

Understanding the

Foreign Policy of India

Of yesteryears, present and years to come

Vivek S. Raj

A Civil Services Times Publications

Fourth enlarged and revised Edition: 2012-13

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Foreign Policy of India

Rs. 550/-

Published by **Civil Services Times**

C-75, Paryavaran Complex,

IGNOU Road, New Delhi-110030

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To begin with ...

The foreign policy of a country should always be aimed at its solid existence and continuance on the global map with boastful territorial integrity and omnipresence in all walks of international affairs-social, economic, cultural and political.

As per the imperatives of the global realities, the following policies must be followed: (1) India must convince its nuclear and non-nuclear neighbours about its intentions and purposes of the nuclear technology. At the same time, steps should be taken to make them know and believe that the use of nuclear technology is purely for peaceful purposes. (2) India must participate in all the regional and global platforms so that its presence can be felt everywhere, in every walk of social, developmental and cultural life. (3) India must strengthen its economic ties with both weak and strong neighbours as per its strategic interests and personal equations. In this era of globalization economic ties hold more relevance than political ties. (4) India must continue to put emphasis more on Track II, III, IV and V diplomacies. The fate of Track I diplomacy depends on above tracks basically. (5) Over and above, all such steps in foreign policy must be based on cautious studies and analysis of each and all countries historical past and behavioural tendencies. Proper safeguards should invariably be kept ready for any untoward development in the conduct of above policies in the form of preventive diplomacy. Here, I must mention about Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, who was probably the only Indian ruler who defeated the Britishers. He was not a scholar or a very learned person. His son Tipu was more learned but was defeated by the Britishers. It signifies that there is no relationship between formal training and education in diplomacy. To me, diplomacy is a sort of awareness and the art of what to know and what to ignore; of what to do and what not to do; of how to react and to when not to react; of what to highlight and to what to hide.

Life is nothing but the creation, extension, and preservation of human relations. Relations are precious. Human relations indicate that no one is complete without the help of others. The evolution of global village is the hallmark 10,000 years of history of civilization. No doubt war begins in the minds of a human being but the same mind talks about the peace also. We must know that the act of today is bound to be analyzed tomorrow. Let the peace prevail and rationality dominate over myopic vision of war and aggression. To me, sovereignty means the right to live without interference in

the personal equations of a nation with other nations. For example suppose USA wants to impose its relations and equations with Iran on India's relations and equations with Iran, then it is blatant violation of the principles of sovereignty and sound diplomacy.

We are a democratic country, with numerous political parties based on opposing and variant thinkings and views, to run the state affairs. But they all should always keep in mind that they are to manage and run the internal affairs of the state. The foreign affairs are the total prerogative of the government in power and they all are to stand by its side as one nation in the matters of foreign affairs. Anything less than this will prove counter productive to the interest of our nation in foreign matters by weakening our stand in the eyes of other nations.

During the cold-war period, the foreign policy was guided by three factors: (a) political ideologies of communism and capitalism; (b) the balance of power; and (c) showing loyalties towards the super powers. But, today, the foreign policy of a country is directed by three harsh realities: (a) the imperatives of global market economy; (b) the menace of terrorism; and (c) the wrath of fundamentalism. It is very much different from the pre-cold war period.

Now the situation is different. The required is different. Therefore, the parameters are ought to be different. The days of political protections are over, now the economic imperatives dominate. Now markets are more important than battlefields. The political centres are becoming less important than economic points. Globalization has changed the life-style, behavioural pattern, level of expectations, way of reaction, policies of the Governments and probably everything. Globalization has changed the complexion of foreign policies of the world. Today, diplomacy seems to be subservient to the economic exigencies. China is, politically, one of the greatest rivals of USA. But their economic ties and dependence have compelled them to undermine their political priorities and ideologies. Those who understand this change are changing. Those who are not, will have to change. Because change is the most permanent fact of life. The success of the foreign policy depends on the fact that how a country undermines the political considerations and shifts the relations towards market integration.



Vivek S. Raj

Preface to 4th edition

The new edition has not only updated the diplomatic activities of the recent past but also emphasised more on other bilateral and trilateral relations. In fact, foreign policy has become more vibrant and sensitive to the global changes and trends of new economic order. Indian foreign policy has demonstrated dynamism in responding to the shifting international strategic and political environment, and addressing the global challenges of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, energy security, threats to space and cyber security, maritime security, reform of international organizations and global financial architecture, and environmental degradation, etc.

Indian diplomacy has able to strike a good equilibrium between competition and cooperation with the new emerging economies of the world. The political equations are now separated from economic exigencies. India has managed to exhibit highest level of diplomatic adroitness to ensure its presence at the global platforms like United Nations, G20, NAM, G15, BRICS, RIC, IBSA, CHOGM, IMF, IBRD, etc. At the same time India has unleashed its economic alliances through signing of various FTAs, CECAs, CEPAs mainly manifested through ASEAN-FTA, SAPTA. India has also successfully tackled the issues of subsidies and protectionism at the WTO.

The Chinese aggressive policy of 'string of pearls' has been aptly challenged by India through establishing strategic relations with leading powers of the world, neighbours, and South China Sea projects. The policy of Look East, Look West and Look Africa has considerably diversified the traditional foreign policy. At present, India is facing challenges over balancing Iranian oil for energy security and US pressure in the name of nuclear disarmament. India is trying to get the membership of SCO. The 4th edition has encompassed and incorporated complete analytical coverage of all the possible dimensions of Indian foreign policy at every level of interaction.



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