

FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA

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Introduction:

India was the first country to free herself from the colonial yoke. Many countries in Asia and Africa won their independence thereafter during the 1950s. It was but natural that India's foreign policy should become a guiding factor for them. The post-world war era saw the world being divided into two power blocs and the setting in of the cold-war. India's First Prime Minister, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, saw the interests of the new emerging nations best served by following a third path. The historic decision jointly taken by him and President Tito of Yugoslavia and President Nasser of Egypt saw the birth of the Non-aligned Movement. Here one should remember that non-alignment is not synonymous with neutrality. It is an active policy where the country reserves its right to judge world issues on individual merits. It is not a passive policy as is unfortunately misunderstood.

30 years of this policy has helped India contribute immensely to world peace. We are proud of having chosen this option.

Non-alignment:

When it was enunciated, it was promptly discredited. The popularity of the concept has disproved those beliefs. The two super powers have come to accept the decisive role of this multitude of nations.

Many world events threatened to draw us away from this chosen path but India resisted and came out successful. The growth of the Non-

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alignment Movement was perhaps responsible for thawing of the cold-war and re-shaping world politics.

Relations with super powers:

Non-alignment, as already mentioned, is not a policy of equi-distance but is essentially based on beneficial bilateralism. It does not imply middle-of-the-road policy nor more akin to one and it is a fact that in our case, genuine friends who have come to our help when we needed it are not forgotten. Western mass media has a tendency to label countries without realising the dangers of the affects of such labeling. Our relations are fast improving with both the super powers and we are better understood.

Relations with neighbours:

India, before the British finally left, was one country and the legacy of partition and war have brought in many inherent problems to countries of the region. While some divisions were on firm considerations, some were on artificial political boundaries which, in our opinion, were non-realistic. What our leaders foresaw at the time of partition have now manifested themselves as avoidable friction. We have tried to keep such thorny issues separate from those which can be solved. Our relations with other countries are devoid of many problems and with Pakistan, the Simla Summit has been the basis for improvement. Our national interests desire stable neighbours, as instability in one decisively contribute to instability in other parts. We genuinely wish well-being of our neighbours, instead of diversion of meagre resources meant for development to non-productive areas like arms, we wish to see an end to these phenomena.

To understand Indo-Pakistan relations, one needs to understand the question of Kashmir. It is a difficult issue but we are confident that it can be solved bilaterally. The Simla Document is a good starting point. In other fields, our relations have been developing very fast.

Relations with China:

Our relations with China have been excellent for many years. The

two largest countries in the world have had cultural ties dating back before written history. In contemporary times, India was the first country to switch its recognition from Nanking to Peking, outside the Soviet bloc. We have enjoyed continuous diplomatic relations. During the hey-day of our friendship, we jointly initiated the Panch-Sheel, the five principles of Peaceful co-existence, which have now become the accepted norms of international relations. The 1962 affair was a sad watershed but re-exchange of Ambassadors in 1976 has resulted in gradual and steady improvement in our bilateral ties mutually beneficial to both the countries.

Relations with new emerging nations:

As already mentioned, India, the first country to free itself from the colonial yoke, is naturally looked upon as a model by the new emerging nations. Further her vast manpower and technical advancement, suitable for a developing country, have come of use in their bid to wipe out centuries of colonisation and the resultant backwardness. Our relations with those in the Gulf and the Middle East are especially excellent.

Relations with Japan:

India and Japan enjoy happy relations devoid of any problems. The post-war relations got an excellent impetus with the dissenting judgement of the Indian judge at the Tokyo Tribunal. India was one of the very first countries to waive all reparation and conclude a peace treaty, absolving Japan, the nation, of its war crimes. Annual political consultations, recently upgraded to the Foreign Minister level, is an indicator. The two largest democracies in Asia, both wedded to peace, find themselves on parallel course.

Economically Japan has helped us in our development. The relations have reached a stage when we can share some of our complimentary abilities. A classic case is investment in third countries, the Japanese capital sustaining the Indian technical expertise.

In trade, Japan is one of the largest trading partners of India accounting for nearly 10%. While for Japan, we are far below in the list,

nevertheless we are stable suppliers of such essential items as iron-ore and marine products that the relations are essentially important to both sides. Avenues of development in this field are immense.

Conclusion:

International politics today is far different from what it was earlier. Increased communication has made this a subject of relevance to one and all and no longer confined to professional diplomats. The world is an inter-dependent community where a minor tremor somewhere affects everyone on this earth. India, as the world's largest democracy, hopes to play a large and useful role in this community of nations.