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"Indian Cultural Diplomacy:
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Maj Gen (Dr) Dhruv C Katoch

Assistant Editors

Srihari Avuthu
Shreya Challagalla

Publisher

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E-mail
journal@indiafoundation.in

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India's Foreign Policy : A Success Story

Dear Readers,

With the completion of five years of the BJP led NDA government under the Prime Ministership of Shri Narendra Modi, there is a justifiable sense of achievement in many fields. The economy continues to grow at a steady pace, with India being the fastest growing economy in the world. Inflation has been contained between 3 to 5 percent, the security environment has shown a discernible improvement, introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), India's biggest indirect tax reform has been implemented and after the initial teething troubles, has evolved significantly with high tax compliance and generation of revenue. But perhaps the most credible achievement of the government in the last five years has been in the field of foreign policy, where India is now being viewed with a far greater degree of respect and admiration than hitherto fore.

What has caused this change? A distinct impact has been made by the Prime Minister himself in his outreach to various world leaders. In addition, the outreach by the External Affairs Minister as also by other ministers in the government has ensured that every single country has been visited at least once in the last five years. The period has witnessed a blossoming of relations with the US and other world powers as also in the Indian Ocean Region. The policy changes also encompassed special focus being laid on enhancing ties within India's neighbourhood as also with ASEAN and West Asia. The stress laid on the diaspora and in propagating India's soft power has had visible and beneficial results and India is today viewed with a far greater degree of positivity than ever before. Today, any Indian, anywhere in the world, knows that his government will take care of him, whatever may be the circumstances. This has been seen in the manner Indian nationals have been evacuated from conflict zones, or from areas hit by calamities. It is seen in the sensitivity shown in addressing the problems of the citizens, wherever they may be, by personal communication to the External Affairs Minister, who, in her own words, is just one tweet away. Rightly, all Indians can be proud of this achievement.

But foreign policy can never be conducted in a vacuum and remains a dynamic and continuous process. This issue gives an insight into certain aspects of India's foreign policy and highlights the challenges which still lie ahead. We are set for more interesting times, with the formation of a new government by the end of May. It is but hoped that the next five years will see a further blossoming of the achievements that have been made in the last five years.



India-Japan Relations under Modi and Abe: Prospects and Challenges for a Novel Bilateral Asian Dynamic

Monika Chansoria*

The decades of 2000, and 2010, stand witness to the warm embrace between Japan and India – a distance long travelled since the time when during the mid-1960s, South Asia including India, were omitted from what Japan considered as ‘Asia’. This embrace seemingly is a mirror to the regional and global geopolitics and geo-strategy at play, which have been impacted with the strategic shifts in policy thinking and approaches occurring within Asia. In the ceaseless pursuit of securing national interests set in the backdrop of the struggle for power amongst nation-states, the upbeat phase in Indo-Japanese relations is a tangible outcome stemming from commonalities of culture, shared interests and complementing ideologies that have critically shaped the course of this bilateral relationship. The India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership has been elevated to the new Tokyo Declaration for India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, only providing more reason to evaluate the various determinants in foreign policy-making. Perhaps among these, it is individuals and personalities who could end up being most profound in terms of outcomes. Displaying a higher degree of convergence in the political, economic, and strategic realm, the

strategic realities have become far more pertinent for India and Japan, given the rising centrality of the Indo-Pacific region to regional security and stability. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has discernibly hailed the Japan-India relationship as having “... the largest potential for development for any bilateral relationship anywhere in the world.”

Decrypting the Personality Factor in Foreign Policy Thinking and Formulation

The personality traits of a decision maker and the extent to which they impact upon his foreign policy choices, can be assessed from what political scientist James Barber once remarked, “Every story of decision making is really two stories: an outer one, in which a rational man calculates and, an inner one, in which an emotional man feels. The two are forever connected”.¹ Foreign policy decision-making is an outcome of how individual political leaders bestowed with power perceive and analyse events and how their motivations hold a bearing upon the conclusions they ultimately arrive upon. It is often found that culture, geography, history, ideology, and self-conceptions shape the thought process of a decision maker, forming, what

**Dr. Monika Chansoria is a Tokyo-based Senior Fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) since 2017. Previously, she has held appointments at the Sandia National Laboratories (U.S.), the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (Paris) and at Hokkaido University (Sapporo, Japan). Dr. Chansoria has authored five books including her latest title, 'China, Japan, and Senkaku Islands: Conflict in the East China Sea Amid an American Shadow' (Routledge © 2018).)*

often is referred to as the psycho-socio milieu of decision-making.²

Differing political environments surrounding leaders give rise to variable boundaries to operate as a natural consequence. In this reference, leaders of democracies ideally reflect the attitudes and core principles of their citizens. The broader study of foreign policy always refers back to understanding the significance of policy implementation as the key emphasis, and the concurrent effect of personalities on decision-making, which at times is difficult to quantify. The interpersonal generalisation theory suggests that behavioural differences in interpersonal situations have some correlation to behavioural differences in international situations.³ Contemporary security studies remain well positioned to absorb and analyse the effects of a state's foreign and security policy and the underlying rationales behind it. It has been observed that focusing exclusively on domestic and individual level foreign policy analyses does feature explanations of actions and decisions of individual decision-makers, and not systems.⁴ On many counts, systemic theorists have argued that a system is not a simplistic summation of its constituent parts alone. The overall interaction, and relations between individuals, their characteristics, capabilities, decisions, and actions, form systemic properties that seemingly, and at times overwhelmingly, influence foreign policy decision-making.

Based on the constructivist concept, wherein identity, norms, and interaction of personalities remain vital components, the equation between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe speaks volumes.

The commonality of aiming towards economic development and growth that gets coupled with greater national strength and nationalism can be gauged from Abe's idea and policy of "Japan is back" and Modi's idea of "*Shreshtha Bharat*" (Superior India). The systemic conditions have presented a favourable platform for this duo to bring to light, "... the dawn of a new era in India-Japan relations". Moreover, as PM Modi stated on an occasion, "...[The] India-Japan partnership has been fundamentally transformed and has been strengthened as a 'special strategic and global partnership'... There are no negatives but only opportunities in this relationship which are waiting to be seized." Providing further credence to this thought, Modi underlined the significance of India and Japan being liberal democracies, which provides them with a solid foundation to converge at various levels on the Asian stage. With a shared perspective on the future geo-political and economic order of Asia, Modi and Abe are often viewed as leaders of a new prospective dawn of an alternative regional Asian dynamic.

Personality impact in foreign policy decision-making may not necessarily be exclusive. It hinges on cognitive processes including perceptive reasoning that defines the behaviour of nation-states based upon existential constraints of the international system as well as compulsions of domestic political structures. Modi's assurances to Japanese investors that a "red carpet" and not "red tape" would welcome them in India exhibits his intent and resolve to rewrite the rules of doing business in India. In fact, it is the flexibility in the political environs that tends to create variable boundaries in decision-making, more so, in the

realm of foreign policy. The systemic conditions have presented a favourable platform for Modi and Abe to envision and operationalize what has been termed “...the dawn of a new era in India-Japan relations”.

The Trajectory of India-Japan Relations in the Modi-Abe Era

Since 2005, the Japanese and Indian Prime Ministers have held summits almost annually, with Abe and Modi specifically holding bilateral talks 11 times to date. In October 2018, Modi visited Japan for the third time and became the first foreign head of state whom Abe hosted at his holiday home in the village of Narusawa, at the foot of the scenic Mount Fuji in the Yamanashi Prefecture. The decisional latitude and output of both Modi and Abe was very much on display, and the resultant policy announcements were manifest of the same. Japan has demonstrated groundbreaking pronouncements and developments in its policy on transfer of defence equipment and technology, which can prove beneficial to India in the long run. Tokyo traditionally is known for its extremely cautious approach in this field, but the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology approved by the Abe cabinet in 2014, makes way for Japan to strengthen security and defence cooperation with its ally and strategic partners. Specifically with India, the technical discussions for future research collaboration in the areas of Unmanned Ground Vehicles and Robotics have been initiated by Japan.

The removal of six of India’s space and defence-related entities from Japan’s Foreign End

User List has also been a noteworthy step. The novelty in the present setting and discussion rests in the fact that Modi and Abe have underscored distinctness in bilateral engagement between India and Japan imparted by multi-sectoral ministerial and Cabinet-level dialogues, most significantly between the Foreign Ministers, Defence Ministers and National Security Advisers. All these announcements have certainly added strategic content and furthered ties to a far more concrete level. Notwithstanding the Foreign Ministers Strategic Dialogue and Defence Ministers Dialogue, what stands out is the announcement of a “2 plus 2” dialogue, involving Foreign and Defence Secretaries, the Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue, Defence Policy Dialogue, the National Security Advisers’ Dialogue and Staff-level Dialogue of each service.

When Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe penned his book *Utsukushii kuni e* (Towards a Beautiful Country) in 2006, he publicly advocated the concept of a “broader Asia” that constitutes nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, most significantly, campaigning in favour of strengthening ties with India. At that point, Abe appeared to have anticipated Asia’s geo-strategic future exclusively through the prism of political realism, and rightly so.⁵

The concept of a “broader Asia” appears to be rapidly transcending geographical boundaries, with the Pacific and Indian Oceans’ mergence becoming far more pronounced and evident than ever. In order to catch up with the reality of this “broader Asia”, Abe referred to Japan undergoing “The Discovery of India” - implying rediscovering India as a partner and a friend. The renewed focus

of India's active engagement in the region within the ambit of Modi's "Act East" policy initiative compliments Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy". This meets dual objectives: 1) pushing Abe's vision for an Indo-Pacific strategic framework; and 2) recognising Modi's vision of transforming the Japan-India relationship into a partnership with great substance as a cornerstone of India's Act East Policy.

Abe's bid to forge this vision began in his first term as Prime Minister, when he addressed the Indian Parliament in August 2007. The most famous authored work of Mughal prince Dara Shikoh, the book *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (The Confluence of the Two Seas published in 1655) became the inspiration, foundation and title of Abe's speech and vision for Indo-Japanese relations - that of nurturing an open and transparent Indo-Pacific maritime zone as part of a broader Asia.⁶ In fact, the "Confluence of the Two Seas" speech also underscored the pivotal advisory role of current Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Nobukatsu Kanehara, and special Cabinet Advisor, Tomohiko Taniguchi.

In addition to the political realities of Asia and Japan's placement amidst it all, Abe also focused heavily on Japan's economic health. Since coming to power in late 2012, the Abe administration unveiled a comprehensive policy package to revive the Japanese economy from nearly two decades of deflation, all while maintaining fiscal discipline. This programme came to be known as Abenomics. While it started as a stimulus measure based on three arrows, over the past few years, Abenomics has evolved into a broader blueprint for pro-growth socio-economic

change that aims to lead Japan in tackling today's challenges.⁷ The changes are designed to benefit all parts and facets of Japanese economy and its economic relations with major players in Asia and beyond. Setting the economy on course to overcome deflation and make a steady recovery the focus of Abenomics has been to pursue an aggressive monetary policy, flexible fiscal policy and a growth strategy that includes structural reform. Japan's economic growth has been based on free trade, and promoting the export of Japan's high-quality infrastructure to meet expanding global infrastructure needs.⁸ This initiative helps build and strengthen relationships that contribute to the economic development of partner countries.

In the above reference, the importance of securing appropriate implementation of Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan projects cannot be more emphasised, with the already received 3.5 trillion yen of public and private financing to India in five years under the "Japan-India Investment Promotion Partnership". Japanese contributions to the development and modernisation of infrastructure in India via ODA are fast becoming a vital reference point - with a majority of ODA-related projects lying in the infrastructure sector.⁹ The current financial year sees commitment of a total of 390 billion yen by the Government of Japan - the highest amount committed in a single fiscal year. Incidentally, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi became the first ever Japanese Prime Minister to visit New Delhi in 1957 and launched Japan's first post-war ODA to India.¹⁰ The journey since that time has been a long, winding one. Today, Japan's Official

Development Assistance to India is committed for an amount of Rs 14,251 crores approximately. Among other Indian states, the ODA loan includes 67.1 billion yen for the North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project (Phase 1).

During the successive visits of PM Modi to Japan, the synergy between India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's "Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure" for better regional integration and improved connectivity have repeatedly been highlighted. This policy pronouncement remains significant from India's standpoint, especially in reference to the dire need for infrastructure build-up in India's North-eastern states - the bridgehead of India's connectivity to the East. Japan has pledged an ODA loan of 50 billion yen to the India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) for a public-private partnership infrastructure project in India. The ODA projects undertaken to enhance road connectivity in Northeastern India by identifying technologies, infrastructure, and strategies to facilitate development will be a critical benchmark that would test the strategic basis of India's relationship with Japan. In this reference, Japan has agreed, in principle, to back and fund many critical Greenfield highway projects in Northeast India.¹¹ The Japan International Cooperation Agency, which coordinates ODA for the Government of Japan will be involved in the earmarked 400 km highway stretch in Mizoram between Aizawl and Tuipang; a 150 km highway in Meghalaya; two projects in Manipur; and one each in, Tripura, Nagaland and Assam.

With the Modi government according special emphasis to the Northeast and linking it further to

other economic corridors within India and Southeast Asia, Japanese cooperation for enhanced connectivity and development of this region will particularly be crucial. India and Japan need to develop a concrete roadmap for the phased transfer of technology that is in sync with the "Make in India" initiative, human resource and financial development and collaboration in highways, high speed rail technology, operations, maintenance, modernisation and expansion of the conventional railway system in India. While contribution of Japanese ODA has no doubt bridged India's infrastructure deficit to a large extent, Tokyo's role in developing infrastructure in India's Northeast will be the defining turn of the real "confluence" of India's Act East initiative with Japan's Indo-Pacific strategy. This would be in addition to developing the bullet train, *Shinkansen* trunkline, between Mumbai and Ahmedabad by 2023 – a project that was adopted in 2015, giving India its first, 500-km rapid railway linking Mumbai and Ahmedabad in western India. Roughly half of the 300 billion yen in Japanese loans to India shall reportedly be utilised to fund this project.

Is the 'Broader Asia' Schematic Maladaptive?

The constructivist concept especially vis-à-vis interaction of personalities, is likely to become the defining factor in India-Japan relations. Since Abe and Modi share similar perspectives on Asia's future geo-political and economic order, they should not let go of the solid foundation and converge at the strategic level for greater leverage and say in the future security design of Asia. After

more than six years of negotiation Japan signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with India in 2016, paving way for the export of Japanese nuclear power plant technology to India, in addition to Modi and Abe's call for greater cooperation to promote entrepreneurship and collaborative infrastructure development in third-party countries namely Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and others in Southeast Asia and Africa, are fine examples of their decisional latitude discussed earlier in the paper.

The time has come to make flexible, the variable boundaries in decision-making that political environs tend to create in the realm of foreign policy and achieve strategic deliverables in the coming years, without allowing any external third factor to cast a shadow on the meteoric rise in Indo-Japanese ties. Samuel Huntington famously said, "... the size of China's displacement of the world balance is such that the world must find a new balance within a few decades."¹² This argument notwithstanding, the progress in Japan-India relations in recent years has often been viewed as an effort by both countries to counter China's expanding economic and political influence in Asia.¹³ Although not entirely balanced and sustainable, but often underscored, is the fact that China remains India's and Japan's largest trading partner individually. The power differential caused by Beijing's growth and push outside its borders, evidenced by grand initiatives such as the Belt and Road project and strategy will be a very significant factor in determining regional geo-strategic permutations, through the strategically maladaptive China-India-Japan triangle, the outcome of which shall bear an

imprint on the future security design within Asia. While economic symbiosis appears the ideal driver for states to adopt cooperative frameworks, the concurrently pressing geo-strategic realities are likely to invade upon any/all realignments in the China-India-Japan security triangle. The last meeting between Abe and Modi in October 2018 in Tokyo happened immediately following Abe's return from his official visit to China – in what became the first trip by a Japanese Prime Minister to China in seven years, during which he expressed hopes to lift Japan-China relations into "a new era."

Viewed from the perspective of their bilateral China policies, both countries' policy is pressed towards engagement in economic areas and hedging in terms of security – that is often said to have drawn Japan and India closer together.¹⁴ The phrase "broad-based diplomacy in Asia" is often discussed and debated within Tokyo's policymaking circles wherein it is argued that the major challenge for Japan-India relations going forward will be to find ways through which the two countries can elevate their ties to new stages on the basis of their latest agreements, instead of being a mere counterweight to China's rise.¹⁵ This has been termed as a 'challenge' primarily owing to the following questions: First, how will Japan run this initiative alongside his administration's recent avowed shift from "competition to collaboration" with China? And, second, the informal April 2018 Wuhan Summit saw a recommitment by India and China to 'manage bilateral relations' in a manner that 'creates conditions' for the Asian Century – a commitment that follows the formal joining of India as a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana in 2017.

The Modi-Abe leadership combine exhibits showmanship, content, and cognitive consistency by means of converging themes of nationalism, coupled with motivated eagerness to initiate action driven towards ushering in an era of policy-oriented change, both domestically, and regionally – an ostensibly grand enterprise which is likely to

get recurrently challenged by the latest turn of events that showcase India and Japan's critical wariness and calculus vis-à-vis China in the triangular security dynamic. Whether Tokyo and New Delhi will be able to realize the theoretical potential displayed by the personality factor of Modi and Abe shall be put on test in the coming years.

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Indo-US Ties at a Time of Global Fluidity

Harsh V Pant*

Indian foreign policy is in a sweet spot these days. Wooed by major powers of all hues, it can afford to work with everyone, even if at times the pulls and pressures seem contradictory. This was even reflected at the G20 summit in Buenos Aires in December 2018 where New Delhi managed to pull off two seemingly contradictory trilaterals. Modi met with United States President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to underscore India's firm commitment to make the Indo-Pacific a region for shared economic growth, prosperity and security. Asserting that India will "continue to work together on shared values," Modi said, "When you look at the acronym of our three countries — Japan, America, and India — it is 'JAI,' which stands for success in Hindi." Abe hoped that the trilateral would reinforce the trilateral partnership and its close cooperation "towards realising a free and open Indo-Pacific." Trump also acknowledged that "... the relationships between our three countries is extremely good and extremely strong... with India, maybe stronger than ever... We are doing very well together. We are doing a lot of trade together. We are doing a lot of defence together, a lot of military purchases." The three nations shared their views on progressing a free, open, conclusive and rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, based on respect for international law and peaceful resolution of all differences.

The Indo-Pacific construct is now at the centre

of strategic jockeying in the region and the three nations have been trying to define the exact scope of their engagement. Modi had explained India's stand on the strategic Indo-Pacific region in his keynote address at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore in June. "India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members. Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country. A geographical definition, as such, cannot be," he had said. But China's rapid rise and the challenge it is posing to geopolitical stability is at the heart of the evolution of the Indo-Pacific and the trilateral in Argentina reinforced the desire of the three states to take it forward.

Hours after the 'JAI' trilateral, Modi joined Chinese president Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin for another trilateral - the 'RIC' - the second among the three countries after a gap of 12 years. The underlying rationale for this trilateral was quite different as the three nations discussed enhancing mutual cooperation in international forums. According to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs: "They agreed on the importance of reform and strengthening of multilateral institutions that had benefitted the world, including the United Nations, WTO and well-established as well as new global financial institutions. They underscored the benefits of a multilateral trading system and an open world

**Prof. Harsh V. Pant is a Professor of International Relations at King's College, London and Head of Strategic Studies at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.*

economy for global growth and prosperity.”

While the factor China is the one driving ‘JAI,’ it is the Trump Administration’s challenge to the global economic order that is largely behind India’s outreach to China and Russia. The fact that New Delhi managed to pull this off is a tribute to Modi’s astute investment in managing major power relations over the last few years. This is a period of fluid partnerships and Indian diplomacy will have to be nimble enough if Indian interests are to be preserved. Modi’s engagements at the G-20 underline that New Delhi is capable of managing this fluidity and continuing to construct a robust partnership with the US.

Defying threats of US sanctions, India signed a \$5.4 billion deal to buy the S-400 Triumf air defence missile system from Russia during President Vladimir Putin’s visit to New Delhi in October 2018. This is one of the biggest Indo-Russian defence deals in recent times with expectation in some quarters that it could revive an otherwise flagging Indo-Russian relationship. During the visit, the two nations “reaffirmed their commitment to the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia,” and underscored the value of multipolarity and multilateralism.

The US response to the deal was quick and terse, and India’s move could attract sanctions under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) on defence purchases from Russia, approved by US Congress 98 to 2 in 2017. While underlining that the Act is not aimed at stymieing military capabilities of American “allies or partners” and that the intent is “to impose costs on Russia for its malign

behaviour, including by stopping the flow of money to Russia’s defence sector,” the United States made it clear that waivers would be considered on a “transaction-by-transaction basis.” More ominously, US President Donald Trump suggested that India would soon “find out” if the punitive sanctions apply over the Russian deal as the State Department argues such deals are “not helpful” and the US is reviewing them “very carefully.”

Indian defense planners view the S-400 as a key capability enhancer as it can track multiple incoming targets including aircraft, missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles up to 400 kilometers in distance and 30 kilometers in altitude. With the deal, India has ensured that Russia will remain the main supplier of high-tech defense equipment for the foreseeable future while challenging Washington on an issue now regarded as the primary national security challenge by many in the United States.

It is no surprise, therefore, that this was among the main issues during the inaugural 2+2 dialogue in September 2018 between the foreign and defense ministers of India and the United States. Officials signed a Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, or COMCASA, one of four foundational agreements that the United States signs with its closest defence partners to facilitate interoperability between militaries and sale of high-end technology. The General Security of Military Information Agreement was signed in 2002 and the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement in 2016, and so this one had been pending for some time. The final agreement required is the Basic Exchange and Cooperation

Agreement facilitating geospatial exchange, and negotiations have yet to start. COMCASA is expected to facilitate access to advanced defence systems and enable India to optimally utilize its existing US-origin platforms.

Even under an administration as mercurial and transactional as President Donald Trump's, Indo-US relations have managed to gather momentum, shaped by the underlying strategic logic of the convergence between the two nations. India has managed to find a central place in the Trump administration's strategic worldview as outlined in the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy. Both on China and Pakistan, the Trump administration has demonstrated a willingness to push the boundaries – this is reflected in its approach to make India more integral to Asian balance of power as outlined in the US Indo-Pacific strategy as well as in an attempt to reshape the contours of America's South Asia strategy, which acknowledges India's centrality in the future of Afghanistan while recognizing Pakistan as the source of the problem.

The US position in the Indian defence matrix has also evolved with India buying \$18 billion worth of defence items from the United States since 2008, though the much-hyped Defense Technology and Trade Initiative aimed at boosting joint development and co-production of defence equipment fails to live up to expectation so far. The 2+2 dialogue saw the two nations focusing on enhancing private defence industry collaboration, helping Indian defence manufacturers to join the US military supply chain, thereby boosting the Modi government's "Make in India" initiative as well as placing

innovation at the heart of this defence collaboration. Given these high stakes, both US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis have supported waivers for India on its weapon deals with Russia.

The United States imposed sanctions in September on Chinese entities for their S-400 deal. If Trump makes an exemption for India, that would have global reverberations. Already, suggestions are emanating from Beijing that India and China need to deepen cooperation to fight trade protectionism in the wake of the unilateral approach adopted by the United States on trade-related disputes. China is taking a new cooperative approach towards India, and the Trump administration's outreach is part of this complex equation.

The other challenge facing Indo-US relations is the persistent question of Iran. After Trump withdrew from the international deal for containing Iran's nuclear weapons program in May, he signed an executive order officially reinstating US sanctions against Iran. The full weight of these sanctions come into force on November 4 despite most of the world opposing Washington's move.

India regards it a priority to obtain waivers from Washington. The country is the second largest buyer of Iranian oil after China. Indian firms have already started feeling the pressure of US sanctions, reducing oil intake from Iran, though that is unlikely to come down to zero. Iran accounts for around 10 percent of India's total oil imports, and Reuters reported that Indian refiners reduced monthly crude loadings from Iran for September and October by nearly half from earlier

this year. Also, New Delhi is in a quandary as falling rupee and rising oil prices are generating public pressure. In this context, India would be hard pressed to ignore Iran and its concessionary rates on oil purchases. Two Indian oil firms have placed orders to import Iranian crude, and in an attempt to bypass US sanctions, New Delhi is trying to evolve another payment system to buy Iran's oil and use Indian rupees.

On the questions of both Russia and Iran, India has indicated that it must keep its channel of communications with the United States open, and Washington has indicated that it remains sensitive to Indian needs. Equally interesting is that there have been no public spats between India and the United States on these issues – a sign of growing maturity in the relationship. Sanctions on India would be counterproductive to Indo-US ties by pushing India into a Russian embrace and jeopardizing Indian interests in the Middle East.

Washington has far better appreciation of Indian sensitivities today, and New Delhi displays more skillful strategic posturing when it comes to the United States. Giving in to American public pressure on these issues would open New Delhi to charges of giving up its “strategic autonomy” – a charge any Indian government would like to avoid with elections around the corner.

The 2+2 joint statement has talked of the need “to ensure freedom of the seas, skies, uphold the peaceful resolutions of the maritime disputes, promote market-based economics and good governance and prevent external economic coercion.” So long as the two sides can keep the focus on the big picture, differences on Russia and Iran are not likely to alter the broader trajectory of the relationship between the world's two great democracies. Modi's contribution in keeping a robust partnership with the US on track has been key in more ways than one.



Russia: A Key Pillar of India's Foreign Policy

Meena Singh Roy*

The long standing partnership, which New Delhi and Moscow have enjoyed since diplomatic relations were established in April 1947 have seen many ups and downs. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Indo-Russian relations have gone through some rough patches, with the relationship notably weakening during the 1990s. It is of significance however, that at a bilateral level, pragmatic considerations formed the basis of this relationship. While geopolitical realities and economic limitations did not allow the relationship to continue in the same way as it existed during the Soviet era, a sea change occurred after Vladimir Putin's election as the head of the Russian state in 2000. President Putin became the architect of a new strategic partnership between India and Russia, bringing the two countries close to each other. These ties were further elevated to the level of Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership in December 2010. A fresh impetus and new direction was given to this relationship under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2014. A new milestone was achieved during the annual summit in Goa in October 2016 followed by President Putin's visit to India in October 2018. During the last five years, various high level visits from both sides have given a new momentum to this unique partnership between the two countries. India–Russia strategic partnership has moved in the direction of greater cooperation in every respect

but remained under the shadow of changing regional and global system, particularly in the light of the emerging Indo-US strategic partnership and increasing pre-eminence of China in the region.

Regional and Global Context

India-Russia relationship needs to be viewed in the context of new geopolitical and geo-economic shifts that are unfolding in the regional and global system. The current international order is characterised by the rapid shifting of global power to Asia, marked by, among other things, increasingly assertive role of China and its new Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); the perceived shift in the US policy under the Trump's Presidency; Brexit and its impact on the EU; Russia's "pivot to Asia" policy; the growing Sino-Russian partnership in the light of the U.S sanctions on Russia; and growing new strategic partnership between India and the U.S. At the regional level, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the volatile cauldron of West Asian geopolitics characterised by the spread of the Islamic State (IS) ideology beyond the West Asian region, and the intense Shia-Sunni sectarian rivalry as well as intra-Sunni rivalry in the region are key developments. In addition, new energy scenario after the re-imposition of sanctions on Iran by the Trump administration and its global impact (with increase in oil prices) has generated completely different scenarios, both economic and strategic,

**Dr. Meena Singh Roy is a Research Fellow at Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.*

for many countries in Asia. Finally, the new policy decisions taken by President Trump have introduced greater uncertainties in the new global and regional order, which is still unfolding. These developments not only pose new challenges and threats, but also provide opportunities for India and Russia to engage with each other at bilateral and multilateral levels. Despite its diminished global heft, Russia retains the experience of great power diplomacy and a credible military arsenal to shape the international order and a strong Indo-Russia bilateral partnership continues to be relevant, given their shared strategic interests and concerns in maintaining security, tackling extremism and terrorism, and the increasing pre-eminence of China in the region.

New Dimension of India-Russia Cooperation under PM Modi: 2014-2019

Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin's pledge to take the relationship to a new level, the current narrative on India-Russia relations has raised some issues questioning the changing nature of strategic partnership. While some pessimism exists on both sides about the bilateral relationship, the leadership in both the countries has worked towards enhancing this long standing special strategic partnership creating an optimism that India-Russia "diplomatic and political relationship still remains strong as ever"¹ and "New Delhi and Moscow have been extraordinarily successful in fostering a friction-free relationship that harks back to the Soviet era".² More importantly, within India, there is a general consensus for sustaining

and fostering of strong bilateral ties between New Delhi and Moscow. This view has been endorsed at the highest level in Moscow and New Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 2017 speech called Russia "an abiding friend" and said, "...our trusted and strategic partnership...our investments in new drivers of our relationship and the emphasis on energy, trade, and S&T linkages are showing successful results".³ Reiterating the importance of bilateral ties in his 2018 speech he noted "The change in the nature of this relationship to a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership is an example of the similar aspirations and viewpoint of the two countries. Change is common phenomenon in the world. A lot has changed and is still changing, but the friendship between India and Russia has never changed".⁴

Similar views were echoed by President Vladimir Putin on the eve of India's 68th Republic Day. "Over the decades of independent development, India has achieved impressive success in economic, social, technical and other spheres. Special and Privileged strategic partnership with India is an invariable in Russia's foreign policy".⁵ The recent apprehensions and concerns of Russia's shifting policy towards South Asia, characterised by growing engagement with Pakistan, should not be given undue weightage. Similarly, its new entente with China should be seen in the context of the U.S attempts to isolate Russia. Moscow still sees India as a key partner in its pivot towards Asia. According to Russia's "Foreign Policy Concept" of 2016,⁶ Russia stands committed to further strengthening its special privileged partnership with India based on the

convergence of foreign policy priorities, deep rooted historical friendship, and mutual trust with focus on implementing long-term programmes approved by the two countries to promote cooperation in trade and economy. More importantly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been awarded the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, the highest civilian award of the Russian Federation in April 2019, for his distinguished achievement in developing the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries. This is clear recognition of PM Modi's new initiatives to not only boost the current engagement with its old partner Russia but to give a new direction to New Delhi's policy approach towards Russia.

An analysis of the contemporary phase of the India-Russia engagement clearly highlights various attempts and efforts being taken by New Delhi and Moscow to elevate existing ties to new height. Despite some differences on regional issues, both countries still share a common position on global and regional issues. They remain engaged through many multilateral groupings like BRICS, G-20, SCO, RIC and others. Both India and Russia have now accepted the reality that the new pragmatic relationship, away from the old romanticism of the Indo-Soviet era, needs to be crafted. It is also true that despite many challenges, there is a great deal of potential in the two countries to take the relationship to the next level. Many Russia lovers feel, "...the best times for the Indo-Russian relationship are yet to come".⁷ In this context, it is important to draw attention to some of the key elements of PM

Modi's new policy approach towards rebuilding Indo-Russian engagement that has evolved over last five years. These are mainly:

- The new mechanism of engagement was initiated by the leadership of India and Russia by informal summit in Sochi on May 21, 2018. A unique form of summit in "international diplomacy, reflecting the deep trust and confidence between Prime Minister Modi and President Putin, underlining the desire of both countries to maintain regular contacts and hold frequent consultations on issues of mutual interest"⁸ as described in the joint statement during visit of President Putin to India on October 5, 2018. Both sides have agreed to continue this practice of informal meeting to reiterate their commitment to the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries. The Sochi Summit is a clear manifestation of growing desire on part of the top leadership in New Delhi and Moscow to keep the level of interaction going to cooperate and appreciate "each other's respective roles as major powers with common responsibilities for maintaining global peace and stability"⁹
- Another significant feature of bilateral cooperation between the two countries got highlighted by new momentum of engagement between Indian States and Russian Regions - developing the sister city partnership. Efforts were directed at signing of agreements between Assam and Sakhalin, Haryana and Bashkortostan, Goa

and Kaliningrad, Odisha and Irkutsk, and Visakhapatnam and Vladivostok.

- New push has been given to promote strong defence cooperation, with focus on joint collaboration under “Make in India” initiative as seen in the agreements on manufacturing of AK-203 7.62 mm assault rifles, Ka-226T Kamov helicopters, and frigates. Additionally, leasing of nuclear submarine and conclusion of the contract for the supply of the S-400 Long Range Surface to Air Missile System to India reflects such cooperation, the unique feature of which has been the transfer of technology by Russia.
- Both countries have also stepped up cooperation in science and technology, co-opting the fourth industrial revolution and engagement in cyber security. The High-Level Committee on Cooperation in High Technologies was set up in November 2017 that identified concrete projects in areas of mutual interest for joint research and development. Many new initiatives have been taken up to boost cooperation in this sector.
- Connectivity has been an important component of PM Modi’s foreign policy priority. Under this, greater push has been given to International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). India and Russia also witnessed new level of cooperation within the framework of the SCO after India was accepted as full member in the regional organisation.

- Active and robust engagement has been manifested in the energy sector. The programme of Cooperation in Oil and Gas Sector for the period 2017-18 and the MoU between Gazprom and Engineers India Limited on the joint study of a gas pipeline to India and other possible areas of cooperation were inked. A new landmark was achieved in 2016 in nuclear power cooperation when Prime Minister Modi and President Putin dedicated Kudankulam Unit-1 to India; the second unit will be put in operation soon. They also witnessed the commencement of the site work for Kudankulam Units 3 and 4.

Although economic ties between Russia and India are the most unsatisfactory part of an otherwise fruitful relations, this seems to be changing. With the aim of building an “Energy Bridge” between the two countries, many initiatives have been taken in the last three years. Now, the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India is by the Russian oil company, Rosneft. Major progress has also been made by Indian and Russian oil companies since the last summit with the Indian companies acquiring equity in “Taas-Yuryakh Neftegazodobycha” and “Vankorneft” making it the largest equity oil acquisition till now by India. In 2016, Indian Oil, Oil India, and a unit of BPCL agreed to buy 29.9 percent in the Taas-Yuryakh oilfield in east Siberia for USD 1.3 billion. The consortium signed heads of agreement for taking a 24 percent stake in Vankor field, also in East Siberia for over USD 2 billion and paid another USD 180 million as its share of future

Capex. ONGC Videsh, the overseas arm of ONGC, signed an MoU to raise its total stake in Vankor to 26 percent by acquiring additional equity at a cost of USD 925 million. Russia-India energy cooperation got a further push with Rosneft taking a 49 percent stake in India's Essar Oil Limited, as well as recent Indian moves into the East Siberian upstream sector. This deal amounts to a massive USD 5.5 billion.¹⁰

To facilitate mutual high-technology investments, both countries agreed for creation of bilateral investment fund by the National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) of India with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF). To boost economic cooperation, both countries called for the finalisation of investment proposals in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, the chemical industry, mining, machine building, and implementation of infrastructure projects, cooperation in the railway sector, in fertiliser production, automobiles and aircraft construction as well as collaborative ventures in modernising each other's industrial facilities. The feasibility of a free trade agreement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is being done by the Joint Study Group, which could impart added momentum to bilateral economic cooperation.

Prospects for Future Cooperation

Given the past experience and understanding between the leadership of two nations, prospects for cooperation in future are immense. Recently, in his speech, PM Modi suggested five areas¹¹ where the relationship can be taken forward, these are: (a) Enhance further interaction and

engagement between Indian states and Russian provinces; (b) Russia becoming a source of conventional energy for India and greater involvement of Russia in India's "campaign of New and Renewable Energy"; (c) Given the ongoing cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, Russia can be joint partner in manufacturing sector in India as their relationship can now go beyond buyer-seller to joint manufacturer of things in India; (d) Grow old partnership in the defence sector to be transformed into joint producer under India's new initiative of Make in India. Additionally, Moscow can open a dedicated Defence Industrial Park in India; (e) High prospects for Indian IT and Pharma companies to work in Russia.

Russia's experience in many areas can be very useful for India's start-ups particularly in the field of space, fertilisers, gems and jewellery and in the field of food processing. These are prospective areas of cooperation in future between India and Russia. Four focus areas of cooperation identified jointly by India and Russia include Energy, Digital Economy, Startup and Infrastructure.

While the challenges that confront the Indo-Russian ties remain present on the horizon, including their recent divergent foreign policy priorities, yet India considers Russia to be the most important partner in its social and economic progress. The trade between the two countries has increased greatly in the last two years. If we take trade figures of 2017-18, India's trade with Russia has grown by 20 percent. Given the trust and comfort of working with each other and past experience, it is likely that India and Russia will

remain a key vector in each other's foreign policy priorities as endorsed by top leadership in Moscow and New Delhi. India's former Ambassador to Russia has very aptly noted that, "the legacy of the past continues to have relevance for the present and future. The clouds in the relationship reflect

differences in security perspectives; they can be dispersed with frank dialogue, resulting in policies which accommodate the core interests of both sides. It is therefore not appropriate to sound the death knell of the India-Russia "special and privileged strategic partnership".¹²

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India Unveils Maritime Diplomacy in the Indian Ocean Region

Narender Kumar*

Abstract

India was known as a reluctant maritime power in the Northern Indian Ocean Region. In spite of the dominant geo-strategic location, India refrained from demonstrating and unveiling its proactive maritime diplomacy to project power with an objective of securing vital national interests. If India does not create capabilities matching the strategic boundaries that extend from Red Sea in the West to South China Sea in the East, the space will be encroached upon by China with an aggressive “String of Pearls Strategy” (backed by infrastructure development and Maritime Silk Route). India has now realized that maritime diplomacy to “Go West” and “Act East” on land and ocean is vital to secure economic and military interests. But security alone is not an answer to the already volatile and polarised under developed region. Such strategy must be nurtured for long period since it takes time to fructify and develop capabilities. The beginning has been made and it requires continuous government focus and impetus. India must develop capabilities with a view to become a resident maritime dominant power but avoid competing with China till India is able to develop comprehensive maritime power that is able to project power beyond territorial waters of the Indian Ocean.

Introduction

Alfred Thayer Mahan said that, “Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, and the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters.”¹ India derives its Geo-strategic importance principally from its geographic location in the Northern Indian Ocean. Indian Ocean was considered to be an “Ocean of Peace” but due to historic distrust, territorial disputes, ideological differences and differential military capabilities among the regional countries, the region has become now an “arc of instability”. It is now one of the most militarized and nuclearized zones in the world. There is inexorable hybrid war that continues to

simmer in West Asia and North Africa. Major cause of instability and turbulence in the region is spread of Pan Islamic terrorism and internal armed conflicts within the countries. Direct intervention of US in Iraq and Afghanistan and rise of Islamic fundamentalism from Mogadishu to Manila has made the region an unstable plateau. From the military perspective, India is a key regional power to maintain stability along the critical Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC). As a result, India is emerging as a major regional maritime power which is capable of influencing the future trajectory of security environment in the Indian Ocean Region.

Indian Ocean is emerging as the “centre stage” for 21st century “and it remains a stage for the

**Brig Narender Kumar, SM, VSM is a former Infantry Officer and currently a Distinguished Fellow at The United Service Institution of India.*

pursuit of the global strategic and regional military interests of all world and regional powers.”² To a great extent development of India as a comprehensive national power (CNP) depends upon how India develops and projects maritime capabilities. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) landmass is a heavily militarized zone but historically its SLOCs have largely remained free of military intervention. And as majority of IOR states followed the Continental Strategy, naval forces have rarely been a strong element.³ This has led to maritime power vacuum in the region. Instability and power vacuum in the IOR will impinge upon the trade, energy security and human resource development. India will be most affected by destabilization of nations due to economic and political implosion of states. In fact, “insecurity in the 21st century appears to come less from the collisions of powerful states than from the debris of imploding ones.”⁴ Some of the main reasons of regional security imbalance and implosion would be debt trap, demise of local industry, environment pollution, unemployment, political polarisation and radicalization. In fact, these factors that can cause imbalance and instability in the IOR can be attributed to the entry of China and Pan Islamic fundamentalism in IOR. Thus, India needs to fix the flux of power in the Indian Ocean Region and emerge as a net security provider to the Northern Indian Ocean Region against the non-traditional threats.

Geostrategic Significance of the Indian Ocean to India

Indian Ocean is third largest ocean in the world and home to approximately one third of the

world population with the land mass of just about 25%, a huge human resource. A total of 70 percent of the world’s oil, 33 percent of global trade and 50 percent of world’s container traffic passes through the SLOCs of IOR. The Indian Ocean is a geographical and cultural bridge to the rising economies of South East Asia, South Asia and Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It directly impacts multilateral trade and transit between Asia and Africa, Asia and Europe. Indian Ocean contributes immensely to the economic growth and security of India. Approximately 95% of the country’s trade by volume and 70% by value are moved through SLOCs of the Indian Ocean.⁵ India is natural inheritor of resident maritime power of the Indian Ocean with 12 major ports and 200 minor ports in Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.⁶ These ports have direct impact on security and economic growth of India. Major ports are Kolkata, Paradip, Visakhapatnam, Chennai, Ennore, and Tuticorin on the east coast and Cochin, new Mangalore, Mormugao, Nhava, Mumbai and Kandla on the west coast. India’s rise as a regional power in the foreseeable future is solely dependent on its capability to influence and protect its interest in Indian Ocean Region. Geographically, India is ideally poised to assert its influence on Indian Ocean Rim Nations.

The geo-political context of India and Indian Ocean might have changed, but geography has not. If geography is destiny, India has a pivotal role in the Indian Ocean and its littoral, irrespective of who rules New Delhi.⁷ There is a considered view that if India does not keep pace with the development of maritime capabilities, the key players in the Indian Ocean would be the US,

Russia, Iran, China, Indonesia and Japan.⁸ Development of maritime capability for India is vital to remain a dominant stakeholder in the region to secure vital economic and military interests. But before India decides to put a strategy in place, it is important to understand the strategic boundaries of India and what is at stake for India in the Indian Ocean Region.

- The foundation of India's maritime diplomacy was laid by two visionaries. First, it was Lord Curzon who wrote in his book 'The Place of India in the Empire', published in 1909, about India's geopolitical significance. He wrote, "On the West, India must exercise a predominant influence over the destinies of Persia and Afghanistan; on the north, it can veto any rival in Tibet; on the north-east and last it can exert great pressure upon China, and it is one of the guardians of the autonomous existence of Siam". It is a very profound thought on strategic boundaries of a nation that sits right on top and centre of the Indian Ocean with an ability to influence and dominate the entire expanse of Northern Indian Ocean and littoral states from Red Sea in the West to South China Sea in the East. Subsequently in 2003 Former PM Atal Vihari Vajpayee laid down the contours of India's strategic area of interest and extended neighbourhood. He said, "As we grow in international stature, our defence strategies should naturally reflect our political, economic and security concerns, extending well beyond the geographical confines of South Asia". "Our security environment ranges from the Persian Gulf

to the Straits of Malacca across the Indian Ocean, includes Central Asia and Afghanistan in the North West, China in the North East and South East Asia. Our strategic thinking has also to extend to these horizons"⁹

- **Threats and Challenges to India:** What is at stake for India? India has 7,516 KM of coastline and more than 1,197 islands in the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep groups of islands. These islands provide strategic depth and reach to India and make India an important economic and military ally to the regional and extra regional powers. The challenge that comes to India is from state and non-state actors that would attempt to erode India's influence as an economic and hard military power. China has already entered the Indian Ocean and is keen to maintain permanent presence with its port strategy. China Daily Mail has reported that China plans to build 18 naval bases in areas of the Indian Ocean.¹⁰ China has established its first off shore base at Djibouti that will be hosting approximately 10,000 Chinese troops. It is only the first step in what is likely to become a network of Chinese bases across the Indian Ocean. Many analysts had long thought that the next Chinese naval base would be established at Gwadar.¹¹ The threat from China becomes more pronounced when it is looked at from the perspective of China-Pak strategic nexus especially to encircle India by "String of Pearls" with an objective of containing India economically and militarily. Second, challenge that is

threatening the region and India in particular is Pan Asia Islamic terrorism. 26/11 had indicated that open sea is no more a geographical obstacle for the Jihadi terror groups. Apart from MENA, Islamic State and al-Qaeda have already found toe hold in Maldives, Sri Lanka, Indian Peninsula, Bangladesh and Arakan Coast of Myanmar. India continues to face non-traditional threat manifested from natural disasters, displacement of population and influx of population from neighbouring countries in search of employment and to escape from persecution by religious majority.

- **India a Natural Dominant Power in the Indian Ocean Region:** India dominates 6 and 9 degree navigational channels passing through Northern Indian Ocean. It is both an advantage and an obligation for India to maintain incident free passage of SLOC. Failure of India to provide safe and free passage will invite presence of extra-regional powers closer to Indian shores which in fact is detrimental to the national and strategic interest and will also undermine the growing influence of India in the region. Island territories and Indian peninsula gives India reach to dominate the SLOC from Gulf of Aden to Malacca Strait.¹² Jeff M Smith, a Scholar with 'The Heritage Foundation' calls Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI) a strategic out post of India that dominates the 6th and 9th degree channels and provides India strategic reach and dominance over choke points that connects Indian Ocean SLOCs with South China Sea. ANI constitutes just 0.2 percent

of India's landmass but provide for 30 percent (6,00,000 sq kms) of the country's 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).¹³ Today ANI is fast becoming an unsinkable aircraft carrier and with its developed capabilities, the ANI could help India monitor military and commercial traffic passing between the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific. ANI could provide India a forward position from which to serve its growing economic, political, and military interests in East Asia, and further position India as the "gatekeeper" of the Indian Ocean.¹⁴

Military Diplomacy in IOR

Diplomacy will only work if India is able to keep pace with development of maritime capabilities. There are only two options for India, either to build own capabilities and maintain strategic autonomy, or join an alliance led by the US to contain/ develop leverages against China. Ideally, India should focus on building comprehensive maritime capabilities, sea-based infrastructure development, building regional capacities in partnership with littoral and island nations against common threats. Maritime diplomacy of India in IOR must be to secure vital national interests rather than competing with China.

In the last five years, India has adopted a more proactive maritime diplomacy in the Indian Ocean Region. In fact, India's maritime diplomacy should be ideally called a "turning strategy" to encircle the encirclement of 'String of Pearls'. Vice Admiral Pradeep Chauhan in a very precise manner has described India's maritime diplomacy

as the pursuit, promotion, preservation and protection of India's 'maritime interests'.¹⁵ He underpins maritime-diplomacy as an instrument of State policy to prevent others to use Indian Ocean that compromises India's vital national interests. There are two aspects of maritime diplomacy of India with regard to the IOR, first, securing vital national interests of India and second, for collective safety, security and growth of the regional neighbours.

Securing Vital National Interests of India

- Securing of island territories, territorial boundaries and offshore assets.
- Deter and defeat threat from states and non-state actors to sea-based assets.
- Prevent encroachment and exploitation of blue economy within the EEZ of India.
- Secure own commercial shipping against the threat from inimical forces.
- Protect and extricate own diaspora if threatened during war and internal instability in a foreign country.
- Undertake HADR in island territories during natural disasters and calamities.
- Protect vital SLOCs from crime on high seas.
- Undertake maritime reconnaissance and sea patrols to ensure freedom of manoeuvre of naval combat fleet as part of routine naval operations.

The key **diplomatic objectives of maritime diplomacy of India** in the IOR are as under:-

- 'Neighbourhood First' policy in connectivity, development and economic growth.

- Preserve organic unity while advancing cooperation.
- Use the Indian Ocean as an engine for growth and prosperity in our region and beyond.
- IOR nations bear the responsibility for the peace, stability and prosperity of the IOR littoral states.
- Sharing and benefitting collectively from the 'Blue Economy' is a new avenue for prosperity in the region.
- Effective response mechanism to address humanitarian crises and natural disasters for collective good of the states and the people.
- IOR is a global stage for continued economic, social, and cultural engagement.
- Prevent militarization of Indian Ocean and prevent crime on high seas.
- Freedom of navigation for trade and transit.

India's Maritime Diplomacy A Turning Strategy

India's 'Look West' Maritime Diplomacy:¹⁶

India is engaged in anti-piracy operations since 2008, however, the "Look West" maritime diplomacy as a major initiative is taking shape as part of durable maritime relations. The most significant dimension of India's Indian Ocean diplomacy, however, has been the outreach to Arab Gulf states, where the Indian Navy has embarked on program of sustained capacity building and security collaboration.¹⁷ India and Oman are maritime strategic partners and has been engaged in biennial maritime exercises since 1993. However, deeper engagement has been given flip after India's "Look West" policy was formalised.

Oman has played a key role in sustaining India's security efforts in the Gulf of Aden by offering berthing and replenishment facilities to Indian naval ships, and hosting a crucial Indian listening post in the Western Indian Ocean.¹⁸ Indian navy is now providing training hydrographic support and refueling facilities to Oman's naval ships. West Asia is important for India due to energy security and security of more than 6 million Indian Diaspora, a major source of forex remittance. Thus, there is a need for Indian Navy to maintain a listening post and birthing facilities to deal with any eventualities in future.

India's Maritime Pivot to the East:¹⁹ In a major departure from the reluctant maritime diplomacy to a proactive diplomacy, India has entered into an agreement with Indonesia to develop a strategic port at Sabang, which lies at the tip of the Sumatra Island and close to the Malacca Strait. During the recent visit of Prime Minister Modi to Indonesia, Indonesian President Joko Widodo told the press, "India is a strategic defence partner... and we will continue to advance our cooperation in developing infrastructure, including at Sabang Island and the Andaman Islands."²⁰ China may see it as a move to contain and choke the SLOCs. However, it certainly is an initiative to put in place turning strategy that China may find it difficult to out manoeuvre with ANI as a backup leverage to dominate 6th and 9th degree channel SLOCs. As part of "Act East Policy" India has now deepened its engagement with Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore. "Vietnam and Japan are currently embroiled in territorial disputes with China in the South China and East China seas, respectively, and are willing to partner with India to form

diplomatic and security ties under the threat of Chinese maritime expansion."²¹

Naval Support for Surveillance of Ocean: To strengthen maritime relations India has been assisting island countries such as Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius by providing aerial and maritime vessels for better surveillance of their territorial waters. India has offered custom made ships and patrol boats for its maritime allies and partners. India has offered \$100 million in credit, a Dornier maritime patrol aircraft, along with assistance for strengthening the Seychelles coast guard in the Assumption Islands.²² The Indian Navy has been assisting Mauritius, Maldives, and the Seychelles in training and hydrographic assistance for mapping ocean waters to ensure maritime security. This will assist India in maintaining a permanent presence as well as assisting the island nations in ensuring territorial integrity. Though India and Seychelles had agreed on lease of Assumption Island, however, for some internal reasons within Seychelles the agreement is yet to be promulgated.

Andaman & Nicobar Island an Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier: Andaman & Nicobar Islands are geo-strategically most significant land mass that dominates Bay of Bengal and choke points leading to South China Sea. These islands stretch approximately 500 NM in North South direction. These islands are a formidable land mass that gives India an advantage SLOCs leading to Malacca and Sunda Strait. Beyond active surveillance and submarine hunting, the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is an important marker of India's strategic presence in the Eastern Indian Ocean.²³ Government of India has taken initiative

to create key islands into unsinkable aircraft carriers that can support, naval, amphibious and maritime air operations. In addition, the infrastructure that will be created under the roll-on plan of 10 years will support electronic and air defence operations against the enemy air and missile threat. This will certainly give India a vital edge over China in the region and also keep this region free from organized crime on high seas.

Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR): Prime Minister Modi unveiled his SAGAR doctrine and linked it with the larger project of transforming India and regional maritime neighbours by developing blue economy and security of the region. India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.²⁴ SAGAR Doctrine is aimed at to fill a serious security and policy vacuum and highlighted the critical interdependent link between maritime security, maritime cooperation and blue economy²⁵ and governance of sea for shared benefits.

Recommended Actions to make maritime Diplomacy more potent and enduring

Joint Exercises: India could expand maritime exercises to include Southeast Asian partners and Western African nations. The currently annual trilateral Malabar naval exercise, comprising India, the United States and Japan, takes place in alternate years in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.²⁶ India must take lead to invite other Southeast Asian countries of IOR to take part in regional multilateral naval exercises to develop deeper

understanding for joint operations especially against the common nontraditional threats. Similarly, India could engage with anti-piracy and HADR exercises with Western African nations. It will ensure interdependence, cooperation and inter-operability during any regional crisis.

Building Maritime Surveillance Capabilities: India should assist regional countries to build capabilities to keep their territorial water under surveillance and domination to prevent misuse by non-state actors and organized crime on the high seas. India has successfully indigenized naval platforms and most of its ships, both small and large, are being built in Indian shipyards. India needs to capitalize on its leverage in naval systems by providing it as aid to Southeast Asian countries.²⁷ This will lead to closer interaction and interdependence.

Joint HADR and Counter Terrorist Centre to Build Partnership: South Asia and South East Asia are known for natural disasters. India has capabilities to predict, forewarn and capacity to assist and mitigate impact of disasters. With the rise in acts of terrorism in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar and Indonesia, it will be prudent for India to take lead to establish joint training and operation centre for IOR nations to assist the regional partners to deal with the threat effectively. Islamic terrorism is not a problem of one nation; it requires collective and synergized efforts to neutralize the threat. Initiative of joint training, intelligence sharing and joint planning will assist to coordinate operations on and off shore, sharing of information to operate independently and jointly.

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India's China Policy: Dynamics of 'Change' and 'Continuity'

Shikha Aggarwal*

As manifestations of definitive core-national interests and evolving aspirations, foreign policies are inherently dualistic constructs that involve elements of both strategic continuity and tactical dynamism. In addition to national interests and aspirations, foreign policy dynamics are governed by a country's ideological underpinnings and outlook, and the overarching narrative of international politics. It is this interplay between *continuity* (in pursuing strategic national interests) and *change* (in the style and normative ideals of diplomacy) that constitutes the defining theme of India's foreign policy towards China since 2014.

Any nuanced analysis of continuity or perceived departures in a country's foreign policy template vis-à-vis another country needs to be foregrounded in a study of evolving strategic dynamics between the two nations. In the context of India-China relations, it can be persuasively argued that the strategic environment has continued to be defined by the same set of issues that existed prior to 2014.

While Indian foreign policy since 2014 has largely followed the established doctrine vis-à-vis the long-standing border dispute, new policy narratives have been fostered to deal with the Belt and Road 'grand-strategy', skewed bilateral-trade economics, and China's selective reading of terrorism. Further, there has been an enhanced

effort to integrate India's cultural ethos with its foreign policy outreach to counter China's gradual penetration within India's civilizational space through a state-funded and meticulously crafted strategy of embracing and appropriating Buddhism¹.

To counter China's growing footprint in South Asia and Indian Ocean Region, the country's Foreign Policy has begun conferring an enhanced thrust upon geopolitics. This approach has been articulated through the idioms of 'extended neighborhood' and 'Act East', 'neighborhood first', and 'Indo-Pacific'. Most Importantly, India has moved beyond the shibboleths of 'non-alignment' and has embraced the concept of 'strategic and issue-based alignment'.² While these formulations signify India's larger strategic interests, their importance in India's China policy cannot be over-emphasized.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, India-China dynamic is also governed by the PRC's efforts to undermine India's status as a global nuclear power under the pretext of its 'all-weather friendship' with Pakistan. The alliance with Pakistan and heavy investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have also fuelled Chinese ambitions to foresee a mediation role for itself in the Kashmir dispute. On both these issues, Indian foreign policy has followed strategic continuity that upholds India's credentials as a

*Ms. Shikha Aggarwal is a Senior Research Fellow at India Foundation. Views expressed are personal.

responsible nuclear power, and reaffirms India's traditional position on Kashmir being a bilateral issue.

While strategic contestation remains the overarching theme of India-China dynamic, the Doklam crisis of 2017 marked the watershed in this relationship. Not only did the 73-day-face-off demonstrated India's firm position and resolve on the issue of territory and sovereignty, it made China recognize India as a strategic challenge almost for the first time³. Additionally, India's robust stand at Doklam reaffirmed the country's leading role in the South Asian geopolitics.⁴

India's China Policy Since 2014: Breaks and Continuity with the Past

Beginning with the contentious issue of boundary demarcation between India and China, it is justified to assert that the 1988 paradigm continues to define the larger contours of India's foreign policy approach towards the dispute. While the 1988 rapprochement between the two countries was noteworthy in many respects, it has tacitly relegated the boundary question as secondary in India-China dynamic⁵. The reluctance or inability on part of successive policy dispensations to establish a new *modus vivendi* to deal with this vexed issue has allowed the stalemate to linger on for several decades now.

Since 1988, India-China border dispute is largely managed by a framework that involves the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border of 1993⁶, the expert group talks, and the Special

Representative (SR) Mechanism of 2003. While it is conventional wisdom to cite BPTA⁷ and its various avatars as 'instruments of success' in maintaining peace and tranquility along the India-China border, it is equally important to recognize that the SR mechanism has not yielded any tangible results even after 21 rounds of talks. However, it is important to recognize that since 2014, the mechanism has been approaching the boundary dispute with a more assertive vocabulary that emphasizes upon achieving '*a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the India-China boundary question at an early date*'⁸. This constitutes a significant departure from the earlier formulations that committed the two countries to '*discussions on a framework for a resolution of the Boundary Question*'⁹.

In terms of political approach to the dispute, a new discourse was added to India's foreign policy during Xi Jinping's maiden visit to India in 2014 and Modi's 2015 State visit to China. In a significant move, Prime Minister Modi raised the boundary issue at public forums as against keeping it confined as a recurrent topic in bilateral documents¹⁰. Ironically, this momentum and dynamism was not maintained during the Wuhan Summit - which in fact came under the backdrop of a border stand-off.

The very bedrock of the Wuhan summit was built on India's sacrifice of the 'Thank You India' celebrations. This constituted a strategic retreat from the policy narrative that the country had initiated on Tibet in 2014 when Sikyong Lobsang Sangey was invited to Prime Minister Modi's oath-

taking ceremony along with the Heads of all SAARC nations. If this invitation had signaled a new posturing by New Delhi, Wuhan provided the Chinese with a 'new normal' to deal with India. In the final analysis, while the summit achieved strategic compromise by India on Tibet, it did not secure any commitment from the Chinese side regarding India's core national concerns.

It is important to note here that the joint statement issued at the end of the Wuhan summit included the formulation of '*fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement*' with regards to the boundary dispute¹¹. The crucial missing link in this position is the emphasis upon '*early settlement of the boundary question*' that was an integral component of the joint statements that were issued after the Modi-Xi State-level meetings in 2014 and 2015¹². In this context, the 'strategic guidance' issued to the officials at the end of the Summit largely constitutes yet another appendix to the CBMs (confidence building measures) regime that began with the 1993 Agreement. When read alongside the joint statement, the much hyped 'strategic guidance' appears to be a reiteration of the lexicon of 'border management' that has come to characterise the Border Question.

While it can be argued that the Wuhan Summit was directed towards restoring normalcy in India-China relations, it is equally pertinent to underscore that the summit came at a time when China was faced with an increasingly unfavorable domestic and international climate due to the trade war with the US and growing internal unrest (albeit muted) against the decisions taken during

the 19th Party Congress. Though it is never advisable to undermine an adversary's strength, times like these require countries to design foreign policy templates that offer a skillful combination of *realpolitik* and constructivist approaches and not commit themselves to a liberal positioning.

Notwithstanding the above discussed criticism, the Wuhan Meet can be justifiably credited for introducing the concept of 'informal summits' within the scope of India-China strategic dialogue. If institutionalized as an annual event, this mechanism of informal exchanges between the top leaderships of the two countries can go a long way in addressing the 'political-will deficit' that has kept the boundary issue in an imbroglio for several decades now.

With regards to 'One China', while India's foreign policy continues to abide by the 2010 decision to not endorse this formulation, certain developments on this issue merit attention. In the middle of 2018, India's national carrier, Air India was made to replace 'Taiwan' with 'Chinese Taipei' in the list of destinations on its website. While this move could have easily been projected as a business decision - if only for tactical reasons, the MEA decided to dub it as a reiteration of its official policy on Taiwan¹³. Though this turn of events does not exactly represent a departure from the 2010 policy, it certainly dilutes the strategic impact of this robust initiative. The fact that this development came in the post-Wuhan context makes it all the more crucial.

In yet another significant move on the 'One China' construct, India recognized Tibet as '*Tibet*

Autonomous Region of People's Republic of China' in the 2014 joint statement and followed it up with the 2015 joint statement¹⁴. Needless to say, this move contradicted India's consistent position since 2010 to not recognize Tibet as a part of China in any joint statements between the two countries. As against these initiatives, 'One India' policy has not found any mention in India's recent dealings with the PRC.

Inarguably, the most successful demonstration of India's foreign policy approach towards China has been on the issue of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI is not only China's flagship foreign policy project, it bears Xi Jinping's 'personal signature' in more ways than one. While the country has reiterated its unflinching position on India's territorial integrity through its opposition to CPEC, India should be credited for shaping the emerging global narrative on connectivity and infrastructure finance by highlighting the predatory nature of China's 'debt trap diplomacy'. In fact, India has not restricted itself to the criticism of BRI and has proposed an alternative in the form of 'Asia-Africa Growth Corridor'.

Another disconcerting dimension of BRI is its use as a geostrategic tool by China to advance its penetration within the South Asian landscape. In order to deal with increasing Chinese footprint in the country's immediate periphery, India's foreign policy re-invented the doctrine of 'neighborhood first'. While the idea itself is not new, the concept was imbued with renewed strategic salience that involved reiteration of India's cultural links with the South Asian nations

and an enhanced thrust upon the issue of regional connectivity.

However, in spite of these initiatives, India still needs to address the perennial irritants in its relations with the South-Asian region. This policy vacuum has been utilized by China to acquire strategic space within this region.

Over the years, oppositional political discourse in all South Asian states (barring Bhutan) has expressed itself through an anti-India rhetoric. Moreover, alignment with China is employed as a tool in South Asian polities to demonstrate their strategic autonomy vis-à-vis India to their domestic audience. While this narrative has continued to define India's regional environment, India has not been able to create permanent constituencies in South Asian states that can safeguard its strategic interests across the entire political spectrum in these countries. Though this lack of strategic template has characterized all foreign policy establishments, the 2015 Nepal-blockade has proved to be the most negative articulation of India's neighborhood policy in a long time. Even on the issue of connectivity, the progress has largely remained mixed. As a result, China's increasing strategic thrust in the South Asian region continues to remain a challenge for India.

With regards to the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) component of the BRI, while continuity has been maintained in the policy of deepening strategic interests in the region, India's stand on the Indo-Pacific construct remains in stark contrast to the much touted policy of 'issue-based

alignment'. While more negotiations regarding the scope and nature of the proposed architecture were due, India did not have to altogether reject the concept's credentials of being a 'strategy'¹⁵.

While on the subject of geostrategic conceptualizations that have direct bearing upon India's China policy, India crafted the novel approach of reimagining its strategic geography and extending it to Southeast Asia. In order to fully realize the scope of this 'extended neighborhood', a constructive effort was made to connect the South and Southeast Asian spaces through the idiom of Buddhism and physical connectivity. The evolution of 'Look East' into 'Act East' was integral to this strategic outlook. Another dimension of this policy is that it allows India greater strategic presence within the South China Sea.

Inclusion of cultural diplomacy within the dynamics of the 'Act East' construct has been one of the novel and most significant foreign policy conceptualizations by India in recent times. While this policy is important for varied reasons of diplomacy, it entails definitive strategic component with regards to China. By placing Buddhism on India's diplomatic agenda, India has offered a potent counter to China's consistent efforts at assuming the leadership of the global discourse on this philosophy. In fact, Buddhism is one of the key pillars of China's outreach to Nepal. Moreover, ownership of Buddhism narrative is indispensable to China's hold over Tibet and its attempts to place pro-China spiritual leaders within the pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism.

Further, in pursuance of its policy of 'strategic

alignment', India has forged closer ties with US, Japan and Vietnam. While these partnerships have evolved over the consistent work of several decades, it needs to be recognized that the last five years have imbued them with a new momentum and energy. Today, India's relations with these countries have moved beyond the dynamics of bi-laterals and have acquired the status of 'comprehensive strategic partnerships'¹⁶ that involve an ever increasing military dimension. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this article, while such developments need not be viewed entirely from the perspective of India-China binary, they nevertheless remain central to India's foreign policy approach vis-à-vis China.

The issue of Trade Deficit continues to be a work in progress. While India has reportedly reduced the deficit by 10 percent recently, this largely remains an outcome of the US-China trade war. As such, India needs to continue with its efforts to secure more favorable and justified trade terms with China - both at the bilateral level as well as under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) framework.

With regards to the domination of India's smartphone sector by the likes of Huawei and ZTE, India urgently needs to revisit its policies. While an outright ban is neither advisable nor tangible, India should participate in the global narrative being led by the US regarding the strategic designs of these companies, and insist upon operational transparency by these Chinese giants.

Finally, it can be concluded that 'dynamism' and 'assertive posturing' constitute the two

recurrent themes of India's foreign policy approach towards China since 2014. In the last five years, the most articulate expressions of this policy narrative have been the Doklam issue and India's position on the BRI. Additionally, India's foreign policy template towards China is now governed by the ideal of 'strategic and issue based

alignment'. This newly crafted ideology and India's thrust upon cultural diplomacy have allowed the country greater maneuverability space against China's expansionist policies in India's sphere of interests. With these elements, India's new foreign policy constitutes a template for its leadership role in world politics.

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India's 'Engage West' Policy: A Bold Initiative

Ashok Sajjanhar*

Introduction:

The National Democratic Alliance government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has registered many successes in diverse areas since it assumed power in May, 2014. Possibly one of the most significant spheres is foreign policy. While India's expanding relations with the United States and Japan as also its tensions with China and Pakistan have found extensive mention in popular media as well as in discussions by scholars, practitioners and think tanks, adequate space has not been devoted to India's outreach to and momentous accomplishments in strengthening its partnerships to its West with Afghanistan, Central Asia and West Asia. Countries in these regions are extremely important for India not only for its security and stability but also for its energy security, trade, investment as well as the welfare of its 9-million strong diaspora in the region.

Central Asia:

India has several millennia old historical, cultural and civilisational links with Central Asia. Brisk trade of goods, ideas and thoughts took place from India (and China) to Central Asia and beyond over the Silk Road from 3rd century BCE to 15th century CE. Buddhism travelled to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Western China from India through the Silk Road. The region was part of

Emperor Ashoka's kingdom in 3rd century BCE. Alexander of Macedonia, Kushans, Babar, Mughals and Sufism are evidence of vigorous links between India and the region over the ages. India and the Central Asian Republics (CARs) enjoyed vibrant economic and cultural ties when the latter were a part of the Soviet Union in the 20th century.

Notwithstanding the strategic and economic significance of Central Asia, the region was not accorded adequate importance by India's political leadership for much of the period since the countries gained independence in 1991. The then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao recognised the strategic importance of the region and visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 1993 and Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995. After 1995, for a period of 20 years till 2015, only 4 Prime Ministerial visits from India to the region took place viz, by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Kazakhstan in 2002 (in continuation of his participation in the regional Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia) and Tajikistan in 2003, and by Dr Manmohan Singh to Uzbekistan in 2006 and to Kazakhstan in 2011 on way back from the BRICS Summit in China.

This evident neglect was corrected by Prime Minister Modi soon after assuming power. He took the initiative to visit all the five countries of the

**Shri Ashok Sajjanhar has worked for the Indian Foreign Service for over three decades. He was the ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia, and has held several significant positions in Indian embassies in Washington DC, Brussels, Moscow, Geneva, Tehran, Dhaka and Bangkok.*

region in July, 2015, two of them (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) before going to Ufa in Russia for the BRICS/SCO Summit, and three of them (Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) on the way back. This provided a strong impetus to bilateral ties. Since then, PM Modi has travelled twice more to the region, once in 2016 to Tashkent, Uzbekistan and again in 2017 to Astana, Kazakhstan to participate in the annual Summits of member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The Indian PM will travel again to the region to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in June, 2019 to attend the next SCO Summit. On the sidelines of all these Summits as also of the SCO Summit in Qingdao, China in June, 2018, PM Modi met leaders of the four Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) which are members of SCO.

The then President Almazbek Atambayev of Kyrgyzstan and President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan visited India in December, 2016. The new President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev who has launched several far-reaching and visionary initiatives in domestic, economic and foreign policies of his country visited India twice within a span of four months. His first visit was a bilateral State visit in Oct, 2018 and the second came in January, 2019 for the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. All these visits and interactions have led to a dynamic upsurge in bilateral interactions and cooperation in political, economic, defence and cultural spheres.

India became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in 2017. In addition to the lack of direct geographic contiguity and connectivity, one of the important causes for

India's failure to take full advantage of its historical and civilizational linkages with this region has been the inadequate interactions and meetings between the leaders of India and CARs. India's membership of SCO has sought to address this lacuna in a substantial manner. It is well understood that in Central Asian countries, most decisions of significant importance and value, both political and economic, are taken by Presidents of the countries and not at a Ministerial level. The regular and frequent meetings at the highest political level can be expected to provide a fillip to India's ties with these countries and the region in the coming years. In addition to meetings at the highest level, several meetings at Ministerial and official levels have also taken place. These have led to discussions on expanding understanding and cooperation in diverse areas.

Although India enjoyed direct access to the region over millennia through the current day Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is not able to have a direct connect with Central Asia today because Pakistan does not permit people, goods and traffic to travel from India to this region using its territory. To circumvent this obstacle, India pro-actively focused on developing connectivity routes to Central Asia and Afghanistan via the Chabahar project and the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Although these projects had been planned many years ago, they were taken in hand seriously only over the last 5 years. A trilateral Agreement was signed by PM Modi with Presidents of Iran and Afghanistan during his visit to Iran in May, 2016. Within 18 months, the first phase of renovation and upgradation of Chabahar port from 2.5 million

tonnes to 8.5 million tonnes was completed and inaugurated by the Iranian President in December, 2017. Further work on expansion of Chabahar and connecting it by a rail link to Zahedan and then onwards to Malik/Zaranj on the Iran-Afghanistan border is under way. Uzbekistan has expressed interest in linking with this connectivity initiative by joining a railway link from Termez to Herat. India also acceded to the Ashgabat Agreement in February 2018. This will help in smooth and streamlined flow of goods between Central Asia and India. India joined the Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) in August, 2018, under which the first consignment arrived without any obstacles from Afghanistan via Chabahar in March, 2019. This will help India and Central Asia to enhance their economic cooperation.

India is an energy deficient country. This region is extremely well endowed with energy, mineral and natural resources. Both India and Central Asia are a perfect match for each other. The challenge is to transport the energy resources from these land-locked states to India. The region offers significant trade, investment and economic opportunities to Indian businesses. Indian private sector needs to take aggressive and determined measures in prospecting and exploiting economic potential in these countries through joint ventures, export of services, bidding for World Bank, ADB and other multilaterally funded infrastructure projects etc.

India has been importing uranium from Kazakhstan since the bilateral civilian nuclear deal was signed during visit of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to India as Chief Guest at

India's Republic Day in January, 2009. Recently this Agreement was further extended to import another 3,000 tonnes of uranium ore by India. Kazakhstan has the world's second largest reserves of uranium ore and is the world's largest producer of this mineral. During the visit of Uzbek President to India in October last year, it was agreed to import 3,000 tonnes of uranium from Uzbekistan also.

Work on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline has been speeded up over the last five years. Work in Turkmenistan on laying the pipeline appears to have been completed while that in Afghanistan commenced more than a year ago. The likely date for completion of the project is 2020 but could slip by a few months.

In a significant development, Kazakh troops were deployed in November, 2018 under Indian command as UN peacekeepers in Lebanon. It is for the first time in Indian history - whether in UN missions or otherwise - that an Indian Army unit has been broken down by replacing one of its own companies with a foreign company.

Central Asian Region has always constituted the extended neighbourhood of India. India's outreach to this region since PM Modi assumed power has seen a significant upswing in political, strategic, economic, commercial, defence, counter-terrorism, cultural spheres and enhanced people-to-people contacts.

Afghanistan:

India and Afghanistan have a strong relationship based on cultural and civilizational links. The relationship is not limited to only the governments in New Delhi and Kabul but has its

foundations in historical contacts and exchanges between the people. Transfer of power in New Delhi and Kabul in 2014 took place within a few months of each other. After a protracted political process, President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah assumed power in September, 2014. The first visit by Abdullah Abdullah to India took place in March, 2015 followed soon thereafter by Ashraf Ghani in April, 2015, a full seven months after assuming the Presidency. Before coming to India, Ghani had already travelled to Pakistan, USA, Iran, China, Saudi Arabia and some other countries. Ghani's decision soon after assuming power to suspend the request for supply of arms was initially viewed as a setback for Indo-Afghan strategic ties. Besides, his decision to visit China and Pakistan ahead of India was also viewed as a snub to Delhi.

Since his election Ghani tried to improve relations with Pakistan, which in turn could pave the way for peace talks with the Taliban. His first visit after becoming President was to Pakistan in November, 2014. However, after many terror attacks in Afghanistan from Pakistan, and failed Taliban peace talks, Ghani grew increasingly cold to Pakistan and called it the "center of the Taliban."

Notwithstanding the late and uncertain start to bilateral ties after assumption of power by Ghani, relations have warmed and improved significantly over the last 4 years. Two long-pending projects viz the Parliament building and the Salma dam (Afghanistan-India Friendship dam) were completed at rapid speed and handed over to the Afghan authorities, the first in December, 2015 and the second in June, 2016. By getting these two prestigious and iconic

projects completed expeditiously after coming to power, PM Modi sent out a strong message that India will meet its commitments and deliver on its promises on time. In August 2016, PM Modi also jointly inaugurated through video conferencing the restored Stor Palace in Kabul with President Ghani.

India-Afghanistan partnership has always been characterized by high level exchanges. Over the last four years, the frequency and regularity of such visits witnessed a sharp increase. Bilateral trade crossed the US \$ 1 billion mark. The two sides successfully organised the India-Afghanistan trade and investment show in Mumbai in September, 2018 and strengthened connectivity, including through Chabahar port and Air-Freight Corridor. Under the New Development Partnership, both sides are implementing 116 High Impact Community Development Projects in 34 provinces of Afghanistan. These important investments are in areas of education, health, agriculture, irrigation, drinking water, renewable energy, flood control, micro-hydropower, sports and administrative infrastructure. On-going programmes for education, capacity building, skills and human resource development of Afghanistan, one of the largest such programmes in the world, was extended for a further period of five years from 2017 to 2022. India offered 500 scholarships for children of martyrs of Afghan Security Forces and gifted four Mi-25 Attack helicopters to the Afghan Air Force. India agreed to implement some important new projects such as the Shahtoot Damand drinking water project for Kabul that would also facilitate irrigation, water supply for Charikar City, road connectivity

to Band-e-Amir in Bamiyan Province that would promote tourism, low cost housing for returning Afghan refugees in Nangarhar Province to promote their resettlement, a gypsum board manufacturing plant in Kabul to promote value added local industry and for import substitution, and a polyclinic in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The inauguration of the Dedicated Air Cargo Corridor in June 2017 between Kabul-Delhi and Kandahar-Delhi has provided a fresh impetus to bilateral trade. In December 2017, Kabul-Mumbai Air Cargo Corridor was also inaugurated. The Air Corridor has ensured free movement of freight despite the barriers put in place due to the denial of transit by Pakistan. It has been decided to further strengthen the corridor and expand it to other cities in India. Several thousand tonnes of cargo has already been transported in the Air Corridor since its inauguration.

India has supported the people and Government of Afghanistan in their efforts to build a united, sovereign, democratic, peaceful, stable, prosperous and inclusive nation. India supports all efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan which are inclusive and Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled. India has advocated the need for a sustained and long-term commitment to Afghanistan by the international community. India has been opposed to involvement of Taliban in the peace process till it renounces violence and accepts the Constitution of Afghanistan. In recent months, for a variety of reasons, most of the international players active in the region have come around to the view that Taliban will need to be a part of the final resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan. Although this is

against the stated position of both India and Afghanistan, both countries participated through presence of non-official representatives in the meeting organised by Russia in Moscow in November, 2018 in which for the first time Taliban representatives also participated. India is actively engaged with a number of countries on bilateral, regional and plurilateral basis as well as in different formats to find an acceptable solution to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. Although the coming months pose a formidable challenge, India has reiterated that it is committed to work with like-minded countries to arrive at a solution for a safe, secure, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

West Asia:

India's vigorous and dynamic relations with West Asian countries represent one of the brightest achievements of India's foreign policy over the last five years. India today would be one of the very few, if not possibly the only country, which has excellent relations with all countries of the region. India enjoys strong relations with Saudi Arabia as it does with Israel. India has robust relations with United Arab Emirates as it has with Iran. With other countries in the region like Qatar, Syria, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Turkey etc India maintains warm ties.

This region is vitally important for India's safety, stability, energy security and economic well-being. This region is home to about 9 million Indians who travelled to that region for better job opportunities in the wake of the oil boom in the 1970s. 70% of India's imported oil needs and 90% of gas requirements come from West Asia. This dependence will only increase as the Indian

economy continues to grow at 8 per cent or more. Indian diaspora in West Asia remits about 55% of the total inward remittances to the tune of about US\$ 45 billion into the country. This inward flow of funds is extremely important for India to balance its current account deficit. Safety and security of the Indian people is extremely important for the Indian government. Hence stability in the region is of great interest to India. The region represents a significant market for Indian goods and also a source of large investments into India for India's infrastructure and economic development.

Since the BJP-led government came to power in 2014, the Arab governments were somewhat wary that because of the well-known personal rapport between PM Modi and Israeli PM Netanyahu, India might adopt a pro-Israeli policy at the expense of traditional relations with them. Also, the Palestinian cause could suffer. These misgivings were soon dispelled. Starting with his first visit to the region to UAE in August, 2015, PM Modi travelled to Qatar and Saudi Arabia as well as to Iran over the next one year. Many leaders from the region also visited India. Crown Prince of UAE was the Chief Guest on India's Republic Day in 2016. Far reaching collaboration in security, defence, counter-terrorism & intelligence were the major outcomes of these visits. Joint Statement with UAE was noteworthy as it prohibited Pakistan to use UAE territory for anti-India activities which had hitherto been the case. In addition, several accused Indian origin terrorists were extradited to India. Moreover, several billions of dollars of strategic investments in India have been agreed to by these countries.

Reaffirming importance of this region and particularly of UAE, PM Modi visited UAE the second time in 2018 after his visit to Palestine. Several MoUs were signed in railways, energy sector, financial services and manpower. But for the first time a MoU between an Indian consortium (OVL, BPRL & IOCL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) was signed that allows the acquisition of 10% participating interest amounting to US\$600 million in Abu Dhabi's offshore Lower Zakum concession for 40 years.

The crowning pinnacle of India's relations with UAE and the Islamic world in general came in early March, 2019 when India was invited as the Guest of Honour to the 46th Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. This was done in the face of threat from Pakistani Foreign Minister that he would boycott the Meeting if invitation to the Indian EAM was not withdrawn. The Foreign Minister of UAE refused to get blackmailed as a result of which Pakistan FM did not attend the meeting. Statement by UAE foreign minister that "the friendly country of India" had been invited "as guest of honour in view of its great global, political stature as well as its time-honoured and deeply rooted cultural and historical legacy, and its important Islamic component" clearly demonstrates the huge distance that India's relations have travelled not only with UAE but with all countries in the region.

The first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel was undertaken by PM Modi in April, 2017. This was followed by a week-long visit to India by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu in January, 2018. Both these visits provided a huge

impetus to bilateral ties. Soon after coming to power, PM Modi met his Israeli counterpart on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York in September, 2014. Israel has emerged as a major and reliable security, intelligence and counter-terrorism partner for India. In defence, it is the third largest supplier after Russia and USA. Reputed for its arid agricultural technologies, it has become a close partner in India's food security initiative. S&T and Cyber Space as well as intelligence cooperation have become new frontiers of cooperation.

On the issue of Palestine, India has maintained its principled stand but has de-hyphenated the relationship from that with Israel. Before visiting Israel, PM Modi received President Mahmoud Abbas in India and assured him of India's consistent political and economic support. India stuck to its ethical position by voting against the US move at UNGA to shift its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Also, PM Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Palestine-Ramallah in February, 2018. In fact, the Palestinian leadership which has discarded US as an honest broker of peace hopes that India perhaps could play a more proactive role in the Middle East.

PM Modi went to Ramallah via Amman, Jordan where he had extensive discussions on counter terrorism, deradicalization and economic and security collaboration as well as on issue of Jerusalem and Palestine. King Abdullah II of Jordan who was on a visit to Pakistan and UAE, cut short his visit and returned earlier to meet PM Modi.

Within weeks, King Abdullah II paid a highly

significant State visit to India, after a gap of 12 years when over a dozen agreements and MoUs were signed including on defence cooperation that has hitherto been elusive due to Jordan's close relations with Pakistan. Jordan has emerged as a key collaborator in India's food security initiative. Being rich in shale deposits, it could become a reliable partner in India's energy security scenario.

Visit by Iranian President to India in February, 2018 was significant for the message it conveyed that India conducts its foreign policy independently and based on its national interests. In addition, notwithstanding the threat of US sanctions, India has continued to import significant quantities of oil from Iran to meet its energy needs, as also to develop Chabahar to promote connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia. During the visit of President Rouhani, nine MoUs across a wide spectrum were signed. One of the most important was to create a mechanism for Rupee-Rial trade through Asian Clearing mechanism that would overcome the risk of being hit by sanctions on import of oil from Iran.

PM Modi also paid a visit to Oman in February, 2018. Oman has maintained good relations with Iran and other GCC countries and can act as a reliable interlocutor in intra-regional affairs and conflicts. India and Oman relations have been very close and historic. Apart from deeper trade and economic engagement Oman has been a significant defence and anti-piracy partner for India. During the visit eight agreements were signed in military, health, tourism, judicial cooperation, and space sectors. India will be able to use the Duqm port for its military logistical requirements. This fits well in its SAGARMALA

initiative and maritime security. This was further supplemented by the Agreement India signed with France during President Macron's visit to India allowing India to use its naval bases and facilities in the region.

This proactive outreach has yielded significant results not only in the fields of security, counterterrorism, defense and de-radicalisation, but also in the area of trade and investment. Joint military and naval exercises were held with UAE for the first time. Defence, intelligence and counter-terrorism cooperation have started acquiring greater salience. UAE has agreed to raise its investments in India, including through the establishment of UAE-India Infrastructure Investment Fund, to reach a target of US\$ 75 billion to support India's plans for rapid expansion of next generation infrastructure, especially in railways, ports, roads, airports and industrial corridors and parks. UAE has also agreed to participate in the development of strategic petroleum reserves, upstream and downstream petroleum sectors, and collaboration in third countries.

During PM Modi's visit in 2015, UAE agreed to allot land to build a Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. This will further enrich cultural and people-to-

people ties. The dynamism in India's relations with West Asia can be ascertained from the fact that Saudi Arabia, UAE and Palestine have conferred their highest awards on PM Modi for his contribution to strengthening relations between them and India.

West Asia has been facing profound turbulence and instability. India on account of its enhanced credibility could be asked to play a greater role be it in the Middle East Peace Process and Palestine or Syria. India will however need to approach this issue with great care and circumspection. Over the last 5 years, India has followed a sophisticated policy of nurturing bilateral ties with all the countries in the region without getting entangled in their ideological or sectarian fault lines. This is the key reason for success of India's foreign policy in the region.

Conclusion:

India has covered enormous distance over the last 5 years under PM Modi's stewardship in rejuvenating bilateral and regional relations with West Asia, Central Asia and Afghanistan. India today stands on the threshold of providing a massive impetus to partnerships with these regions in the coming years.



India and the Multilateral Institutions

Asoke Kumar Mukerji*

The general elections in India in 2014 coincided with the ambitious negotiation of a global agenda for sustainable development at the United Nations (UN). These negotiations converged the three aspects of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The outcome, adopted by world leaders in September 2015, was Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core. This has been a major success for multilateral diplomacy.¹

The principle of international cooperation is the core of multilateralism. As an “original” founder-member of the multilateral system created by the UN, India has major stakes in effective international cooperation. With over 40% of her Gross Domestic Product (GDP) being contributed by her international trade,² India’s destiny is closely linked with sustaining international cooperation to catalyze her transformation into a major power. India’s ability to participate on an equal basis in the decisions of multilateral institutions is intrinsic to this endeavor.

Agenda 2030 has validated India’s view that the eradication of poverty is central to sustainable development.³ Home to almost 270 million people living under the poverty line,⁴ India has a strong

interest in implementing Agenda 2030 on the basis of her nationally set priorities and transform herself. Globally agreed means of implementing Agenda 2030 include supportive financial flows, such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for employment and infrastructure, as well as access to appropriate technologies and clean energy to accelerate development while protecting the environment.

In the run-up to the May 2014 general elections in India, several of these priorities assumed political prominence. The new government’s focus on prioritizing inclusive development, captured in the *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* slogan, galvanized voters in India as well as interlocutors from many of India’s strategic partners.⁵

India’s clear road-map of national targets for development announced by the government between May 2014 and September 2015 served to significantly align India’s national development agenda with the goals formulated by the UN. *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* became aligned with SDG 1, the over-reaching goal for poverty eradication. The National Food Security Mission aligned with SDG 2 for food security; Health Insurance schemes with SDG 3 for good health

**Shri Asoke Kumar Mukerji retired after over 37 years in the Indian Foreign Service as Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in December 2015. He led the team that implemented Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s proposal for the UN General Assembly to declare an International Yoga Day in 2014, in a record time of 75 days with 177 co-sponsoring countries. He led India’s negotiations on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development which was adopted by world leaders in September 2015. In July 2018, the University of East Anglia (UK) awarded him a Doctor of Civil Laws (honoris causa) degree for his contributions to diplomacy.*

and well-being; the National Education Mission with SDG 4 for quality education; *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* with SDG 5 on gender equality; *Swachh Bharat* with SDG 6 for sanitation and clean water; the target of 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022 with SDG 7 on clean energy; the MNREGA scheme and Skill India with SDG 8 on decent work for all; Make in India, Start Up India and Digital India with SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure; *Jan Dhan Yojna* with SDG 10 to reduce inequalities; the Smart Cities Mission with SDG 11 for sustainable cities and communities, India's SAGAR policy announced in March 2015 with a focus on the Blue Economy with SDG 14 on oceans; and the *Krishi Vikas* and *Fasal Bima Yojna* with SDG 15 on agriculture and life on land.

Prime Minister Modi's first official visit to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 27 September 2014 reiterated India's commitment to multilateralism. He said that "India is a country that constitutes one-sixth of humanity; a nation experiencing economic and social transformation on a scale rarely seen in history. Every nation's world view is shaped by its civilization and philosophical tradition. India's ancient wisdom sees the world as one family. It is reflected in a tradition of openness and diversity; co-existence and cooperation. This is why India speaks not just for itself, but also for the cause of justice, dignity, opportunity and prosperity around the world. It is also because of this timeless current of thought that India has an unwavering belief in multilateralism."⁶

The 2014 UNGA address by the Prime Minister contained his proposal for the UN to

declare an International Yoga Day. Emphasizing international cooperation to recognize the integral bond between humanity and the environment, the proposal captured the imagination of delegations in the UN General Assembly. As the Prime Minister explained, "For us in India, respect for nature is an integral part of spiritualism. We treat nature's bounties as sacred. Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day."⁷

The implementation of this proposal was swift, demonstrating the commitment of member-states to making a living reality out of international cooperation. Within 75 days, 176 other countries joined India in co-sponsoring a UNGA resolution on 11 December 2014 to declare 21 June every year as the International Day of Yoga. This has become a record for such resolutions in the UNGA. When the International Yoga Day began to be implemented from 2015 onwards, its link with SDG 3 (global health) and SDG 12 (changing lifestyles for responsible consumption and production) of Agenda 2030 became explicit. As the Prime Minister had said in his address, "We can achieve the same level of development, prosperity and well-being without necessarily going down the path of reckless consumption."⁸

At the Paris meeting of the UN Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November 2015, India took a major initiative to push environmental issues towards the path of meaningful international cooperation rather than polemical confrontation. Together with President Francois Hollande of France, Prime Minister Modi launched an International Solar Alliance (ISA). Speaking on the occasion, he said, “Our hope for a sustainable planet rests on a bold global initiative. It will mean advanced countries leaving enough carbon space for developing countries to grow. That is natural climate justice. It also means a growth path with lighter carbon footprint. So, convergence between economy, ecology and energy should define our future.”⁹

In March 2018, barely 16 months after having proposed the ISA, Prime Minister Modi jointly inaugurated the ISA with visiting French President Emmanuel Macron in India. In October 2018, India hosted the first General Assembly of the ISA, which became the first inter-governmental organization associated with the UN to be headquartered in India since India’s independence in August 1947.¹⁰ Aligning India firmly with SDG 7 of Agenda 2030 on clean energy, the Prime Minister asserted that India was doing so with a new self-confidence of “Poverty to Power.”¹¹

Such positive contributions to implementing the principle of international cooperation by India are today being increasingly challenged by major powers seeking to impose their domestic political and economic policies on the multilateral system.¹² Unilateral measures, including attempts to enforce extra-territorial application of domestic laws, directly impacts on the capacity of countries like India to meet their national developmental targets

under Agenda 2030. Polarization between the major powers has begun to create frictions within multilateral institutions established under the UN framework.¹³ These include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The agreements in 2010 to reform decision-making within the IMF and World Bank to reflect global economic realities are yet to be implemented,¹⁴ mainly on account of the reluctance of western economies to cede their inherited privileges in decision-making in multilateral financial institutions.¹⁵

In the WTO, the United States is targeting the effective functioning of the international dispute settlement mechanism which it helped create in 1995, and which has adjudicated over 500 trade disputes between member-states so far. Attempts to revert to the pre-WTO bilateral approach to use punitive measures based on domestic laws to resolve trade disputes jeopardizes international cooperation based on the international rule of law.¹⁶

India’s ability to make multilateral institutions responsive to priorities of developing countries depends on India’s participation as an equal member in decision-making in all structures of multilateral governance. It is worth recalling that Agenda 2030, in which India participated actively, was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly, which takes decisions on the democratic principle of one-country one-vote.¹⁷ When adopting Agenda 2030, world leaders had unanimously stressed that “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”¹⁸

The mandate to ensure international peace and

security is the “primary responsibility” of the UN Security Council according to the UN Charter.¹⁹ Unlike in the UN General Assembly, decision-making in the UN Security Council is determined by the veto power of the five self-selected permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK and the USA).²⁰

This is the context for India’s active leadership in the UN General Assembly since November 1979²¹ to reform the UN Security Council by amending the UN Charter, including the veto provision in decision-making.

Since 2014, India has attempted to conclude this reform within a fixed time-frame. Prime Minister Modi exhorted fellow world leaders in 2014 to “reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, and make it more democratic and participative. Institutions that reflect the imperatives of 20th century would not be effective in the 21st. It would face the risk of irrelevance; and we will face the risk of continuing turbulence with no one capable of addressing it.”²² China is leading the push-back by permanent members against reforming the Security Council.

What are the issues concerning India on the agenda of the Security Council which need India’s participation on an equal basis in the Council’s decision-making process? Countering terrorism directed against India by Pakistan is a priority. Before the Security Council became active in seeking to counter terrorism through its resolutions,²³ which are binding on all member-states of the UN under Article 25 of the UN Charter, India had taken the lead in using the UN General Assembly to compel member-states to prosecute or extradite terrorists wanted for

committing terrorist attacks against India. Speaking at the UN General Assembly in 2014, Prime Minister Modi urged world leaders to “put aside our differences and mount a concerted international effort to combat terrorism and extremism. As a symbol of this effort, I urge you to adopt the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).”²⁴ The CCIT contains the legal obligation of “prosecute or extradite”. Pakistan has delayed consideration of the CCIT in the UN General Assembly’s Legal Committee (of which it was Vice-Chair in 2016-2017)²⁵.

After the Pathankot terror attack of 2016, India’s request to the Security Council to list the leader of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) Masood Azhar on the Sanctions List²⁶ has been repeatedly blocked by China, a veto-wielding permanent member. Earlier, following the 26 November 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai, carried out by the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), the UN Security Council had placed the leaders of the LeT like Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi on its Sanctions List on 10 December 2008.²⁷ However, the Security Council has been unable to enforce its decision to imposing sanctions on Hafiz Saeed so far,²⁸ due to lack of political will among its permanent members.

Related to this is the impact of terrorism on UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs). Out of the 71 UN PKOs mandated by the UN Security Council since 1948, India has participated in 49, contributing over 200,000 troops to date.²⁹ Terrorism has already targeted PKOs like UNDOF³⁰ in the Golan Heights and MINUSMA³¹ in Mali. The potential for an increase in terrorist attacks on other UN missions, including UNAMA

in Afghanistan, has become greater due to the perception that the Security Council is ineffective in countering terrorism, including terrorist acts against the UN itself.

This aggravates the existing shortcomings in Security Council in the effective use of PKOs for conflict resolution. Currently, as many as 75,000 out of the total of about 100,000 UN peacekeeping troops are deployed by the Security Council to respond to just 4 conflicts in Africa,³² which continue to spiral out of control. Two reasons for this failure are lack of representation among the Council's permanent members from Africa; and the absence of consultations by the Security Council with troop-contributing countries like India, which are not permanently represented in the Council. Under Article 44 of the UN Charter, India has the right to seek consultations with the Security Council on deployment of its troops contributed to PKOs. Prime Minister Modi had drawn attention to this issue, emphasizing that "the problems arise to a large extent because Troop Contributing Countries do not have a role in the decision-making process."³³

Despite deployment of PKOs, the Security Council has not been able to contain escalating crises across the continents, which extract a huge human and material cost. More than 68 million people are currently displaced by violent conflicts. Till 2018, over 3800 UN peacekeepers, including 169 Indian UN troops, have laid down their lives to uphold the UN Charter. At the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in New York in September 2015, Prime Minister Modi had underlined that "it would be most fitting if the proposed memorial wall to the fallen peacekeepers is created quickly. India

stands ready to contribute, including financially, to this objective."

Beyond measures to counter terrorism and the deployment of PKOs, other issues on the Council's agenda impacting on India's strategic interests include the situation in Yemen, which sits astride the main sea lane of communication through the Red Sea that carries the bulk of India's international trade; the situation in Iran, which is an important source of energy for India, as well as a critical partner in India's connectivity projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor through Bandar Abbas and the Chabahar Project; the situation in Afghanistan, especially regarding attempts to regularize the re-integration of the Taliban into Afghanistan's political structures; and the looming confrontation between the major powers on securitizing cyber space and outer space, where India is an emerging power.

As India looks to contribute to strengthen the multilateral system, two areas emerge as priorities for her.

First, India must become an equal participant in Security Council decision-making to ensure that this multilateral structure is responsive to India's core interests of ensuring peace and security for sustainable development. To amend the UN Charter and reform the UN Security Council, a UN General Assembly resolution needs to be adopted. China has asserted that such a resolution requires "comprehensive consensus".³⁴ China's assertion flies in the face of the fact that the UN General Assembly decided unanimously in 1998 that any resolution for deciding on Security Council reform needs only a two-thirds majority,³⁵ and not "comprehensive consensus." India must

take the lead to counter China's blocking tactic in the UN General Assembly by tabling the text of a draft resolution on Security Council reform co-sponsored by at least 129 member-states (a two-thirds majority).

Second, India must take the initiative to restore the primacy of the principle of international cooperation, on which the current multilateral system was founded a century ago. In 1963, over half a century ago, the UN General Assembly³⁶ had declared 1965, the 20th anniversary of the United Nations, as the "International Co-operation Year".

Given India's significant stakes in effective

international cooperation for the transformation of India, an Indian initiative in the UN General Assembly to declare the 75th anniversary year of the founding of the UN in 2020, as a Year of International Cooperation would galvanize the latent sentiment among the majority of UN member-states for restoring the inter-linkages between peace, security, human rights and sustainable development. In addition, such a contribution by India for making multilateralism relevant for the 21st century would create an important leadership framework for India when she assumes the Chair of the G-20 in 2022.

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India and the European Union: An Almost Strategic Partnership

Praket Arya*

Forty one years after establishing diplomatic ties, India and the European Union (EU) formed a strategic partnership at The Hague Summit in 2004. From the international community's point of view, this held great significance. India was one of only ten countries that the EU had chosen as its strategic partners. There was great potential for future growth and cooperation in the spheres of trade, connectivity, political and economic development policies, defence and regional security, building a rules based institutional architecture centred on multilateralism and a common vision of global governance that had shared values and principles.¹ Fast forward to 2019 and this 'strategic partnership' has been a partnership that is described by many as one that is high on potential and loud in rhetoric, but sadly low on substance with little convergence on prickly issues.² The EU-India strategic partnership has yet to realise a majority of the initial goals it set out for itself way back in 2004-05. It unfortunately remains a relationship that never found its momentum despite leaders from both India and the EU, ranging from all sides of the spectrum, calling each other 'natural allies' that have a common vision for shared prosperity.³

Since 2014, however, a fresh attempt has been made to renew and de-ice this partnership with new leaders at the helm of affairs in both India and the EU. With a new government in India under Prime Minister Modi, which presented a landmark shift in the way India conducted business abroad

and a new President in the European Commission headquarters in Brussels that had a completely new team and organisational structure under President Jean-Claude Juncker, the EU-India partnership has a renewed outlook, dynamism and vigour to build this partnership into a real global strategic partnership.⁴ President Juncker is the first President of the Commission from the European Parliament and the Presidency now has significantly increased powers after the Lisbon Treaty of 2009. With regards to India, Prime Minister Modi has led the first majority government in India since the General Elections of 1984, ending years of policy paralysis under fractured and often at odds coalition governments of the past that simply lacked the numbers in Parliament to initiate meaningful reform and build lasting alliances.

The Need for a Strategic Partnership

The European continent has always been an important one for India, historically and culturally, the two have always been linked through trade and people to people exchanges. After the EU was formed in 1993, reconciling its political differences to form a new supranational organisation, different member states had varied attitudes as far as India was concerned.⁵ The recent liberalisation of the Indian economy in 1992 was seen by many EU member states as unstable and not far reaching.⁶ From the point of view of the Brussels diplomat, India was uncertain regarding its international role and its non aligned past was

**Mr. Praket Arya is a Senior Research Fellow at India Foundation. An economist by education, he is an alumnus of The University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. His research interests include Development Economics and the International Political Economy of the European Union and the Greater Eurasian Space.*

deemed a limiting factor.⁷ It would be another decade or so till all the EU member states acknowledged India as an important player in the global market. As a consequence, the EU-India relationship was left in a vacuum of uncertainty and mistrust. Thus, it became easier for India to build closer bilateral relationships with the larger EU member states than with the EU as a whole. From the Indian perspective, it was convenient for India to engage government with government; the EU institutions became an additional tier to deal with and the constant political flux of the EU, in which newer member states would join the EU or older ones would express dissatisfaction with the system became a concern for progressive Indian governments. Moreover, for all the simplicity that an economic and monetary union could possess, the EU from the point of view of the Indian policy maker remained a largely complicated organisation with ever evolving regulations and intragovernmental legislature.

Therefore, it took almost a decade after the first EU-India Cooperation Agreement in 1994 for both actors to realise the importance, need and potential of this partnership. India and the EU, by 2004 converged as ‘natural partners’ in international politics to recognise each other as strategic partners.⁸ Although, often driven by divergent geopolitical considerations, both India and the EU base their foreign policy on the aspirations of its electorate and share the values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms centred on the principle of multilateralism.⁹ With a very diverse socio-economic profile, both actors face common issues of poverty, inequality, terrorism, climate change, international piracy and rogue states. Today, all 28 EU member states have permanent diplomatic missions in New Delhi and there is also a permanent EU Delegation in India. The global

political order of the second decade of the 21st century has mandated that Europe starts looking East for all its complications with the USA and India is now not only open to the world for business, but acts as an important balancing link in connecting Europe to the rest of Southeast Asia.

Trade and Investment

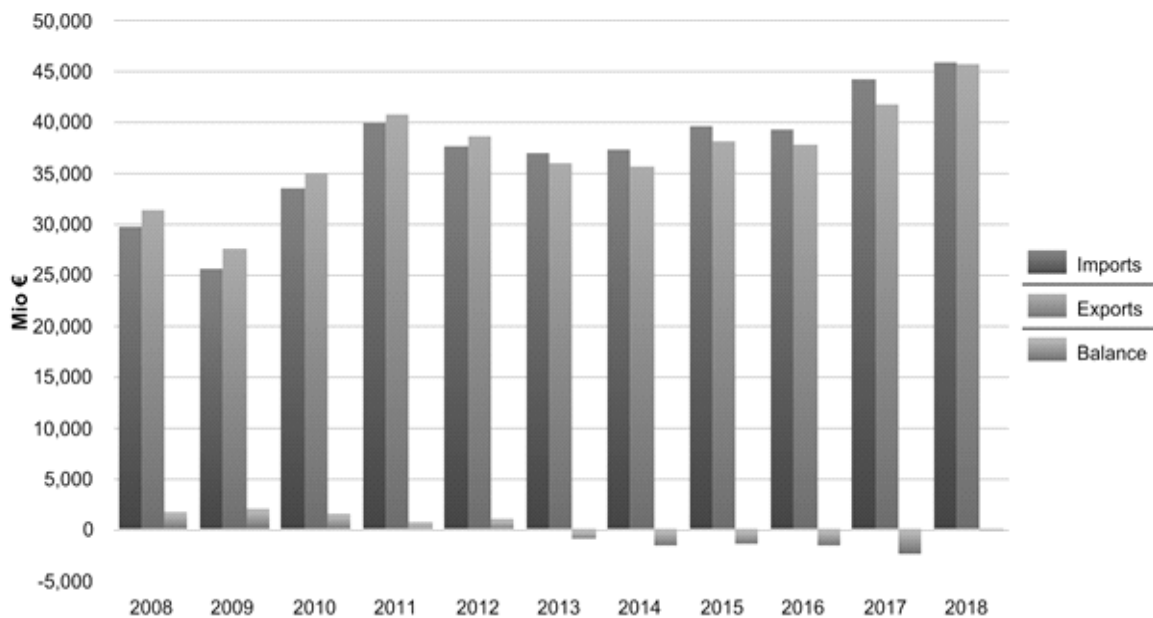
As of 2018, balanced trade (goods and services) between India and the EU has grown to an estimated •115 billion and the EU is India’s largest trading partner amounting to 12.9% of total Indian trade, far ahead of trade with China and the USA. For the EU, India is its 9th largest trading partner. In the services sector, India is now the 4th largest service exporter to the EU and the 6th largest destination for EU services exports. Six thousand EU companies are present in India and have created 1.7 million direct employment opportunities with an additional 5 million indirect jobs in various sectors. Indian companies on the other hand have invested over •50 billion in Europe over the last 15 years.¹⁰ With the onset of Brexit, this number is likely to grow as a successful Brexit would mean that London would no longer be the gateway to Europe for Indian companies.¹¹ For investment inflows, the European Investment Bank has invested around •2.5 billion in infrastructure, renewable energy and climate projects. At 18 percent, the EU is the largest foreign investor in India. With regards to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), EU 28 FDI inflows account for nearly one fourth of total Indian FDI, amounting to nearly •75 billion. Indian FDI into the EU is steadily growing and currently caps out at •5 billion.¹²

The following tables represent the EU’s trade in goods with India from 2008 to 2018 and the EU’s trade in services with India from 2014 to 2018:

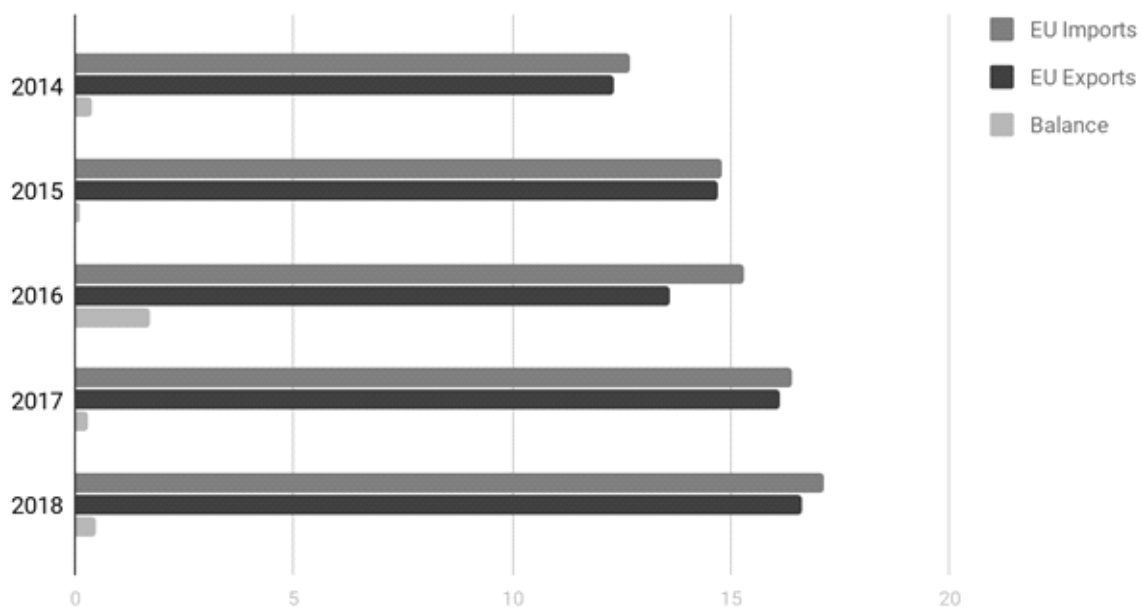
European Union, Trade with India

Total goods: EU Trade flows and balance, annual data 2008 - 2018

Source Eurostat Comext - Statistical regime 4



EU-India: Trade in Services 2014 - 18 (€ Billions)



EU-India Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)

Probably the biggest criticism for the EU-India strategic partnership has been its inability to successfully negotiate the partnership's single biggest initiative, the long pending EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Launched in 2007, the EU-India FTA is a comprehensive trade (goods, merchandise, agro commodities, pharmaceuticals and services) and investment agreement that encompasses key interests for both parties. As the above section illustrates, economic gains from such a partnership would significantly alter the already growing fortunes of both actors and give their economies a driving push in the Eurasian region. After 16 rounds of negotiations, talks stalled in 2013 and did not resume until the second half of 2018. During this time, annual EU-India summits too did not take place as per schedule as there was little consensus on the way forward regarding the FTA with no compromise in sight either.¹ The EU-India FTA is today the biggest impediment to a robust economic and trade relationship between the EU and India, especially because the EU is today India's largest trading partner.² Moreover, the absence of a well structured policy on bilateral trade has caused asymmetry in the market which has resulted in the EU initiating cases against India in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) time and again over one issue or the other, particularly with regards to import duties and intellectual property rights.³

Without going into the specifics of the FTA and reasons why there is a gap in the way both parties approach the FTA, there is no doubt that a comprehensive, exhaustive and balanced FTA

between India and the EU would result in a more meaningful agenda and a stronger partnership in all areas of cooperation. The EU and Indian leadership at the 14th EU-India Summit in New Delhi in October 2017 decided that negotiations on the FTA must continue in the right circumstances that addresses all trade and investment irritants, which would help maximise business and economic opportunities.⁴ Moreover, any hindrance in negotiating the FTA must not come in the way of building a deeper partnership in all other areas of mutual interest.

Connectivity

*"History is increasingly leading us to a world where the border between Europe and Asia would disappear."*⁵ - Bruno Mações

Prior to the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting held in Brussels in October 2018, the European External Action Service (EEAS) in September 2018 presented a joint communiqué to the European Parliament, Council and the European Investment Bank (EIB) on the first building blocks for an EU strategy on connecting Europe and Asia. Connectivity in this context, applies primarily to physical connectivity but also includes the paradigm of digital, energy and human networks. The EU argues that Asia and Europe together account for 60 percent of the world's population, 55 percent of global trade, amounting to •1.5 trillion annually; 65 percent of global GDP and 75 percent of global tourism.⁶ This new global EU strategy takes centrestage at a time when China is spending trillions of dollars on its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that invariably favours Chinese businesses and interests. EU member

states have at best been divided over joining this reimagined 21st century silk route.⁷ Apart from the already vibrant human network that exists between India and the EU, which includes about 55 thousand Indian students that go to the EU for higher education annually⁸, Europe now sees India as an important link in physically connecting the two continents, particularly so in connecting Central Asia to Southeast Asia, wherein any other alternate route would be commercially untenable. Ideally situated at the centre of key European and Asian trade routes, India occupies an important place in this complex geo-strategic space. As a stabilising regional power, India's diplomatic and security outreach towards its neighbours have important consequences for the EU.⁹ The 7200 km North South Transport Corridor, meant to transport freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Central Asia, Russia and Europe is an extremely important project in this regard. The EU hopes that this project would ultimately lead to the creation of a larger cross border network that would be based on a system of fair and transparent rules which would help European companies expand their presence in Asia Pacific and help in planning for long term, sustainable and high return investments for European businesses.¹⁰

Defence Cooperation

Convergence on defence and security related issues is another important paradigm of the EU-India relationship. Although there is plenty of evidence to suggest that India and the EU are doing enough in this regard with various dialogues and joint working groups, this convergence or the lack

of, comes across in the public domain in three prominent areas: Afghanistan, Counter Terrorism Coordination and Maritime Security.

In Afghanistan, many EU member states, as part of their NATO commitments, have been militarily engaged for upwards of 10 years. India, being a geographical stakeholder and an important contributor to Afghanistan's post war reconstruction has not seen much acknowledgement from the EU as being a dominant global player that has an important stake in the region's stability and prosperity. This is all the more heightened because of its troubled relationship with Pakistan. Moreover, the EU has not made any substantive effort to consult with or include India in the process of political reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban.¹¹ The EU and India must join forces in Afghanistan for a more harmonious military partnership.

On the front of counter terrorism and intelligence sharing, there has again been too much common rhetoric and little cooperation between the two sides. This is not without taking into account the Enrica Lexie case in which two Italian marines were taken into custody by Indian authorities for accidentally killing two fishermen off the coast of South India in 2012. That said, from Indian perspective, the EU is viewed as a supranational organisation that is struggling to form a common front on military and defence activities.¹² In such a setup, it would be impractical for India to develop a deeper defence cooperation mechanism with the EU. However, coordination between Europol and the Indian Police needs to be improved to develop better strategies to tackle global terror financing and coordinated anti terror

strategies. Maritime security on the other hand is an area where the EU and India have managed to form a common consensus. Post the 14th EU-India Summit, both militaries held a maiden dialogue to expand their network for a strong maritime security partnership in the Indian Ocean Region. Future activities, training and joint exercises have been planned under the aegis of the Indian Navy and the EU's EU NAVFOR.¹³

Future Prospects

Any government to government partnership, more so, any strategic partnership between two major global powers should engage all the stakeholders. It must be based on a quadruple helix that includes the government, academia, industry and last but not the least, civil society. If India and the EU join forces on issues such as sustainability, environment, climate change, energy, science & technology, mobility,

development, skill development, education and cultural exchanges, both sides will get recognition as important and responsible global power blocs. The key to achieving this, apart from building on existing trade relations and celebrating common democratic values, is to deepen the political dimension of this partnership. Summits at the ministerial and heads of state level must be held at regular intervals with no breaks for any reason whatsoever. Further, government backed meetings of academics, think tanks, and business houses must be encouraged and fostered.

The EU-India strategic partnership is a significant partnership, if not yet a fully 'strategic partnership'. Furthermore, there is widespread faith that there is potential in the said partnership to grow into a robust arrangement through new ideas and multifaceted engagements to achieve strategic convergence that fulfils its utmost potential.

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Re-imagining India's Afghanistan-Pakistan Policy

Zulfiqar Shah*

India's Afghanistan and Pakistan policy is intertwined as a hyphenated Afghanistan-Pakistan (Af-Pak) policy. Its Pakistan policy is centred around the Kashmir issue and is focused on preventing and countering export of violence in the region by Pakistan. India's Afghanistan policy is also centred around security concerns, wherein it is perceived that terrorist violence in Afghanistan can have a spill over impact on India, especially in J&K. It can thus be seen that India's policy towards both Pakistan and Afghanistan is designed to contain and neutralise violence that is being exported from its Western neighbours. Fundamentally, it is a human security policy expressed within the ambit of India's national security policy doctrine.

India's military gets into the frame when Pakistan supported terrorists attack military personnel and installations within India.¹ Pakistan calls such personnel operating from its soil as non-state actors, but that is mere rhetoric as Pakistan actively aids and abets groups such as the Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahidin and others to attack targets in India, in effect waging a proxy war on the country.

Indian newspapers frequently write on the Indian economy being attacked through fake Indian currency notes (FICN), which originates in Pakistan and is pumped into India via Nepal and Bangladesh. They also regularly cover the sporadic violation of the ceasefire agreement between the two countries by Pakistan, wherein

villages near the LoC (Line of Control) as well as the Indian troops deployed on the LoC are subjected to machine-gun and mortar fire from Pakistani positions. Unfortunately, no Indian newspaper ever covers the blatant abuse of human rights by the Pakistani establishment in Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJ&K). This includes both the region of Gilgit-Baltistan as well as the region of Mirpur-Muzaffarabad, called Azad Kashmir by Pakistan. This silence by the Indian media on what is happening in POJ&K is hard to explain. India still treats Pakistan with kid gloves, despite the fact that terrorist groups that carried out major attacks in India such as the attack on India's Parliament, the attack on the Akshardham Temple and the Mumbai attacks to mention but a few, were all supported by the Pakistan military. Evidently, Pakistan is waging a proxy war against India, in line with its doctrine of 'bleeding India with a thousand cuts'.² Pakistan is also in illegal occupation of Indian territory (POJ&K). Pakistan continues to suppress these people, and the human rights abuses inflicted on this hapless population knows no bounds. They continue to be denied their fundamental rights and have no recourse against the atrocities being inflicted on them by the state. There is thus a need for India to review its policy with respect to the Af-Pak region and view it in a more realistic framework, to enable the charting out of a fresh course which can bring peace to the region and which can have a beneficial impact on stability in South Asia and indeed on the world.

**Mr. Zulfiqar Shah is a Sindh and Balochistan civil and political rights activist.*

Until March 2019, Pakistan authorities were loathe to admit that they created ‘militants’. However, for the first time, such an admission came from no less a person than the Pakistani premier, Mr Imran Khan. Khan’s electoral rhetoric was venomously anti-India and it was due to his intransigence that both the Sindh and Punjab Assemblies of Pakistan passed resolutions regarding Kashmir against India. The admission from Khan was made in April 2019, while briefing a group of foreign journalists, wherein he stated that Pakistan created these ‘militants’ during the Cold War to fight the Soviet Forces in Afghanistan and that Pakistan is now ready to dismantle these assets. Khan also went on to state that both the Pakistan Army as well as its intelligence arm, the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) are also of the same resolve.³

However, such statements make little sense and have even lesser sanctity. If, at any time in the future, the Pakistan military establishment wishes to withdraw the statement made by the Pakistani Prime Minister, then all that is required is that the Pakistani Assembly will pass a unanimous resolution disassociating itself from the statement made by Khan. There is thus no reason for India to feel elated at the statement given by Prime Minister Khan. By itself, it carries no weight and is worthless.

For some reason, many in India get carried away by such Pakistani theatrics. It must be remembered that a chance for peace was derailed by General Pervez Musharraf, when Pakistan attacked India on the Kargil heights. The Pakistani premiers attempt to remove Musharraf did not only not succeed, but resulted in a coup and the ouster

of the elected Prime Minister himself! After the coup, Musharraf visited India and was accorded a red carpet welcome! It is only to be hoped that in future course of time, the likes of Hafiz Saeed, the head of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, are not accorded such VIP treatment! India thus needs to review its South Asia policy. As of now, the policy appears to be tactical, and has little strategic impact.

What exactly has changed since 2013 in Afghanistan and Pakistan? The period saw Nawaz Sharif being deposed from the office of the Prime Minister. It also saw the SAARC Summit becoming conditional to the drawdown of terrorism emanating from Pakistan. We have seen the flare up of tensions along the Durand Line with Afghan and Pakistani troops clashing across the Line. We also see the complete breakdown of the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan, with violations taking place almost on a daily basis. The period has also seen the emergence of ISIS in Afghanistan, which has been named the ‘Khorasan’ module, but which in effect is ISIS ‘Lahore’ module. There also appear to be Pakistani links to the 9/11 attacks in the US as also to the St. Petersburg metro blasts. In all, the security situation remains grim.

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations also exhibit similar indicators of unending conflict as existing in the India-Pakistan relationship, with all initiatives for peace coming to nought. It is unfortunate, that in the minds of the Pakistani establishment, Afghanistan is little more than a colony of Pakistan. The Pakistan government’s persistent meddling in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, with Prime Minister Khan seeking a change in government also adds to tension in

the region. Another factor to be considered in this equation is the presence of three terrorist groups in Afghanistan: the Afghan Taliban, al-Qaida and the Islamic State. If Afghanistan has a truce with the Afghan Taliban, the latter is likely to be replaced by the ISIS. This game, if it can be called such, is unlikely to end, as it has too many players and too many conflicting interests.

The world apparently, has also not focused sufficiently on understanding, why a Sindhi student from Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), in Jamshoro district, Sindh province, actually joined up with the Islamic State in Lahore. The student, Naureen Laghari, was arrested in Lahore, during a security operation. She was a brilliant student and never exhibited any extremist leanings, yet she chose to join the Islamic State and was planning, along with three other colleagues, to target Churches and Christian gatherings during the Easter festivities. It appears she was radicalised through the social media.⁴ It is apparent that the Islamic State has established roots in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as in other countries in South Asia. In April 2017, the US used a large yield bomb, the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB), commonly known as “Mother of All Bombs” to destroy a network of tunnels and caves in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan, in which a large number of terrorists who were from the Islamic State were killed.⁵ According to Afghanistan Times, the cave complex also had some fighters who had earlier served in the Pakistan military as well as from groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

It is apparent that the Islamic State as well as

other terrorist groups have a foothold in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan. Both the countries also have indigenous movements which are fighting the state. Ultimately, what needs to be secured is human security for the entire South Asian region, but this can only come about if terrorism is eliminated from Pakistan and Afghanistan, which are the tectonic plates from which terrorism emanates. What therefore needs to be done to bring out this outcome?

The following requires consideration:

- A return of all the fighters to their respective countries. This outcome is easier said than done, as fighters from Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Central Asia, Russia, China, Thailand, Africa, Europe and North America are dispersed in various trouble spots across the world. On return, these fighters would need to be put through a process of de-radicalisation.
- For the Muslim masses, the education system must now inculcate programmes, which can insulate the youth from embracing a radical culture.
- There is a danger of the Pakistani nukes falling into the hands of radical groups. It may be worth considering if such assets could be shifted to Sindh, the only province so far in Pakistan that has not been completely radicalised. The government of Sindh too, needs to see that Punjabi influence, which has dominated life in the whole of Pakistan since 1947, is curtailed and there is greater space for regional aspirations. The Sindhi and Baloch

Diaspora could also play a greater role in achieving such an outcome.

- The international community, with India taking the lead, could look into the possibility of holding a referendum in Pakistan, in Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the local people could vote to remain with the state of Pakistan. If the people desire to do so, then a state-building and state-making process along with the nation-making process in Pakistan should be kicked off. Based on the Lahore Resolution of 1940, Pakistan must transform itself into a confederation, or perhaps a union of Indus Republics.

For sustainable peace in the region, we could also look into the possibility of having an International Security Force intervention in Pakistan to eradicate terrorist elements, which have inflicted a reign of terror and insecurity, not only in Pakistan, but across the world.

For peace in south Asia, the initiative must be from within South Asia and not from outside the region. Prime Minister Modi has to some extent broken the mould when he spoke about the Rohingya issue and of the rights of the people of Balochistan. This change in the Indian approach must be pushed through with vigour by the Indian foreign policy.

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NLIU-India Foundation Constitutional Law Symposium

Iravati Singh



The NLIU-India Foundation Constitutional Law Symposium was held on 16th and 17th March, 2019 at National Law Institute University (NLIU), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. This was the first such symposium to be conducted in Central India. It commenced with paper presentations from students from all over India. Out of over 80 articles received from students and scholars around the country, on contemporary issues in constitutional law, the organizers shortlisted eight outstanding papers to be presented at the Symposium via a thorough review process.

The inaugural session was graced by the chief guest, Prof N.L. Mitra, former Director, National Law School of India, Bangalore and Founder Vice

Chancellor, National Law University, Jodhpur; Major General Dhruv C Katoch, Director, India Foundation; Prof. V Vijayakumar, Vice Chancellor, NLIU; and Prof. Ghayur Alam, Dean, Academics, NLIU. After the traditional lighting of the lamp ceremony, Major General Katoch in his address said that such events are usually reserved for Delhi, but NLIU and India Foundation have partnered to break this trend. Prof. Mitra, in his address, expressed his pleasure at being a part of this novel event, and detailed his journey from the world of economics to the realm of law. Prof. Vijayakumar shared his views about the Indian constitution being “one of the best written constitutions in the world, one which citizens should read regularly”. Prof. Alam outlined his

take on the essence of the Constitution, which is to question everything and everyone, particularly the ones in power.

The first presentation of the day, titled “Does Your God Satisfy the Constitutional Test?” by Rajat Sinha and Stuti Bhargava from NLU Jodhpur dealt with the controversial Sabarimala verdict. The speakers took the stand that the core belief of the devotees of Sabarimala is not the alleged impurity of menstruating women, but a unique brand of celibacy practiced by Lord Ayyappa. The speakers advocated that preference be given to religious practices in case of conflict between them and government regulations, with exceptions made when the practices have crossed the intolerable degree threshold.

The second presentation of the day, “Relooking at the Admissibility of Illegally Obtained Evidence” by Paras Marya from NLU

Jodhpur outlined the need for revamping of our evidentiary laws with respect to admissibility of evidence. The speaker contended that there should be a balance between human dignity and the weight of the evidence.

The next presentation, “How Islam and Article 25 Jibe Against FGM” by Deeksha Sharma and Kratika Indurkha from RMLNLU Lucknow dealt with the controversial topic of female genital mutilation, practised by specific communities. The speakers elaborated how the practice cannot be protected under Article 25 as it does not pass the essential religious practice test, and is hence not sanctioned by Islam.

The presentation titled “Essential Religious Practices with respect to Sabarimala” by Kanika Sharma from MNLU Nagpur discussed the various definitions and understandings of religion in legal parlance. The speaker further discussed the



doctrine of essential religious practice evolved by the courts and examines how it is violative of the right to freedom of religion with special emphasis on the Sabrimala judgement.

The fifth presentation, “Gulping the Spike: Rationalizing AFSPA” by Deepanshu Poddar and Vrinda Aggarwal from Jindal Global Law School, Sonapat, described the various sections of the AFSPA and their operations. It raised the question of whether the Courts have the institutional competence to delve into matters of national security and whether there is a constitutional basis for courts to exercise review jurisdiction over military actions.

The last presentation of the day talked about the Jarnail Singh case on reservation in promotions. The speaker Aparna Singh from NLU Jodhpur discussed the ambiguities brought about by the judgement and the issues regarding the ascertainment and effective choice candidates from SC/ST classes for reservation in promotion.

The second day of the Symposium commenced with the final paper presentation titled “Sedition: The Victorian Era Tyrant” by Vidhi Koolwal from School of Legal Studies, Mody University, which examined the use of the sedition law to stifle criticism against the government and the branding of people as anti-national.

The Symposium featured a special panel on “The Aberrations in Principles of Separation of Power” chaired by Justice A.P Misra, former Judge, Supreme Court of India, and Chairman, Legal Education Committee; with Prof N.L. Mitra, former Director, National Law School of India, Bangalore and Founder Vice Chancellor, National

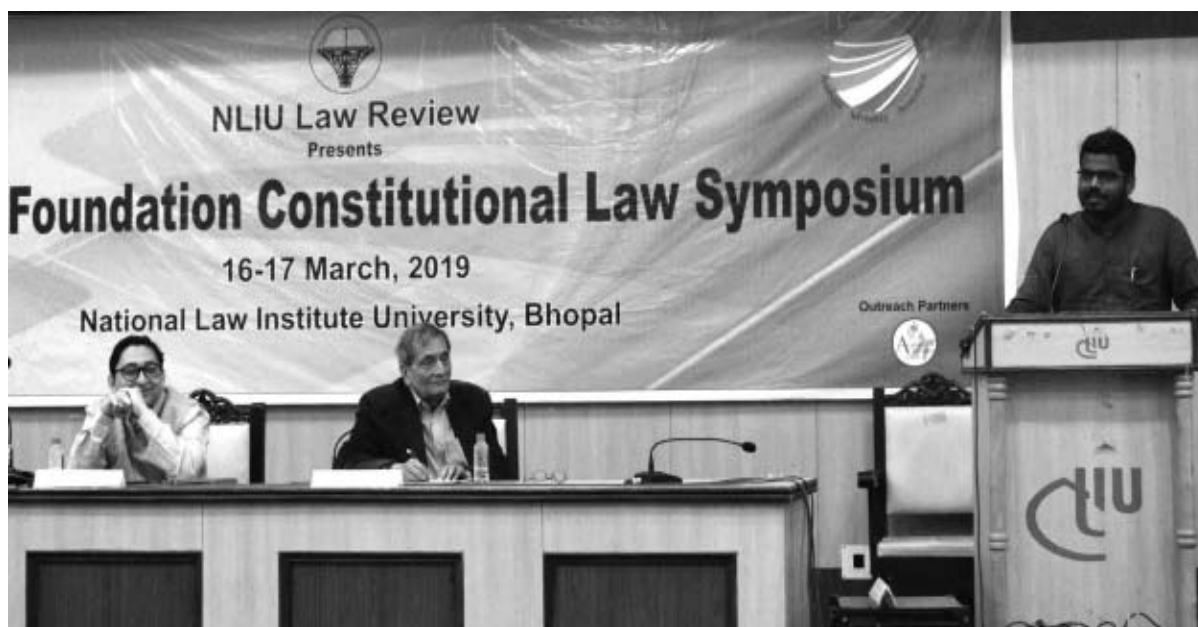
Law University, Jodhpur; Prof (Dr.) B.N. Pandey, Dean, Adamas University; Dr. V. Vijayakumar, Vice Chancellor, NLIU and Dr. Manoj Sinha, Director, ILI Delhi as panellists.

Justice Misra enunciated his views on the Indian constitution being a philosophy more than a document. He lamented the shift of society’s focus from obligations to rights, while urging students to value morality over money. The speakers touched upon landmark judgments, historical events, and relevant doctrines of law while discussing the prevailing theme of separation of powers.

The plenary panel on “Faith and Indian Constitution” began with an address by Shri Vikramjit Banerjee, Additional Solicitor General, Supreme Court, on the development of the relationship between law and faith. Law has always come from the people and always must be interpreted within people, thus making faith, society and law largely inseparable. This, unfortunately, has led to the State, through the judiciary, imposing upon Indian people its own definition of morality – an oppression in itself.

The second panellist, Prof. V. K. Dixit, Professor of Jurisprudence and Constitution, NLIU said, “I have little faith in faith, but tremendous faith in the Indian Constitution”. He staunchly supported the Sabarimala judgment, stating that women have been victimized by all religions for eons, dominated by the patriarchy, which was made more visible in the Triple Talaq and Sabrimala judgments where the Supreme Court was put on the defensive.

A spirited reply was given by advocate J Sai



Deepak, often termed the ‘Lawyer for Lord Ayyappa’, who asserted that while equality is important, it commits an intellectual fraud by closing eyes on every distinction possible. Equality is a mandate that must be achieved in context. Unrestrained judicial activism ignores the nuances of beliefs of tantric temples, and leaps to ill-informed conclusions based on half-baked information. He urged people to read more extensively and wisely in order to form their own opinion, and not succumb to what is fed to them on prime-time debates. In his interaction with the students, he stressed upon the need for India to evolve its own brand of feminism, not relying on the import of its western notion.

The last panel discussion for the day was on “Freedom of Speech and Expression in the Age of Social Media” and it featured addresses by Dr. P. Puneeth, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, JNU Delhi; Ms. Anuradha Shankar,

ADGP, Madhya Pradesh Police and Prof. (Dr.) Ghayur Alam, Professor, NLIU. Dr. Puneeth outlined the important issues relating to regulation of speech and expression in the age of social media, pointing out that the actual issue at hand is not freedom of speech but rather protection





given after the speech has been delivered.

Ms. Anuradha Shankar brought out the relevancy of the issue by referring to the latest terrorist attack in New Zealand, which stretched freedom of speech to deranged limits. He killed innocents at a place of worship while streaming it live on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. This leads to a dystopian 1984-like situation, but is not because of the presence of a draconian government. Prof. Alam offered his

concluding remarks, illustrating the responsibility of the private actors in this scenario, who essentially decide what we read and access.

The Symposium concluded with the declaration of results of the paper presentation. The papers presented by (i) Deeksha Sharma & Kratika Indurkha, from RMLNLU, Lucknow, (ii) Aparna Singh, from NLU, Jodhpur; and (iii) Rajat Sinha & Stuti Bhargava, from NLU, Jodhpur got the awards.



2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit

Shristi Pukhrem



The 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit was held at Guwahati, Assam from 3 to 7 February, 2019. This was the 2nd leg of the Youth Summit organised by India Foundation in collaboration with ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia and supported by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Government of Assam. It witnessed the participation of 100 Youth Delegates from the 10 ASEAN Countries and 80 Indian Delegates. On the first day, the introductory session was addressed by Maj Gen Dhruv C. Katoch, Director, India Foundation. The inaugural session was chaired by Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister, Assam. Welcome remarks were made by Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh, Secretary (East), Government of India and Mr. K.J. Alphons, Minister of State for Tourism, Government of India was the Chief Guest. Mr. Kung Phuok, Deputy Secretary General, ASEAN Socio-

Cultural Community, ASEAN graced the inaugural session as the Guest of Honour. A keynote address was delivered by Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh, Secretary (East).

The first technical session of the Summit was on the theme “Physical Connectivity”. Mr. Chandra Mohan Patowary, Minister of Transport, Industry and Commerce, Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Development, Govt of Assam chaired the session. Mr. N Biren Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur said that the year 2017 was a landmark year while ASEAN celebrated 50 years of existence; India celebrated 25 years of meaningful partnership with ASEAN. He mentioned that the Act East policy under leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was reflective of India’s commitment to deepening its ties with the region. ASEAN-India relationship banks on strong cultural and civilizational ties.



There exists a strong cultural affinity between the North East region of India and the ASEAN region. The NE region of India is also endowed with rich natural and cultural diversity. It is now seen as new engine of growth for India. He spoke about his state of Manipur which is the land gateway of India to South East Asia. To unlock the latent potential and uncap opportunities in the state, it is important to ensure that physical and social infra services are robust. Physical connectivity through air, land and sea is vital to facilitate enduring partnership and collaborations.

He mentioned of elevated highways, ring roads being planned in Imphal, the capital of Manipur and how through Asian Highways, Manipur is becoming a gateway to ASEAN countries. He talked about recently inaugurated integrated check post cum immigration point at Moreh in Manipur with idea to boost border management, trade infrastructure and people to people connectivity between India and Myanmar.

Bus service trial run was flagged off in December 2015 between Manipur in India and Mandalay in Myanmar. While talking about air connectivity he said that there is increased frequency of flights linking India's NE region to the rest of the country. He also spoke about art and culture related opportunities and how dance, film and theatre are connecting platforms. Saying that the law and order conditions have improved tremendously, he welcomed all the investors to come and invest in Manipur. He also talked about agricultural sector with lots of potential. He mentioned how his state is a sport power house of the country, especially in developing grassroots football ecosystem. He said that Government of Manipur believes that future lies in engaging actively to collectively create synergized and mutually supportive relationship, transforming the lives of the people in the region and reshaping the geo political and economic landscape in the ASEAN sanctuary.

Mr. Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, Research and



Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi said that for physical connectivity we also need to think in the direction of globalization and de-globalization. He spoke about three important factors which need to be understood - scale, technology and network. By scale he meant matching the scale of economies e.g. India and ASEAN, while ensuring local production and skills are preserved and addressed adequately. His second point was to be open to use technology intelligently like Singapore did in 1998 and established itself as global leader in bio-pharmaceutical sector. But technology should be people centric and common people should benefit. His third point was that without network, the technology is of no use. There should be good network between firms, companies, institutions, think tanks or even individual researchers so that growth corridor or growth poles can be created. He further added that physical connectivity empowers youth by integrating internal economy. It creates social mobility, better understanding of culture, which automatically sets stage for small and medium enterprises. While quoting the Prime Minister Modi's idea to bring Central Asia to South Asia and South Asia to South East Asia toward preparedness of grand Asian century, he said that in order to comfortably move from Kabul to Ho Chi Minh, both digital and physical infrastructure are important.

Mr. Pham Sanh Chau, Ambassador of Vietnam to India appreciated NE India's natural beauty as well as its distinctive cultural, historical and spiritual linkages with ASEAN countries. He also appreciated that India is the fourth country in addition to Japan, China and Australia to organise



this kind of youth summits. About physical connectivity he said that presently Vietnam does not have any direct physical link by road or by air with India, except the sea link because physical connectivity requires huge investments, policies, internal stability, harmonization and coordination of internal policy of the countries. He acknowledged the importance of physical connectivity requirement and efforts being taken by India and other countries but due to slow progress of projects in absence of funds, he advised that multilateral financial institutes like ADB, World Bank should pitch in for funding. He mentioned his efforts to have direct air connectivity between India and Vietnam but due to less passenger demand and lack of suitable time slot, the airlines are hesitant in undertaking operations. He also talked about India's intention to invest \$ 5 billion to boost air connectivity between India and ASEAN countries and gave the

suggestion that all 16 existing ASEAN airlines and Indian operators should sit together and discuss options for mutual growth. He also urged the youth of all the countries to come up with ideas for better connectivity in respect of their countries and let the panel know.

In his concluding remarks he suggested to the heads of the states to select the best feature of their respective state like any art form, place of interest or cultural tradition and put it forward through union government for UNESCO branding for better advertising. This will help in gaining universal acceptance and will improve road, rail, air and sea connectivity. He said that Vietnam treasures the relationship with India and that his team is here to contribute to strong ties, physically, humanly, politically and also spiritually between India and ASEAN and especially between India and Vietnam. After the first technical session on “Physical Connectivity”, a motivational lecture was delivered by Mr. Pullela Gopichand, Chief

National Coach, Indian Badminton Team.

The second day of the Summit began with Country Presentations of five ASEAN Countries – Brunei Darussalem, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Malaysia. The second technical session on the theme “Economic Connectivity” followed the five country presentations. This session was chaired by Mr. Ranjit Barthakur, Founder & Chairman, Globally Managed Services (GMS) and the panelist of this session were H.E. Chutintorn Gongsakdi, Ambassador of Thailand to India and Mr. Yash Gandhi, Senior Investment Specialist, Invest India. Three parallel group discussions on three themes – Governance & Polity, Cultural & Historical Linkages and Entrepreneurship & Skill Development were held after the second technical session and also on the following day.

The parallel discussion on Governance and Polity was addressed by Ms. Archana Chitnis, Former Minister of Women and Child Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh.



She said that the current generation of policy makers are more refined, evolved, and with a level of maturity in thinking. Speaking from her experiences as a former Minister of Women and Child Development and the work done by her ministry in improving the educational, health and sanitary conditions of women in the state of Madhya Pradesh, she listed out case studies of role of the geography of a state in formulating policies and providing good governance. She also spoke about some of the most popular schemes of the Government of India which have brought about a remarkable change in people's lives in the last 5 years. The Jan Dhan Yojana, started by the Government of India in 2014, has been credited with being the largest financial inclusion programme ever carried out in the country with 1.5 crore bank accounts opening on the inauguration day itself.

The second parallel discussion was addressed by Mr. Ram Madhav, National General Secretary, Bharatiya Janata Party and Member, Board of Governors, India Foundation along with Ms. Chitnis. In his interaction with the delegates, Mr. Madhav spoke of the aim of governance and polity being that of fulfilling the aspirations of the common man. He then spoke of the four objectives that should be a part of the larger agenda of governance of any country: National Unity; National Happiness; National Security (Internal and External) and to promote National Honour and Dignity. He then opened the floor for the delegates to look back and discuss if their respective governments have been able to fulfil the four objectives listed above. He asked each of the delegates to list one policy implemented by



their governments which has left a mark on their society. Delivering the concluding remarks of the session, Ms. Chitnis, spoke of the increased participation of women as one of the take-aways of the policies of the NDA government at the Centre. She also highlighted the role played by education in the level of sensitivity displayed by our policy makers and public representatives towards the concerns of the masses.

In the session on Cultural and Historical Linkages, Ms. Vandana Mishra, Associate Professor of Political Science, Delhi University introduced the panellists. H.E Moe Kyaw Aung, Myanmar Ambassador to India spoke about Myanmar's cultural heritage giving the example of the temple of Bagan. He said that modernisation does not mean letting go of our culture and stressed on the physical, tangible and intangible culture of Myanmar. He said that for Buddhists, it is ingrained in their culture to pay respects to the Buddha and such examples of culture should not

be forgotten. Myanmar's culture includes stone making, carving and bronze casting apart from fashion, textile, jewellery making and traditional arts of dances and music. He said the best way to cultivate relationships is by enhancing cultural ties especially with neighbouring countries such as India. In Myanmar, performances by Indian cultural troops have been organised since 1997. Similarly, Myanmar groups have been visiting India, especially the northeast region to advocate closer cultural and trade links between the two countries.

Prof. Sunaina Singh, Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University spoke about the historical linkages between India and ASEAN and how these linkages can be preserved and lend to economic ecosystems for today and the future. She defined culture as a way of life, the reflection of spirituality, languages, architecture, day to day conduct, value system, ethics and morality. She said that although culture is seen as a mirror but

should instead be looked as a hammer that shapes and sculpts the minds. Looking at historical connects, she said we find many common mythical stories that are very India but at the same time has merged with local cultures. She said there is a need to preserve these cultures, and countries like India and Southeast Asia have strong, historical cultures that can be preserved.

H.E Pham Sanh Chau, Vietnam Ambassador to India spoke about elements that links India and ASEAN such as religion, including Hinduism and Buddhism. In Bali he saw an authentic Hindu temple which introduced him to Hinduism and it was Indonesia that brought him to India. The first country that President Kovind visited after assuming office was Vietnam where he visited the former Cham kingdom region that has got many Hindu elements. Currently, the Indian government is helping renovate the Hindu temple in Vietnam. He said that Buddhism is the greatest gift that Indian civilisation can offer to the world.



Three Group Discussions were held on the topic of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development. The first such session had H.E. Lim Thuan Kuan, Hon'ble High Commissioner of Singapore to India and Mr. Shaurya Doval, Managing Director, Zeus Caps & Member of Board of Governors, India Foundation as speakers. This session was moderated by Ms. Soumya Agarwal, Board Member and Executive Director, Gateway Education. The second session's speakers included H.E. Dato' Hidayat Abdul Hamid, Hon'ble High Commissioner of Malaysia to India and Mr. Shaurya Doval. This session was moderated by Mr. Priyang Pandey, Political Advisor to the Chief Minister of Nagaland. The final session, moderated by Ms. Sonu Trivedi, Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, had H.E. Chutintorn Gongsakdi, Hon'ble Ambassador of Thailand to India and Mr. Shaurya Doval as speakers.

The relationship between entrepreneurship and skill development, to a great extent today is an exclusive one. However, going into the future this is going to be a more synonymous and interlinked relationship. It is a misnomer to believe that skill development is simply a training exercise for jobs and that entrepreneurship is an art. Entrepreneurship is today considered to be a skill bordering on being a science in itself and similarly one can now also be skilled or taught the science of entrepreneurship, much like one can be taught the science of mathematics or physics. The conventional thinking has been that one can only be skilled to be a mechanic, carpenter or teacher etc but, skilling is now also a skill in itself and also on its way to becoming a booming business for new entrepreneurs. This has been made



possible with the onset of the digital age. In the internet ecosystem of today, young people are more aware, catch onto new things quicker, are capable of thinking for solutions and are hence disrupting the traditional approach to entrepreneurship and have made it a sort of DIY (Do It Yourself) exercise. It would be a fair assertion to compare the internet of today to the invention of the printing press in the 15th century and the role it played in revolutionising the way people were educated and spread information on a mass level, which was previously only limited to an oral, limited reach system of learning. It is hoped that with time and with unhindered, uninterrupted and affordable access to the internet, populations in the future will be able to skill themselves and have an entrepreneurial 'mindset'.

With regards to skill development, an important change in human life has facilitated the

need for the working population to learn how to skill and more importantly reskill themselves. With major advances in medical sciences, compared to previous generations, longevity of human life is increasing all over the world. Thus, the previously established life order of first educating and skilling yourself before taking up a job and then eventually retiring from the same job is passe. Today, a great proportion of millennials take up more than two careers in their lifetime. Moreover, there is greater flexibility in trying out a few job profiles before finally settling in one. In this situation, the importance of learning and the ability to skill and reskill oneself on the go is paramount. We can therefore say that skill development today is a continuous process owing to a new globalised world order where

opportunities are aplenty and mostly free from discrimination.

Two major themes of critique with regards to entrepreneurship and skill development in today's '4th Industrial Revolution' relate to the scarcity of credit for social entrepreneurship and the impact of artificial intelligence and machine learning on skill development programmes. Speaking about competitive versus conscious entrepreneurship, it is generally observed that profit making entrepreneurial ventures get more capital than social entrepreneurial ventures and that non availability of credit is the prime reason for failed socially mindful start-ups. However, on closer inspection it is found that scarcity of capital is not an issue but the mindset of 'whether credit will be available?' is an issue. There is no doubt that





the government needs to initiate reforms for fair redistribution of capital but there is also no doubt in the fact that access to capital is not so much of a challenge as much as access to bankable and sustainable capital is a challenge. In this situation, CSR initiatives must be encouraged and zero-sum game setups be discouraged and dismantled. On the issue of impact of artificial intelligence and machine learning on skills needed in the future to still have a relevant job, there is no doubt that certain jobs are becoming redundant with the passage of time such as need for drivers with the coming in of technology that enables innovation of driverless cars or construction related jobs with the coming in of 3D printing in house design and construction. However, it must be noted that though this change may impact the nature of jobs available but it will not impact the number of jobs available (at least not in the immediate future) so

long as there are corresponding changes in the system of imparting skills, for these new innovations and even artificial intelligence is only as good as humans make them.

The chair for the panel discussion on Youth and Socio-Cultural Connectivity was Mr. Shaurya Doval, Managing Director, Zeus Caps and Member, Board of Governors, India Foundation. The panellists were Mr. Bhaichung Bhutia, Footballer & Former Captain of Indian National Team welcomed all ASEAN delegates to the North East of India and Ms. Fientje Maritje Suebu, Deputy Chief of the Mission, Indonesia.

Ms. Fientje spoke of the historic links between the people of the region from the time of Rama and Sita, the Pandavas and Kauravas to the traders, sailors and learned men from the region who travelled and mixed freely. She said we have always been preachers of pluralism and tolerance.

Both India and ASEAN region know what it is to be ethnically, religiously, politically, rich and diverse. Our diversity and history will give us the strength to face modern challenges. According to UNFP, India has the world's largest youth population and will continue to do so in the next few decades. And Indonesia follows closely in this regard. Both countries have to explore possibilities on how to maximize on this demographic dividend. Representing India as a footballer, Bhaichung Bhutia visited almost all ASEAN countries and discovered a great deal of similarity between India and the ASEAN region in terms of social and cultural aspects of our lives and even food habits. He spoke of North East being the football capital of India and that forging a special connection between the ASEAN nations with the region as youth from both regions are deeply passionate about football.

On the third day of the ASEAN-India Youth

Summit, the participants of the summit witnessed a Conversation on 'North-East as India's Gateway to ASEAN' by Chief Ministers of three Indian North East states of India - Mr. Biplab Kumar Deb, Chief Minister of Tripura; Mr. Neiphiu Rio, Chief Minister of Nagaland and Mr. Pema Khandu, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh. The session was chaired by Mr. Ram Madhav, Member, Board of Governors, India Foundation. He said that the two Chief Ministers Shri Pema Khandu and Shri Biplab Kumar Deb look young but Mr. Neiphiu Rio and himself are young at heart.

In the Valedictory Session of the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit, Mr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of Finance, Government of Assam was the Guest of Honour; Mr. Jagdish Mukhi, Hon'ble Governor of Assam was the Chief Guest and Swami Mitrananda of Chinmaya mission was Special Guest. The ASEAN-India Youth Awards were presented to promising youth leaders from

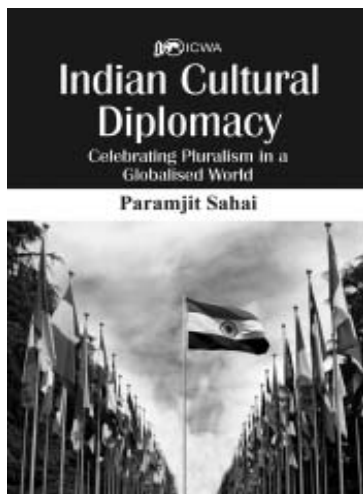




ASEAN countries and India. The Youth Summit witnessed the attendance of prodigious talent from the region. Youth icons nominated from fields as varied as journalism, law and politics, entrepreneurship, science and technology, historical studies to social activism, performing arts, and even religious studies enabled the confluence of diverse minds to brainstorm on

issues of connectivity between India and South East Asia. Participants were handpicked by a distinguished jury from the organisers of the event, India Foundation and Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, based on their ongoing contributions towards strengthening of ASEAN-India ties, and excellence in their respective professional and academic careers.





Indian Cultural Diplomacy Celebrating Pluralism in a Globalised World

Author: **Paramjit Sahai**

Publisher: Vij Books India Pvt Ltd

Price: Rs.1,450/-

Book Review by: **Shreya C***

Paramjit Sahai's latest book, "Indian Cultural Diplomacy: Celebrating Pluralism in a Globalised World" is timely. As India and the rest of the world explore soft power diplomacy as a legitimate foreign policy tool, the book comes in handy. The book can act as a good source and starting point to evaluate the need, structure, framework and overall idea of India's cultural diplomacy. The book is set in the backdrop of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, "the world is a family", that is the ethos guiding India's cultural diplomacy.

Paramjit Sahai spends the first chapter defining "cultural diplomacy", "soft power", "smart power" and other terms common in diplomatic parlance. He is careful not to conflate the two terms – "cultural diplomacy" and "soft power" – and says that unlike soft power, cultural diplomacy is "people centric" and its "aim is to create an atmosphere of trust". This first chapter sets the tone for the rest of the book and forms the basis for which the rest of the chapters can be understood.

For the remaining thirteen chapters, the author

discusses various aspects of cultural diplomacy ranging from education, the diaspora, the media, Bollywood, yoga, art and literature. He brings out the "idea of India" in its purest form, especially as seen by the foreign eye. What makes the book stand apart is the detailed and inside view that the author is able to present to the readers of the role that various organs such as ICCR, the Ministry of Culture, and diplomatic missions play. The author uses multiple anecdotes and case studies throughout the book to emphasize his point. For instance, in the second chapter, he examines through case studies the impact of Head of State and other dignitary visits on cultural connectivity. Similarly, in the eleventh chapter he examines in great detail the Smithsonian Institute, which he calls a "Global Cultural Hub" and the role it plays in portraying American culture. What might be of interest to many readers is the methods in which India has been connecting with the Smithsonian since 1985, and concludes with interesting and practical recommendations on how India can gain from this collaboration.

**Shreya C. is a Senior Research Fellow at India Foundation.*

The book also provides a historical overview of India's cultural engagements abroad, in particular through the use of Cultural Agreements. The author says that India views these agreements to perform a tripartite function – establish new relations, strengthen historic relations and reorient the relationship. India signed the first Cultural Agreement in 1951 with Turkey, and has since signed 129 more. Although the largest number of Agreements were signed in the 1950s, the author points that there is no pattern to signing these agreements. Paramjit Sahai also traces the evolution of other methods India employed to project its image or idea abroad from Festivals of India, and Chairs of Indian Studies. He aptly points out the role that third party, non-governmental organisations play in furthering this image, such as Wizcraft Arts.

The book is not only informative but is also critical of the workings of the various stakeholders involved in India's cultural diplomacy. For instance, Sahai is quick to identify that ICCR and Indian diplomatic missions abroad fail to move beyond the traditional basket of vehicles of cultural diplomacy such as classical dance and music, yoga, and Hindi. One must stop and question whether these elements are identifiable

with a foreign audience, and more importantly whether the young generation is attracted to them. He cautions that the real challenge would be in linking cultural heritage with modernity.

Interestingly, he takes his argument further and dedicates an entire chapter into the work that foreign missions in India are doing in terms of image building and furthering their cultural diplomacy. He examines in great detail the work of the United States, Russia, and Japan in India, and concludes that there is much that can be learnt from them in devising India's own programmes.

Paramjit Sahai's book, "Indian Cultural Diplomacy: Celebrating Pluralism in a Globalised World" is a must-read for anybody looking to study India's cultural diplomacy. It will be useful to academics and students alike who are keen on India's foreign policy, in particular cultural diplomacy. From Prime Minister Nehru to Prime Minister Modi, the author traces India's cultural diplomacy as it evolved and took shape. What stands out is the author's ability to contextualise theoretical and practical forms of knowledge in cultural diplomacy, owing to his vast experience in the field of diplomacy. The author's insights, attention to detail, and extensive employment of historical facts and data will be of interest to many.



Upcoming Events

5th International Dharma Dhamma Conference

27th - 28th July 2019; Rajgir, Bihar

CALL FOR PAPERS

India Foundation, in collaboration with Nalanda University, is organising the fifth International Dharma Dhamma Conference on the theme “Sat-Chit-Ananda & Nirvana” in Dharma-Dhamma Traditions on 27th - 28th July 2019 in Rajgir, Bihar.

The Sub-themes of the Conference for four Panel discussion sessions are: 1. Sat (Truth), 2. Chit (Consciousness), 3. Ananda (Bliss) & 4. Nirvana (Enlightenment). The papers are invited for these four sub-themes. Paper presenters need to submit 300 words abstract on any one sub-theme and if the abstract is selected then 3,000 words paper needs to be submitted.

Submission Deadlines:

Last Date for Submission of Abstracts (300 Words) : **20th May 2019**

Last Date for Submission of Papers (3000 Words) : **20th June 2019**

The Abstract and Paper can be sent on dharmadhamma@indiafoundation.in

Young Thinkers Meet (YTM) – 2019

19th - 21st July, 2019

The eighth edition of Young Thinkers Meet (YTM) is being organised by India Foundation from 19th to 21st July, 2019. The theme for this year's meet is 'New India - Ideas, Concepts, and Contestations'. The two-day meet aims to bring together young intellectuals, policymakers, professionals, media personnel, artists, and thought leaders from varied walks of life to a common platform to discuss and deliberate on issues facing modern India. Over the course of several sessions, talks, and interactions, the selected participants are given the opportunity to closely engage with eminent dignitaries from Indian public life. Last date for applying is May 15, 2019.

For further details, please write to shrutirao@indiafoundation.in



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