

# **The Changing Narratives of Indian Foreign Policy: From Non-Alignment to All-Alignment**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In light of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, India was compelled to reassess its foreign policy to sustain itself in the international scenario. Initially moving along the lines of Non-Alignment, India finds its way to contribute to the issues of the global world and has opened its policy to All-Alignment according to the changing circumstances. India has chosen the road of multi-alignment in a growing international arena, which comprises creating alignments based on problems with like-minded nations and significant power centers. To re-examine its foreign policy and modify its economic structure, it has made several adjustments to protect its interests in a changing world. This included strengthening ties with the United States, Western European nations, and China. However, it faces challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, to the East, India is confronted by China which is asserting claims to disputed territory in the Asia-Pacific area as well as expanding its influence in the neighboring states of India. To the West, issues prevail between India and Pakistan, and there doesn't appear to be any prospect for a quick resolution. This calls for more active participation by India in geopolitical events. To address the threats that impede our growth and prosperity, pragmatic resolutions are necessary on a strategic and diplomatic level. The present paper aims to analyze the shift in Indian Foreign Policy from post-Cold War to the present day. It further analyzes the significant challenges that India faces as a result of its current foreign policy.

## **INTRODUCTION**

India, a potential superpower, has evolved its foreign policy since its hard-earned independence from colonial rule till date. In addition to the changing traditional conceptions of power, the world has now become much more dynamic. India has been able to recognize and maintain its power status in the international arena because of its nonalignment policy, which played a significant historical role during the Cold War era. Although it is often argued that India's foreign policy ignores the hard realities of the global world order, it is one of the influential players in the growing world. India's independent foreign policy through its Panchsheel principles has made it evident to the rest of the world that it respects each country's sovereignty and would not permit any other country to obstruct peace on its territory. World politics after the 1990s demanded a renewal of Indian Foreign Policy and a gradual shift from idealism to realism. India's foreign policy and diplomacy in the 21st century have come to be characterized and configured by the pursuit of national interests, pragmatic issue-based alignments with nations, and proactive diplomatic outreach. It now aims to strengthen alliances that benefit the involved countries, increase influence

in international discussions, and promote and facilitate India's economic development. However, it faces complex challenges and demands attention to influence the ideals and principles of India to other key sectors in the world. This has required the country to adopt a new worldview that views foreign policy from a realist perspective—pragmatism.

## **TRANSFORMATION IN THE INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

Indian foreign policy to facilitate its economic status, strengthen strategic partnerships, and enhance and promote the national interest has proven to be highly dynamic. The reshuffling alignments in foreign policy are a result of India's short-term as well as long-term interests and can be classified into the following phases:-

### **1) 1947-1991: Non-Alignment And Beyond**

When the world was dominated by the two rival superpowers, India had its central theme of not aligning itself with either of the superpowers. The Cold War was a protracted war for domination that erupted between the Soviet Union and the United States itself after World War II. The Cold War prompted newly independent nations like India to keep themselves away from the war while trying to make amicable relations with both superpowers. Pandit Nehru greatly influenced India's foreign policy and firmly believed in the policy of 'Non-Alignment' for India and wanted to remain sovereign. For a while, India's position on the global stage seemed definite and firm. However, it ended in 1962 with the conflict with China.

#### **a) India's Stand in the Cold War**

India was among the founding members of the NAM, along with Yugoslavia, Ghana, Indonesia, and Egypt. Non-alignment for these countries neither meant neutrality nor isolationism, instead, it was about taking an independent stand on global issues. Although India was a member of the community of developing nations; but, throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union, had the upper hand in ties with India. The Indo-Soviet connection began in the mid-1950s, developed intermittently through the late 1960s, and became a sensible mutual acknowledgment of complementary as well as divergent interests.<sup>1</sup> Despite being a member of the NAM, India maintained friendly relations with the USSR. Not only the strategic relationship but also the ideological identities of the two nations were similar.

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<sup>1</sup> [academia.edu](http://academia.edu)

## **b) Indo-China Relations**

The harmonious relationship between India and China was disturbed when the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949. In the distant past, cultural and commercial ties sparked the partnership between the two. The Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 was a treaty between the two nations that defined interactions among emerging nations and served as a symbol of friendliness between them. However, the two countries' boundary issues led to the three military conflicts between them in 1962, 1967, and 1987. Another cause of tension between the two countries is India's backing of Tibetan refugees and Chinese military assistance to Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea. The 1962 Indo-China conflict also led to a significant loss of India's stand on NAM. Noting that India did not get any aid except from the UK and the US, it was clear that preserving alliances with other countries was necessary. Further, it started looking beyond Nehru's policy of non-alignment.

China has made efforts to drive India out of South and Southeast Asia. As part of what Indians perceive as a plan to encircle India, it has equipped Pakistan with nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology and established close military connections with its neighbors, including Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

## **c) India's Nuclear Policy**

India was the first nation to call attention to the international community on the serious repercussions of continuing nuclear weapons testing. The "no first use" principle and the prohibition on using nuclear weapons against nations without nuclear weapons are the cornerstones of India's nuclear strategy. India began its civil nuclear program in 1948 however, it was cautious of China's development of nuclear weapons and the effects on the subcontinent because it had previously lost the 1962 war to China. This convenience resulted in India being the first "threshold" state when it carried off its first peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974. India's transition as one that successfully possesses nuclear weapons without still being a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is both a success and a setback for the global objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

## **d) Indo-Pak Relations**

Cross-border terrorism, cease-fire hostilities, territorial disputes, etc., have frequently hampered India-Pakistan relations but the focal point of a majority of conflicts remains their dispute over Kashmir. Although India has made numerous efforts to establish cordial neighborly ties with Pakistan, the latter continues to support cross-border terrorism against India and obstruct normal trade, interpersonal interactions, and connectivity with India.

The attack by the Jaish-e-Mohammed extremist group of Pakistan was the worst in Kashmir in three decades. Concerns from Pakistan are a product of historical, ideological, and local factors.

## **2) 1991- 2014: India and the Post-Cold War Era**

The fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent financial crisis compelled India to re-evaluate the foundations of its external and internal policy. The 1991 era was also a period of adoption of a new economic policy based on Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization.

### **a) The Collapse of the Soviet Union**

The fall of the USSR had left India's leaders adrift. This collapse resulted in the disappearance of a bipolar world and the emergence of the US hegemony in the international arena. Western ideologies and influences emerged as the global dominant force and India started to witness positive relations with the US post-Cold War.

On the other hand, the mutual trust and goodwill between the USSR and India cannot be questioned. However, when the newly formed Russian Federation attempted to reconstruct its foreign policy, the upheavals of the early post-Soviet years echoed across the Indo-Russian relationship. Nonetheless, the differences between the two countries' objectives have become more pronounced recently and might have a significant effect on the future of ties between India and Russia.

Events like the collapse of the Soviet Union or the Gulf War led to an economic crisis in India that made India re-evaluate its foreign policy. India's growth was also evident in the 1990s economic reforms and the growing rise of globalization.

### **b) The Indo-US Relationship**

The Indo-US relationship witnessed new configurations post-1990s. During the tenure of then-former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, India and the US attempted to advance their bilateral relations. Rao's official trip to the US in 1994 resulted in the signing of various agreements between the two countries. It was a significant step and chance for the Indian side to revise its relations with the Western Bloc, to have a strategic relationship with them, and to remedy its strategic imbalance with the United States. The US sees India's expanding influence as a rising democratic power in the globe as largely aligning with US interests. The bilateral relationship between the US and India is broad-based, encompassing civil nuclear energy, education, trade and investment, security and defense, etc. Controlling China's hegemonistic influence remains the top concern for both nations. The future Indo-US

alliance will require close communication regarding Asian trends through bilateral and multilateral regional agreements.

### **c) The Indo-Russia Relationship**

Given that both nations have similar security, political, and economic objectives, India's ties with the Soviet Union are varied and encompass numerous fields. In light of the ground circumstances brought about by the end of the Cold War, India and Russia agreed to recast their relationship. The Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation of 1971 was a stepping stone in the Indo-Russia bilateral relationship.

Considering the political situation, Russia has endorsed India's stance on Kashmir and needs to help India in its quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Both nations are also a part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the RIC, and the BRICS. Today, the parameters of Indo-Russian ties are advanced by the rising Chinese influence. Since the Ukraine crisis, the economic relationship between the two has been further dominated by oil. The relationship's future foundation may depend heavily on the availability of energy. They must thus combine their efforts in both the economic and security spheres and new forms of cooperation must be discovered as structural changes in international relations take place.

## **3) 2014-Present: Moving Towards All-Alignment**

The period following 2014 talks about the “Modi Doctrine” which attempts to use the ‘soft power’ element to influence and strengthen its ties with other nations. The government focuses on bilateral relations to revive strategic ties with great players and earlier neglected emerging powers such as Australia and Japan.

### **a) International Organizations**

India being an active key member of several international organizations aims to enhance strategic relations with other nations and increase regional stability among countries.

#### **i) BIMSTEC**

BIMSTEC brings together 1.67 billion people and a combined GDP of around US \$ 2.88 trillion.<sup>2</sup> It has emerged as a viable regional organization in recent years due to the re-intertwining of strategic and economic interests in the Bay of Bengal as a component of a larger maritime strategic space - the Indo-Pacific. India leads

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<sup>2</sup> [mea.gov](http://mea.gov)

BIMSTEC in four key areas Tourism, Transport and Communication, Counter-Terrorism, and Environment and Disaster Management. The Bay of Bengal, which serves as a link to the Strait of Malacca, is strategically placed between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The importance of BIMSTEC is also a result of its marine security and regional connectivity, which allows India to achieve its aspirations for a "blue economy." Due to China's assertive behavior in several sectors, notably the Belt and Road Initiative, BIMSTEC assists India in multilaterally opposing China. It calls for cooperation in commerce, politics, and security, enabled by BIMSTEC.

## **ii) ASEAN**

India's relationship with the ASEAN is increasingly emerging which indicates both an increase in economic and military clout. India is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and has held a yearly summit meeting with ASEAN since 2002. India's Indo-Pacific policies and outreach have made ASEAN centrality essential. India sees the Indo-Pacific region as a strategic and geographical stretch that connects the two large oceans through the ten ASEAN nations. The AOIP (the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific) offers a roadmap for ASEAN's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and underlines ASEAN-led institutions to deepen regional and sub-regional cooperation, which would help maintain peace, freedom, and prosperity and promote ASEAN Centrality.

## **iii) SAARC**

With India's initiative, the SAARC members have established a Free Trade Area, which will significantly enhance their internal commerce while narrowing the trade gaps between a few countries. India is in an undisputed leadership position as it shares land or maritime borders with six of the other seven members. The SAFTA is one of the primary concerns on which SAARC has failed to make progress in recent years compelling India to look at the Bay of Bengal region as a forum for regional cooperation in response to these difficulties. It might serve as a platform to unite in opposition to trade restrictions or to demand better conditions for South Asian members around the world in a region that is increasingly being targeted by Chinese investment and loans.

#### **iv) OPEC**

About 70% of the crude oil that India imports comes from OPEC nations. A reduction in the production of OPEC+ will leave India with a drastic impact. The reduction in production will lead to an increase in the prices of crude oil, in turn increasing India's current account deficit and the prices of petrol and diesel. To reduce its heavy dependence on crude oil imports from the OPEC countries, India can build relations with major oil-producing nations beyond the boundaries of OPEC to maintain its oil demand.

#### **v) European Union**

The dialogues between the EU and India have evolved and unleashed their potential to offer each other significant trade opportunities. India's rapid economic growth over the last decade has helped the country become the seventh largest by nominal GDP and fourth largest by purchasing power parity globally.<sup>3</sup> The fifteenth summit between the two economies in 2020 has resulted in the EU-India Strategic Partnership for five years to counter the rising influence of Chinese forces. To further solidify relations with India, the EU has established a Trade and Technology Council in 2023 to prioritize digital governance, sustainable technology, and other essential issues of strategic importance. India's successes in technology and digitalization will be highlighted by the G-20 presidency in 2023, providing a tremendous chance for the EU to strengthen its ties with India, particularly in the IT sectors that support strategic autonomy.

#### **vi) United Nations**

India solidified its place in the UN as a key supporter of the apprehensions and ambitions of developing nations and the establishment of a more egalitarian economic and political order by serving as a founding member of the NAM and the Group of 77. Despite the difficulties on the borders with Pakistan and China, Nehru decided to support global peacekeeping missions. As a result of this legacy, India is among the largest contributors to the peace operations carried out under the auspices of the UN. The Indian government has strongly defended its case for permanent membership in the UNSC based on its contributions to UN activities, particularly the upkeep of global peace and security. For instance, nine rotations of all-female Indian police units were stationed in Liberia between 2007 and 2016.

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<sup>3</sup> [eeas.eu](https://eeas.eu)



India has also emphasized reforming organizations like the IMF as their top priority to better serve the interests of developing countries. The Lifestyle for the Environment (LIFE) idea, recently unveiled by Prime Minister Modi, harnesses the power of individual and collective action on a global scale to address the climate catastrophe. In 2021, India, along with the UN, assumed the presidency of the Security Council and introduced UNITE AWARE, to protect peacekeeping missions.

### **b) Neighbourhood First Policy**

India considers its neighborhood a top priority of its foreign policy and believes in the principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. It is also aware of how closely tied its progress and prosperity are to those of its neighbors. India has a long history of considerable influence in South Asia due to its geographic location and power asymmetries with its neighbors in the region. While India has consistently received support from its neighbors on the international stage regarding issues of terrorism and its sovereignty, there have also been instances of rifts in India's political relationships with some of its neighbors, such as with Nepal over disagreements over their constitution and the ensuing economic embargo, or with Bangladesh over the issue of illegal immigrants and the Citizenship Amendment Act. One of the key reasons behind India's renewed emphasis on its neighborhood was to counter China's increasing presence in South Asia.<sup>4</sup> Even though India's relations with Pakistan deteriorated and China increased its strategic footprint in Nepal, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, India's relationship with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar showed improvement.

### **c) Act East Policy**

To re-establish Southeast Asia's presence on the nation's foreign policy agenda, India adopted its Look East Policy in the early 1990s. While the pros and cons of the Look East Policy are debatable, the current government, following its massive victory in the 2014 elections, had entirely different plans for the oil and tea-rich north-east region of India, which is strategically situated at the junction of China, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar. The foundations of India's Act East Policy are Commerce, Culture, and Connectivity. It fosters closer commercial connections with Southeast Asia and other Indo-Pacific nations and opens up development potential for India's North Eastern States. For instance, a renewed defense cooperation agreement was signed as a part of the 25th Singapore-India

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<sup>4</sup> [claws.in](http://claws.in)

Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX), a combined naval exercise between India and Singapore, to enhance intelligence-sharing activities.

#### **d) India's Soft Power Resources**

India's soft power diplomacy relies on its cultural, political, and economic influence that creates goodwill for India on the global stage. India being a diverse country has remained successful in influencing nations through its culture and promoting its beliefs and values. Cultural exchanges and tourism have enabled India to develop better relations and cooperation with its alliances. Being the largest democratic nation having a free and fair independent judiciary, India has gained worldwide respect in the international arena. Providing humanitarian aid is one of the significant components of India's soft power policy as exhibited during the global pandemic by distributing vaccines to needy countries. Since 2014, the Indian government has made large expenditures in initiatives and resources to strengthen India's capacity for soft power diplomacy. While the 'Make in India' initiative supports domestic production and innovation, 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' is a unifying idea for the Modi administration's ambitions for India to improve its productivity, competitiveness, and resilience in the global economy.

### **KEY CHALLENGES IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

Indian Foreign Policy has evolved since the time of India's independence to the 21st century and has changed its nature from idealism to pragmatism. However, certain challenges stand in front of India's foreign policy that need to be addressed.

#### **1) China's Rising Influence**

China is more of a strategic challenge than a threat to the Indian security system. China's assertiveness in the border dispute, its expanding commercial and defense ties with India's neighbors, and the rise of Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, which India believes could lead to encirclement, are the main causes of concern for India. For instance, concerns about inciting enmity among Nepalese citizens are also raised by Chinese assistance for the Maoists in that country. India has serious concerns about China's escalating influence in its neighborhood as the latter is strategically surrounding India in an effort to reduce India's geopolitical influence by weakening its position in world politics. The two rising threats for India remain its relations with Pakistan and China. The collusive alliance between China and Pakistan is based on a few shared features, such as their resentment towards India, or their opposition regarding India's decision to repeal Article 370 in 2019. The coastline of Pakistan serves as an important staging area for China's

emergence as a naval force, extending its reach from the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. Hence, Pakistan and China's alliance would create a diplomatic and security concern for India.

China's BRI will make its String of Pearl even stronger. Through this, China builds bases in India's neighborhood to serve both strategic functions if any war occurs between India and China in the future, hence reducing India's influence in these regions. India strongly condemns China's BRI initiative and its flagship project (CPEC) as it impinges on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. China is seeking a stronger presence in India's North East region, part of which (Arunachal Pradesh) has been claimed by China as its territory, impacting India's security concerns. India has also been protesting CPEC's route being laid through POK.

## **2) Terrorism**

India has suffered the most from the international order when it comes to issues concerning terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism. Terrorism is another challenge that affects developing countries like India. International terrorism has further increased the risk of similar terrorist acts in neighboring areas of West, Central, and Southeast Asian States, aggravating the already-existing proxy war scenario between India and Pakistan. The recent terror attacks in the Rajouri-Poonch region in Jammu, raise questions about the management of patrols in sensitive locations in the region which has seen a spike in militant violence in the recent past.<sup>5</sup> The attacks were attributed to a "spring offensive" when terrorists were typically known to escalate violence in J&K.<sup>6</sup>

## **3) India's Dependence on Energy**

India continues to rely heavily on gas and oil imports. The shortage of raw materials including petroleum crude compels India to highly depend upon imported crude to meet its oil requirements. Rising demand for fuel and other petroleum products amid flagging domestic crude oil output has resulted in India's reliance on imported crude increasing to a record 87.3% of domestic consumption in 2022-23, up from 85.5% in 2021-22.<sup>7</sup> Although India has set high goals for obtaining more oil and gas domestically and using energy from cleaner sources like solar and wind power, achieving these targets requires more time. While the effects of COVID-19 on the Indian economy had just begun to replenish, the Russia-Ukraine war set the economy back. The current geopolitical crisis that is driving up the price of crude has compelled Indian oil marketing

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<sup>5</sup> [The Hindu](#)

<sup>6</sup> [TOI](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Indian Express](#)

organizations to eventually raise fuel prices to reduce their potential losses. Such a rise in prices would also be detrimental to India's trade balance and import bills.

#### **4) India's Neighborhood**

India lacks a clear road plan for achieving global leadership and for the role that its neighbors would play along the way. The non-conforming nature of the neighboring states and the shifting geopolitical landscape have made India's existing neighborhood considerably more risky, with severe implications for India's geostrategic future. India's neighborhood policy has highlighted the straining of its regional relations by the Taliban's control in Afghanistan, Nepal's political turbulence, Sri Lanka's economic collapse, Bangladesh's escalating unrest, and neglect towards Pakistan. Water sharing has been a source of conflict over the allocation and usage of water resources, which has resulted in disputes, as India shares rivers with its neighbors, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal. Political unrest and internal strife have also impacted the peace and security of the region, for instance, the military coup in Myanmar in 2021.

#### **5) Climate Change**

India being one of the most populous and developing countries in the world, is particularly vulnerable to the hazards posed by climate change, which has the potential to adversely affect its national security, social stability, and economic growth. Climate change's effects are especially likely to have an adverse effect on the Indian Ocean, raising the stakes for marine security. India's national security is also impacted by global warming. India faces significant challenges as a result of the rising sea levels and temperatures in the world. India could be in an extremely vulnerable position due to a critically depleted water supply, potential mass migration, and resulting food insecurity. Environmental degradation brought on by climate change could cause mass migration and displacement, resulting in tensions and conflicts across international borders. This is an urgent issue for India considering its extensive and open borders with its neighbors.

### **WAY AHEAD**

1) India's emphasis on diplomatic exposure during the period of non-alignment made it realize that using soft power diplomacy alone is insufficient to keep the nation safe. Although India's influence is rising in South Asia, it faces disputes from its neighboring countries, creating economic obstacles for India. Considering this, India should reform its soft power diplomacy to tackle these situations. An integrated strategy that combines public diplomacy at the international level with a creative economy at the local level is essential for Indian soft power to realize its full potential. It underlines

India's national interests and soft power from a cultural perspective but contends that these should be complemented by investments in hard power skills.

Although, there is a growing need and desire to interact with one another's cultures and communities, soft power, does not guarantee security. This calls for striking a balance between soft and hard power. For instance, the relationship between India and the EU is a prime example of how shifting geopolitics encouraged diplomatic competence. This review evaluates how Smart Power is manifested in the way that both partners are witnessing changing relationships.

2) Despite the socio-economic changes, skirmishes continue between India and China. The two great powers are on a trajectory that they may find challenging to navigate in the future years due to a tumultuous past brought on by their concurrent ascent. Building infrastructure along the border can facilitate access to isolated areas for both nations and lessen the likelihood of clashes. India needs to reexamine its defense acquisition strategies to make sure they are focused on both capability and sustainability over the long term. The main focus of India's foreign policy and diplomacy needs to be on the acquisition of deterrence capacity. Knowing that any hostile action would be painful for them should spur a more resolute military strategy towards China.

3) Taking into account Pakistan, India cannot ease itself until there is a settlement of the issues of terrorism and proxy war. To resolve its issues with the countries that are on India's periphery, India needs to build cooperation and confidence among its neighbors, failing which the countries will find it difficult to sustain in the global world. Stamping out terrorism requires negotiations at regional and international levels and limiting the source of weapons. Focus should be placed on creating a culture that values tolerance, respect, and cooperation. It is necessary to foster an atmosphere of understanding and peace, but the primary means of creating such an atmosphere is through dialogues and discussions. To quell any worries of an attack by either nation that is unfairly raised in the public mind, India and Pakistan should sign a no-war pact. India must also prioritize border security and improve its military readiness to prevent insurgencies, cross-border attacks, or provocations from Pakistan. Additionally, by opening up trade between India and Pakistan and importing goods at significantly lower prices, the pressure on the economies of the two nations can be reduced.

4) India needs a comprehensive and integrated approach to foreign and security policy that acknowledges the linkages between security and climate change. This involves investments in domains such as Research and Development, and infrastructure for marine security, to analyze the diverse effects of climate change. India can ensure its national security while assisting in efforts to combat climate change through a multifaceted strategy that includes regional cooperation,

climate-resilient agriculture, the use of renewable energy, and disaster preparedness. There is plenty of potential for economic investments that generate enough eco-friendly jobs to make up for the jobs shed in the sectors of petroleum-based power production, despite the fact that green initiatives are frequently faced with opposition due to initial outlay costs and the perception that they slow growth.

5) The establishment of a single nodal ministry or department with personnel from various concerned ministries can help end the slow pace seen in the implementation of development-related projects and agreements with foreign nations by releasing funds, issuing clearances, and ensuring the timely implementation of projects under a single roof. More resources must be allocated to carrying out diplomacy, including consolidating and expanding our diplomatic presence around the world. The existing foreign policy of India has allowed it to raise its status to an emerging great power, rather than a middle power, and plays a significant role in international negotiations on the diplomatic front. However, it should be more assertive and an active participant in the global world order and should also consistently maintain its relations with regional and multilateral organizations.

6) The ability to manage risks without sacrificing the chance to take advantage of potential opportunities would be crucial for Indian foreign policy. Prudence is required for effective diplomacy. As the world is completely interconnected, India needs to strategize and requires hedging in its foreign policy to move in the desired manner. It requires defining its actual interest and strategic collaboration with other countries upholding its principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'.

## **CONCLUSION**

Indian Foreign Policy, primarily based on preserving its national interest, has come a long way to adapt itself to the changing circumstances. It is in a deliberate attempt to maintain and strengthen its relations with neighboring countries, other alliances, and international organizations. The end of the Cold War and subsequent events have allowed India to work and re-focus its external affairs. Non-alignment was a cornerstone of India's foreign policy after its independence and moving towards all-alignment is one great way of realigning its policy, however, it demands India to look into the challenges such as nuclear disarmament, bilateral tensions, and terrorism; and make the best use of opportunities that came in its way. India's diplomatic schedule for this year appears packed, including its leadership of the G20, rotation as head of the SCO, and its presence in important summits including the G7, BRICS, QUAD, and ASEAN. Currently, a well-defined plan

to maintain its position and add the element of pragmatism to its foreign policy is the need of the hour for India.

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