Chapter II

INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH ASIA: AN OVERVIEW
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India’s Foreign Policy towards South Asia: An Overview

“Whatever policy we may lay down, the art of conducting foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about international goodwill and mean what we say. We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say. But in the ultimate analysis, Government functions for the good of a country it governs and no Government dare do anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of the country.” Jawaharlal Nehru

India’s policy has not been some sudden bright inspiration of an individual but a gradual growth evolving from even before independence. The inevitable line that we took subsequently has followed that thinking as a matter of course.

The Indian National Congress, the main organization embodying that movement, showed interest in matters relating to foreign policy right from its birth in 1885. At first quite limited, this interest gradually became wider in line with the corresponding widening of its general political outlook, till a time arrived when there was hardly an international issue on which the Congress did not express its views. Thus by the time India achieved independence there had developed a distinct, Indian outlook on world affairs, and this became the foundation of India’s foreign policy. Needless to add, in the growth of this Indian outlook Jawaharlal Nehru himself played the most notable role, particularly during the last and the most creative phase of its evolution, from 1927 to 1947.

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2 Ibid, p 481.
3 Ibid, p 482.
Meaning of Foreign Policy

*Foreign Policy:* A policy regulating a particular country’s relations with other states and people in the international arena.⁴

The foreign policy is the sum total of the principles, the interests and objectives which a state formulates in conducting its relations with other states.⁵

The foreign policy, principles mean the codes of right conduct, which are considered desirable in themselves, such as adherence to treaties and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Like interests are what a state considers, in general terms, essential for its survival and development: such as territorial integrity, improvement of living standards, and maintenance of a free way of life. The objectives are more or less precisely delimited interests, formulated in the circumstances in which the relations with another state are conducted.⁶

*Foreign Relations:* The external relations of a country, part of the general complex of international relations.⁷

Foreign relations are the actions that a state resorts to in pursuance of the foreign policy formulated, such as declaration of war, conclusion of peace, the signing of a treaty, giving or accepting aid, recognition of a state, establishment of diplomatic relations, and carrying on negotiations.⁸

The Glimpse of India’s Foreign Policy

The art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. It may talk about international goodwill and mean what it says.

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⁵ A. Appadorai, (1981) Domestic Roots of India’s Foreign Policy, published by R. Dayal, Oxford University Press 2/11 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002
⁷ Ibid, p 220
may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what it says. But in the ultimate analysis, a government functions for the good of the country it governs and no government dare do anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of that country.

The interest of peace is more important, because if war comes everyone suffers, so that in the long-distance view, self-interest may itself demand a policy of cooperation with other nations, goodwill for other nations, as indeed it does demand.

India’s interests lie in the context of world cooperation and world peace, in as far as world peace can be preserved.  

At the present moment no country, including the big powers, with their long traditions in foreign affairs, has anything which could be called a precise and definite foreign policy, because the world itself is in a fluid condition? 

In criticizing the foreign policy of the Government of India, this House for an instant to turn its mind to any country today and think of its foreign policy whether it is the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, the U.S.S.R., China or France. The foreign policy of any one of these countries has succeeded from any point of view, from the point of view of moving towards world peace or preventing world war, or succeeded even from the mere opportunist and individual point view of that country.

This question from this point of view, it will find that there has been a miserable failure in the foreign policy of every great power and country. It is in that context that it has to view these matters. It is not really the failure of the foreign policy of any particular power, though perhaps two or three major powers do influence foreign policy greatly. 

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There are bigger and deeper causes affecting the world, like the strongest of nations, are pulled hither and thither by these forces. That is one fact that likes the House to bear in mind.\textsuperscript{12}

Nehru wants to tell the world on behalf of India that not frightened of the military mighty of this power or that. India’s policy is not a passive policy or a negative policy.\textsuperscript{13}

It is certainly true that the instructions to the delegates have always been to consider each question first in terms of India’s interest and secondly on its merits, it means to say if it did not affect India, naturally, on its merits, and not merely to do something or give a vote just to please this power or that power, though, of course, it is perfectly natural that in desire to have friendship with other powers that India avoid doing anything which might irritate.\textsuperscript{14}

Nehru thinks that not only in the long run, but also in the short run, independence of opinion and independence of action will count. He hopes that the House realizes that nothing is more important in the opinion of this Government than to make India strong economically and militarily, not strong in the big power sense, because that is beyond the capacity, but as strong as India can to defend themselves if anybody attacks.

Therefore, purely from the point of view of opportunism, if one likes, a straightforward, honest policy, an independent policy is the best.\textsuperscript{15}

India being friendly to all countries and not becoming entangled in any alliances, military or other, that might drag to the country into any possible conflict. That does not, on the other hand, involve any lack of close relationships with other countries.\textsuperscript{16}

Nehru affirmed that changing circumstances have to be understood and interpreted in different ways, but the broad lines of India’s policy have been laid down and they are:

\textsuperscript{12} Jawaharlal Nehru (1961) “\textit{We Lead Ourselves},” India’s Foreign Policy, Selected Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru, September 1946- April 1961, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi-6, p 30.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, p 32.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p 33.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p 35
a. That India is an Independent Republic; and

b. That in the external, internal or domestic policy, in the political policy, or in the economic policy, India do not propose to accept anything that involves in the slightest degree dependence on any other authority.  

Other forms of association which do not bind in this manner, but which help in bringing together nations for the purpose of consolidation and, where necessary, of cooperation, are, therefore, far more desirable than any form of alliance which does bind.

Cooperation can only be the cooperation of independent nations without the least commitment of one to the other. That is for India to consider together and to decide what is more feasible, but in any event two facts have to be borne in mind. One is that whatever structure of cooperation that the nation may build up will be entirely within the scope of the Charter of the United Nations. Secondly, there will be no binding covenant in it, and this will largely be an organization for the consultation and cooperation that naturally flow from common interests.

The main stake in world affairs is peace, to see that there is racial equality and that people who are still subjugated should be free. For the rest that India do not desire to interfere in world affairs and the country (India) do not desire that other people should interfere in her affairs. If, however, there is interference, whether military, political or economic, India shall resist it. It is with this friendly approach that the country looks at the world.

A special interest in one another and India must, inevitably, think in terms of her relations with the countries bordering her by land and sea. What are these countries? If start from the left, Pakistan; India would also include Afghanistan, although it does not touch India’s borders; Tibet and China, Nepal, Burma (newly Myanmar), Malaya (newly Malaysia), Indonesia and Ceylon (newly Sri Lanka).

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18 Ibid, p 38.
As far as the other countries are concerned, India’s relations with others are quite friendly. Take, for instance, Afghanistan. India relations with Afghanistan are exceedingly friendly and her relations with Tibet, Nepal and all the neighbouring countries are also very friendly. Nehru thinks that he justified in saying that there is no country in this wide world today with which her relations may be said to be inimical or hostile. Naturally, India will be attracted more towards some or her trade or economic interests might link to the country more with some countries and less with others, but there can be no doubt about it that India is friendly with all that is a good thing and some achievement.\(^{21}\)

India is very curiously placed in Asia and her history has been governed a great deal by the geographical factor plus other factors. Whichever problem in Asia may take up, somehow or other India comes into the picture. Whether think in terms of China or the Middle East or South – East Asia, India immediately comes into the picture. It is so situated that because of past history, traditions, etc., in regard to any major problem of a country or a group of countries of Asia, India has to be considered. Whether it is a problem of defence or trade or industry or economic policy, India cannot be ignored. She cannot be ignored, because, as Nehru said, her geographical position is a compelling reason. She cannot be ignored also, because of her actual or potential power and resources.

India by virtue of her practical position and other reasons, India is bound to play an important part in Asia, in all parts of Asia, whether it is Western Asia or the Far East or South-East Asia. It so happens, of course, that even culturally speaking, that the bonds are very great with all these parts of Asia, whether it is Western Asia or the Far East or South- East Asia and these bonds are very old and very persistent.\(^{22}\)

The desire to confer together and cooperate closely, and a certain looking in the direction of India on the part of all these countries, the feeling that India might possible play a fairly important part in bringing Asian countries together.\(^{23}\)

\(^{21}\) Ibid, pp 42-43.
\(^{22}\) Ibid, p 43.
\(^{23}\) Ibid, p 44.
Foreign policy is normally something which develops gradually. Apart from certain theoretical propositions it may lay down, it is a thing which, if it is real, has some relation to actuality and not merely to pure theory. Therefore, it cannot precisely lay down the general outlook or general approach, but gradually it develops to become very friendly with some and hostile to others. That is the normal foreign policy of a country, very friendly with close relations with some, with the consequence that hostile to others. It may be very friendly with all countries. Naturally, if make more friendly with those with whom have closer relations, but, that great friendliness, if it is active friendliness, is good, if it merely reflects hostility to some other country, then it is something different. And ultimately the hostility provokes other people’s hostility and that is the way of conflict and leads to no solution. Fortunately, India has inherited no past hostility to any country. Why should then start this train of hostility now with any country? Of course, if circumstances compel it, cannot be helped, but it is far better for to try the utmost to keep clear of these hostile backgrounds. Naturally, again, it is likely to be more friendly to some countries than to others, because this may be to more friendly to some countries than to others, because this may be to mutual advantage. That is a different matter, but even so, friendship with other countries should not, as far as possible, be such as brings inevitably into conflict with some other country. Now, some people may think that this is a policy of hedging or just avoiding pitfalls, a middle-of-the-road policy.  

India’s foreign policy, naturally, has to do with world affairs but any hon. Member thinks that the Government of India moulds world affairs he is very much mistaken. Jawaharlal Nehru says that India cannot or have not affected the world to some extent. But, obviously, it affects or influences it in a very small measure. If the world goes wrong, then it may, of course, be due to some error of it but surely it would be the resultant of a large number of policies, in particular the policies of the powerful and influential countries that dominate the policies of the smaller and weaker countries.

It is a spirit of realism that Nehru wants to approach the question of India’s foreign policy. It has to deal with a positive situation that to issue orders and have to decide what is to be done or not done. It cannot afford to talk of vague theoretical things and waste its time with *idealistic* or *moral* approaches to the situation.

Idealism is the realism of tomorrow. It is the capacity to know what is good for the day after tomorrow or for the next year and to fashion itself accordingly. The practical person, the realist, looks at the tip of his nose and sees little beyond; the result is that he is stumbling all the time. 26

**The Enrichment of India’s Foreign Policy**

The security of a country is the most fundamental demand upon foreign policy. Every country’s foreign policy is first of all geared to the objective of ensuring the maximum possible security in a given situation. It includes situation in and relations with neighbouring countries, the relations of neighbours with other significant actors in the international arena and your own relations with those actors, the country’s place and role in international politics, whether it is a quite or an unquiet state of affairs on the frontiers, and if unquiet how unquiet, and not the least significant internal strength and health of the country which, again, includes economic development and social cohesion, the level of industrialization and modernization of economy and the level of involvement of different sections and groups and regions in a country in the perception that the unity and the integrity of the country was of prime importance.

Security, however, remained a primary and continuing concern of India’s foreign policy. Whenever occasion demanded there was a flexible approach keeping in view the country’s national interests. The security aspect shall be considered in great depth in a subsequent chapter, but its importance as a determining factor in foreign policy can on no account be ignored. 27

Foreign policy is the “system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. “It is a systematic statement of deliberately selected national interest.” Hartman

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26 Ibid. p 51

The objectives of a nation’s foreign policy are:

1. maintaining the integrity of the state,
2. promoting economic interest,
3. providing for national security,
4. protecting national prestige and developing national power, and
5. maintaining world order.  

Foreign policy of any country is the product of a complex interplay of history, geography, past experience, present requirements, perceptions of the ruling elite of national interests and ideological consensus, if one exists in the country, and if not of the leaders of government. It is also shaped and moulded by the domestic balance of forces, the regional balance of forces and the international balance of forces.

Geography could not fail to determine the thrust and focus of India’s foreign policy. Jawaharlal Nehru himself pointed out the geographic parameters of India’s foreign policy. India, Nehru said, was at the gateway to both South-east Asia as well as the Middle East. Anything happening in South Asia as well as South-east Asia, the Gulf region, West Asia and the Indian Ocean region affected India, and India could not close her eyes to it. 

The security and economic prosperity are core components, the national interest of a country. The maintenance of international peace, the promotion of international law, or the establishment of global organization also be one of the objectives of foreign policy like the great power.

The foreign policy of a nation is conceived in the minds of men who subscribe to certain fundamental beliefs relating to the distribution of power in society, the proper function of

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30 Ibid, p 75.
government and a particular way of life. Policy is expressed in terms of these beliefs and behaviour, though custom and tradition is conditioned thereby.  

According to James Rosenau foreign policy determines on size, geography, economic development, culture and history, great power structure, alliance, technology, social structure, moods of opinion, political accountability, governmental structure, situational factors (both external and internal).

India’s security, vital interests, and well-being was intimately tied up with the fate and future of this region. Similarly, India was vitally concerned with developments in South-east Asia, on our doorsteps, the Gulf and West Asian countries, equally our immediate neighbours, and the Indian Ocean area, whose very name testifies to its importance for India.

The compulsions of history, geography and past experience thus were important formative influences on the formulation of India’s foreign policy. In addition, it can hardly be overlooked that India’s size, potential and perceptions of her elite postulated an intense interest in world affairs and an effort to carve out a place for India’s role, certainly a determination not to ignored and cast aside. Potentially, India was a major power, a fact of which at least the vocal opinion in the country was highly conscious.

The Spirit and the Development of India’s Foreign Policy

The India’s Foreign Policy spirit developed before her independence of in 1947. In fact, the foreign policy was shaped in the 20s and 30s where anti-imperialist was the mood of the Indian national movement. Jawaharlal Nehru who was the head of Interim Government in 1946 laid the essential principles of foreign policy and in his famous broadcast in Delhi on September 7. Nehru expressed that the determination of his government to keep away from the power blocs or groups aligned against one another which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale.

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31 Ibid, p 79.
Nehru’s broadcast from London on 12th January, 1950 describes war and peace in his view as: What we need is a passion for peace and civilized behaviour in international affairs… If we desire peace, we must develop the temper of peace and try to win even those who may be suspicious of us or who think they are against us… We cannot seek peace in the language of war or of threats.  

Moreover, India also maintains traditional values like an understanding of International Relations through an ideal of tolerance and peaceful reconciliation. India has an essence of approach in such negotiations that neither party should suffer a significant loss and to utilize for a common cause and one which is favourable for reconciliation. Nehru’s philosophy follows the principles of Gandhi like non-violence to foreign policy that essentially meant fostering reconciliation and peaceful approach in the situation of vengeance and hatred. In 1951 Nehru observed: Unhappily the world of today finds that it cannot do without force. We have to meet aggression and evil… To surrender to evil is always bad. But in resisting evil, we must not allow ourselves to be swept away by our own passions and fears and act in manner which is itself evil. India’s leaders approach is friendly with neighbouring nations to achieve security. Indira Gandhi, on 31st August, 1970 in a seminar in New Delhi said: It is possible through friendship to outmaneuver hostility. With the same motto India focuses to develop multilateral international collaboration and friendly relations through different social system with other countries. The United States bombing in 1945 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a tragic fate in the history of the world. Gandhi argued: The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be by counter-violence.

The world accepted various proposals and principles of Nehru in India’s foreign policy in the matter of halting the arm race in the year 1953-54, 1957-58 and 1962. The United Nations General Assembly adopted an Indian resolution which affirmed the world body’s “earnest desire for the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen, bacterial, chemical and other weapons of war and mass destruction and for the attainment of these ends through effective means” in the

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34 Ibid, pp 4-5.
year 1953. India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, reacted to the American hydrogen bomb test on Bikini atoll with an urgent appeal to stop nuclear testing and start negotiations immediately on an agreement which would end the production and stockpiling of such weapons in 1954. This was the first clue movement of non-alignment. Nehru also appealed for immediate suspension of nuclear weapon tests to ensure to prevent humanity from sliding to the brink of the precipice. India was one of the eight representatives of the Non-Alignment Movement in the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee in 1962. In 1963 India was one of the first states to sign the Moscow partial test ban treaty—outlawing surface, atmospheric and subterranean nuclear tests. Independence and development is like oxygen and living things similar with peace and disarmament. Nehru observes, without peace all dreams of development inevitably turn to ashes, so as today India is the leading force in the Non-Alignment Movement, India is in the forefront of the struggle for peace, averting the threat of nuclear destruction and halting the arms race. Indira Gandhi’s words of Non-Alignment Movement has became “history’s biggest peace movement”. In 1978 India took initiative during the first special session of the UN General Assembly to discuss on disarmament. India took a sincere calling upon member-countries of the Non-Alignment Movement and the international community to outlaw the threat of nuclear weapons, also to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, to restrict the production of nuclear weapons and fissionable materials for military purpose, and to prevent the development, production and dissemination of all kinds of weapons of mass destructions. In the year 1983 Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi voiced for a submit conference of the non-aligned countries. During the 38th session of the UN General Assembly, she reaffirmed her dedication to the ideas of détente and peaceful solution of disputes through negotiations.  

India as a country makes effort to mobilize the world opinion for disarmament and halting of the arm race by issuing an appeal on 22nd May 1984, together with Argentina, Mexico, Greece, Sweden and Tanzania to the five nuclear powers. The proposal was successfully adopted at a meeting in Delhi Six the capital of India on 28th January 1985. The general secretary of CPSU Mikhail Gorbachev noted: “The proposals expressed in the documents adopted by the six  

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countries and the Soviet proposals point in the same direction.” The ultimate goal was to rid the world of all nuclear weapons.  

India and Soviet Union expressed its concerns about the continuity of arms race, particularly in the nuclear field and its mounting danger to the outer space. On 27th November, 1986 Delhi’s Declaration on the principles of a world free of nuclear weapons and violence was adopted during Gorbachev’s official visit to India, it paved the “new political thinking” which made the emergence of the response to the needs of an age free of nuclear and cosmic violence. It shows the inviolability of the sovereignty of states where the democratic spirit rule the international community in peaceful coexistence based on mutual tolerance of various socio-economic systems. Further, it also declares that the balance of nuclear terror must be replaced by a comprehensive system of global security and, as a matter of urgency, called for the substitution of trust and mutual understanding for fear and suspicion. In fact, the Delhi Declaration creates the ethic of new development for international relations.

The Delhi Declaration was a restructuring of international relations and a world free of nuclear weapons committed to non-violence and the assurance of the Action Plan specified to eliminate the nuclear armouries by 2010. The Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi expressed his country’s belief that humanity have a chance to survive into the third millennium when an idea of abundance of a “peace which rests on the search for parity of power” in favour of a course “signposted by the doctrine of peaceful co-existence”. The theories like “a balance of power” and nuclear deterrence involves an increasing danger of human self-destruction. This is how Rajiv Gandhi appealed the international community to negotiate a binding commitment to general and complete disarmament.

India’s Action Plan is to eliminate all forms of nuclear weapons in three stages by 2010. In the first stage, liquidation of short and medium range rocket systems is to be followed by a 50 per cent cut in Soviet and U.S. strategic arsenals. All the production of nuclear weapons and weapons-grade fissionable material must cease immediately. A moratorium on the testing of

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nuclear weapons is to be agreed, with immediate effect, it is on to the set of negotiation of a comprehensive test ban treaty. The nuclear weapons should be divested of its legitimacy by the negotiation of an international convention, which outlaws the threat, or use of such weapons. A moratorium would be imposed on developing, testing and deploying space weapons systems, and the United Nations would evolve a new strategic doctrine of non-provocative defence. India’s diplomacy has become a new structure of international relations sustaining a world without nuclear weapons based on the principle of co-existence, non-use of force, non-intervention in the internal affairs of others countries. Besides, it is also non-first use where to maintain its security from deterrence from others. Nehru maintained, The alternative to co-existence is co-destruction.

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Struggle for peace, disarmament, development and independence is indivisible in the perspective of India. Economic and politically power strives for stronger and greater power in the nuclear age with development and progress. Again, disarmament also channels substantial resources and development in particular. 40

India had no traditional rivalries with other countries and could look at the world free from complexes and prejudices. The foreign policy determines and influences, at times, by circumstances over which the national Government has no control. Indeed, the factors which govern the foreign policy of a country are numerous. However, the most important of these are historical, geographical, political, strategic and economic. It is to say, national interest self-interest should be India’s first concern.

Traditions and Values of India’s Foreign Policy

Foreign policy reflects and forms from human behaviour, social life and attitude of every individual and state in general. The social values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, and practices transmitted through successive generations could be regarded as esteemed and adopted. The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru an architect of independent India’s foreign policy said:

Though... the long ages have accumulated and covered up the ancient Indian culture with a heap of “dust” and sometimes “filth”, yet the old Indian civilization is the basis of Indian life even today.... In a sense, we in India are heirs to these thousands of years.  

The foreign affairs of India where Jawaharlal Nehru remarks, on some occasions, “looking back”, “India’s policy has not been some sudden bright inspiration of an individual but a gradual growth evolving from even before independence. The inevitable line that we took subsequently has followed that thinking as a matter of course”. In the view of Nehru, India’s foreign policy has two aspects, viz the “positive aspect of peace” and desire to promote “a larger degree of cooperation among nations”, this could indirectly and directly impact India’s past reflection to the formulation of foreign policy.

**India’s Perspective on Religion in the Trend of Foreign Policy**

There is no specific religion or ethic sanctioned for uniformity and regimentation of thinking and behaviour. The Buddhist literature highlights a state ruled by one person, but such a rule has to be established by love rather than force. In the concept of rules which means through love as a king of righteousness (dharma raja) who promotes non-violence and enforces non-stealing and conquers the whole earth by his spiritual influence. The Buddha conceived of himself similar to the principle of chakravartin. Similarly, Jesus Christ himself is the king of peace and goodwill.

Christianity has a unique principle and it differs from Buddhism and Hinduism in spreading the message of love and peace and to serve humanity even in the time of violence and war. Like St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Francis of Assisi encouraged the crusades. The ethical core of a Christian state is to fight against the heathens and the infidels.

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42 Ibid p 83.
43 Ibid, p 104.
India’s foreign policy follows the trend of friendly relations to all neighbouring countries and to all states. Every religion is based on love and compassion where India’s foreign policy stands for self-defence, keeping away from deterrence through national capability like nuclear power.  

The traditional values and religious perspectives on India’s foreign policy reflect the Indian constitution. Article 51 describes, “promotion of international peace and security. The State shall endeavour to:

a. promote international peace and security;
b. maintain just and honourable relations between nations;
c. foster respect for international law treaty obligations in the dealings of organised people with one another; and
d. encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.”

Preamble of the constitution of India, Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties enshrines the people of the global state and the citizen of India in particular. The spirit of fundamental rights is the natural rights that strengthens and enforces Human Rights in the enlightenment era of the world.

**Changing Dimensions of India’s Foreign Policy: From Cold War to the Present**

During the Cold War period India’s foreign policy has been governed by a persistent belief in nonalignment with two blocs, although it has always been somewhat closer to the Soviet Union; with the collapse of superpower rivalry, its foreign policy is in increasing disarray. Relations with the United States have varied from strained to warm but have never been overly warm. Since partition, relations between India and Pakistan have been especially strained and embittered, principally over the long standing territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. Armed conflict over that region in 1947-1948 resulted in the division of Kashmir into Pakistan held and Indian held sectors. There was renewed armed conflict in 1965 and again in 1971 when, following a political crisis in East Pakistan, Indian intervention led to the creation of Bangladesh.

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44 Ibid, p 105.
Despite periodic efforts to improve relations, tensions persist. India also has an outstanding territorial dispute with China involving 37,500 square kilometers (14,500 sq. mi.) of territory in the Aksai Chin area of Kashmir and 93,250 square kilometers (36,000 sq. mi.) of territory in Arunachal Pradesh. The dispute escalated into a military conflict in 1962, and relations have been strained ever since. During the 1980s, India emerged as a major actor in South Asia. It intervened in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and is trying to bring about multilateral cooperation in South Asia under the auspices of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

**The Trend of Non- Alignment as India’s Foreign Policy**

“Non-alignment has never been defined precisely, authoritatively and comprehensively,” M. S. Rajan

Non- alignment became the logical framework of India’s foreign policy. An independent foreign policy responded to the conscious and sub-conscious urges of the people, imparted a sense of pride and belonging and helped cement the unity of the country, for this foreign policy secured a consensus and was taken out of the ambit of day-to-day politicking. The intrusion of foreign policy into domestic policy would have vitiated the domestic situation, divided the people and created new tensions in the country. Through the adoption of a policy of independence, support to the anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere and through a policy of promoting peace in the world, Jawaharlal Nehru took foreign policy out of the vortex of domestic politics and made it subserve the cause of unification and stability in the country.

The non-aligned movement historically grew out of the immediate need after World War II to avoid bloc division and resist pressures by big powers for alignment; and undoubtedly this remained a powerful motivating force for the non-aligned countries, but the non-aligned movement spawned an entire historical epoch and went far beyond a mere staying out of military blocs. It was not a search for equidistance or neutrality, although individual countries might have thought only in those terms. The non-aligned movement came to stand for a struggle for

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strengthening the independence of the newly emerging countries and against colonialism and imperialism. Militarism blocs were also a manifestation of colonialism in a new garb. Military blocs were apart, the non-aligned movement’s struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialism, racialism and for peaceful co-existence and the right of small countries to determine and shape their own future defined the parameters of India’s foreign policy. 47

Nehru also felt that as a non-aligned country India would be able to secure assistance from both sides in the Cold War and at the same time maintain its self-respect, which was vital for securing its long-term interests. Nehru remarks, even in accepting economic help, or in getting political help, it is not a wise policy to put all our eggs in one basket. Nor should we get help at the cost of our self-respect. 48

While sticking to certain fundamentals like non-alignment with any Power blocs, opposition to imperialism and racialism, and active interest in issues involving world peace and freedom, Nehru was all the time watching the changing international situation and adapting India’s foreign policy to it so as best to serve both India’s interests and the cause of world peace and freedom in which he passionately believed. While the fundamentals of his foreign policy are generally well understood, few have noticed the changes in that policy, which had imperceptibly been taking place without, of course, any change in the fundamentals.

Non-alignment’s aim was to strengthen international peace, not through division of the world, but through the expansion of the areas of freedom, independence and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. 49

India’s trilateral relationship rested firmly on the foundation of non-alignment. Non-alignment gave sum and substance to India’s foreign policy and enhanced India’s leverage in the international community dominated by the two big powers. It also provided a useful shield in relations with the two big powers. India’s own experience had demonstrated the soundness of

49 Ibid, p 493.
this policy as well as mutual need of India and the non-aligned for each other. This was again highlighted at the time of the meeting of the Seventh Non-aligned Summit.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) had expanded phenomenally. From a handful in 1950-51 it had taken on the shape of an Afro-Asian conclave in the sixties, and had gone on to become a global movement in the eighties straddling across the four continents. It now gathered within its folds a hundred countries from virtually every geographical region. 50

Foreign policy being a dependable variable is conditioned by a large number of factors. Among such mixed determinants of foreign policy, domestic factors are particularly important. A State’s external behaviour is, of course, conditioned by the international system. The range of choices and emphases within these limits is however, wide. Accordingly, the goals, content and conduct of that behavior are to a significant extent shaped by the domestic context out of which it arises.

The domestic sources of foreign policy are so numerous that the task of tracing the way in which they guide that policy constitutes a profound theoretical challenge. It requires nothing less than the application of a comprehensive multi-disciplinary approach to know how the domestic physical, socio-cultural and politico-economic environment of a country moulds its foreign policy.

It is remarkable that experts on foreign policy analysis have been unable to arrive at a consensus on what foreign policy is. Hugh Gibson defines as, “A well rounded comprehensive plan based on knowledge and experience for conducting the business of Government with rest of the world.” On the other hand, George Modelski defines foreign policy as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other States and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. Joseph Frankel writes that foreign policy “consists of decisions and actions, which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one State and other.”

Three conceptions in the sequence or phases of foreign policy behaviour through which foreign policy elites link their States to events and situations abroad are:

50 Ibid, pp 60- 61.
(i) their general attitudes, conceptions and orientations;

(ii) content, that is, concrete plans and commitments regarding foreign policy; and

(iii) implementation of those plans. It is this sense, that foreign policy represents the external aspect of a country’s public policy.

Foreign policy objectives are supposed to be tailored by elites of a country in a manner that may protect and further interests of that country, one often finds a reference to a general and ambiguous term such as national interest in any study of foreign policy. It is the national interest defines this concept that some critics have declared it as not only a vague and meaningless formula, but also a pseudo theory.

Foreign policy, on the other hand, is usually executed through persuasion, negotiations and compromise or in some cases coercion; and foreign States or international organizations have no obligation to collaborate except as their own interests or rules dictate. Foreign policy may be addressed principally to domestic interest groups, but so long as it carries some minimum intention and recognition of external orientation, it may be considered foreign policy.

The intimacy of relationship between a country’s domestic situation and foreign policy has received scholars’ attention to some extent since ancient time. Plato in his writings in as early as 400 B.C. visualized the linkage between production of too much wealth within a country and that country’s involvement in foreign wars. 51

Three aspects of the Indian geography merit: its location and frontiers, size and climate, and natural resources. India’s strategic location at the centre of the great Asian arch and on the Indian Ocean has made it inevitable from ancient times that she should play a vital role in the history of Asia and the World. Jawaharlal Nehru told the members of the Constituent Assembly on 8th March 1949: “If you have to consider any question concerning South-East Asia, you


India’s Foreign Policy towards South Asia: An Overview

cannot do so without India. So also with the Far East. While the Middle East may not be directly connected with South-East Asia, both are connected with India.” Further, Nehru also observed: “Whichever problem in Asia you make take up, somehow to other India comes into the picture… She cannot be ignored, because as I said, her geographical position is a compelling reason….”

India’s strategic location on the Indian Ocean and its peninsular character with extensive and open coastline make it dependent on the Indian Ocean. It will be a very long time before air power, whether commercial or military, can make a major difference in this basic situation. The rise of any hostile power with access to the Indian Ocean would not only disrupt our foreign trade which depends upon freedom of the Indian Ocean but also undermine our global importance and jeopardize our security. The logic of strategic location, therefore, inevitably makes India a sea-fearing nation. In view of the importance of the Indian Ocean for India, it is not surprising that it has raised voice against the American presence in this area and it has been demanding that this area should be converted into a zone of peace.

Apart from India’s strategic location, the fact that India is the seventh largest state in the world having the total area of 1,232,060 sq miles extending some 2,000 miles from north to south and about 1,850 miles from east to west is not without considerable geo-political significance.

India’s enormous and fast increasing population has tended to reduce rather than strengthen its foreign policy capabilities by retarding the rate of its economic growth and contributing to scarcity of resources for investment, military equipment, food, etc., and thereby making India upon foreign sources.

The water resources of India are also immense for development of irrigation and hydroelectric energy. India is also one of the world’s largest growers of cotton and sugarcane. She ranks high in the production of lac, hides and skins, tea and a number of other raw materials.

53 Ibid. p 31
55 Ibid, 32.
56 Ibid, p 33.
57 Ibid.
India’s Foreign Policy Tends on Social Structure

A vast country with an equally large population, India is almost a world in miniature. It has a large variety of social, religious, linguistic, regional groups and a great amount of diversity in political opinions and economic interests. Prior to the advent of the British rule in India, various regions had different historical experiences. Although the subcontinent came less than one umbrella during the British rule, yet even at that time, diversities in terms of regional development and in terms of benefits enjoyed by the English-knowing elite and non-English-knowing peoples continued.

For a variety of geographical, cultural and communication reasons, peoples in different regions of India look at the nation in peculiar ways. For instance, peoples in the north, especially in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir identify themselves with those from the Central Asian culture. Their styles of dress, food habits and artistic and cultural heritage reinforce their believes. In some ways, they have more in common with adjoining foreign nations than with their own countrymen from such areas as Bengal and Tamil Nadu. This compliment is more or less returned by the peoples of Bengal and Tamil Nadu in their attitude towards the peoples of the northern states.

India’s foreign policy (as also domestic policy), must, therefore, be fully geared to the complex task of integrating the diverse socio-cultural fringes of its population. The recruitment of foreign policy to this task of nation building demands that foreign policy must be based on a broad consensus. This compulsion, along with the earlier discussed traits of Indian culture, explains why Indian leaders tried to refrain from embarking on radical shifts in not only domestic but in foreign policy as well. In other words, India’s domestic diversity, when projected into foreign affairs, inevitably led to a policy which could neither be pro-US nor pro-Communist.  

India and Afghanistan

The Afghanistan policy got caught up for a short while in the confusion of the political transition in India. Mrs Gandhi’s Government had just been back into power after nearly there years in the

58 Ibid. pp 46- 47.
political wilderness and was swamped by a host of problems, internal and external. The first immediate responses were not necessarily the best thought-out. The first statement of the new Government at the UN Security Council created some flutters and tended to give the impression that India had no particular objection to the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. Much of the misunderstanding was due to confusion in the changeover and soon enough the contours of the policy towards this region came into clearer focus.

A considerable segment of opinion believed that it was not in India’s interests to work for a situation in which the Kabul Government was just to be replaced by a fundamentalist regime or by fanatical, communalist elements supported by Pakistan. The substitution of a pro-Pakistan, pro-US, pro-China regime could not be considered an advance. The alliance of the landlord, the mullah and qazi in power was not a very attractive alternative.

India’s approach to the problem of Afghanistan encompassed the following premises. India was generally opposed to foreign troops going into other countries. India acknowledged the Soviet assertion that Moscow had been requested by the Kabul Government to send Soviet troops for assistance to the revolutionary forces in power in Kabul and the right of a country to invite such assistance. However, India’s position on the undesirability of Soviet troops remaining in Afghanistan was made repeatedly clear. In a statement to the Lok Sabha on 12th June, 1980, the External Affairs Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao said that India’s position regarding Afghanistan is well-known. We do not approve the presence of foreign troops or bases in another country. As such we felt that Afghanistan should maintain its sovereign, independent and non-aligned status. Afghanistan should also be assured of cessation and non-continuance of external intervention or interference against it.  

India and Bangladesh

The Ganges is an international river. Originating in the womb of the great Himalayas system, the Ganges flows successively across the territories of Nepal, India and Bangladesh and finally

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59 V.P. Dutt (1997) “The Setting and India’s Trilateral Relationship,” India’s Foreign Policy, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi- 110014, pp56- 58.
enters into the Bay of Bengal. A long-standing dispute over the allocation of the Ganges dry season flow between India and Bangladesh has been going on since 1951. In international river basin system, upstream states are, by virtue of their geographical location, in an advantageous position to control the supplies of common waters. They usually, but not always, claim complete territorial dominion over the water of an international river while flowing across their territories. Downstream states, which by reason of their location are placed in a disadvantageous position, assert their rightful share to the same water system. They invoke that riparians have only a limited territorial jurisdiction over common waters. This has precisely happened in case of the Ganges.

The Ganges water dispute involves, *inter alia*, the international legal question of the territorial supremacy of riparians on an international river while flowing through their national boundaries. The crux of the problem is whether riparians have absolute or limited sovereignty over the sections of an international river under their territorial control.

The absolute territorial sovereignty of a state implies that there is no legally organized human authority except and above that state which is competent to regulate its affairs. This omnipotence of a state allows it to exercise supreme power over all components of its territory. The legal regime governing its territory cannot be based other than on full ownership.

The freedom of action of the riparians over the Ganges within their territories is also limited by the principles of integrity, reciprocity and good neighbourliness. Article 2 (4) and 74 of the UN charter respectively recognize the principle of territorial integrity of a state and of good neighbourliness. One of the sanctions that ensure the observance of these principles is rule of reciprocity. Max Huber points out that in addition to the principle of territorial sovereignty emphasized by Harmon, it is imperative to reckon with another equally worthy principle, that of territorial integrity.

The concept of state sovereignty from the national frontier point of view, as it is commonly understood and applied, is no longer absolute. States recognize their interdependence and realize
that the theoretical notion of unfettered sovereignty is in practice qualified by numerous socio-economic, political and cultural factors. Yet, in the course of diplomatic negotiations in the event of international river disputes, riparians, particularly the upstream riparians, still make extreme claims for legality of their liberty to act as they please with the section of common waters in their territory irrespective of the effects of such use on downstream, riparians. But, upstream riparians have not behaved in accordance with the principle they profess and have eventually settled their common water disputes in a moderate’s way on the basis of shared enjoyment and mutual accommodation. The physical unity of the Ganges and the dependence of the riparians on the river and its resources create a regime of mutual interdependence and reciprocal obligations among the riparians in exploiting the river. Consequently, the exercise of absolute territorial sovereignty over the Ganges is neither possible nor desirable. Since the Ganges is essentially an international river of common interest, international law imposes certain restrictions upon the freedom of action of the riparians with the segments of the Ganges within their territories. 60

The most critical and the most dangerous challenge to India came with the Bangladesh crisis. After the partition of India, Pakistan was comprised of two regions, in the north, West Punjab, Singh, Baluchistan and the North Western Frontier Province, and the east, East Bengal which came to be known as East Pakistan. There was no common border and movement between them could either depend on a long circuitous sea or airway between hundreds of miles of Indian territory. The only thing common was religious faith among the majority population. This was a highly unnatural phenomenon.

The people in East Bengal were rouse in revolt against the effort to suppress their cultural moorings and their language, Bengali, and to impose upon them the Urdu-dominated culture of West Pakistan. This combined with economic discrimination and the lack of development was producing a highly explosive situation. The increasing bitterness can be understood if it is recalled that the majority of Pakistan’s population lived in East Pakistan. A major political party, the Awami League, emerged to articulate the aspirations of the people of East Bengal and the

demand for autonomy became widespread among the people there and came to be the official plank of the Awami League.

The ominous portents for India were already visible on the horizon. Within eight weeks, three and half million people came in an endless trek day and night. They came from all social classes and communities, peasants, labourers, middle class, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, men, women and *children victims of terror across the frontier*. A most serious situation was arising for India. There appeared to be a deliberate policy pursued by the West Pakistani rulers not only to stamp out all dissidence but also to drive it out and away into India in an indiscriminate swoop down on the people of East Bengal. As Mrs Gandhi said in a statement in the Lok Sabha that there could be no military solution and that must be created for their safe return to their homes and lands.

The gravest threat to independent India’s security, stability, polity and foreign policy had been posed. It becomes a question of survival as a secular, democratic country, in fact even as a going concern. India sounded the alarm signals appealed to world opinion to exercise pressure on the military rulers of Pakistan, but the world response was tardy and inadequate.  

A new situation was emerging in South Asia. A US-China-Pakistan relationship was beginning to emerge, while in East Bengal an elemental resistance of West Punjab dominance was brewing which was to draw the Soviet Union and India much closer, establishing a new relationship of trust and confidence and awareness of the identity of interests of the two. The Bangladesh events created a new crisis in Indo-US relationship too, it came at a time when the American administration was set on a new course of developing a new balance of relationship in Asia, with a relationship with China at the centre of the new strategic concept.

The most critical crisis in Indo-Pak relations came over the upsurge in East Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh. The background to the crisis, however, had little to do with India but its maturing and consequences become intimately involved with Indo-Pak relations.

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61 Ibid pp 42-44
Psychologically, emotionally and even physically, East Bengal’s participation in the Muslim League’s concepts and politics even before partition and in the emergence of Pakistan was minimal. The Muslims of East Bengal were the least identified with the struggle for Pakistan, notwithstanding the communal riots on the eve of independence.  

The emergence of Bangladesh was an event of major importance in the subcontinent. For the people of Bangladesh it was the end of a nightmare of terror and torture, a reassertion of their individuality and personality, and an opportunity to decide their own future development. For India it was a major victory of democratic secularism. The politics of hate and violence had been rejected and one more country in the region had opted for democracy and secularism. India and Bangladesh in friendship and on the basis of mutuality of interests and equality of relationship could help create conditions of peace and security in the subcontinent, promote the development and welfare of the people of these two countries, concentrate their resources on fighting poverty, disease and ignorance which were the real enemies, set an example for Pakistan and invite the people of that country too to join in this endeavour. The rise of Bangladesh was seen as a critical catalyst in the process of establishing new relationships and turning back from the path of religious fanaticism, obscurantist politics and ruinous local conflicts and wars.

India and Bhutan

Indians have been settled in Bhutan along the foot of the Bhutan hills since the early eighteenth century, not always by choice but mostly for political and administrative reasons. Some of them appear to have migrated far inside the Bhutan hills for protection from invaders. It is because all the eighteen Duars of Assam and Bengal plains suffered repeated Muslim invasions since the thirteenth century and for some time the entire territory was forcefully occupied by Bhutan also, though the inhabitants were non-Bhutanese, i.e., Toto, Mech, Rajbansi, immigrant Bengalis and Assamese having no ethnic affinity with the Bhutanese. This situation has been modified by the Indo-Bhutan Friendship Treaty of 1949 and Indian government but it was also encouraged for diverse reasons. The more India economically supported Bhutan since 1961 the

more the presence of Indian technical personal was felt in the Bhutan proper. What follows in this study is to examine their history, change of nationality and their problems.  

Over the past many years, Indo- Bhutanese relations have been extremely cordial. They are now getting even firmer.

Bhutan has remained in isolation in order to keep the sanctity of its tradition and culture free from outside influences. The desire to zealously guard the virginity of the land was aided by the topography of the region. But, if it gained something from the self-imposed isolation, it also lost as it remained in a state of stagnation for centuries. Before 1960 it was almost unknown to the outside world.

During Bhutan’s period of isolation, the winds of progress were shunned. The life style of the people remained outdated. Hospitals and schools were of a conventional nature. And yaks and ponies were the modes of travel. The barter system was common as the kingdom had had no monetary system. The entire economy was based on agriculture.

Bhutan slowly realized that it was being left far behind in the development race. The close existence was out of tune with the changing times.

The legend of Sindhu Raja of Bumthang and his battiest with Na’u-che (Big Nose), a neighbouring Indian ruler, warns “that if Mon (Bhutan) succeeds all to India will be conquered, if India succeeds all of Mon will be conquered.” The warning was really an exhortation to peace; it persuaded the two princes to meet under Gutu Padma Sambhava’s benign aegis and swear everlasting amity at the oath stone pillar which was thereafter known as Powerless since the

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kings relinquished their own power for the sake of external friendship between the two countries.\(^{67}\)

**India and Maldives**

Mr Zaki sees no menace to any one from India’s nuclear test. As he said at his banquet to Mrs Gandhi, “I do not for a moment believe that the possession of nuclear power by India means any threat to any one.” On the contrary, India can be a great help to the whole of Asia in the effort to accelerate economic development. He, therefore, conveyed to Mrs Gandhi his “sincere congratulations for India having become a nuclear power.”

India’s assistance may prove useful is transport and communications. Indian engineers have already set up a radio telegraphic link between Male and Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Along with the commercial circuit with Colombo in operation since October 1974, this links the republic with the international communications network thus providing immediate benefits to the shipping and tourist industries. New Delhi has also undertaken to have the feasibility of a regular air link between Trivandrum and Male examined by the Indian Airlines (IA). Again, India is among the countries biding for a contract for the expansion of the Hulule airport which is to be financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

These marked the beginnings of a new and closer relationship between India and the Maldives.\(^{68}\)

**India and Nepal**

India’s policy forwards Nepal has been largely influenced by the consideration of its security interest. The former has for long explicity included Nepal within its frontier security system. As


early as March 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, held that India’s security has linked with Nepal’s, when he stated in Parliament:

*It is not necessary for us to have a military alliance with Nepal…. But apart from any pact on alliance, the fact remains that we sub-continent. Any possible invasion of Nepal would inevitably involve the safety of India.*

Nehru further explained the indivisibility of Indo-Nepali security in a speech in Parliament on 6th December:

*From time immemorial the Himalayas have provides us a magnificent frontier. Of course, they are no longer as impassable as they used to be but they are still fairly effective. We cannot allow the barrier to be penetrated, for it is also the principal barrier to India. Much as we stand for the independence of Nepal we cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened, because that would be a risk to our own security.*

The Treaty of Peace and Friendship which was signed between India and Nepal in July 1950 and the “letters of exchange” that accompanied the treaty make the two countries, to all intents and purposes, quasi-aligned. According to Article 2 of the treaty, both India and Nepal would engage “to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with neighbouring state likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two governments.”

The letters exchanged along with the treaty further stipulated: “Neither Government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat, the two Governments shall consult with each other and devise effective counter measures.” Besides, the 1950 also enjoins close cooperation between the two countries in the field of their economic and industrial development. According to Article 6, each country undertakes to give to the nationals of the other preferential treatment in “the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development.”

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India and Nepal to whom the analogy about the lips and the teeth applies so demonstrably and aptly. One look at the map brings home the inevitable intimacy of their relationship. The two countries have been bound together by history, geography, kinship, religion, faith, cultural legacy and linguistic affinity. It is as if when God created India he worked until Saturday and then resting on Sunday began creating again thinking he had not finished his work on Saturday, but by then he had created Nepal and was undecided whether to leave them as two countries or join them together as one. India does not naturally end where Nepal begins. The natural frontier is the Himalayas that surround Nepal on three sides, leaving the only outlet the continuous territory with India. The two have shared their mythology of the Himalayas and their reverence for those tall forbidding mountains.

Indo-Nepalese relations assumed even greater significance from the point of view of India’s defence and security. In the post-War and post-Independence era, Indo-Nepalese relations were essentially based on the Treaty of Peace and Friendship concluded on 31st July, 1950. The treaty also provided that Nepal would consult India before importing any war equipment from any country other than India but gave the right to Nepal after such consultation to import from or through the territory of India arms, ammunition, or warlike material and equipment necessary for the security of Nepal.

Jawaharlal was very clear in his mind that, although it was a buffer state, Nepal must enjoy all the attributes of sovereignty and independence. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship itself began with the acknowledgement of the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Nepal. 70

India and Pakistan

India and Pakistan did come into conflict quite early as independent countries and this had a visible impact on Indian foreign policy. Subsequently, China too fell out with India and Indo-Pak relationship became a part of the Sino-Indian syndrome. Inevitably, these hostilities affected virtually every aspect of our foreign policy with long-term consequences, and even more long-

term images in our minds which almost became a part of a fairly common and general Indian outlook, even though sometimes certain important sections differed from them. And of course their impingement on our relations with our other neighbours was very considerable.

The Indo-Pakistan relationship is a complex mix of national prejudices, inflated psyche, injured ego and plain rivalry. This was rooted in the history of partition and the manner in which the subcontinent was divided into two separate countries in which major roles were played by the imperialist policy of divide and rule of the British, the growing awakening of the Muslim middle class and the fear of the Muslim landlords of Hindu dominance, the spread of petty middle-class Hindu chauvinism symbolized by the Hindu Sabha and the RSS, and the diffidence of the Congress leadership in the face of these challenges to seriously struggle for the support of the Muslim masses.

The impulse and much of the enthusiasm for partition was provided by the Muslim elite of UP and Punjab (Some from UP migrated to Pakistan subsequently). In fact very soon after partition West Punjab came to provide largely the ruling class of Pakistan and came to consider it almost its natural right to rule Pakistan. West Punjab consequently came to dominate the other regions of Pakistan. The most anomalous feature of Pakistan was its composition: two parts, East and West, separated by a thousand-mile territory of another country, India. Their language was different, their sub-culture, if use that term, divergent. In addition there were other important linguistic and regional groups in West Pakistan, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans.

Its inception Pakistan’s paramount problem has been that of identity and integration. Religion provided the impulse for separation and formation of the State, but by itself could not resolve the problem of identity or of development and to keep the country emotionally integrated. The Bengali Muslim had little in common except religion with his counterpart in West Punjab and the Pathan and the Baluchi and even the Sindhi Muslim increasingly chaffed at the Panjabi Muslim’s dominance.

The Indo-Pak situation was the conviction of the West Punjab ruling elite that it was superior, certainly, in no way inferior, to the Hindu ruling elite of India and must match its will and resolve with that of India. The urge for parity with India was deep and compulsive. The enmities
and jealousies that the Indo-Pak relationship witnessed were an investable part of the psychology of separation and division.

India was the chief antagonist almost in the act of birth of the two states. Here was nothing that India did that Pakistan could not and should no do better. The question of accepting to lay a smaller country’s role in relation to India did not arise. No sacrifice was too small; every effort was but towards achieving equality with India. Security considerations were overlaid with a strong sense of rivalry and competition.

In Pakistan the State was founded on religion and it became its raison d’etre. India moved forward towards a parliamentary democracy; Pakistan towards initially bureaucratic and subsequently military dictatorship. Noisy and often chaotic Indian democracy stood in contrast with the discipline and order of Pakistan. But above all the sense of rivalry, the fears, and the anxieties dominated Indo-Pak relationship.

All the problems were symbolized in the Kashmir tangle which plagued the relations between the two since Pakistan-trained tribesmen invaded the State in 1948, followed by large elements of Pakistan’s armed forces and occupied a part of it, but were frustrated in their effort to take the entire valley by storm by the Indian troops which were hastily airlifted to Srinagar, the capital, just before it could be run over by the invading forces.

Pakistan’s search for security and for parity with India has also led to divergent foreign policy perceptions and equally divergent goals in foreign policy. If India tried to block foreign intervention in the region, Pakistan invited it to get even with India.

India and Pakistan were set upon opposite directions. India towards non-alignment, Pakistan towards alignment India towards minimizing foreign intervention, Pakistan towards maximizing it. Pakistan’s urge for standing on the same mountain top as India and its continuing crisis of identity lent a particularly explosive dimension to the two neighbours’ mutual dealings. It is in this setting that relations in the period under study have to be surveyed.  

India and Sri Lanka

The Indo-Ceylon question, the issue has been a colonial legacy; its beginning can be traced back to the 1820’s. As an issue Indo-Ceylonese relations, however, it assumed significance in 1920’s, when the number of non-official members began to increase in the legislatures of both the countries. With the growth of the elective elements in the political life in India and Ceylon, popular national interests began to emerge as major determinants in national politics. The nationalist leaders of both the countries were prone to define their attitude towards this question in terms which tended to diverge and conflict. 72

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka can be explained by the historical perceptions of the two communities in regard to each other. But, it was only after its independence that the conflict was exacerbated due to certain alienation policies pursued by the governments in power. Most of these policies created a feeling of alienation amongst the minority communities and created a wide gulf between the two communities. The issues of contention between the two communities need not be spelt out in detail here. Tensions were generated over the language issue, policy of land colonization, inadequate access to university admissions, consequent deteriorating employment prospects, and constitutional guarantee to Buddhism.

These policies led the Tamils to demand greater autonomy within a federal system. However, the demands for affirmative discrimination and autonomy later took the form of a demand for secession, due to the reluctance of the state to concede to the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils. Further, State repression resulted in the formation of organized militant groups who took over from the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leadership of the Tamil people.

Ethnic conflict in any country in South Asia is bound to have a spillover effect on India due to the Indo-centric nature of the region. Therefore, ethnic tensions in any part of South Asia have

always been viewed with concern by India. Developments in Sri Lanka after 1983 turned out to be of grave concern for India.\textsuperscript{73}

India’s ties with Sri Lanka (erstwhile Ceylon) are rooted deep in history and mythology. The very characters Lanka, the legendary abode of one of the great mythological characters in Indian folklore and Hindu religion, Ravana, who was an erudite scholarking but under provocation abducted the great Rama’s wife Sita during their exile in pursuit of the demands of duty and filial piety. The story is immortalized in \textit{Ramayana}; one of the two most popular and most deeply-believed Indian epics; the other most popular \textit{Mahabharata}, evokes immediate memories. The island just across the southern coast of India and forms part of what we generally refer to as South Asia. Like the northern Hindus and the Muslims of Western Pakistan, the Sinhalese and the Tamilians of the south are hardly distinguishable in their appearance.

The links are close and strong. That does not imply by any means that there have been no problems. Thus persons of Indian origin saw their fate and future oscillate between hope and fear, hope about an honourable existence and secure future and fear of being sacrificed at the alter of Sinhalese chauvinism. There were the Tamilians, who have now proliferated into nearly a million people, who went to Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) in ancient times, some believe even before the Sinhalese inhabited it, now known as Sri Lanka Tamils.\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{India and China}

India and China are the two giants of Asia. In population, human resources, and potential they far outstrip any other country of Asia or even many of them combined. They are the two most populous countries of the world. They carry the weight of proud history stretching into mythology and appear to be both ageless and timeless. They are also neighbours whose inaccessible Himalayan frontiers have been made less forbidding and impenetrable by modern


\textsuperscript{74} V.P. Dutt (1997) “The Neighbours: China, Sri Lanka and Burma,” India’s Foreign Policy, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi- 110014, pp 299- 300.
technology and means of communication and who have been drawn into the maelstrom of world politics in times that have made short shrift of distances and created a more unified world than would have been conceivable at any earlier age.

Geopolitically China enjoyed a certain natural advantage. It virtually looked down upon the hills and plains of India from its higher mountain tops in Tibet and Sinkiang. It put a greater effort from the beginning in fortifying its position in both the Western and Eastern sectors of the boundary, in building roads and network of communications, establishing checkposts and strengthening its military position in many areas on the borders claimed by it but under dispute with India.

Learning from the lessons of history, Nehru advocated a policy of befriending the Chinese revolution, bring new China into the mainstream of the world community, encouraging contacts, lessening hostiles and suspicions, so that a more normal relationship and more normal world order could be established. This way Nehru hoped to avoid conflict China, to preserve security and peace at the northern borders, to obviate the Chinese revolution going extremes, to end the isolation of China and to prevent a persecution complex from gripping the Chinese leadership and the sowing of the dragon’s teeth.

Jawaharlal compromised on some bilateral issues too in the interests of world peace. Very early after independence Tibet cast a could over India-China relations. The acceptance of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy. Once the Chinese were in Tibet, there was no way of ensuring autonomy. It might have been far better for India to offer full acceptance of Chinese sovereignty in return for concessions on the border alignment. If China had declined the proposal, India would have been better prepared for the subsequent conflict.

The cooling of India-China relations was greatly abetted by the developments in Tibet, the Khampa revolt, the flight of the Dalai Lama and the large-scale exodus of Tibetan refugees to India, and the consequent embitterment of relations. In its wake came the border dispute and the 1962 war. Nehru’s policy towards China lay in shambles, even though the postulates on which it was founded were not wrong and are still valid. Nehru had not realized the full extent of the change in Chinese foreign policy and its implications, and public opinion in India had been left
totally uneducated by the mass media in this regard; in fact the newspapers made their contribution to the irrational and unrealistic approach on the border conflict at the time.

India believed that China wanted to dominate Asia. As Lal Bahadur Shastri said in Parliament, *To justify its aggressive attitude, China is pretending to be a guardian of Asian countries, who, according to China, are being bullied by India. The basic objective of China is to claim for itself a position of dominance in Asia, which no self-respecting nation in Asia prepared to recognize.* And he added, *We reject the Chinese claim to tell us anything about what we should do or should not do about Kashmir, which is an integral part of India.* In the Indian view, a strong and independent India was probably the *best guarantor of stability in South-east Asia*, Shastri told James Reston of the *New York Times*.  

India and China were not only on opposite sides, but conducted themselves almost like the actual adversaries. Chinese commitment to Pakistan was revealed as more fundamental and long-term. Peking carried on a vigorous campaign against India and it was a vocal spokesman of the Pakistan case at the UN.

The Chinese reaction was sharp and angry. It blamed India for the trouble, accused her (not for the first time) of *expansionism* and charged that New Delhi was bullying its neighbours. India was gobbling up Sikkim, had divided Pakistan, was encouraging *anti-national* elements in Nepal and giving protection and succour to Tibetan rebels. It was a *black record* against neighbours. India was warned that the expansionists had never come to any good and that she was dropping a rock only to crush her own toes.

Its reaction was quite critical, yet while all this was going on, a quite process of probing for the establishment of a more normal relationship was also going on, along with some public exercise on the part of Peking of people- to people diplomacy, and India and China had their own version of the ping pong diplomacy.

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76Ibid, p 285.
India and Myanmar (formerly Burma)

India has had a peculiar relationship: close and cordial but most unobtrusive and almost untouched, despite the existence of a number of troublesome issues between the two and external danger and internal threat of subversion faced by both, though much more intensely by Myanmar. Essential because Myanmar gradually took a conscious decision to opt out of world politics, ignore even regional pulls and groupings and have as little to do with the world outside as possible. Confronted by the awesome power of China and torn by internal insurgency partially sustained with Chinese support, the Myanmar leaders perhaps came to believe that isolation was the only way to ensure their sovereignty, integrity and stability. 77

The geographical importance for India of a friendly, independent state of Myanmar is too patent to need restatement. The rest of the world might look upon Myanmar as a South-east Asian state, but for India that country was as much of a South Asian neighbour as the other neighbouring states. 78

Non-alignment and independence of mind, anti-colonial and anti-racial convictions moulded their policies. Myanmar and India worked together in considerable harmony in international forums, in the non-aligned movement and at Bandung. The philosophy of Buddha in a modern context became a cementing force. Despite many mundane problems (Indians in Myanmar, trade difficulties, boundary differences, etc.) larger interests were to be more decisive determinants. 79

The profile would hold for a long time and there was no question of any major or demonstrative change. There was hardly any serious national, outstanding issue or problem and the nature of relations between the two was well-understood on both sides and would broadly confirm to the pattern delineated here. 80


78 Ibid, p 337.

79 Ibid, pp 336- 337

The Challenges and opportunities of India’s Foreign Policy

India being a large nation, her foreign policy is not easy. It faces international politics as well as strong pressure within the country to demand a drastic reorientation of its external posture. After the Cold War India has to pull and pressure the domestic economic and political setting, in the light of global domestic settings to articulate India’s national interest by the dominant elites. 81

The virulent form of terrorism has made the state machinery ineffective in the border states of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and different parts of the country. Moreover, caste conflicts, left-extremism, and student unrest have afflicted a large part of north India and Andhra Pradesh. Again, in the northeastern region bordering Bangladesh, China, and Myanmar, several insurgent and terrorist groups are demanding more and more of the national cake if not total independence. 82

In the case of Kashmir, the Indian state is fighting a total alienation of the Muslims in the Valley that, in spite of the best efforts at both the military and political levels, much success has not been achieved. In fact, Pakistan’s moral support to the Valley Muslims and its assistance to the extremist groups in terms of arms and money exacerbate the problem. It is a violation of human rights norms, a situation that tends to attract the notice of international civil rights groups to the embarrassment of India.83

North East India is an evolving problem as well as a challenge to national integration. Several insurgent and extremist groups such as the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur, and the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), to mention only the most important, are a source of constant worry for the state government and security forces, moreover, it cannot simply ignore local citizen who faces extreme extortion and taxes from insurgents. The problem

81 Ibid. p 105
82 Ibid. p 112.
83 Ibid. p 112
is compounded by the fact that most of these groups have transborder linkages in Bangladesh, China, and Myanmar, either with or without direct patronage from these states.  

**The beam of economic ties**

Among the Third World countries India is a champion of solidarity more in the political sphere, while real economic contacts have always been with the developed world.  

In the capacity of Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao who took the opportunity to address the World Economic Forum at Davos in Switzerland with the ostensible idea of luring foreign investors to invest in India. “The liberalization process, Rao said, is irreversible because it’s evolutionary….We are a successful democracy and an outward-looking economy…. I request you to believe a man with twenty-five years of experience in government and a half-century in public service that India’s reforms will not only be carried out but accelerated.

**Political Perspectives**

India being a republic democratic state intends and wishes to have friendly relations with all the nation-states and to live in peaceful coexistence. India’s diplomacy and foreign affairs look forward for political strength, economy growth and development among the states. India’s political scenario is to merge with the global moral rights and to fight against anti social elements in the world.

India’s agenda with the world is a security component. International terrorism, democracy, and human rights, secular, nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, military strategic cooperation, and so forth are encompassed in the agenda.

**India and South East Asia**

India’s links with South-east Asia reach back into history and legend. All over South-east Asia one finds numerous symbols of these ancient ties. Indian philosophy, culture, religion,
Buddhism, art and architecture, languages, all these left an abiding impact on many countries of South South-east Asia. Indeed, Indian and Chinese cultural influences met in the outer reaches of South-east Asia and you have the interesting phenomenon of Vietnam falling under the sway of Chinese cultural influence in its political institutions, code of ethics and language, but Cambodia coming wholly under India’s cultural influence. This influence was also evident in Thailand, Malaysia and parts of Indonesia. These ancient bonds became alive and were reinforced by the emergence of these countries as modern nations.

India’s relations with South-east Asia are of abiding importance to her. Next to South Asia, India has vital stakes in South-east Asia whose independence and security are bound up with her own. As Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out, India was the gateway to both West and South-east Asia and, therefore, inevitable came into picture. The independence and security of South-east Asia served to strengthen India’s own independence and security and any serious setback there constituted a potential threat to India too.

India’s approach towards South-east Asia was marked by two basic postulates. One, that colonialism must go and that all vestiges of imperial rule must be liquidated. Second, that no big or medium power should try to or be allowed to dominate the area in the name of filling the vacuum. Pandit Nehru had once described the vacuum theory as a cloak for imperialism. It was, in fact, an aspect of neocolonialism. The resurgence in Asia was a revolt against Western colonial dominance and an assertion of the urge for independence and development. Strengthening their independence and promoting their economic development was the surest way of warding off external dominance.\(^8\)

A major critical problem India faced during this period was the Bangladesh crisis and the attitude of Malaysia was of importance to her, both because of the close links and because it was a Muslim country. Pakistan made much of the Islamic connection. The complicating aspect of the Bangladesh problem was the fear of secession that haunted most countries with diverse ethnic, linguistic or religious population compositions. It was not easy to carry home the clarification

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\(^8\) V.P. Dutt (1997) “India and South-east Asia: Duality of Interests,” India’s Foreign Policy, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi- 110014, pp 345-346.
that here it was not a simple case of secession, but that of an imposed regime lacking popular sanction, defying the popular verdict and denying the majority of the population of right to rule. It was that majority that had arisen in revolt and was being ruthlessly put down by an illegitimate government.

**India’s Foreign Policy in Continuity**

Foreign policy of any country is formulated in view of the national interest: economic, political, social, military, environmental, demographical etc. and circumstances prevailing inside and outside the country.

The national interest of a country can never be permanent, therefore, the foreign policy of a country is best to be in a state of continuity and change according to the circumstances. Apart from that any nation cannot afford to ignore the past currents like sociological, spiritual and cultural. Nehru remarked in the foreign policy’s statement in the Lok Sabha on March 11, 1950 that, it is a policy which flows from our past, from recent history and from our national movement and its development and from various ideals we have proclaimed.

In all ages of foreign policy one cannot keep aside the natural objectives like maintenance of freedom of policy, the promotion of international peace, the emancipation of colonial and dependent territories and the promotion of racial equality. The hidden agenda of the foreign policy of a democratic state cannot achieve the maximum rights of every individual. Freedom and liberty enjoyment is the core of social life’s meaning. Every individual can develop into the maximum standard when freedom and liberty empower without harming others. In the absence of international peace the nation cannot develop. Peace is the source of development. Development can take place when peace and tranquility prevails in the country. Universal rights and human dignity is the essence of natural law. Racial discrimination is a stumble for development and peace in the country. Fundamental rights itself is the spirit to develop and bring up the foreign policy of the country. The freedom from want was a fundamental need, naturally a significant foreign policy could be developed on the basis of a vital internal policy. In the year 1947 Nehru declared that, Ultimately, foreign policy is the outcome of economic policy and until India has properly evolved her economic policy, her foreign policy will be rather
vague, rather inchoate, and will be groping. Nehru makes it clear in his speech in the Constituent Assembly in 1947 said, Whatever policy we may lay down, the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about international goodwill and mean what we say. We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say. But, in the ultimate analysis, a Government functions for the good of the country it governs.

India’s foreign policy emerged prior to Independence. The principles of ideology and relations towards the other nations particularly the British colonial nation India took strong opinion for her stand for friendship, neutrality, goodwill, good faith, disarmament and collective security in the sovereign democratic spirit.

The continuity of India’s foreign policy may be summed up based on the following principles:

i. Non-alignment even if the world divides into many groups;

ii. India wants friendly relations with neighbouring nations like South- East Asian countries for mutual economic and other interests;

iii. Article 51 of the Indian constitution, “promotion of international peace and security”. It contributes to world peace wherever and whenever possible;

iv. Championing the cause of the weak, even at the risk of enstranging vested interests; and

v. Making the best use of the United Nations for the purpose for which it was created;

vi. Diplomatic contacts to all corners of the world in the absence of reservation to any nations.  

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**Foreign Policy of India towards of South Asia and Neighbouring Nations**

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and China are the countries which directly touch the external boundary lines of India. Though India has no direct boundary line with Sri Lanka and Maldives, their religions, cultures, languages and aspirations are much similar to that of

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89 Ibid, p 354.
India. That is why these people look at India’s foreign policy hopefully. All the states of South Asia are very much prone for the development of commercial relationships. But, no sincere efforts have been applied to develop commercial, religious, cultural and political affiliation so far. India’s cordial and friendly relations with these nations are essential for external security of the country. All these factors are pertinent for the India to take the step to develop cordial relations with them and broaden trade and commerce in South Asia.

India’s Foreign Policy originated on non-alignment, a phenomenon distinct from isolationism, non-commitment, neutrality, neutralization, unilateralism and non-involvement is a course of foreign policy arising from the attitude of non-acquiescence in the bi-polarisation of the world politics. Strategically, India’s Foreign Policy is for National Security in the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threat.

In view of its economic/military strength, India has been offering economic/technical assistance to all them (exception Pakistan which does not need them.), even training of their military personnel. Some of them (Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives) are largely dependent on India’s assistance. Except Pakistan’s large armed forces are readily available for ensuring their security (when they need and ask for it) against external threats or efforts at internal subversion.

The emergence of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 has posed both opportunities as well challenges before India’s Foreign Policy in South Asia. India’s foreign policy during the last 61 years of its independent existence has changed on the demands of global, regional and domestic balance of forces.

Various governments in India have to readjust India’s foreign policy within the overall framework of continuity. The most fundamental goal of foreign policy is to protect India’s autonomy in international politics, which, remained the chief guiding factor in the framing of New Delhi’s external behaviour in the post Pokhran and the post Kargil era.

In the continent of Asia, Republic of Red China and India are two big countries, but, the relations between these two nations have not been cordial. China doubts India’s growing strength and takes it as potent danger to its monopoly of power in Asia. However, both countries need peace and stability. Both need cooperation. The small states of South Asia as well as South East Asia
are watching the activities of these two powers very curiously and sensitively for leadership. It is sad to note that two neighbouring countries India and Pakistan, which had been one before India’s partition in 1947, need regional cooperation and mutual trust. But, the scenario is that these two nations have been doubtful and inimical to each other since the day of their independence. They have gone for the war more than two times, which caused them enough damage of lives and properties. India should tend its own relationship with Pakistan with care, patience and perseverance.

Bangladesh’s antagonistic posture receives encouragement from both Pakistan and China. India deals firmly with its provocations on the border, its sheltering and nurturing of Indian insurgents undeclared policy of encouraging in surplus population to infiltrate and settle down in neighbouring state. This policy poses a serious security threat to the future of our sensitive Northeastern region. Therefore, it should be a parallel conciliatory approach. Bangladesh is a functioning two-party democracy. In matters of trade and development India has to be a good deal more accommodating of Bangladesh’s needs.

The progress of the SAARC has been obstructed by Pakistan’s support for jehad in Kashmir and moral and military support to the military organizations of North East. Bangladesh including Myanmar and Bhutan has been the strong organisational base and hideouts of the militant organisations working in the North East region of India.

India’s Foreign Policy and diplomacy must increasingly look at the world beyond South Asia and a working relationship with the US appears to be a good bet. There is a convergence of their political, economic and security interests in the regions surrounding India. The states is expected to maintain its supremacy in the foreseeable future, and that rules out the viability of “China-India-Russia Strategic Triangle”, for in varying degrees each country in dependent on different technologies, trade and support.

The neglect of South-East Asia since independence has allowed China’s dominance in the economy and politics. The region’s countries look to India for diversification in their political, cultural, economic links, but, India’s “Look East” policy has yet to acquire substance. The region can be an important source of energy supply and can vastly expand trade for India.
In a globalised world, India’s Foreign Policy will have to focus increasingly on economic objectives enhancement and attracting foreign investment and advanced technologies to enable the countries achieve a steady growth of eight to 10 per cent of the GDP per annum. But, diplomacy has to be reinforced at home to liberalise the economy. Reform and rationalized laws, and remove bureaucratic corruption and hurdles to pave way.

This is how India argues not to leave her technology to the mercy of market forces who are enthusiastic about research and development, but, the state must also guide and supplement technological strategy to realize the dream of the nation’s leaders of freedom struggle to struggle to transform India into a great power.

The strategic design can only evolve if the interests of internal and external security and diplomacy are fulfilled. The decision-making process has to be integrated on the basis of the activity to be saving resources improving the output. Indian Foreign Policy and diplomacy are used with the premise that regional and global cooperation can be achieved with strengthening of strategic alliances.