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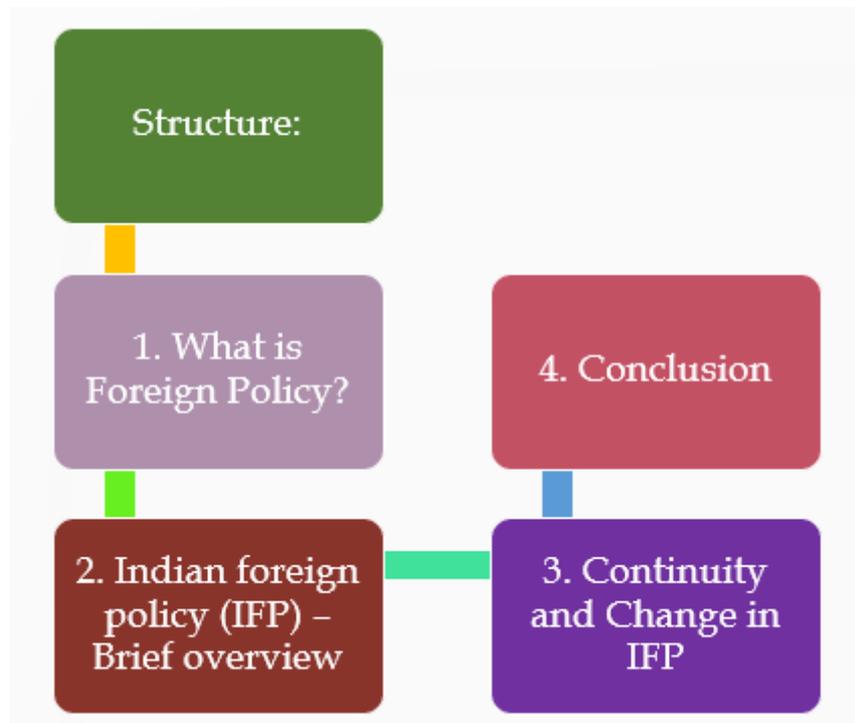
# Political Science & International Relations Crash Course

*Lecture - 14*

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India's current foreign policy marks a significant qualitative shift from that of the previous regimes. Discuss. [2018-10m]



According to Britannica, foreign policy is the general objective that guides the activities and relationship of one state with other. It helps achieve the "National Interest". It is influenced by both external factors and domestic factors.

National Interest has been categorized by Morgenthau into – Vital (Primary) and secondary. The vital interests are the core interests and hence they provide the element of continuity. Secondary interest is subjected to change and thus they provide the element of change in foreign policy.

## Evolution of India's foreign policy

- India's foreign policy can be viewed as an amalgamation of the old and new with both elements of continuity and change in its new avatar. S. Jaishankar in his work, 'The India Way' points to 6 phases of Indian Foreign Policy:
- Phase 1 (1946-62)- Era of optimistic non-alignment
- Phase 2 (1962-70)- Realism and Discovery
- Phase 3 (1971-91)- Regional Assertion
- Phase 4 (1991-99)- Quest for strategic autonomy
- Phase 5 (2000-13)- Balancing power

## Emergence of the Modi doctrine

- Andrew Kennedy argues that IFP under Nehru was a mix of both **utopia and realpolitik** which moved towards 'hard realism' towards Indira Gandhi. Modi regime has been termed as leading to the emergence of a '**Modi doctrine**'.
- In recent times, India's strategic ambitions have taken a lift. **PM Modi** has claimed to make India a **leading power**, a qualitative step Ahead of India's role as a **balancing power**.

Similarly, C.Rajan Mohan argues that Modi had fundamentally reinvigorated India's foreign policy, finally shedding many of the shibboleths that had previously hobbled the country's foreign policy choices. There are a number of distinctive, contemporary features that have emerged as a part of India's foreign policy such as:

1. Emergence of Multi/Issue based alignment: MEA S. Jaishankar and Vijay Gokhale view non-alignment to be a concept of a bygone era. On the other hand, he emphasizes the need for strategic autonomy and issue-based alignment to push forth India's national interests such as QUAD grouping, signing defence and logistics agreements with USA etc.
2. Increased risk taking: Jaishankar underlines the need for a more transactional ethos will promote ad hoc groupings of disparate nations who have a shared interests on a particular issue. This emphasizes a need to hedge to emerge as a global swing state. This has been especially important with India taking a stand on issues like trade, climate change, terrorism etc.
3. Emphasis on Geo-economics: Aakriti Tandon underlines that Modi's foreign policy, along the lines of the Manmohan doctrine, acknowledges the crucial role of economic considerations in shaping a nation's foreign policy. The Manmohan 'doctrine' stated that Indian foreign policy is shaped by a commitment to economic development of all developing economies within the framework of open society and economy. This is

especially underlined in the reinvigorated relationship with Central Asia and BRICS.

According to **Navdeep Suri**, The positions taken by India on new areas of economic diplomacy will be followed closely, not only by India's competitors but also by its allies in the developing world. Recent events like India's high-profile participation in **Dubai Expo 2020** and the dramatic expansion of India's aid programmes under the **Development Partnership Administration** within the Ministry of External Affairs point towards the expanding Economic Diplomacy.

4. **More realism and pragmatism**: While recognizing the need for regional interconnections, India has become more assertive in its dealing with neighbours be it with Nepal regarding the Madhesi or boundary issues, dealing with Pakistan or engaging with China and its expansionary tactics. For example India's procurement of oil from Russia during Ukraine war.

**De-hyphenation** has also been an instrument of realism for India allowing a deeper engagement with Israel. "This is a time to engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play."

**Ronak Desai** points that India no longer sees the Palestine conflict in zero sum terms. **Harsh Pant** finds that India's engagements with West Asia has **jettisoned the traditional balancing approach**. India has deepened its cooperation with UAE and Saudi and includes reciprocal high profile visits. India's **Doklam posture, blockade in Nepal, surgical strikes and nonmilitary preemptive strikes** in Pakistan displays a firm posture.

However, India still believes in Gandhian idealism, follows **Gujral doctrine** with some neighbours, seeks to maintain **strategic autonomy** and believes in **South South** cooperation.

- There are a number of elements of continuity that continue to be a part of India's foreign policy including- emphasis on civilizational aspects of India, respect for international law and order GAVI, UN, India's call for respect of territorial integrity amid Ukraine war etc.), leadership and focus on Global South as well as emphasis on soft power through Yoga, Bollywood, Indian Cuisine etc. **Diaspora Card'** played more extensively than in the past like through the **Houston Event**.
- Active engagement in **Climate Change** talks and providing effective leadership via International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and Green Grids Initiative – One Sun One World One Grid.

## Conclusion

- **Sumit Ganguli** argues that despite Modi's interest in altering many contours of India's foreign policy, bringing about significant changes is no easy task. India has a fairly well-institutionalized foreign policy decision-making apparatus, a growing attentive public, and a political culture that has a deep-seated propensity for incremental changes.
- In **Modi's World**, **C Raja Mohan** has argued that Modi's foreign policy heralds the beginning of the **"Third Republic"** in India, the first being the Nehruvian era and the second the Manmohan era of economic reforms in the 1990s.
- **Shyam Saran**, in his article "Continuity amidst change", "Since the Modi government took office, there is a notable activism and energy evident in the conduct of foreign policy. There are no major departures, yet more determined and energetic pursuit.

“Non-alignment was little more than a rational strategy on part of a materially weak India to maximize its interests with a bipolar distribution of global power.” Comment[2021-20m]

Structure:

1. What is Non - Alignment?

2. Importance of Non Alignment for India

3. Criticism of NAM

4. NAM 2.0

- Non-alignment was a policy fashioned during the Cold War, to retain autonomy of policy (not equidistance) between two politico-military blocs.
- According to **M.C. Chagla**, India's policy of non-alignment did not mean neutrality. By not aligning herself with any power bloc, India was not subservient to any country and reserved the right to pass judgment on international issues. At the same time, it was aligned to certain principles and certain causes: to disarmament, to doing away with nuclear weapons, to anti-communalism, apartheid, and so on.
- **Ashok Kapur** held that rather than staying away from bloc conflicts, non-alignment was about getting **involved in global politics as a 'low-risk' strategy** to gain influence despite the condition of material weakness and to gain influence through diplomatic means.

### NAM as an Interest maximiser

- **Soft balancing mechanism-T.V. Paul** observed that the NAM acted as a **limited soft balancing mechanism** by attempting to delegitimize the threatening behavior of the superpowers, particularly through their activism at the UN and other forums such as the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, as well as through resolutions. The tradition of 'non-use of nuclear weapons', or the 'nuclear taboo', was strengthened partially due to activism by the non-aligned countries' at the UN.
- **India's demand of NIEO-S. Kalyanaraman (IDSA)** held that NAM served as a **forum to channel India's deep dissatisfaction with the international order**, characterized as it was by economic, political, and nuclear hierarchies. It was through NAM that India articulated the **call for a new international economic order** that would cater for the special needs of the developing countries.
- **Bridge between two power blocs-** It was observed that non-alignment acted as a bridge between two hostile ideological blocs, and a policy of independence to judge issues on its merits irrespective of external pressure.

- **Vinod Kumar** theorized that:
  - Beyond principles like neutrality and equidistance, India's non-alignment policy was about **the autonomy of decision-making and flexibility of choices in pursuit of national interest**. It also demonstrates how visionary leadership seeking to influence international politics could develop ideational frameworks to propel their grand strategy.
  - NAM's actual relevance was in **determining the space for India and the third world in the Cold War spectrum**, when the superpower competition began to acquire numerous dimensions - of conflict, cooperation and détente
  - NAM as a foreign policy was based on **Nehruvian vision**: (a) as a **model of third world self-sufficiency** bereft of influence of imperialism or colonialism, and (b) as a platform to **safeguard the interests of those who wished not to align with the superpowers** in their rivalry
- The NAM forum also presents India with an opportunity to articulate its concerns about **Pakistan** and the latter's support for **cross-border terrorism**

### Criticism of NAM

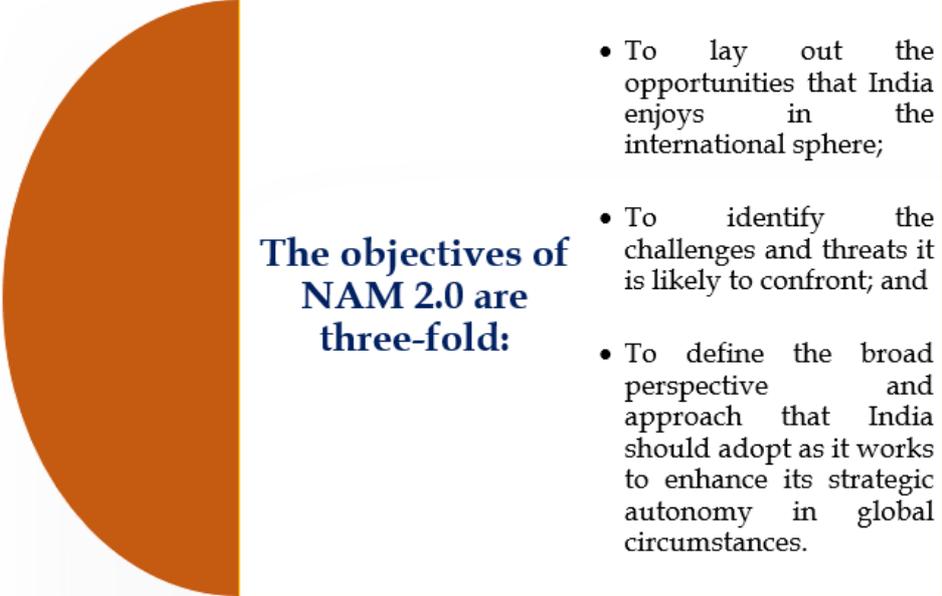
- **Relic of the past-India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar's** recent statement that "non-alignment was a term of a particular era and a particular...geopolitical landscape" could be viewed as an iteration of the notion about non-alignment movement (NAM) being a **relic of the Cold War-era world order** and the recognition that the world has since moved towards a polycentric system with a handful of great powers competing to enhance their spheres of influence and establish their hegemony.
- **Issue-based alignment-Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale has said** "India has moved on from its non-aligned past. India is today an aligned state – **but based on issues. For example India is engaging with BRICS and QUAD at the same time.**
- **M.K. Bhadrakumar** argues how India's transition as a nuclear weapon state embroiled it in strategic deterrence; its disinterest in South-South cooperation and its disengagement from the struggle against inequalities and injustice in international economic relations reflected its retreat from the centre stage to the shade to focus on **self-interests by aligning with the West**, especially the US leading to NAM taking a backseat.
- **More pragmatism and pursuing of strategic autonomy-Harsh V. Pant** remarked how India's rising global profile as well as the growing assertiveness of China is reshaping New Delhi's approach to its major partnerships in the changing global order. Though sections of the Indian establishment still want to reinvent non-alignment under ever new guises, New Delhi is showing signs of pursuing strategic autonomy separately from non-alignment under Modi.
- The **asserting pragmatism** in India's foreign policy as well as the failure of NAM to keep with institutional development or evolving into a geoeconomics forces (like ASEAN) led to it loosing ground with the emergence of other like-minded groupings like BRICS, G20, SCO, BIMSTEC etc

- As per **S. Kalyanaraman (IDSA)**, Non-Aligned Movement was not relevant for promoting India's important national interests during the Cold War years. And since the end of the Cold War, India's increasing integration with international economic, political and security structures has led to NAM losing even its earlier limited usefulness as a vehicle for articulating India's dissatisfaction with the international order.

## NAM 2.0:

As per Nonalignment 2.0 document:

- "the core objective of a strategic approach should be to give India maximum options in its relations with the outside world – that is, to enhance India's strategic space and capacity for independent agency – which in turn will give it maximum options for its own internal development".
- According to **Ashley J. Tellis**, Nonalignment 2.0 see India as contemplating its external engagement principally from the viewpoint of how it ought to maneuver in order to protect itself while it remedies its infirmities.



### The objectives of NAM 2.0 are three-fold:

- To lay out the opportunities that India enjoys in the international sphere;
- To identify the challenges and threats it is likely to confront; and
- To define the broad perspective and approach that India should adopt as it works to enhance its strategic autonomy in global circumstances.

## Conclusion:

- **N.S. Moorthy** points that while India cannot take on China in the economic department, in the foreseeable future, to be able to aid and assist needy Third World nations as much, it enjoys goodwill among the developing countries and NAM can be an able platform to build upon this trust by Global South.
- **Harsh Pant** underlines the changed context wherein instead of being a philosophy, NAM today is one of the instruments to push forth India's strategic interests. PM Modi himself underlined the changed geopolitical context of the contemporary world underlining **that India's new relationship with NAM rather than being based on idealism will be marked by a pragmatic approach.**

- With the participation of PM Modi in **2020 NAM virtual summit**, scholars like **C. Raja Mohan** point out a rethinking of NAM's role in Modi's foreign policy. NAM remains a critical diplomatic forum for the pursuit of India's international interests. For example, **reforming global institutions (UNSC)** is high on India's international agenda and the backing of the NAM is crucial in realizing this objective.

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