India-China boundary’. The accord said that the two sides will take into account ‘historical evidence, national sentiments, practical difficulties and reasonable concerns and sensitivities of both sides and the actual state of border areas’. The agreement also specifically mentioned that while reaching a boundary settlement, ‘the two sides shall safeguard the interests of their settled populations in the border areas,. It has to be acknowledged that the actual final settlement will be some years off.

In a range of major confidence-building measures, India and China agreed to avoid holding large-scale military exercises in close proximity to the Line of Actual Control and to observe self-restraint if troops of the two countries came face to face on the border. The clause of exercising self-restraint assumes significance in the context of reports of border patrols of the two countries resorting to measures like disarming and threatening gestures during such incidents.

The pragmatism brought into the discussions on bilateral differences was noteworthy. China has often cited the resolution of its border dispute with Russia, which paved the way for a strategic partnership, as a model, India and China could follow. The document on the ‘guiding principles and political parameters’ is precisely the kind of formula the political leaderships of the two countries need, to move ahead in areas of complementary interests.

In geopolitical terms the consequences of a rapprochement between the world’s two most populous countries could be profound. ‘In the same way the commentators refer to the 1900s as the American Century, the
early twenty first century may be seen as the time when some in the
developing regions of the world, led by India and China, came into their
own’, said a December 2004 study by the U.S. National Intelligence
Council. Such ‘arriviste’ powers, the study noted, ‘could usher in a new
set of international alignments, potentially making a distinctive break
with some of the post-World War II institutions and practices.

At the beginning of June at a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of
the three countries, India, Russia and China upgraded their trilateral
dialogue, deciding to move from discussion to joint action and add an
economic dimension to their political cooperation. This was their first
stand-alone meeting. The previous three meetings were on the sidelines
of various international forums like the United Nations. For the first time
the Ministers adopted a joint communiqué setting out a common agenda.
The informal tripartite dialogue had actually developed into a institutional
form becoming integral part of the foreign policies of the three countries
and thus a key element in international politics. ‘The Ministers expressed
shared confidence that their meeting in Vladivostok would provide a new
impetus to the trilateral dialogue in all spheres of mutual interest’, the
joint communiqué said. The Ministers ‘confirmed the strengthening of
partnership in the trilateral format met the long-term interests of India,
Russia and China’. They were convinced that ‘development of mutually
beneficial cooperation between the three countries in practical terms
would make a considerable contribution to the strengthening of peace and
stability not only in Asia but also globally’.

Even Ministers emphasized that their dialogue was not directed
against any third country, their joint statement implied the rejection of
unilateral politics pursued by the United States. India, Russia and China
said they ‘favoured democratization of international relations aimed at building a just world order based on the observance of international law, equity, mutual respect, cooperation and progress, towards multipolarity’. They underlined the central role of the United Nations in building a multipolar world and rejected ‘double standards’ in combating terrorism. The UN reform was discussed at length, with the three countries registering their agreement ‘on the objective requirement for comprehensive reforms of the U.N. including the UNSC’.

It has been recognized that there are several factors in favour of trilateral cooperation among the three countries.

The talk of ‘strategic triangle’ of these countries gained currency in 1998 during the visit of the Russian Prime Minister, Yevgeny Primakov to New Delhi. At the very start of his trip, at the formal reception at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, he was asked by a correspondent whether Russia favoured this concept. ‘If we can succeed in establishing a triangle’, he replied, ‘it will be very good’. However, the issue did not figure in his discussions with his Indian hosts. China too was cautious in its reaction at that time. Primakov’s immediate purpose when he made the proposal was to prevent the U.S. led North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s air strikes against former Yugoslavia. The idea had no takers at that time.

The radical change in the world situation post-September 11 brought in new dimensions to the idea and informal talks among the countries began. In November 2002, New Delhi denied that India, Russia and China were forming a separate axis, adding that talks among the three countries in New York in September of that year were informal and not directed against the U.S. or any other country. In late 2002, the Russians
hinted at a possible Moscow-New Delhi-Beijing axis, a move arguably made to highlight the Kremlin’s strong disagreements with U.S. policies on Iraq. India was not ready to come openly against the U.S. and China preferred to use the forum of the U.N. Security Council.

Parallel to the government efforts to pursue this idea, there has been an exercise by academics from the three countries from the China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, the RAS Institute of Far Eastern Studies, Moscow, and the Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi. According to published accounts, they made known, at the very beginning of their first meeting in 2001, their continued adherence to the three ‘no’s – the tripartite relationship is not an attempt to forge an alliance; nor meant for confrontation; nor targeted against a third country.

If virtual silence was the order of the day after the September 2002 meeting, India’s External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha was more direct in his remarks in September 2003. The three countries apparently decided to adopt a common approach toward Iraq and favoured a political process to ensure quick return of sovereignty to the people of Iraq. After the joint meeting of the three Foreign Ministers, Sinha was quoted as saying there was ‘unanimity that what was required in Iraq was not sending more troops but a political solution that will see the return of sovereignty to the people of Iraq, a return of governance’.

In 2004, with a Congress-led government in power in New Delhi, the Foreign Ministers of the three countries could meet in New York due to scheduling problems. Instead, they met in Almaty in October 2004, and called for a common understanding against terrorism and drug trafficking.
The Foreign Ministers endorsed the need for the three countries regularly to exchange views to ‘strengthen a collective approach to world affairs’.

The idea of a strategic triangle was given a major push by Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to India in early December 2004. ‘Cooperation among Russia’ India and China would make a great contribution to global security’, Putin stated in New Delhi. He accused the West of following a dictatorial foreign policy and setting double standards on dealing with terrorism. A unipolar world would entail dangerous trends globally, Putin said, adding that unilateralism increased risks that weapons of mass destruction might fall into the hands of the terrorists. Putin refrained from naming the unilateral power in question, but it is widely assumed he was referring to the United States when he lashed out against ‘unipolar’ world policies. Putin and the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh issued a joint call for a ‘multipolar world’ and a greater role for the United Nations.

Putin chose the visit to New Delhi to warn of the dangers of an international system where a ‘dictatorship coated in beautiful pseudo-democratic phraseology’ attempted to transform a pluralist civilization ‘according to the principles of a unipolar world’. In a speech to the Nehru Foundation on December 4, Putin took exception to the U.S. ‘use of the current war against terrorism led by it to occupy Iraq’. He complained that there were ‘two weights and two measures’ that were being employed in international relations and stated that ‘terrorism must not be used as an instrument for any geopolitical games’.

This critique was earlier spelled out by the Russian President in an interview to The Hindu (December 3) where he argued that the illegal
occupation of Iraq had in fact turned Iraq into a hotbed of terrorism and an incubator for militants. Apart from shared concerns of U.S. dominance, the three have other common interests and mutually reinforcing needs. All three are weary of militant Islamic groups on their soil and, want stability in Central Asia. Given the polarizing effect of the war on terror and the imperial designs of the U.S. administration, some sort of strategic unity among Russia, China and India is not beyond realm of feasibility. Therefore the triangle may finally get some substance. After all, mutual interests, the greatest of all purposes, may become the cement of the alliance.

The Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, during his New Delhi visit, when asked about an Indo-Russia-China strategic partnership and the issue of multipolarity vis-à-vis the sole superpower, said it must in no way be seen as an ‘alliance’ targeting another country. ‘China, India and Russia are all influential countries. The cooperation among these three countries will democratize international relations and achieve world peace, coordination and cooperation, which serve the interests of the region and the world. China is positive about this trilateral cooperation for peace and stability in the world’. Wen added a postscript: ‘It is by no means an alliance against any other country’.

In the recent period the U.S.A. has been mounting an attack on China on the issue of Taiwan and its military expansion. The U.S. Secretary of Defence recently warned China that its failure to match economic freedoms with political freedoms could raise tensions and undermine its growing influence in the world. With regard to India, the U.S. is assiduously attempting to make it a vassal by undermining its independent approach in foreign affairs. Washington wants India to be a faithful military ally to help its pursuit of imperial ambitions. As Amit
Baruah wrote, ‘If India, China and Russia cannot take on the job of bringing about an element of sanity in international power relations singly they can certainly do it collectively’.

**India and China:**

When India went for the Pokharan-II nuclear tests, it was interpreted and with good reason that India is going for nuclear.

All the same, as several China-watchers in India have pointed out, China’s initial reaction to the nuclear tests was relatively muted. As Chinese scholar Li pointed out in “Security Perception and China-India Relations”, “the day after the first round of tests, the (Chinese) ministry of foreign affairs spokesman only expressed ‘grave concern’ over the test’s harm to the international process of nuclear disarmament and the peace and stability of South Asia”.

That was quite unlike the reactions from ostensibly friendlier countries, especially the United States which almost rallied world opinion against India and imposed sanctions. Immediately, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee wrote a letter to US President Bill Clinton in which he said: “I have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment, especially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to the unsolved border problem.”
According to Li IL, this letter was leaked in the US on May 13, the day India conducted the second series of tests, and this apparently outraged China.

This might look a simplistic explanation from a Chinese scholar, but the fact is that India-China relations are now changing colour and character over shorter time periods, and even acquiring an emotional dimension as is often the case with India-Pakistan relations. earlier the relationships – warm, cordial, indifferent, cold or hostile – persisted for long periods before they changed character. From the days of India gaining independence and China establishing a communist regime till the unfolding of the events that led to the war of 1962, the relationship, at least from India’s point of view, was warm, cordial and overtly friendly. The war was followed by a long period of hostility and frigidity till diplomatic relations were re-established in 1976.

**Diplomatic Relations Restored**

The re-establishment of diplomatic relations was on India’s initiative, essentially to mend fences after the 1975 accession of Sikkim to India, a geopolitical development that China has not yet fully reconciled to. Then followed a period of lukewarm relations during which time both Chinese and Indian leaders had little time to bother about each other, preoccupied as they were with domestic political issues. In India, Indira Gandhi’s Congress government felt threatened by a series of events and developments – the great Indian railway strike organised by socialist George Fernandes, the Jayaprakash Narayan movement for total revolution and finally the Allahabad high court judgement which unseated Indira Gandhi – all of which culminated in the proclamation of an internal Emergency. This was followed by the Janata Party rule during
which the then External Affairs Minister A.B. Vajpayee made attempts to mend fences, but was virtually snubbed by the Chinese who chose the day of his visit to launch a war on Vietnam.

**The End of the Mao Era**

China too was experiencing domestic tremours during the same period. The Mao era was ending, and there was a bitter attempt by the Gang of Four, including Mao’s widow to grab power.

By early 1980s, both polities had stabilised internally. The Congress under Indira Gandhi returned to power, and in China Deng Xiaoping took power and consolidated his position. War, revolution and ideology gave way to engagement, transformation and pragmatism in China’s conduct of its domestic and foreign relations.

**The Border Problems**

Deng, determined to modernise China, technologically, industrially, economically and militarily, seemed keen on cold-storing prickly issues, or at least starting a dialogue on them. Thus official-level talks on the boundary dispute began in 1981.

The crux of the border problem is that India considers the McMahon Line, drawn on the maps in 1914 after an agreement between the British Indian government and the then government of Tibet, which was for all practical purposes independent of Beijing’s control. Explains Gautam Das in his book China-Tibet-India: “At the tripartite British India-Tibet-China conference convened at Shimla (Simla) to arrive at this agreement, the Government of India’s Foreign Secretary, Colonel Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, laid down a line dividing Tibet into an ‘Inner’
Tibet and an ‘Outer’ Tibet (as in the case of Mongolia), and a line dividing India and ‘Outer’ Tibet, thereafter to become known as the ‘McMahon Line’. The British aim at the Shimla conference was to get China to accept the division of Tibet, and though Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was recognized, China was to enjoy no administrative rights in ‘Outer’ Tibet, and thus be kept back from the border of India. A Chinese diplomat, Chen I-fan, was witness to this agreement, and his ‘chop’ is on the map that forms part of the original document, though he did not have the authority to agree to the proposal on behalf of China. The Chinese government has refused to permit their plenipotentiary to proceed to full signature. The presently disputed McMahon Line, which China does not recognize, is the one drawn between Assam and ‘Outer’ Tibet.”

Then there are territorial issues, which are linked to the McMahon Line dispute. For instance, the Chinese claim Aksai Chin to be a territorial and ethno-cultural part of Tibet. Similarly, they have laid claim to the Tawanf tract, where the Sixth Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhists was born, though the Monpas inhabiting the region do not consider themselves Tibetans. The Chinese claim on Arunachal is the least negotiable as far is India is considered, since the inhabitants there have traditionally had no links with Tibetan Buddhists.

Little progress was made in the negotiations through the 1980s, but issues were not precipitated either. The Chinese too were careful not to precipitate matters, especially with the aggressive postures taken by the Soviet Union in 1980s. Even when they invaded Afghanistan, the Soviets did not ease their military presence on China’s northern borders. Plus China suspected that the Soviets were instigating Vietnam in the Southeast.
The Time of Modernisation

It was modernisation time in India too in the 1980s. Both Indira Gandhi and her successor and son Rajiv Gandhi were keen on modernising Indian economy, industry and technology. Indira Gandhi made a high-profile visit to Washington, and was willing to invite foreign technology and investment from the West, too. Rajiv, determined to take India into the 21st century, followed on her footsteps, albeit more aggressively.

In short, both India and China were on a modernisation drive in the 1980s, and neither side was keen on precipitating ticklish issues. It was in this context that Rajiv Gandhi made his historic visit to Beijing, after 34 years by a Prime Minister.

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union jolted India, strategically and militarily, though not economically. But China found suddenly an opportunity to emerge as a world power, especially with a strategic threat on its northern borders gone. It could now concentrate more on its modernisation drive, for which it continued to need a peaceful or at least trouble-free neighbourhood.

India too needed peace on the Chinese border, though for different reasons. Its superpower friend, which had been supplying bulk of strategic technology and equipment, no longer existed. Pakistan which was engaged in training and sending Mujahideen into Afghanistan to fight the Soviets now had extra militant power to inject into Indian Kashmir.
Soon, the old militancy in Jammu and Kashmir transformed itself into a full-blown insurgency with well-trained guerrillas coming in hundreds from Pak-held Kashmir, from Pakistan, some even from other countries. The army, which was inducted for full-scale counter-insurgency operation needed more manpower and firepower in the valley. It was at this time Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited China and the two countries agreed to maintain peace and tranquility along the line of actual control. This enabled India to move forces from the China border into the Kashmir valley. The agreement was followed up with another on confidence-building measures in the military field during the visit of President Jiang Zemin in 1996 to India. The joint working group on the boundary question now began to meet regularly, military-to-military contacts were encouraged commitments were made on troop intrusions and airspace violations.

The Nuclear Tests

The nuclear tests of 1998 affected the pace of the relations. Joint working group meetings were postponed, trade suffered, and there was mutual criticism. Several members of the new Vajpayee led government made statements which ruffled the Chinese, but the borders remained peaceful. But as the new government settled down and its members gained experience with the realities of geopolitics the relations were soon on an even keel. President K.R.Narayanan went on a goodwill visit in 2000 to Beijing and Vajpayee in 2003. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India in 2005 and President Hu Jintao in 2006. During Vajpayee’s visit, the two sides agreed to give a further political momentum to the border talks by appointing their national security advisers as special representatives.
This was considered a major breakthrough in the relations because now both sides were committing themselves not to stand on technical issues. The attempt now would be to solve the issues with a spirit of accommodation and political sagacity. China now openly acknowledged Sikkim as part of India, in return for India’s full recognition of Tibet as an autonomous part of Chinese territory.

**Strategic Gulf**

The momentum in bilateral trade and military contacts were continued after the Congress-led UPA government of Manmohan Singh came to power, but strategic gulf widened too from the perspective of both sides. The George Bush administration in the US was now perceived by China to be on an attempt to engage and contain China, and India getting closer to the United States was viewed with caution by Beijing. The joint military exercises between the US and India further added to the concern.

From India’s point of view also there were tensions at the back of the mind. China’s building of maritime facilities in Myanmar, Pakistan and recently in Sri Lanka heightened India’s concerns. With India too having embarked on a high economic growth trajectory, there were apprehensions of an unhealthy competition between two economies. China’s modernisation drive by now was completely enveloping its military capabilities, and concerns were expressed in India of the latter’s inability to cope with it. The rapid growth of transport and communication infrastructure in Tibet was viewed with concern in India which realised that its own borders with Tibet had primitive facilities, especially in terms of its ability to transport troops and military hardware.
All the same, the Chinese were cautious. They had bid for the 2008 Olympics and did not want to mar their reputation in any manner. Thus one saw the Chinese going out of their way to address, or at least brush under the carpet, India’s concerns over China’s strategic moves.

The perception in India post-Olympics was that Beijing would now return to their old strategic games. However, what is to be noted on the positive side is that the Chinese have been fairly accommodating of even India’s civil nuclear ambitions. China could not move from stated position of opposing India’s nuclear ambitions, but at the same time did not sabotage the move to give India the special status that the Indo-US nuclear deal had accorded at either the IAEA or the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

The Shape of Things to Come

The concern today is neither about China’s present military capability nor its high-velocity economic growth. The concern, rather, is about the future. Leaders on both sides concede that there is enough space in the world for both economies to grow and compete even in third markets like Africa. The Chinese are aggressively wooing the African states, rich in resources and the Chinese navy has been making frequent flag visits in the recent past to the African coast. Indian maritime thinkers are concerned that the rapid modernisation of the Chinese fleet might one day enable China to pose a challenge to India’s dominance over the Indian Ocean, the energy lifeline for Southeast Asian and far eastern states.

The concern in strategic circles is mainly about the advantage that China’s rapid economic growth will bestow on its military capabilities. If
China’s defence expenditure was just two and half times more than that of India in 2000, it is projected to be nearly three times in 2020.

As Mohan Guruswamy and Zorawar Daulet Singh argue in Chasing the Dragon, “On the whole, India’s autonomous capabilities in manufacturing critical military technologies and weapon platforms remain far too short of an aspiring regional power.”

And China is aspiring for the status of not just a regional power, but a global superpower.

**The China Factor:**

A country-wise perusal of emerging domestic realities that, serve as catalysts in shaping the 21st century foreign policy of India.

The stability of South Asian region with India at its centre flanked by a powerful China, mid sized Pakistan and smaller powers Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Maldives, has been a matter of great concern for those who aspire for global peace. An attempt to assess the emerging security scenario in South Asia from an Indian foreign policy perspective is relevant. It may be interesting to see how Indian foreign policy responds to the recent signals from the neighbouring states.

**Peaceful Co-existence with a Resurgent China**

The greatest security threat to India possibly comes from People’s Republic of China, its powerful Communist neighbour. Despite several similarities including large population, pluralist traditions, socialist aspiration and the like, India and China adopted an extremely cautious approach in their respective foreign policies towards each other.
A number of issues ever since India provided political asylum to Tibet’s spiritual leader Dalai Lama half a century ago caused strain in the bilateral relations. Though the Chinese attack on India in 1962 was quite unexpected, India’s preparedness in ensuring its territorial integrity has increased over a period of time.

The Chinese territorial claim over Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh put pressure on the credibility of Mc Mahon Line, the official border that separates the two countries. Chinese refusal to demarcate the Line of Actual Control in the North East of India, questioning of Indian Prime Minister’s Arunachal visit and opposing the ADB loan to a Hydel project in Arunachal Pradesh make the contemporary Sino-Indian relations uneasy.

The ongoing human rights violations in Tibet by Chinese administration generated world wide protests. This was particularly evident during the run up to Beijing Olympics, in 2008. Though India never used Tibetan issue for making political gains, China continues to implicate India for instigating anti-China demonstrations over Tibet. The heavy deployment of People’s Liberation Army along the Indo-Tibetan border, in this context, is a matter of grave concern for India.

It is in this background that a recent provocative article written by Chinese defence analyst Shan Lieu-E that appeared in the country’s official website assumes significance. Though it can easily be discarded as a simple feeler by an eccentric academician associated with China International Institute of Strategic Studies, the idea of seeking help from Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan to destabilise India by dividing it into twenty
independent states gives sufficient alert to India’s defence and foreign policy establishment.

**The Pak factor in Chinese Policy**

The Pak factor in Chinese policy towards India is also an irritant, Chinese help to Pakistan in their nuclear programme, supply of Chinese arms to Pakistan, handing over of a portion of Pak occupied Kashmir to China, construction of Karakoram highway between China and Pakistan along this disputed territory, the formulation of a strategic Beijing-Islamabad-Washington axis, etc., destabilise the Northern region of Indian sub continent.

Apart from the security threat, India faces an economic challenge also from China. Recent Chinese policy of emerging as the leader of Afro-Asian fraternity of under developed countries by economically wooing them is a threat to Indian interests. Increasing Chinese investments in Central Asian, Persian Gulf and African countries, especially in energy sector, is a case to this point. The overwhelming response of African countries to the recent Africa Summit in Beijing, attended by 40 African leaders, illustrates the growing Chinese clout in the Third World. This is a direct threat to India’s expectations of retaining the leadership of the Third World in general and NAM in particular. Nevertheless, the recent Indo-ASEAN trade agreement provided a fillip to India and a setback to China.

Maintenance of nuclear equilibrium between India and China is important in preserving peace in South Asia. India’s formal acknowledgement of its nuclear status after nuclear tests in 1998 and the declaration of a nuclear doctrine indicate that India wanted to develop
nuclear deterrence against China. This is confirmed by the unsavoury statement issued immediately after Pokhran II by the then Defence Minister George Fernandez, naming China as India’s number one enemy.

It is an irony that despite Panch Sheel, a set of five healthy principles that determine the Sino-Indian friendship, both the countries are yet to learn to co-exist peacefully. China, in its quest for global domination sees India as a potential future threat which the country wants to nullify at any cost. Therefore, the goodwill factors such as China being India’s largest trade partner, joint military exercises at the border and a host of confidence building measures proved insufficient to ensure a rapprochement between the two countries.

**National Security and Pakistan**

No country in the South Asian region is free from security concerns. Preservation of peace and tranquility being the ultimate concern of modern states, national security is the focal point in India’s foreign as well as domestic policy today.

Ever since partition and independence, a Pakistan oriented approach was the hallmark of India’s foreign policy. It was wars and low intensity conflict in the form of cross border terrorism over Kashmir that dominated the 20th century relationship between the two countries. But the first decade of 21st century witnessed the emergence of strong non-state actors in Pakistan that include terror outfits. Pakistan’s new political establishment has little control over these players who influence the actions of the country. India, therefore, is compelled to adopt a cautious approach in its foreign policy towards Pakistan.
India realise the Pakistan, a state that is going through domestic turmoil cannot have a concise and focused foreign policy towards its powerful neighbour. The domestic unrest is primarily caused by the increasing clout of Tehreek-e-Taliban, a loose alliance of 13 militant groups in the tribal self governing areas and the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. As the Pak army is fighting Taliban, the reported killing of Taliban commander Baithullah Mehsud in a U.S. missile strike on 5th Aug 2009 and the succession feud that followed further destabilised the region.

As long as Kashmir remains a bone of contention between India and Pakistan, stability of the region will be an ever elusive concept. A number of bold diplomatic initiatives in the past including Agra, Delhi, Lahore and Islamabad summits between the leaders of the respective countries could not resolve the issue. While Pakistan holds the resolution of Kashmir issue through any means as a prerequisite of solving other issues including cross border terrorism, India insists on strict bilateral means emulating the spirit of Shimla Accord of 1972. The resultant deadlock does not augur well for peace and harmony.

On the other hand, the unexpected inclusion of the crisis in Baluchistan and the exclusion of Kashmir in the Indo-Pak joint statement issued at the NAM summit at Sharm-el-Sheikh in Egypt in July 2009 further complicated the scenario.

In order to improve the bilateral relation both the countries tried Track II diplomacy that does not involve career diplomats. These attempts to defuse tension included cricket and bus diplomacy which yielded limited returns. Now the composite Indo-Pak dialogue process started in 2004 stalled after 26/11, the only means of retaining
relationship seems to be through industry captains, sports persons and Journalists. Meanwhile opinions expressed by key Indian politicians like L.K. Advani and Jaswant Singh, and former RSS Chief K.S. Sudarshan hailing Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, is watched with a keen interest within Pakistan. Moreover, the presence of Manmohan Singh, born in Pakistan, at the helm of Indian establishment could also help in bringing peace.

India’s security concerns after 26/11 was addressed by the enactment of a new federal agency at national level. The need of the hour is to ensure better coordination between the intelligence agencies of the country that include RAW, CBI, IB, army and police intelligence, so that vital data collected by one agency may be shared with others.

Indian foreign policy can take credit from the fact that the country could successfully convince the global community of Pak role in the recent terror attack especially the 26/11 episode with Pak citizen Ajmal Amir Kasab under trial in India. But this is insufficient to prevent further attacks. What needed is joint Indo-Pak endeavours in fighting militancy as both the countries are equally affected by it albeit in different ways.

If jihadis are allowed to establish an upper hand in Pakistan, the two countries may drift further apart. As there is a convergence of the US, Pak and Indian interest in fighting global terror, no time should be wasted to bail Pakistan out of its internal problems, for, India does not want to have a failed state in the neighbourhood. Therefore, Indian foreign policy has to look beyond Pakistan to address the issue of national security.
Coping with the Post Monarchical Order in Nepal

Nepal, historically a neutral state sandwiched between China and India, underwent radical transformation in the last decade. The year 2008 witnessed the end of a 240 years old monarchy and the formation of a republican government after the Constituent Assembly election.

It may be noted that it was under India’s persuasion that Maoists who started an armed struggle against monarchical order in 1996 laid down arms in 2006 to join the main stream democratic process of Nepal. Consequently they formed Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) which won 226 seats in a 601 member Assembly and formed a coalition government under the Prime Ministership of Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda who was known for his anti-India attitude.

Once Maoists captured power, it was expected that their cadre would be integrated with Nepal Army (NA) as per the key principle of Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the nine year civil war. But due to the uneasy relationship between the elected government headed by Prachanda and NA headed by Gen. Rookmankad Katawal, this could not take place. Consequently, Prachanda resigned and a new coalition government was installed by President Ram Baran Yadav under the leadership of Madhav Kumar Nepal.

New Delhi, by defending the actions of Nepali Army chief, sacrificed the prospects of long term democratic stability in Nepal for short term goal of undermining Maoists whom India viewed with suspicion. In fact, India committed a mistake in backing the military over civilian side, which exposed the inconsistency in Indian foreign policy. India’s response stems from its fear of Maoist success in Nepal.
motivating similar ultra left movements in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chatisgarh, Orissa and West Bengal where Naxalites are already active.

Besides the question of Maoist insurgency in Nepal and its possible fall out across the borders, India is weary of China’s “Look South” policy that envisages befriending Nepal with a sizable Tibetan population. India would ideally like to retain Nepal as a buffer state between China and India, which requires a consistent foreign policy towards its small neighbour. If India succeeds in addressing Nepal’s concern over the age old Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950 by replacing it with a more balanced and mutually beneficial one, the Indo-Nepal relationship will blossom even under a new regime in Kathmandu.

**Stabilising the North-East with the help of Bangladesh and Bhutan**

The stability strategically located Bangladesh and Bhutan, the neighbours that separates India’s North Eastern states from its main land is of vital importance to India. India’s role in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 is a well known fact. But a series of problems including border and river water dispute marred India’s cordial relationship with Bangladesh that created instability in that region.

Historically, the country’s long and porous border with India caused the migration of refugees into Indian Territory following each calamity ranging from natural disasters to war and political turmoil. This migration even altered the demographic balance of key Indian states of Assam and West Bengal.

The last two decades witnessed hyper activity of militants in India’s North Eastern states. ULFA and Bodo militants often cross over
to Bangladesh and return at will, generating a severe security threat to India. Moreover, there have been instances of these militants receiving ISI training in Pakistan routing their journey through Bangladesh. The coincidence of lull in militant activity in Jammu and Kashmir and the simultaneous in the North East indicates this Pak Bangladesh nexus.

Bangladesh is known for its political instability characterised by Inter-party tussles between Pro-Indian Awami League headed by Sheikh Hasina and Bangladesh National Party under the leadership of Begum Khalida Zia. India displays cordial relations with Dhaka whenever former comes to power and strained relations when the latter rules Bangladesh. It is high time that India replace this fluctuating foreign policy with a consistent one capable enough to take Bangladesh always into confidence in order to engage militancy in the North East effectively.

Bhutan, on the other hand, though appears to be stable with a monarchical order, has its share of problems due to the absence of a strong political establishment and democratic tradition. Bhutan’s security, over a period of time, has been the responsibility of India. It has no option but to go in accordance with the greater security paradigms of its powerful neighbours.

**Healing the Scars of Ethenic Divide in Post- LTTE Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka, India’s southern neighbour figures high in India’s foreign policy considerations. India knows that the ethnicity induced divide between the Tamils and Sinhalese in the country located across the Pak Straight is multi dimensional.
The root cause of ethnic divide is the perceived subjugation of a strong ethnic minority by a more numerous ethnic group which controls political power. The failure of Sri Lankan political system to accommodate Tamil interests through a proper power sharing provided fertile ground for extremist outfits to demand “eelam”, a homeland for the Tamils. The disintegration of the country took a new turn 1980s with the emergence of LTTE led by Veluppiila Prabhakaran, decimating the other Tamil separatist movements such as TELO, TULF, PLOT and EPRLF, singularly taking up the cause of Tamil eelam.

India responded to this deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka by sending Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) following the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987. But ever since the withdrawal of IPKF in 1989 due to rejection by both LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka, India’s relationship with Sri Lanka has not been very warm.

Now the long era of civil war has ended with Sri Lankan army winning one of Asia’s longest modern wars, referred to as “Eelam War IV”, declaring victory on May 19, 2009 after defeating the LTTE comprehensively and eliminating Prabhakaran. India, which had kept away from a mediatory role since it burned its fingers in the IPKF fiasco in late eighties, did not comment on the Norwegian brokered peace process in the recent past.

But India did not turn a blind eye to the current developments in the post-LTTE. Sri Lanka as the country could not ignore the sentiments of Tamils in Tamil Nadu towards the plight of their kith and kin in the North and East of Sri Lanka. This domestic political compulsion prompted India to adopt a policy of speaking out for the cause of Sri
Lankan Tamils. Here the emerging question is whether India succeeds in convincing a victorious Sri Lanka of the need to have an honourable power sharing with the Tamils, thereby converting the state into a pluralist polity.

Meanwhile, the instance of Mahinda Rajapakse administration getting liberal consignment of arms from China and Pakistan during war with LTTE did not go unnoticed by India. This coupled with Sri Lanka’s response to the Sethu Samundram project that cuts through the trade corridor between the two countries provide raw materials for India’s future foreign policy towards Lanka. Stability of the Southern part of Indian sub continent hinges upon ensuring peace in Sri Lanka, the absence of which will invite India’s rivals into that country, much to the chagrin of India.

Keeping Maldives Safe from External Interference

The strategically located Maldives in the Indian Ocean region has to be seen as the hub of maritime security as South Asian security considerations are today linked to the retention of Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Upheavels of 1988, causing the coup may be a thing of the past. But the end of the long Abdul Gayoom era and the assumption of a new government in office in Maldives is watched with great interest by the entire region since any fragility in its political establishment may be seen as an opportunity by the Islamic militants to stretch the theatre of conflicts to the high seas from the South Asian main land.

Securing the Threshold through Afghanistan and Myanmar

In India’s emerging security perception, Afghanistan, a new entrant in SAARC, situated in the North-West and Mayanmar, a vital cog in the
Bay of Bengal Community of BIMSTEC located in the North-East of the country, occupy considerable space.

Afghanistan, arguably, is the breeding ground of global terrorism, posing threat not only to South Asian states, but also the entire world. As world’s attention today is gradually shifting from Iraq and Palestine to Afghanistan and Pakistan, India cannot relax this neighbouring state’s track record of being a theatre of superpower conflicts in the past and civilizational conflicts today, is a matter of great worry for India. The active presence of Al Qaeda net work led by Osama Bin Laden in the Pak-Afghan frontier throws up a challenging situation not only for US, but also for India. This convergence of Indo-US interest in countering global terrorism is reflected very much in the latest Indian foreign policy initiatives.

The stability of India’s North-East depends on cordiality in Indo-Myanmar relations. Issues like smuggling and narcotic trade along India’s Eastern border can be tackled only with the support of Myanmar. However, India’s empathetic attitude towards nobel laureate Aung San Suu Ki led pro-democracy movement and Burmese Communist party’s support to Naga insurgency cause mutual resentment.

Growing Beyond the South Asian Frame into a Global Player Status: India’s 21st Century Foreign Policy in a Nutshell

Often described as “Big Brother” by the relatively small neighbouring states, India has now arrived on the world stage. The Nation rode on the wave created by its recent economic surge with a consistent 7 to 9 % growth, withstanding global economic melt down of 2008-09. The country joined hands with the leading powers of the world, especially the
U.S., in their fight against global terror, which incidentally has been a perennial problem for India during the last decade. India also tried the nuclear route to address the issue of energy security, even entering into epoch making deals with U.S.A., Russia and France. Ultimately, India is trying to secure a permanent member status in the Security Council of the United Nations in order to position itself as a world player.

An ambitious India, in its quest for global recognition and appeal had to confront with a series of security problems, disrupting peaceful life in Indian cities. Islamic militancy, today, enraged by India’s increasing proximity to the Christian, democratic and Capitalistic West is unleashing its wrath against the Indian state with a strong track record of democratic institutions, human rights protection and secular credentials. Peaceful life in India is seriously disturbed by the new terror tactics of choosing soft targets such as hapless people in public places for attack. Prospects of peace and stability in South Asia depends primarily on the dexterity shown by Indian foreign policy in seeking political and diplomatic rather than military solutions to the security threat. This requires global initiatives and the country has to adjust its foreign policy accordingly.
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