

An Analysis of the Riveting Transfiguration of the Foreign Policy of Government of India—The Renaissance of India's Diplomatic **Endeavors**

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ABSTRACT

The current foreign policy of the Government of India, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a significant shift from the past, both in manner as well as in essence. This is denoted by a more positive and confident strategic perspective with the objective of positioning India as a major global force or as a "Vishvabandhu" (friend of the world). The fundamental doctrine is often summarized as "Multi-Alignment"—based on issue-based convergence, not following a single force, but rather creating strategic partnerships with several countries. The current foreign policy of the Government of India is practical, insistent and dynamic. This has enabled India to transfigure from its periphery into a nation playing a highly significant role in global geopolitics.

Having practiced multi-alignment proficiently, India has overseen critical steps to establish relations with all major powers, while simultaneously rigorously defending its own strategic independency. The eventual purpose is clear: to create an external environment that favors India's economic growth, provides its position as a major force, and gets its due respect in the multipolar world. In this context the present research paper seeks to initiate a qualitative enquiry into India's stance on the ongoing geopolitical conflicts which have been making headlines globally like the Russia-Ukraine War, the Gaza Conflict and the Israel-Iran War. This paper presents the strategic viewpoint of India on the current international tensions which can act as a guide for other nations aspiring to emerge as an influential force in global diplomacy.

Keywords: Defensive Neorealism, Gaza Conflict, Multi-Alignment, Russia-Ukraine War.

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1. Introduction

"Will the global community keep on delimiting India or will India build its distinct identity? In distinguishing terms, will the world be allowed to draw precincts for India or will India adjudge for itself how it will expand?" India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar catechized this query in his internationally acclaimed book, The Indian Way (Bajpai & Chong, 2019). He also gave a detailed answer. In the book, he writes, "India should not hand over other countries the authority to determine what policies it must pursue or what policies it should steer away from (Ganguly, 2010)."

Today, the most significant transshipment under the steerage of the Government of India is the continuously growing aspirations of the Indian government to not only perform a substantial role in the international arena but also to emerge and transmigrate from being a mere command follower to being a rule-maker which is very much in alignment with the desire of its people also (Mukherjee & Malone, 2011). India's diplomacy in the international arena has provided novel wings to India's

ambitions. India now has no intention of backing down as it wishes to further expand its international and regional role (Chandra, 2017).

In recent years, India has worthily and appropriately challenged its adversaries and has united its friends without any form of uneasiness regarding the ideological stance (Sikri, 2014). India, which was unsettled with its ideological position in the past, exists in today's world as a voice that matters (Ganguly, 2003). The globe has witnessed an inkling of India's seemingly clear perception in this new countenance through its 'Vaccine Maitri' programme during the distressful times of the corona virus pandemic (Bajpai & Chong, 2019). Now, India is showing engrossment in sorting out global issues. In a world that is becoming increasingly deprived of a spearhead, India's headship has left its footprint at the universal stratum. The most recent instance is India's presidency of the G20 (Ganguly, 2010).

The most significant change observed in the last decennary is the increased accentuation by the Government of India on the oceanic terrain of the world's largest bay the Bay of Bengal instead of entanglements with age-old adversary Pakistan, thereby promoting interconnectedness between South Asia and Southeast Asia (Dalmia & Malone, 2012). It can also be seen as a key accomplishment that has helped India in paying attention on its factual strategic contender which is China and not Pakistan because it is largely presumed to be a failed state (Raghayan, 2017). Currently, India's foreign policy is based on five salient pillars: First and foremost is Realism, and as decisions such as buying crude oil from Russia amidst its war with Ukraine show that the current foreign policy is entirely pragmatic (Markey, 2009). The second major focus is Economic Diplomacy, and as such, India's foreign policy is now heavily based on economic interests (Rajan, 1998). Learning from numerous global economic transitions that have taken place prior and post independence, India has ditched the protectionist market mechanism and embraced unified internationalization (Mukherjee & Malone, 2011). The third significant consideration of this brand-new foreign policy is the adoption of a Multipolar World Order (Gupta et al., 2019). We can visualize the triumph of India's foreign policy in the fact that it has instituted a worldwide balance by establishing its existence even in combatant factions, for example an imposing appearance in groupings like Shanghai Corporation Organization (SCO) and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue also known as QUAD etc (Ollapally & Rajagopalan, 2011). The fourth aspect is to take a reasonable risk. History has shown that risk-averse foreign policy guidelines have not been very successful. In these circumstances, if India needs to embark on the terrain of extensive development quickly, it will definitely require risky steps (Sridharan, 2017). The fifth standpoint is about solutions in the context of the global situation. In a scenario resting on globalization, a reasonable foreign policy structure is definitely about comprehending global competition, uncertainties and interests (Hall, 2015).

Since 2014, epochal alterations have taken place in India's foreign policy, reflecting shifts in policy, strategy and fundamentality. Key aspects of this multiformity include:

- 1. Renewed emphasis on national security: In response to territorial threats since 2014, more attention has been paid to national security (Pant, 2019). The border puzzlement between India and its otherwise unpredictable neighbor China and the strenuous status of the largely contested Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir have largely resulted in a more aggressive foreign policy structure, especially in the context of military buildup and strategic espousal (Asthana & Jacob,
- 2. Strong Bilateral Relations: India is absolutely determined and committed to strengthening its bilateral ties with the noteworthy powers of the world. These engulf:
 - United States: Relationship with the U.S. have outpaced prominently through enhanced defense partnership, strategic negotiations and economic accordance (Gupta, 2005). Initiatives like the enunciation of Quad elucidate common interests in keeping up an independent and fenceless Indo-Pacific region (Chaulia, 2002).
 - Russia: Regardless of its deepening affinity with the United States of America, India keeps on imparting immense concernment for its prolonged alliance with Russia, notably in the areas of defense and energy (Mohan, 2009). A significant example is the buying of the coveted S-400 missile system (Shukla et al., 2020).
 - European Union: India is seeking to strengthen relations with the EU, with a focus on trade settlements and cooperation on climate change (Miller & Sullivan de Estrada, 2017).
- 3. Regional Engagement and Leadership: India is playing a highly pivotal role in its adjoining vicinity and the capacious Indo-Pacific region (Shukla et al., 2016). This assimilates:
 - South Asia: Endeavors to resolve the military issues in Afghanistan and solidifying ties with countries having proximity with the Indian border such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Hall, 2016).

- Indo-Pacific Strategy: Effectual partake by India in territorial associations and forums and initiatives to promote maritime security and counter China's aggressive slyness in the South China Sea (Malone, 2011).
- 4. Economic Diplomacy: India is placing volumetric force on economic diplomacy since 2019 and beyond. This involves:
 - Trade Agreements: Implementing bilateral and multilateral economic pacts with quietism to stimulate economic augmentation and protect supply chains (Horimoto, 2017).
 - Investing in infrastructure: Participating in developmental projects and strategic partnerships aimed at improving infrastructure, circumstantially in the Indian Ocean Region (Parthasarathy, 2017).
- 5. Climate change and sustainability: India emphasized commitment to stability and pure energy and played an instrumental role in world level climate deliberations (Menon, 2007). As a country, India has been a keen partner in global climate forums, negotiations and agreements, for example Paris agreement (Ganapathi, 2017).
- 6. Multilateralism and International Governance: India is predominantly participating in global governance conventions, putting a strong case for reforms in global think tanks of the likes of United Nations and the World Trade Organization. India's candidacy for an enduring seat on the UN Security Council is a clear testament of its desire to perform a pivotal role in international decision-making (Sinha, 2017).
- 7. Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: India has always attempted to use its cultural and civilizational heritage and everlasting soft power to enhance its international prestige and domination. This involves broadening its native culture, knowledge tradition and emerging technological innovation on the global stage (Chakravarty, 2014).

Generally speaking, India's international policy from 2014 and beyond reflects a combination of regional security assertiveness, strategic positioning with global powers and a renewed focus on numerous environmental and economic affairs to establish it as a major voice in global issues (Mohan, 2006). The uphill and superlative challenge that India faces is determining the appropriate blend of policy leverages in a rapidly changing, dynamic, convoluted and multipolar world (Blarel & Paliwal, 2019). Furthermore, as a country, India must persevere to benefit from the experiences in the pursuit to uphold continuous equilibrium in its international relations even in a rapidly uncertain and unstable global context (Ray, 2015). The skill of finding balance is essential not only in managing foreign policy and protocol but also in any government, especially in a country as huge, disparate and complex as India (Mazumdar & Statz, 2015).

2. HISTORY OF INDIA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Even though the Cold War was formally considered over after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formed against it never ended. It kept getting stronger at the instigation of America and reached Russia's doorstep with the help of Ukraine (Mitra & Schöttli, 2007). However, strategic-diplomatic changes in the last three decades have destroyed all the equations. While continuing friendship with Russia, India has now come very close to America (Tripathi & Shukla, 2017). Both the countries have the same opinion on China. On the other hand, Russia and China have come together. Earlier, Pakistan is boasting at the instigation of America and now China. But the Ukraine war created such a situation that the policies of India, Pakistan and China became the same in the United Nations (Shairgojri, 2021). All three countries refused to vote against Russia. Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have talked twice in the eight days of the war. Now the Russian army will help in providing a safe corridor to the Indian students trapped in Ukraine.

When Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi issued the Delhi Declaration on 27 November 1986, America and Europe were stunned. The whole world knows it as Delhi Declaration (Andersen, 2001). Holding Rajiv's hand, Mikhail Gorbachev had said that if any threat arises to India's integrity and unity, the Soviet Union will not sit silent (Shukla, 2022). The next lines were—We will not take even a single step in our foreign policy that hurts India's real interests. The Soviet Union condemns all conspiracies and evil thinking against your country (Purushothaman, 2010).

Just before the war with Pakistan in 1971, Indira Gandhi and Brezhnev signed the Friendship Treaty. America was badly shaken by this (Hall & Ganguly, 2021). India had surprised everyone once again. Richard Nixon thought that India would not enter into such an agreement under the Nam Movement (Kugiel, 2017). But the Friendship Treaty proved to be a milestone in India-Russia relations. Under this, it was clarified that both countries will avoid any military alliance that is against the interest of either of them or if a third country attacks, they will contact each other (Abraham, 2008). Its test was done in December itself when the war between India and Pakistan started.

During this time, a proposal was brought against India twice in the United Nations Security Council, but Russia vetoed it. Even before this, a proposal came against India four times on the issue of Kashmir and every time Russia supported India and vetoed it (Saran, 1969). This time it is our turn. What can be done if neutrality starts bothering a country. And on this issue, we are all united (Miller, 2013). You can understand this from Shashi Tharoor's tweet in which he said that S Jaishankar presented our policy on the Ukraine war in a brilliant manner in the Parliamentary Committee. Foreign policy should be run in this spirit (Ranjan, 2022).

3. HISTORY OF INDIA-UKRAINE RELATIONS

During the Russia-Ukraine war, India followed a policy of neutrality. Western countries including the US accused India of leaning towards Russia due to this policy of India. The US and Western countries took part in the voting against Russia in the United Nations. The US considered Russia an aggressor (Verma, 2024). There was pressure from the US and Western countries that India should also come with the US and Western countries. However, India ignored this pressure and strengthened its strategic and economic relations with Russia. In such a situation, let us know how India's relations have been with Ukraine. What is the factor of Pakistan in these relations (Shairgojri, 2022).

- (a) After the dissolution of the Soviet Union USSR, India was the first country to recognize Ukraine which had separated from the USSR (Pant, 2019). In 1991, India gave the status of a sovereign country to Ukraine which had separated from the Soviet Union. Diplomatic relations between India and Ukraine started in 1992 (Malone, 2011). In 1993, the Ukrainian government opened a High Commission in New Delhi. This was its first high commission in Asia. 17 bilateral agreements were also signed between the two countries and Ukraine became India's trade partner (Horimoto, 2017).
- (b) However, later the relations between the two countries saw a lot of ups and downs. In 1998, when India conducted nuclear tests under the then Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, relations with Ukraine became sour (Verma, 2023). Since then, both countries are trying to normalize their relations. During the nuclear tests, India was hoping that Ukraine would support it (Gupta et al., 2019). In 1998, India conducted nuclear tests under Operation Shakti. At such a critical time, when many developed countries of the world had imposed sanctions on India, Ukraine stood against India. Ukraine, along with 25 countries of the world, opposed this move of India (Blarel & Paliwal, 2019). However, the Indian government had said in favor of its test that it had conducted this test for its own security. Ukraine also supported the United Nations (UN) proposal, which called for stopping India from conducting more nuclear tests (Shairgojri, 2022). (c) Ukraine has been supplying weapons to the country's neighboring country Pakistan. Ukraine and Pakistan have a long history of defense deals. Ukraine supplies the most weapons to Pakistan. A defense deal of \$ 1.6 billion has been signed between Pakistan and Ukraine for weapons (Pant, 2019). The T-80 tank included in the Pakistani army is made in Ukraine itself. In the year 2017, both the countries signed a bilateral agreement, in which there was a mention of purchasing an upgraded version of the T-80 tank (Bajpai & Chong, 2019).
- (d) Ukraine has stood in favor of Pakistan many times in the matter of terrorism. India has also objected to the supply of dangerous weapons many times, but Ukraine has ignored India's demand every time (Mohan, 2006). Ukraine did not stop the export of 320 T-80 tanks to Pakistan. Whether it is the matter of Pak-sponsored terrorism in Kashmir, or the help given to terrorists in Pakistan, Ukraine has never supported India. In such a situation, when voting took place against Russia in the United Nations in the midst of the Russia-Ukraine war, Indian officials were absent (Sridharan, 2017).

4. Theory and Methods

This research is a qualitative study based entirely on the theory of Defensive Neorealism propounded by Kenneth Waltz in his 1979 book Theory of International Politics supported by Robert Jervis from Columbia University. The theory argues the primary goal of states is not power but security and the maintenance of their position within the system. They argue that aggression is often counterproductive; expansionist policies tend to trigger balancing coalitions from other states, ultimately decreasing the aggressor's security. Therefore, the rational strategy is to seek an appropriate amount of power to deter threats, typically through moderate military capabilities and diplomacy, rather than relentless expansion (Shukla, 2020). Defensive Neorealists believe that in most situations, the international structure provides opportunities for states to signal defensive intent and achieve a stable balance of power, making security plentiful rather than scarce. Conquest is also seen as difficult and costly in the modern era. Thus, states are socialized into restrained, defensive strategies to survive (Singh & Shukla, 2024). The study paves way for a descriptive analysis to comprehend the ongoing regional instability and humanitarian crisis in Russia, Ukraine, Iran, Israel and Gaza. To conduct this study the data has been collected through an extensive literature analysis ranging from published scholarly papers, international policy documents and research-based reports to advance an extensive and encompassing analysis.

5. Results

5.1. India's Diplomacy on the Russia-Ukraine War

An elaborated synopsis of the position of India is presented hereunder:

- Neutrality, Objectivity and Diplomacy: India as a nation has strongly corroborated an indifferent position on the current scramble, emphasizing for discourse and diplomacy in place of being on a single side (Verma, 2023). India's position complies with a wider arbitration of international policy on non-calibration and reverence for national jurisdiction. India ardently emphasizes the relative significance of an amicable solution through deliberation (Verma, 2024).
- The UN Security Council and international forums: At the United Nations, India has ordinarily abstained from precisely reprehending Russia, instead has made calls to focus on the humanitarian dimension and harmonious settlement of the strife (Verma, 2024). India has demanded to dismiss any form of voting aimed at isolating Russia and honour international laws and doctrines (Shairgoiri, 2022).
- Economic and Strategic Relations: India has important strategic and fiscal links with Russia, in addition to defense collaborations and vital energy imports (Sinha, 2017). As India balances these imperatives along with its forbearance with the western world, it is carefully navigating its stand to dodge upsetting its longstanding relationship with its crucial ally Russia (Gupta et al.,
- Humanitarian Concernments: India has time and again conveyed its solicitude about the humanitarian impact of the armed conflict, inclusive of the predicament of ordinary citizens and refugees (Hall, 2016). India has vehemently promoted any and every global attempt and effort to lay out humanitarian support and emphasized the exigency for an immediate suspension of hostilities to reduce human agony and suffering (Blarel & Paliwal, 2019).
- Energy and defense requirements: India has carried on with its age-old policy to cooperate with Russia, in addition to the acquisition of defense equipments and ammunitions along with energy supply (Biswas, 2023). This affiliation is significant for India, taking into account the the rising defense prerequisites and energy surveillance issues.
- Commitment with Western Countries: While enduring its indifferent viewpoint, India has also affianced with global powers and organizations. India has engaged in conflict resolution debates and forums and cooperated with transnational nations on various international problems while atoning with its own international policy goals (Goel, 2022).
- Implications on international supply chains: India is also aware of the impact of the ongoing conflict on the larger global economy, including the damaging supply chain disruptions and increased energy prices (Singh et al., 2025). India has been stern and resolute with its efforts to focus on these threats through multifariousness and engagement with various global partners (Mohammed, 2022).

5.2. India's Diplomacy on the Gaza Conflict

The key facets of India's position are as follows:

- Support for the Palestinian State: India has historically bolstered the institution of an independent and nonpartisan Palestinian state with the Palestinian leadership. This position is entrenched in India's post-colonial international policy, which has persistently seconded for the political liberty and jurisdiction of the Palestinian people (Biswas, 2023).
- Denunciation of Violence: India disapproves violence on either side in the persistent conflict. India has strongly called for a culmination of warfare and stressed the demand for amicable dialogue and immediate truce deal to steadfast the issue (Verma, 2023). India repeatedly stresses the significance of safeguarding the lives of civilians and other burning humanitarian issues.

- Diplomatic Commitment: India plans to engage diplomatically with both Israel as well as Palestinian dispensation. India wishes to support foreign endeavors to intervene and arbitrate a two-state explication (Shukla et al., 2022). India's international policy is aimed at supporting the resumption of truce efforts and a quick fix on the basis of UN declarations and international
- Humanitarian Assistance: India has conveyed its apprehension over the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, particularly in the Gaza Strip. It has backed and sometimes participated in international humanitarian relief exercises intended towards assuaging and alleviating the hardships of noncombatants distressed by the war (Shukla & Shukla, 2025).
- Strategic Relationship with Israel: Supporting the aspirations of Palestinian citizens, India has advanced a robust strategic collaboration with Israel, concentrating on crucial sectors of the likes of defense, technology and agriculture (Verma, 2024). This indispensible and pivotal partnership forms a significant element of India's international policy, and India strives to pursue a balanced approach in its assistance and support for Palestine while upholding its strategic interests.
- Multi-Country Approach: India often advocates resolving the destructive Gaza conflict through transnational forums notably by the United Nations (Biswas, 2023). India is continuously calling the world and proposing a resolution that complies with international law in an attempt to uphold and maintain an equitable position in accordance with its diplomatic kinship.
- Public Proclamations and Policies: The official stance of the Indian government on the Gaza conflict released in public domain have typically emphasized the need for de-escalation and reverence for international norms (Singh et al., 2025). India has been keen to preserve a diplomatic rhetoric while reiterating its unhindered support for a two-state solution and the legitimate right of Palestinians to self-reliance.

5.3. India's Diplomacy on the Israel-Iran 12 Day War

- Neutrality & Diplomatic Balance: India refrained from condemning either side. It refused to join a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) statement condemning Israel's strikes on Iran, emphasizing that it had already articulated its own position on June 13 and wouldn't endorse any separate bloc statements. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) underscored that it "urges both sides to avoid any escalatory steps" and must rely on dialogue and diplomacy to restore stability.
- High-Level Diplomatic Engagement: On June 13, 2025 PM Modi spoke with Israeli PM Netanyahu, expressing India's deep concerns and calling urgently for de-escalation. On June 22, 2025 he held a phone call with Iran's President Pezeshkian, again emphasizing the imperative of dialogue and peace.
- Citizen Safety via Operation Sindhu: Launched on June 18, 2025 Operation Sindhu evacuated over 3,000 Indian nationals—students and workers—from Iran (and later from Israel), using road and air corridors through Armenia, Jordan, and Egypt. This demonstrated India's practical commitment to its diaspora amid potential dangers.
- Strategic Security Measures: India has expedited procurement of Israeli defense technology (e.g., X-Guard decoy systems for Rafale jets) to prepare for any regional spillover (Shukla & Shukla, 2023).

6. Discussions

The position of India on the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war is highlighted by a subtle and prudent approach which is a clear reflection of its stance on the strategic concerns and diplomatic balancing (Shukla & Shukla, 2023). All in all, India's stance on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict manifests a meticulous and balanced approach designed to protect its long-term strategic interests while promoting a non-violent settlement of the conflict and resolving humanitarian plight.

In particular, India's position on the ongoing violent and disastrous conflict between Israel and Palestine in the disputed land of Gaza reflects the historical backing for Palestine's desire and the mixture of strategic stake and requirement to maintain the connection with Israel. Thus, India's position on the devastating Gaza conflict exhibits a difficult and tedious balance between backing Palestinian yearning and aspirations and denouncing violence while cementing strategic ties with Israel and encouraging a tranquil settlement through diplomatic efforts and multilateral mechanism.

India has adopted a clear, balanced stance during the 12-day Israel-Iran war. Due to concerns about energy security and Gulf instability, India is actively diversifying fuel sources, using strategic

reserves, and monitoring shipping through the Strait of Hormuz (Sukla et al., 2023). This reflects India's traditional "strategic autonomy": balancing robust ties with Israel—its major defense partner with longstanding cultural, economic, and energy connections to Iran, while avoiding entanglement. Overall, India has stayed neutral in rhetoric, active in diplomacy, proactive in evacuation, and pragmatic in security preparedness.

7. CONCLUSION

India's foreign policy, guided by its historical principles of "Strategic Autonomy" and "Non-Alignment," adopts a nuanced and pragmatic stance towards ongoing global conflicts. Officially, India advocates for dialogue and diplomacy as the only path to a peaceful resolution. It consistently calls for respect for the UN Charter, international law, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations. In practice, this translates into a carefully balanced position. India's nuanced stance on global conflicts offers a masterclass in pragmatic diplomacy for midsize and emerging powers. The foremost lesson is the primacy of national interest. This is underpinned by a commitment to strategic autonomy. Refusing to be pressured into a camp or signalled into outright condemnation allows India to maintain open channels with all sides. This provides it with unique diplomatic leverage and the ability to act as a potential mediator, a role increasingly valued in a polarized world. By advocating for peace and humanitarian aid while avoiding military entanglements, it protects itself from backlash and preserves its international reputation as a responsible, stabilizing force.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author declares that he does not have any conflict of interest.

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