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INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

1998-2019

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

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PREFACE

Delving over India's standing on the global scale over the last two decades, we come across interesting transition points in terms of strategic outlook and policy options. These metamorphoses can be viewed from several perspectives, but the most striking feature has been the discerning role played by the country's leadership across time spans. Especially over the last five years we have witnessed remapping of India's strategic frontiers with renewed focus on our role in South Asia and proactive stance towards East through the Act East Policy. India has made it clear her role as not just a balancer, but a major power in its own right.

Indian foreign policy entered a new dimension especially after the 1998 Mission Shakti raising the status of India to a responsible nuclear power. The significant shifts that the Indian Foreign policy has undergone since 1998 warrants a greater outlook in the form of a comparative study and its evolution under NDA I and UPA I & II and now under NDA II. Be it defence and strategic posture or reaching out to the diaspora or even leveraging India's soft power across the world, the approach can be mapped vis-à-vis the leadership of the country.

The UPA tenure lasting about a decade was marked by lack of strategic clarity and a submissive stand on issues of national security. It is important to note that the Manmohan Singh government took a shockingly soft stand on terrorism post the Mumbai terror Attacks in 2008. The diametrically opposite stand can be assessed during the NDA II when India led surgical strikes on terror havens inside Pakistan. In the Modi era, India toasted another diplomatic victory after a decade of long struggle as the United Nations designated the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar a 'global terrorist'.

The monograph presents an analytical review of the foreign policy as adopted by the two parties during their respective tenures. The researcher takes cues from major events and decisions taken and their impact on India's international stature to arrive at evidence-based inferences. The report is an interesting approach to foreign policy analysis with leadership and decision making as the defining criteria.

The last five years have been about prioritizing our neighbours, solidifying long standing relationships and putting up an assertive front on the international platform. The researcher has attempted to put the comparative assessment as succinctly as possible to enable a clear understanding of the major decisions taken and how they have worked to evolve our foreign policy over the years and identifying the key contributing factors.

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Indian Foreign Policy (1998-2019)- A Comparative Study

BACKGROUND

A Leader plays an important role in international relations and in the formulation of foreign policy. Conversations about the evolution of countries foreign policy often focuses on particular leaders and evolution of their leadership. The leadership strata that make and shape the foreign policy require the support of the people domestically, as they represent people's aspirations at the International Stage. An atmosphere of political stability and close liaison is reflected in the nations consensus based foreign policy. Such has been the Indian Foreign Policy which has been moulded from time to time by the incumbent leadership and mirrors the consensus of the whole nation. This paper aims to analyse the various policy decisions and actions taken by the incumbent governments for promoting the National Interest of our country and addressing International praise and criticism.

The objective and scope of the study

1. Analysing the major foreign policy events and decision from 1998 to 2019.
2. Analysing the various policy decisions undertaken by the incumbents which shaped the perception of India in the International arena.
3. Analysing how a majority government maintained the Indian stand at the international forums and how the praise and criticism that followed was addressed.

Methodology

The approach for this research report has been qualitative and it is primarily a comparative and analytical research. The data has been collected through secondary sources of the prior findings in the studies and government records and via data collected to induce inferences. The secondary data has also been collected from various sources such as Lok Sabha Speeches, Journals, International Speeches and events, official documents in the domain, among others.

INTRODUCTION

The contours of Indian foreign policy have been shaped by a broad consensus, based on a rich and healthy tradition of open debate and public discussion. Though our political and intellectual leaders have undertaken prolonged debates, followed by heated arguments and divergence on various matters, the resultant decision has always represented a consensus as to 'what represents the national aspirations'. An atmosphere of political stability and close liaison is reflected in the nations consensus based foreign policy. Such has been the Indian Foreign Policy which has been moulded from time to time by the incumbent leadership and mirrors the consensus of the whole nation.

During the tenure of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998–2004) significant developments were witnessed in the conduct of Indian foreign policy, most conspicuously the substantial deepening of India's relations with the United States, as well as with China, primarily through the 1998 nuclear tests that propelled India back into the international mainstream. Then Prime Minister Vajpayee Ji also emboldened India's gradual embrace of liberal economics and an appreciation of some of the virtues of globalization, particularly as the means by which to strengthen and legitimize India's status within the international system.

Subsequently the 14th and 15th general elections resulted in the formation of a coalition government of UPA-I and UPA-II. Hence, in 2004 and thereafter in 2009, the beacon of Indian Foreign Policy was entrusted in the hands of Dr. Manmohan Singh, who judiciously followed Vajpayee's 'Policy of Greater Engagement' with an imprint of Nehruvian foreign policy. The Manmohan Doctrine had economics at its core, 'seeking stable, long-term and mutually beneficial relations with all major powers' and 'greater integration with the world economy'.

Though Dr. Manmohan Singh's government claimed that the Indian Foreign Policy will be reoriented, it lacked any substance. The 10-year tenure of Manmohan Doctrine was marked by a similar trajectory of India's engagement with China, Pakistan and United States but with little innovative steps. Further, what Manmohan Doctrine fell short of was accommodated by Modi's Doctrine. Prime Minister Modi's stand, concerning foreign affairs, in the 2014 election manifesto stated "the vision is to fundamentally reboot and reorient the foreign policy goals, content and process, in a manner that locates India's global strategic engagement in a new paradigm."[i]

Through his 'Neighbourhood First Policy', reorientation of 'Look East Policy' to 'Act East Policy', strong stand on 'Counter-Terrorism', among others, Modi government managed to articulate a worldview that did away with many of the shibboleths of the past and renewed the focus on pragmatic engagements in the realm of foreign affairs. The government worked towards fulfilling the promise made to the people by rebooting and reorienting the Foreign Policy.

The foremost example of a strong leadership taking a crucial decision was evident by Pokhran Test (1998) and the recent being the abrogation of Article 370 (2019), further establishing a firm stance at the United Nations Security Council. The 'New India' is on an

upward trajectory of prioritising its Foreign Policy and the incumbent leadership deserves accreditation for the same. The paper has been grouped under various headings in order to analyse the reorientation of the foreign policy goals via evaluation of the transition in Indian foreign policy from 1998 to 2019. Further it also aims at underscoring the momentous position the Indian foreign policy now holds in the everyday conversation of a common man.

Part-I

National Democratic Alliance-I

In 1998 BJP led National Democratic Alliance was headed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee- a statesman with a poetic soul. His earliest association with International Affairs can be traced back to 1977 as a Foreign Minister in Shri Morarji Desai's government. As a foreign minister his imprints at the world affairs could be traced to his Hindi speech at the United Nation General Assembly grasping attention of the world leaders while underscoring the importance of Human rights, his strong support in the Indian Parliament to the Indian delegation, led by Shrimati Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, stand on Jammu and Kashmir being an integral part of India and his unshakable and unstinted support for decolonisation in Southern Africa.[ii] After coming to power in 1998, he took forward the vision of an aspiring nation to its submit in the International arena.

ANALYSIS

Becoming a Responsible Nuclear Power

On 18th May, 1974 India's first 'peaceful nuclear test' Pokhran-I, code named as the 'Smiling Buddha' was conducted. Though the test was concluded as partially successful, it remains one of the most pivotal decisions in the sector of Nuclear Power in India. Thereafter India had to wait for 24 years in order to fulfil its dream of achieving a nuclear power stature as even the most ambitious leaders at that time- Mrs. Gandhi refused to conduct another test when asked in 1982 and subsequently so did P.V. Narasimha Rao, who pulled out due to strict surveillance and warning by Washington.

The revamping of the dream, which was crushed by the leaders at that time began when the 12th Lok Sabha resulted in BJP emerging as the single largest political party, forming a coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Given all the options many people would have thought twice, but Vajpayee ji exercised his decisiveness and Operation Shakti leapfrogged India in to becoming a 'Nuclear state'.

Many powerful countries-imposed sanctions on India after the successful execution of the five underground nuclear tests, as it took the International community by surprise. They feared an arms race which was already a reality during the Cold War era. USA and China and later United Nations Security Council (UNSC) came together to mount unprecedented pressure on India.

As a responsible nuclear state, India declared its "No First Use Policy" and also clarified that such weapons won't be used against Non- nuclear weapon states. The constant endeavour by Vajpayee ji and his advisors resulted in breaking the nexus. The International community

soon removed the economic sanctions imposed on our country as we showed the world that India, being a 'second generation' nuclear state could act as a responsible nuclear power.

The analyst, generally proffer four arguments about the acquiring or proliferation of nuclear weapons- Security Concerns, Prestige, Technological Imperatives and Pressure. Atal ji carefully carried forward the aspirations of all Indians, transcending international pressure and giving due weight-age to prestige of our nation, security concerns and the need for technology exchange in a globalized world.

In his speech at the 51st Independence Day, in the context of the Pokhran Test, he aptly vouched for a strong and resurgent India in the 21st century- "We can neither develop nor depend the country in the 21st century with the resources of the past century."



Pokhran tests strengthened India: Kalam

On the eve of tenth anniversary of Pokhran-II, former president Dr A P J Abdul Kalam on Saturday said that the decision to conduct nuclear tests was a "very important" one which strengthened the nation.

PTI | May 10, 2008, 05.35 PM IST

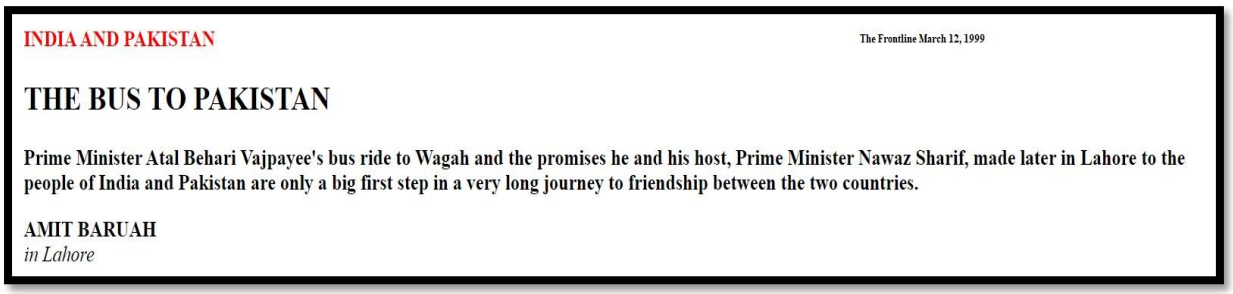
The Economic Times

Such pragmatic approach towards a crucial policy decision made space for India at the global high table after a time span of 24 years since the first nuclear test (Pokhran-I). If the nuclear power gave an equal platform to the nation at multilateral forum, then our impressive Nuclear Doctrine of 'No First Use' has gained us the rightful respect of the world.

Putting the 'Nation First'- Addressing the Kashmir Issue

On a historic Lahore bus visit to Pakistan to meet Premier Nawaz Sharif in 1999, Vajpayee ji made a pitch for better India-Pakistan relations saying "we can change our friends but not our neighbours."

It was a 'defining moment' in South Asian history as Vajpayee ji not only negotiated a formidable physical barrier but also broke through the mental barriers that prevented better relations between India and Pakistan.[iii]



INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The Frontline March 12, 1999

THE BUS TO PAKISTAN

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's bus ride to Wagah and the promises he and his host, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, made later in Lahore to the people of India and Pakistan are only a big first step in a very long journey to friendship between the two countries.

AMIT BARUAH
in Lahore

Though unprecedented peace measure was initiated by the Lahore Declaration, they were soon hijacked by the misadventures of Pakistan in Kargil. In June 1999, Pakistan's

misadventures and hostilities in Kargil district of Kashmir pushed both the countries to the brink of full-scale war. Vajpayee ji responded to the infiltrations in Kargil with a heavy hand and made it clear that entire Jammu and Kashmir forms a part of India and will not rest until the remaining part of Kashmir is secured. Pakistan's pre condition to talks had Kashmir at its centre. The BJP-led coalition made it clear that they were ready to talk on the one-third Kashmir that belonged to India and was occupied by Pakistan.

Further, the question of referendum in Jammu and Kashmir was no longer considered as an option as the precondition of the referendum was subject to withdrawal of forces by Pakistan from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) which was not fulfilled by them. Hence the question of referendum was irrelevant in the present context.

At the National level, Vajpayee ji strongly supported the Indian delegation stand at the United Nations. He had strongly put forth that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is legally and constitutionally an integral part of India and our country will not shy away from expressing its reservations to the studies that claimed otherwise.

Vajpayee ji did not shy away from taking a firm stand on Kargil but also tried to build peace with Pakistan by holding a historic summit in Agra with the then leader of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, in 2001. The Kargil war turned into a demonstration of "Indian Unity" by our countrymen and Vajpayee ji had put the Nation first before agreeing to a peace deal with Islamabad.

Terrorism- 'enough is enough'

Vajpayee Ji had emphasised that "over the last 55 years, every initiative for a dialogue with Pakistan has invariably come from India". The framework for a comprehensive dialogue on all issues in 1998 followed by the peace process in February 1999, with the historic bus trip to Pakistan and followed by the Lahore peace declaration.

Yet in May 1999 the bus trip to Lahore was responded with military aggression in Kargil by Pakistan but yet again President Musharraf was invited to Agra in 2001 for peaceful talks by the Vajpayee government.

Subsequently, it was he who struck a chord with the people of Kashmir in April 2003 after having conducted a historic free and fair election in Jammu and Kashmir, something the UPA could not manage to do.

The series of high-profile attacks of terrorism, first against the State Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2000 and later in 2001 against the Indian Parliament, convinced the Vajpayee government that the efforts at initiating and sustaining a dialogue were being seen as our weakness.

While presenting his views on cross-border terrorism in an interview to the Financial Times, Vajpayee Ji emphasised, "The overwhelming public sentiment in India was that no meaningful dialogue can be held with Pakistan until it abandons the use of terrorism as an

instrument of its foreign policy." Though dealing with Pakistan has always been a challenge, Vajpayee ji constantly maintained that stopping cross-border infiltration and destruction of terrorist infrastructure by Pakistan could open doors for talks.

Vajpayee Ji's pragmatic stance on the issue of Terrorism resulted in Gen. Musharraf's commitment to India in 2004 that he would not allow Pakistani territory to be used by terrorists. But India had to be concisions as there were persistent doubts about the Pakistani leadership's clout and capability to carry the army and the opposition together in addressing India's concerns.

Breakthrough

Vajpayee Ji owns the credit for making major breakthrough in Indo-China relations. There was subsequent downward slide in Indo-China relations after the 1962 war. The relationship between the two countries was stuck on the condition that no progress could be achieved until boundary dispute was resolved. It was due to Vajpayee Ji's constant efforts, first as a Foreign Minister and later as the Prime Minister, that China agreed on setting up of a Special Representative mechanism in June 2003.

The special representatives' process paved the way for accepting the idea of a 'package settlement' involving all sector and to the landmark agreement of 2005 on political parameters for settling the boundary dispute. Thus, the framework put in place by Vajpayee Ji holds the best possibility of an eventual agreement.

Evolving Soft Power Potential

As an External Affairs Minister, Vajpayee ji began his engagements at the International arena by becoming the first person to deliver a speech at the United Nations General Assembly in Hindi. Vajpayee Ji, was fluent in English yet chose to speak in Hindi while addressing the United Nations General Assembly. In his speech he established a 'cultural connect' among all the countries by reflecting upon the age-old tradition of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum'- the world is one family, and stressed that the world- as one family- should make constant efforts to uphold human rights and uproot racial discriminations of all kinds.

It was also his personal poetic touch to India's soft power outreach which mellowed the tension between nations. Such was the case when Vajpayee ji led the Lahore Bus Diplomacy accompanied by 22 distinguish Indians including dancer Mallika Sarabhai, film personalities like Dev Anand and Javed Akhtar. He even recited a poem, 'Ab jung na hone denge hum' which left everyone at the event mesmerised.

One of the key legacies of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee is his reach out to the Overseas Indians. It was he who laid the foundation of a comprehensive structural policy by setting up a high-level committee on Indian diaspora. The policy presented by the committee was accepted without any changes in 2002 and since then has been the foundational framework for all

future initiatives for the outreach to the diaspora. This transformative policy reoriented the relations with people of Indian origin which was initially restricted to the consular sections of Indian mission abroad which engaged mainly with Indian passport holders.

The effect was such that several countries, including Nepal, Nigeria and Ethiopia, were inspired to formulated policies on these lines to reach out to their diaspora. He is indeed a diaspora campion who rebuild the ties with those who were far away from their homeland.

In all his interactions Vajpayee Ji conveyed the impression that it was imperative for the international community to listen carefully to him because his concerns had the backing of more than one billion people dwelling on Planet Earth. With the support and trust of his people, Vajpayee Ji made constant strides in achieving the promises made to his countrymen.

Part-II

United Progressive Alliance-I & II

The outcome of 14th General elections brought Congress led United Progressive Alliance at the helm of political affairs which was initially marred by the controversy- who will be the Prime Minister? Hence, the then President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kamal invited Dr. Manmohan Singh to form the government. When Dr. Manmohan Singh took over as the Prime Minister the UPA had envisioned and promised to carry forward the gains of the NDA's foreign policy and seeking stable, long-term and mutually beneficial reactions with all major powers. But the minority government supported by the left and a weak Prime Minister was unable to provide the stature that India deserved at the international helm even when it had the opportunity to do so. The lacklustre performance in International arena downgraded India to an 'ought to be super power status' during their 10-year tenure.

ANALYSIS

Turbulent Neighbourhood

The Manmohan Doctrine witnessed a turbulent neighbour with rising political and security situation in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan. The UPA led-coalition was unprepared to engage the new democratically elected Maoist regime in Kathmandu and assumed that the Nepali Maoist was pro-Chinese which couldn't be dealt with. This approach led to counterproductive foreign policy outcome as Nepal's then Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, while resigning accused India of being responsible for the political turmoil in Kathmandu.

Further, the policy decisions initiated were either faced a prolonged peace process with hardly any end results or were over-shadowed by the domestic politics. For Instance, the aftermath of the ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka had an over bearing on the International relations as well as domestic politics. In 2012, India voted against Sri Lanka at the session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. Domestically, the Indian Tamils lauded the step taken by India but internationally deteriorated our relations with Sri Lanka who considered it an unduly interference in the domestic affairs and a hindrance to the reconciliation process.

The UPA led-coalition neglected the opportunity to constructively argue for inclusive power-sharing agreements and accommodation of Tamil aspirations in a post-LTTE Sri Lanka. Hence, the 'Big Brother' image of India in the neighbourhood could not be shed during the UPA's 10-year tenure.



Another blunder that the UPA government did was the **reference to Balochistan** on the side-lines of the Non-Alignment Summit in Egypt, emboldening Pakistan leaders to accuse India of involvement in fomenting insurgency in the region.[iv] Most Indians hardly knew about Balochistan as it was a festering wound of Islamabad's own creation. The joint statement emboldened Pakistan to put allegations on India for meddling in Pakistan's internal affairs and also gave Pakistani leadership a window of opportunity to 'hyphenate' Balochistan and Kashmir issue at the International Forums.

The UPA government had promised to follow the policy initiated by the NDA-I government, but failed achieve much success even in mere follow-up action. When the baton of foreign policy was entrusted upon Dr. Manmohan Singh, he maintained the continuity of the peace process with Pakistan but didn't make much effort to attain a result out of the same. He carried forward the Bus diplomacy by allowing travel across Line of Control (LoC) between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad but didn't took the initiative to travel across the border to visit Pakistan.

The relations with our immediate neighbour worsened after the Mumbai attack 2008 to which popular view remains that the UPA government took a soft stance.

Moves at Countering-Terrorism

The NDA-I witnessed many ups and downs in maintaining steady relations with its immediate neighbour- Pakistan. The BJP government choose to practice caution as there were persistent doubts about the Pakistani leadership's clout and capability to carry the army and the opposition together in addressing India's concerns. They were affirmative that any terrorist activities originating from Pakistan soil to hamper India's peace will be dealt with a heavy hand.

But the Manmohan Singh government who witnessed the dreadful and shocking Mumbai Attacks 2008 took a soft stand on terrorism. It was a critical moment in the history of our country as majority of the people wanted the government to retaliate. The public outcry was strong enough to consider using the military option vis-à-vis Pakistan.

Evidently Pakistan had crossed the line and that action demanded more than a standard response, but the decision makers came to the conclusion that retaliation would make things worse as the Pakistan would not take ownership of the attacks. This made evident that the

UPA government no longer had the capability of imposing quick and effective retribution on Pakistan and downgraded the conventional superiority vis-à-vis its regional adversary.[v]

Hence, the UPA government retrieved to the traditional methods- stopped the peace process and the comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan in the wake of terror attacks on the financial capital of India. This move by the UPA government presented India as a weak nation in the International arena, pushing back our stature as a responsible regional power. Even the then Home Minister resigned from his post instead of taking a strong stand against the perpetrators of terror.

Further, the UPA led-coalition had ample opportunities to advance a peace process with Pakistan when Pervez Musharraf was in power. Yet the government failed to seize the initiative and negotiate opportune deals to resolve the outstanding conflicts such as Kashmir issue, which is as old as the declaration of Independence of both the nations.

The UPA's Kashmir policy has been an utter failure. The pessimistic stand taken by the then PM Manmohan Singh's government is indicated by the fact. Dr. Manmohan Singh didn't even visit the Kashmir province on his visit to Jammu and Kashmir in 2013, whereas after coming to power in 2014 PM Modi visited Kargil, the first to do so after 1999 conflict with Pakistan. The cease fire stance has been maintained since then and traditional followed by the UPA during its 10-year tenure.

Snail Paced Nuclear Cooperation

During UPA's 10-year tenure, the Indo-USA civil nuclear cooperation agreement was presented as a crown jewel in the UPA's foreign policy dimension, clearly showing closer US-India alignment. In 2005, the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the United States and issued a joint statement for cooperation in civil nuclear energy. In exchange of cooperation in civil nuclear energy, India agreed to separate its civil and military nuclear facilities and as well as place its former (civil nuclear facilities) under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

At the domestic level, the UPA led-coalition faced challenges or rather internal turmoil due to lack of consensus among the coalition partners. There was a wide spread opinion that India had not struck the deal on equal ground and the nuclear agreement was more of a bargain. Further, the deal was stuck in limbo for a long time due to the liability clause and subsequently the diplomatic relations were caught up in a drama regarding the fate of an Indian diplomat arrested in New York under suspicion of falsifying documents and mistreating her domestic servant.

Another controversy was created when the then US President, Barak Obama and top officials emphasised that nuclear fuel assurance to India was only a 'political commitment' and the government cannot legally compel the US firms to sell a given product to New Delhi. After a snail-paced progress and much bargain, the deal finally came into effect in 2008.

The major aspect of the deal was that it provided a special waiver to India that enabled it to sign cooperation agreement with a dozen of countries but after signing the deal commercial nuclear transactions were first cleared with France, Russia and Kazakhstan rather than the United States. This overdependence on the USA evidently contributed to limited engagements with China, impacted relations with Iran and further increased reliance on Washington to deal with Afghanistan- Pakistan on India's behalf.[vi]

Under UPA-II tenure, India missed numerous opportunities to deepen bilateral engagements with the United States as the shadow of Non-alignment loomed the strategic momentum with Washington.[vii]

Just Looking South

During the Manmohan Singh's era, India's role in the Indian Ocean Region was narrowed to bilateral visits to the Island countries. Even USA took India just as a partner, an ally in maintaining regional stability in the Indian Ocean. Further the failure to maintain good relations with Indian Ocean neighbours, like Sri Lanka, had deprived India of significant strategic opportunities in the region.

Whereas China was able to secure the rights of emergency access to Sri Lanka's Hambantota port for its People's Liberation Army Navy, assuring Sri Lanka protection from International community pressure with regard to the rights of estranged Tamils, the UPA government was unable to accommodate the interest of Tamils and allowed certain state governments to stall relations with the neighbours in the Indian ocean.

There was also a widespread perception that China was expanding its reach via 'String of Pearls' strategy and by 2013 its relative strength in the region would grow many folds. But by the time the UPA government was analysing the vital stakes in the evolution of a stable, open, balanced security and cooperative architecture in the region based on consensus of various stakeholders, China had already established strong foothold in the region.

China took over administrative control over the Gwadar port at the mouth of Arabian Sea, an ideal spring board to monitor US activities in the Gulf region and Indian activities in the Arabian Sea, build a port for Sri Lanka at Hambantota, was involved in building Sonadiya deep water port near to Chittagong in Bangladesh, among others. Thus, with regard to Indian Ocean Region, the UPA government lacked continuous momentum, larger vision, and speedy analysis of emerging opportunities.

International Engagements

The UPA took forward the traditional foreign policy of the Nehruvian ear, with the aim to jigsaw fit it in the changing world order. The Indian national interests in the International Forum remained in a play safe zone, maintaining a stagnant posture of 'ought to be growing regional power'. Thus, the lack of confident decision-making led

to various diplomatic failures even for the policies like the Indo-US nuclear agreement.

With just one year in power the government was put under the scanner by the United Nations on the pretext of corruption. The Oil-For-Food Programme introduced in the aftermath of Gulf War for allowing Iraq to sell oil on the world market in exchange for humanitarian aid became controversial due to allegations of corruption and fraud by politico of various countries including India. The Oil for Food Scam (2005) turned out to be India's first post-liberalisation market related scam.



NATIONAL

Major scam hits Commonwealth Games

The Hindu

PTI

LONDON/NEW DELHI:, JULY 31, 2010 01:11 IST
UPDATED: JULY 31, 2010 01:12 IST

In 1970s, ping-pong diplomacy played a major role in shaping US- China relations. In the same way, even Cricket has the capability of fostering strong relations between India and counties beyond its neighbourhood. The 2010 Commonwealth Games was an opportunity in this regard, but the gross organisational irregularities earned India a bad name during the UPA's tenure. Despite a huge potential for Soft Power diplomacy, it was not utilised optimally.

The Vajpayee government's strategic and decisive decision made India a nuclear power, his Hindi speech at the UNO affirmed the importance of India in asserting the world view. On the other hand, Dr. Manmohan Singh's government pre-poll promise of reforming the global governance did not succeed and the tenure witnessed unearthing of International scams.

Scholars rightfully argue that even though the UPA was in a position to draft a roadmap doctrine for India's foreign policy, it failed to do so. The changing world order demanded an evolution and transformation in the Indian Foreign Policy.

Part- III

National Democratic Alliance II

The BJP won a landslide victory in India's 2014 elections, intensifying the debate on the likely direction of Indian Foreign Policy. There were unprecedented expectations that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi the BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will finally unburden the Indian Foreign Policy from the ideological fixation of the Nehruvian era. PM Modi initiated foreign engagements by vesting priority to the neighbouring countries with an invitation to the leaders of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations and Mauritius to attend his government's swearing-in ceremony. This was followed by choosing neighbouring counties as the first overseas stop by the prime minister as well as the external affairs minister. Subsequently International engagements were intensified with countries world over with the objective of positioning India as a leading global player and imbuing Indian foreign policy with a certain amount of risk-taking, departing from the risk aversion of past dispensations.

ANALYSIS

Expanding Peaceful Use of Nuclear Power

The Modi government carefully strategized the opportunity provided by the Indo- USA civil nuclear agreement and put it to productive use by assuring supply of nuclear fuel and advanced technology through bilateral agreements, taking ahead the clean energy demand of our growing economy. For perusing peaceful use of nuclear energy India signed agreements with countries like, Australia (2014), Sri Lanka (2015), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2015), Japan (2016), Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2016), Bangladesh (2017) amounting to a total of 11 such agreements, 5 during the UPA-I and UPA-II tenure.[viii]

In order to increase deterrence, the Congress led-government gave more importance to weaponization instead of acquiring nuclear energy, the Modi government choose to give due weight-age to both. In addition, through International agreements the government approved the fleet-mode construction of 10 indigenous nuclear reactors giving a major boost to domestic nuclear industry, jointly dedicated KKNPP2 (Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant Unit 2) to Indo-Russia friendship and Co-operation, operationalised Indian Nuclear Insurance Pool (INIP) worth Rs. 1500 crore, India's largest Radioactive waste management plant was operationalised at Kalpakkam, even ratified IAEA's Convention on Supplementary Compensation (CSC) for nuclear damage.[ix] Further the Kaiga nuclear power plant set a world record by completing 941 unbroken days of operation since 13th May, 2016.

Number Agreement in the Peaceful use of Nuclear Energy	
UPA (2004-2014)	7 agreements during a time frame of 10 years
NDA (2014-2019)	6 agreements during a time frame of 5 years

Due to focused diplomatic efforts by the Modi government, India joined three out of the four export control regimes- Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Agreement and Australian Group- and is diligently working for the membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), China being the only road block in this regard.

Streamlining Neighbourhood First Policy

A major difference in the two governments lies in the execution of the foreign policy decisions, wherein the NDA- previously under the leadership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and now under PM Narendra Modi- has showed greater pragmatic and assertive outreach than its predecessors. For Instance, the credit for formulating the 'Look East policy' goes to P.V. Narasimha Rao which aimed to cultivate and strategies relations with the South East Asian nations securing India's position as a regional power. But the sluggish advancement towards the development and growth of North East region, which was the most crucial link in the policy, crippled the Look East Policy.

A new momentous outlook was provided with the adoption of **'Act East Policy'** by Shrimati Sushma Swaraj under the guidance of PM Shri Narendra Modi. This rebooted policy made the seven sisters' equal partners in the Act East Outlook, encompassing a wider vision of developing the North East Region, providing connectivity to South East Asian Nations as well as connecting the seven sisters to the mainland.

Even the 100-year-old pending **Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh** was finally approved, furthering trust building measures between the two neighbouring countries. The upswing in India-Bangladesh relations has aided better transport and infrastructure connectivity through several development cooperation projects, such as, Agartala- Akhaura rail link, aid for Padma Bridge, supply of high-speed diesel from Numaligarh Refinery in Assam to Bangladesh, first train from Siliguri in West Bengal has reached Parbatipur recently.

This strategic step stands crucial is decreasing the dependency on the 'Chicken's Neck Corridor' which connects the mainland to the north east region and is often targeted by China- recently being the **Doklam Standoff**. In the context of Doklam standoff it is imperative to mention that the governments constant assurance and initiatives, such as

prioritising first International visit to Bhutan both in 2014 and 2019 followed by MoU in various category, strengthen **Indo-Bhutan ties** and both the counties stood side by side against Chinese encroachment which resulted in both sides agreeing to withdraw their soldiers to pre-crisis position. Whereas countries like the USA and the ASEAN nations were not able to stop China's construction of artificial island and militarization of the South China Sea, Bhutan with India's unconditional assistance could place insurmountable opposition to construction of road in its territory.

During Manmohan Singh tenure one could observe a Delhi-centric traditional view with respect to the foreign policy, whereas with the advent of Modi government, states were seen as equal partners in taking forward a progressive foreign policy.

During early 1990's Prime Minister Narasimha Rao made efforts for improving relations with Central Asia but faced issues such as instability in Afghanistan and discord between India– Pakistan. The Modi Doctrine formulated a vision which took the **Extended Neighbourhood** in its ambit and for the first time marked a shift in India's diplomatic relations as it looked at the region as a composite geographical unit. A coherent strategy was redesigned to upscale India's relationship with Central Asia, reinvigorating the ancient socio-economic and traditional ties with the region through new initiatives.

Amid the traditional concerns of instability in Afghanistan, misadventures of Pakistan and growing geostrategic and security concerns of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Modi government had to fix the preceding government's ineffectual strategy. Soon after assuming office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi went on a whirlwind tour to all the Central Asia countries in June 2015, boosting the momentum of the "Connect Central Asia" Policy of 2012 and setting in motion the next stage of international cooperation.

As a result of Modi's visit, India and Central Asia signed a range of agreements in the field of security, energy, trade and culture, among others. In the last four years, the presidents of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan made reciprocal visits to India further underscoring the evolution of the India–Central Asia dynamics through bilateral and trilateral arrangements.

In 2017, former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and her Afghan counterpart flagged of the first wheat consignment from India to Afghanistan's city of Zaranj near the Iran-Afghanistan border. This was the result of a significant trilateral cooperation between Iran, Afghanistan and India. The partial operationalisation of the Chabahar Port of Iran has provided India with direct access to Central Asia as well as placed Eurasian region firmly in New Delhi's zone of interest.

This was a geostrategic push towards reiterating India's continued support to reconstruction, capacity-building and socio-economic development of Afghanistan as well as countering Pakistan's Gwadar port and CPEC- part of China's flagship Belt Road Initiative.

Thus, the then External Affairs Minister Shrimati Sushma Swaraj's 'Wheat Diplomacy' earned India in-roads in Afghanistan via the Chabahar port, which is a counter to Pakistan and China's joint presence at the Gwadar port- less than 100 nautical miles from the Chabahar port.

Many countries, overly supportive of Pakistan due to religious reasons, were left out of the ambit of India's bilateral expeditions. India's priorities focused on secular states such as Egypt and Iraq in the past. In 1969, India was denied entry at the plenary session of **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations, due to a boycott call by the then Pakistan leader.

A diplomatic breakthrough was achieved with regard to the OCI, when in March 2019 External Affairs Minister Shrimati Sushma Swaraj attended the inaugural plenary of the foreign ministers' conclave as the guest of honour.

The transition in the Arab world were taken as an opportunity by Prime Minister Modi and took step in the right direction by engaging Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates in political and economic benefits. Prospectively, Modi ji was honoured with the 'Order of Zayed', the highest civil decoration of the UAE, in recognition of his distinguished leadership for giving a boost to bilateral relations between the two countries and previously in 2016 was conferred with the highest honour of Saudi Arabia awarded to non-Muslim dignitaries 'Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud'.

The transformation is such that the traditional knee-jerk support for Pakistan is weakening and the long- term gains derive from the Gulf monarchies' is deepening opposition to Islamist terrorism as India continues to struggle against this threat.

Modi Ji's ability to jumpstart this transformation, while avoiding enmeshment in the current intra-Gulf rivalries and while preserving good relations with Iran, demonstrates an agility that has eluded even the United States.[x]

Awards	**Country/ Organisation**
Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud- 2016	Saudi Arabia
State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan- 2016	Afghanistan
Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award- 2018	Palestine
Highest environmental honour 'Champions of Earth Award'- 2018	United Nations General Assembly
Seoul Peace Prize- 2018	Seoul Peace Prize Committee
First-ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award- 2019	Philip Kotler
Order of St Andrew the Apostle- 2019	Russia
Order of Zayed- 2019	United Arab Emirates
King Hamad Order of the Renaissance- 2019	Bahrain
The Above Table Represents the Major Awards Conferred on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ***Source: Data collected by the researcher.***	

Uprooting Terrorism

The subsequent governments knew that Pakistan won't mend its old ways and would seek the support of world leaders like the USA and UK in such a scenario. Further if the extremists manage to launch another Mumbai-like attack on India from their Pakistani bases, no one would be able to stop a serious deterioration in India-Pakistan relations.[xi] The preconceived notion that India would come under International pressure had to be altered.

Prime Minister Modi gave fair chance to Pakistan and made a historic stop over at Lahore, spoke to PM Nawaz Sharif and wished him for his birthday. But things went south rapidly when Pakistani terrorist attacked the Pathankot Air Force station in Punjab. It made evident that India wanted better ties with Pakistan and had perused such steps but Pakistan wasn't reciprocating.

Though world opinion was on India's side, we restrained from taking any harsh steps and did what was to be done. PM Modi raised the issue at the BRICS summit held in Goa, highlighting- 'It is the responsibility of all states to prevent terrorist actions from their territories'. BRICS unanimously recognised the threat posed by terrorism and stressed that combating cross-border terrorism and its supporters will be a key priority for BRICS.

> We strongly condemn the recent several attacks, against some BRICS countries, including that in India.We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stressed that there can be no justification whatsoever for any acts of terrorism, whether based upon ideological, religious, political, racial, ethnic or any other reasons. We agreed to strengthen cooperation in combating international terrorism both at the bilateral level and at international fora.
>
> Goa Declaration at the 8th BRICS

The Goa Declaration not only urged all the nations to undertake effective implementation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions but also expedite the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN General Assembly without any further delay. The stage was set with the setting up and the first meeting of the BRICS Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism on 14th September 2016 in New Delhi.[xii]

Pakistan was diplomatically isolated at SAARC, South Korea cancelled investment in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and world institutions were denying aid. Now India was prepared to take stringent measures against the promoters and proliferators of terrorism.

Surgical Strikes

In 2016, 19 Army soldiers were killed when terrorist belonging to Jaish- e- Mohammed (JeM) attacked the army base. Shortly after the deadly terror attack in Uri, PM Modi promised that strong action will be taken against Pakistan. India responded with a ground based surgical strike which inflicted deep wound on Pakistan as no country- not even China- questioned India's move because the world opinion was on our side.

Further PM Modi made it clear that surgical strikes was not a one-time affair and every attack on our soil and soldiers will be answered with retaliatory measures.



FATF Asia-Pacific Group puts Pakistan in 'enhanced blacklist': Officials

The Asia Pacific Group (APG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has also found that Pakistan was non-compliant on 32 of the 40 compliance parameters of terror financing and money laundering.

ET Bureau | Updated: Aug 24, 2019, 06.59 AM IST

The Economic Times

In 2018, Pakistan was placed on the Financial Action Task Force's 'grey list' as it failed to take action on the terror breeding from its soil. Though China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia sided with Pakistan, India didn't give up and recently, Global Financial Action Task Force blacklisted Pakistan for non-compliance of anti-money laundering and combating terror financing efforts.

In 2019, the Jaish- e- Mohammed (JeM) suicide bombers hit a convoy killing 40 CRPF soldiers. India responded with aerial precision strikes targeting the major terrorist training camps of Jaish- e- Mohammed (JeM). Balakot surgical strike in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan was a testament that India will root out the germs of terror even if they are breeding on another country's territory.

In the Modi era, India toasted another diplomatic victory after a decade of long struggle as the United Nations designated the Pakistan-based Jaish-a-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar a 'global terrorist'. Even China had to drop its opposition to the UN blacklisting. Subsequently, India declared Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed along with India's most wanted men as terrorist under the domestic law- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 1967.



Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed, Dawood declared terrorists under new UAPA law

Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar and others have been declared terrorists under the new anti-terror UAPA law by the central government.

September 4, 2019 India Today

What the UPA government could not execute during its 10-years tenure, NDA did in a span of 5-years via consistent diplomatic efforts.

'One Nation, One Constitution, One Flag'

The 2014 manifesto of the BJP reiterated its stand on Article 370 and remained committed to the abrogation of the article. This promise was met when the Home Minister Shri Amit Shah pulled off the unthinkable by scrapping the special constitutional status given to erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 on the morning of August 5. Jammu and Kashmir got the rightful place it deserved as an integral part of India, paving the way for **'One Nation, One Constitution, One Flag'.**

As Kashmir is an integral issue with foreign policy implications, the recent Constitutional adjustments with regard to Article 370 provoked Pakistan to take the issue at the International forum. Even the US President remarked that if requested he would be ready to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir Issue.

The External Affairs Ministry immediately issued a media notice, clarifying that no such request has been made and all outstanding issues with Pakistan will be discussed bilaterally. Further, the prior condition of any engagement with Pakistan would require an end to cross border terrorism and the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration provide the basis to resolve all issues between India and Pakistan bilaterally.[xiii]



NATIONAL

PM rejects scope for third party mediation in Kashmir

PTI

BIARRITZ/LONDON, AUGUST 26, 2019 16:47 IST
UPDATED: AUGUST 26, 2019 22:03 IST

The Hindu

At media briefing alongside U.S President Donald Trump, on the side lines of G7 Summit in France, PM Modi said that the two countries can resolve issues bilaterally and categorically rejected any scope of third-party mediation between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. Under NDA government, led by PM Modi, a transformation has occurred from maintaining the traditional stand on the Kashmir Issue to a decisive and strong-willed assertion on securing the sovereignty of our nation.

Another example of the same is the boycotting of China's **One Belt One Road** initiative. The $62 billion CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor), a part of China's One Belt One Road initiative, violates India's sovereignty as it runs through Gilgit-Baltistan that lies in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). Even though Russia backed China, PM Modi refused to endorse China's pet project at the 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in China and said that the mega connectivity projects must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries.

This action was praised by Michael Pillsbury in 2017, an American expert on foreign policy matters and director of Centre on Chinese Strategy at the Hudson institute. He said "The only statesman in the world who stood up to it (China's OBOR) yet is Prime Minister Modi. He and his team have been quite outspoken, partly because the Belt and Road Initiative includes violation of Indian sovereign claims."



Modi only world statesman to stand up to China on BRI: Pillsbury

India boycotted the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) organised by China in May this year to highlight its concerns over Beijing pushing projects through the the PoK.

PTI | Updated: Jul 12, 2018, 03.13 PM IST

The Economic Times

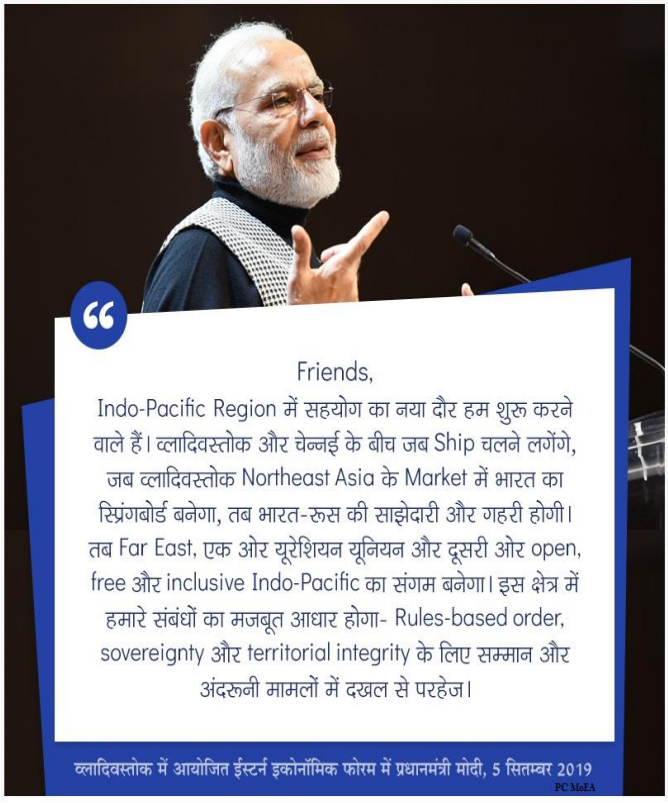
It is a matter of pride that under the able-leadership of PM Modi, India showed other nations the way to not make compromises on their sovereignty.

Indian Ocean Diplomacy

It was not until 2018 that the strategic importance of Indian Ocean Region for India was highlighted. In his keynote address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 2018), Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi provided a clear meaning and vision to the widely nomenclature of 'Indo-Pacific'. [xiv]His vision of the geographical outreach of Indo-Pacific region extended from shores of Africa to the coast of America in the Pacific Ocean. He highlighted the role of Indian Ocean in shaping the history of India and the key it holds in shaping its future.

He also underscored the emerging realisation in the strategic circle that there are linkages between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The term Indo-Pacific brings together two seemingly diverse theatres and gives it a unifying strategic meaning. This view was reiterated by the United States military by renaming its Pacific Command to U.S. Indo- Pacific Command, emphasising the role of India in the region as well as the linkage between the two oceans.

After streamlining the vision and meaning of the Indian Ocean Policy a coherent architecture was put in place by the Modi government by inauguration the Information Fusion Centre at Gurugram (2018)[xv] and setting up an Indo-Pacific wing in the Ministry of External Affairs (2019)[xvi]. Further the Indian Navy had put forward a re-oriented "Mission Based Deployment" (MDP) in the Indian Ocean, involving mission-ready ships and aircraft along critical sea-lanes of communication.[xvii]



In the Modi era, India is playing a major role in the Indian Ocean Region by advancing regional cooperation, building economic capabilities, improving maritime security, promoting freedom of navigation and redressal of disputes in accordance with International law. We are advancing this comprehensive agenda via active participation in mechanisms like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the East Asia Summit, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers Meeting Plus, ASEAN Regional Forum, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, and Mekong Ganga Economic Corridor.

The comprehensive agenda also envisions co-operating with partners beyond the Indian Ocean Region to ensure that the global transit routes remain peaceful and free for all. India is now an active stakeholder in USA's 'Pivot towards Asia' and Japan's 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' for promoting security and stability in the Indian Ocean Region, is actively engaging with Pacific Island countries through platforms like Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), conducting **joint exercise** for better interoperability, for instance, Samudra Shakti- first ever naval exercise between India and Indonesia, AUSINDEX- joint naval exercise between India and Australia, IMBAX- first ever India-Myanmar joint military exercise and recently conducted the 22nd edition of Malabar trilateral naval exercise in the Indian Ocean along with USA and Japan, with future prospects of engaging Australia in the region.

The possibility of involving all stakeholders in the region- Indian Ocean and Beyond- which was stagnated during UPA's tenure is now being actively shaped by the Modi government. The government is perusing greater engagements in the region by promoting multi-layered engagements with China as well as strategic partnership with Russia for an open, free and inclusive Indo-Pacific zone. Recently, India, Japan and Sri Lanka signed a deal for developing a deep-sea container terminal at the Port of Colombo, along with Trincomalee Port. Further India, France and Australia have held track 1.5 dialogues to identify security challenges and sustainability issues in the Indo Pacific region.

The Modi government is taking forward the concept of **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** enhancing a range of capacities, engaging with other countries, and fostering greater cooperation in the littoral. Keeping in mind the growing assertiveness of China, India is not holding back and is balancing and asserting its regional power stance. In the Modi era one can witness an increase in economic involvement, deepening defence and security cooperation and collaboratively strengthen of liberal order in Asia.

Diplomatic Engagements

In the last five years, Modi ji transformed India from being merely an important player in the global order and has long shed any diffidence about India's great-power aspirations. The hyper-energetic diplomacy perused by Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, under the able- leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi has earned great dividends for India at the International forums.

While observing the **pattern of foreign visits** during the tenure of the two Prime Ministers- Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi- it can be concluded that whereas UPA opted for the traditional strategic visits to the USA, Russia and summit-oriented visits, the NDA's focus was towards neighbouring countries, followed by the surrounding region and the broader international community.

For the UPA prioritising visits to the neighbouring nations came on a later stage, but for the NDA, neighbourhood first was a priority from the very start. PM Modi not

only strategized the visits to the traditional partners but also to the small island nations like Fiji, Seychelles and Maldives.

During the first four years of the NDA government, led by PM Modi, diplomatic outreach achieved a new vigour and vitality through first-ever visits from India at the level of Heads of State/Heads of Government to many countries, including Israel, Palestine, Mongolia, Portugal, Switzerland, Equatorial Guinea and e-Swatini. Reigniting the spark in friendship with old friends, several high-level visits took place after a gap of ten to sixty years. [xviii]

DIPLOMATIC OUTREACH: UPA V/S NDA	
UPA	**NDA**
• *A Permanent Seat at the UN Security Council still a dream.* • *After Mumbai attack 2008, terror infrastructure on Pakistan soil remained intact.* • *India-US civil nuclear deal remains on paper.* • *China remained a challenge for India.*	• *First time in 70-years, United Kingdom lost to India in winning a seat at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).* • *United Nations designated Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as global terrorist; Surgical Strike by India on Pakistan not questioned by China.* • *India became a member of three export control regimes- Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Agreement, Australian Group.* • *India openly stood against China's OBOR, faced China during the Doklam crisis.*

Soft Power-From Potential to Reality

Discussion on the "soft power" ingredients in the Indian Foreign Policy began alongside Joseph Nye's evolving views on soft power as a co-optive power. The aspects of soft power in Indian diplomacy are vivid as well as engaging at the same time. Though culture and heritage have been the initial ingredients, sports, diaspora, tourism, yoga, language, food have been an ever-evolving domain of soft power diplomacy. Soft power diplomacy has tangible as well as non-tangible benefits.

The BJP led NDA government made evident its mission to Project India's Soft Power on the global stage by focussing on traditional aspects- historical and cultural linkage- as well as expanding scope and potential of India's soft power to the contemporary realities such as

women safety, connecting Indian diaspora, converging diplomatic, strategic and economic relations with other nations.

The government expanded its Soft Power engagements by focusing on Ayurveda, Yoga, Buddhism, besides reaching pro-actively to the Indian Diaspora. Prime Minister's appeal in the United Nation General Assembly received praise and an International recognition was accorded to Yoga by declaring June 21 as International Yoga Day. Since 2015 the theme of Yoga Day has not only focused on health advantages but also on Peace, Youth, Harmony and recently on "Climate Action". The importance of Yoga in connecting the whole world is evident from the participation of more than 120 countries at around 500 locations on the 5th International Yoga Day.

Yoga, Nawrouz, Kumbh Mela have been included in the UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritages demonstrating the diversity of cultural heritage and raising awareness about its importance. The overwhelming response to the 2019 Prayagraj Kumbh Mela imported the event to the Guinness World Record under three under categories- the largest traffic and crowd management plan, the biggest painting exercise of public sites under paint my city scheme, the biggest sanitation and waste disposal mechanism. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) initiative of inviting one foreign representative from each country of the world to witness the world's largest gathering of humanity, the Kumbh Mela 2019 in Prayagraj, led to around 200 foreign delegates visiting the event.[xix]

Along with cultural outreach, the humane and compassionate face of Indian diplomacy continued to shine in myriad ways under the Modi government. In the last five years, proactive efforts were made to reach out to Indian stranded in situations of crisis and conflict across different regions. For instance, under Operation Rahat, recuse operation during Yemen crisis (2015), along with 4,748 Indians rescued 1,962 nationals from 48 countries were recused. The Modi government carried out the largest ever disaster relief assistance through Operation Maitri in the aftermath of Nepal earthquake in 2015.



It is in this spirit that the government also reached out to the 30 million Indian diaspora[xx] across the world, rekindling their sense of belonging to India and enlisted their support in the mission of national resurgence.[xxi]

On 22nd September 2019 Prime Minister Modi addressed a massive gathering of nearly 50,000 Indian-Americans at the mega "Howdy, Modi" event in Houston, which was also attended by the US President. The cheering Indian diaspora at the event felt connected with the mother land as the Prime Minister replied to the "Howdy, Modi" as "All is Well in India" in Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengal, Telegu, among others. Subsequently, he underscored the

historical-cultural importance of different Indian languages which represent the liberal and democratic tradition of our nation.

Marking an unprecedented engagement with the Indian diaspora, Indian leaders connected to the Indian community in different cities- Johannesburg, Addis Ababa, London, Dubai, Berlin, Sydney, Singapore- cutting across continents.

The ever-evolving soft power status India has a long-term goal of making the world one family- 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum'. The way India has accommodated its diversity- language, religion, food, festivals, attires, even the seasons- is the foundation of our vibrant democracy. Under the BJP government, India has converted this diversity in to strength and inspiration.

Modi Ji took the moto of 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' to the United National General Assembly depicting that our rich cultural heritage has a lot to offer the world- 'Jan Kalyan' not only for India but 'Jaag Kalyan' progress for the whole world. PM Modi while quoting the Tamil poet Kaniyan Pungundranar "Yaadhum Oare Yaavarum Kelir"- "We belong to all places and to everyone"- presented to the world that the very essence of India's progress goes beyond the borders, it encompasses an integrated progressive world order.

CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that the pace of diplomacy in the present era has unimaginably accelerated the Indian Foreign Policy. India is now on an upward trajectory from merely an 'ought to be super power status' during UPA's 10-year tenure to 'a leading global player' in the NDA's tenure. In a short span of five years, since Modi first came to power in May 2014, the country's foreign policy has undergone a remarkable transformation.

- A major difference between the two governments, UPA and NDA, lies in the execution of the foreign policy decisions, wherein the NDA- under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and now under PM Narendra Modi- has showed **greater pragmatism and assertiveness** than its predecessors.
- In the context of **countering terrorism**, the diplomatic achievement in the Modi era is reflected in the world supporting India's opinion through initiatives such as Goa Declaration on adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), United Nations designating the Pakistan-based Jaish-a-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar a 'global terrorist', diplomatic isolated of Pakistan at SAARC, cancelation of investment by countries in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and world institutions denying aid.
- Vajpayee Ji is remembered as a Foreign Minister who made peace with Islamabad and post-Kargil he conveyed the message clearly that "enough is enough" with regard to **cross-border terrorism** in Jammu & Kashmir. This pragmatic decision making went downhill when the UPA government took a soft stand on terrorism in the wake of Mumbai attacks.
- The **Indian Ocean Diplomacy** was provided with a clear meaning and vision in the Modi era diverting from the lacklustre approach of UPA government of just looking South for seasonal bilateral engagements.
- The **hyper-energetic diplomacy** perused by Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, under the able- leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi has earned great dividends for India at the International forums. From the first ever visits to reigniting the spark in friendship with old friends, several high-level visits took place after a gap of ten to sixty years.
- While observing the **pattern of foreign visits** during the tenure of the two Prime Ministers- Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi- it can be concluded that whereas UPA opted for the traditional strategic visits to the USA, Russia and summit-oriented visits, the NDA's focus was towards neighbouring countries, followed by the surrounding region and the broader international community.
- The BJP led NDA government made evident its mission to project **India's Soft Power** on the global stage by focusing on traditional aspects- historical and cultural linkage- as well as expanding scope and potential of India's soft power to the contemporary realities such as women safety, connecting Indian diaspora, converging diplomatic, strategic and economic relations with other nations.
- Unlike the UPA, the NDA government under its able leadership has evolved diplomacy on the terms of developmental needs- **'Developmental Diplomacy'**. For

Instance, the geopolitical significance achieved by paving the way for equability and a just energy order in the international arena with the establishment of International Solar Alliance (ISA) headquarters at Gurugram, India. Further in September 2019, Prime Minister Modi launched the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) with its Secretariat in Delhi, second such international initiative after the launch of the ISA.

- During Manmohan Singh tenure one could observe a Delhi-centric traditional view with respect to the foreign policy, whereas with the advent of Modi government, states were seen as equal partners in taking forward a progressive foreign policy.
- Modi Ji took the moto of **'sabka saath, sabka vikas'** to the United National General Assembly depicting that our rich cultural heritage has a lot to offer the world- 'Jan Kalyan' not only for India but 'Jaag Kalyan' progress for the whole world.
- Even with regard to issues such as China's expansion in South China Sea and Doklam standoff the NDA maintained all through that the issue could be solved only through dialogue. India also refrained from entering into a wrangling match with China. India's response to such outcomes has been measured, balanced and sober in the Modi era.
- The NDA government has made clear its objective of positioning India as a **leading global player** and imbued Indian foreign policy with a certain amount of risk-taking, departing from the risk aversion of past dispensations.

The transition during the NDA tenure as compared to the UPA has not merely an expression of our nation's greater self-assurance but is also driven by an ambition to be a rule-maker, not merely a rule-taker. No Indian prime minister has ever before generated the kind of tenor and volume of academic literature that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, particularly in the field of foreign policy. The diversity endorsed upon the Indian Foreign Policy and balancing engagements at multiple levels- bilateral, multilateral forums, regional, international- has engrossed the interest even of the common man.

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Public Policy Research Centre

Public Policy Research Centre (PPRC) is a research organization established under Dr Mookerjee Smruti Nyas, which is a public charitable trust, in 2011. The Centre aims at constructively impacting the policy formulation process with emphasis on good governance practices, efficient implementation mechanisms and evidence-based policy-making including policy-audit and evaluation, in the larger interest of the nation.

Public interest is of paramount importance in a democracy. No democratically elected government can perform its duties as the custodian of public good without evidence-based research. Solid research is a prerequisite of sound policy formulation and design making. Dispassionate and objectively conducted research enhances democracy as it can reduce the ability of those with vested interests to influence the public policy debate. The idea behind PPRC is to undertake structured research and carry field-study projects to explore constructive solutions on important policy issues in an institutionalized manner, through discussions, debates, seminars, study circles and brainstorming sessions.

Since its inception, PPRC has worked on several short-study projects as well as full length research products and has come out with occasional papers, study reports, research-tools and similar publications.

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