

Sovereign and Strong India-Hope from Realism, Help for Indian Foreign Policy

Dr. Pushker Pandey¹, Gaurav Mishra²

¹Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, DAV College, Kanpur.

²Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, DAV College, Kanpur.

Corresponding address: gauravmsr735@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper very deeply discusses the strength of India. India has deep-rooted sovereignty. India is capable of defending her sovereignty. Power will be a major element to shape or formulate Indian Foreign Policy. Realism can be helpful for watching this scene. India can take help from realism and realist philosophers in making of Indian foreign policy in the same direction. In our discussion, we shall be going through all the above concepts and will also try to find out the future pathways of Indian foreign policy.

Keywords

Indian Foreign Policy, Sovereignty, Power, Realism, Nuclear triad, SIPRI, BRI.

Introduction

India has a deep-rooted policies of power-centric politics from ancient times. India was a country that had a desire for power quest for sovereignty. Although sovereignty is a term of middle ages but India has a sense of sovereignty without binding herself in terminology from the ages of Kautilya.

In modern times, the word 'sovereignty' enters in the discipline by the Peace of Westphalia, a series of treaties signed in 1648 in Westphalian cities, ended the Thirty Years' War(1618-1648). It inaugurated a European order based on the inherent equality of states and the recognition of a state's monopoly over coercive power within its territorial limits. Thus were born the concepts of political sovereignty and territorial integrity. ^(Saran 259) India was a colony of the British Empire till 1947. India got independence from the British Empire on 15th August 1947, making India a state. Being a sovereign state, India can take decisions freely now. India is a vast country. For security of her boundaries on international and domestic fronts, India has to take a stern actions. India has an area of over 32 lakh square kilometres. India has boundaries like mountains, forests, seashores, swamp, deserts, coastal, riparian etc. on international level. India has two main countries like China and Pakistan that has hostile relations with India. With Pakistan India fought four wars and a war against China had to be fought by India in 1962.

Strong India can make the boundaries of India safe and secure. Strong India can also safeguard the sovereignty of India. Sovereignty broke when India took the path of idealism. Indian Sovereignty can only be secured by powerful and strong India.

India started a journey of powerful nation from ancient times. Kautilya's Arthshastra very widely talked about the power-centric politics. The same was earlier talked in epics- the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Murty divides ancient Indian realists into two groups: the 'Arthasastrins' and the 'Dharmasastrins'. (Pande 21)

Arthshastra talked about covert war, open war and silent war; how to engage in war; and what to do in case one is a target of covert or silent war. (Chatterjee 9)

Mahabharata and Ramayana are two epics of Indian civilization. Nothing is left as discussion for a strong foreign policy in these two epics if we analyse these two thoroughly.

After India got independence, she started a journey of a state that aimed at power quest because of her geo-political conditions. With independence, India also got division into three parts-India, East Pakistan and West Pakistan. East Pakistan and West Pakistan were far away from each other but they were one as a nation. With independence, India got hostility, enmity from neighbouring countries.

Indian troubles didn't end with independence. When India was getting independence, the world was dividing into two blocs-the capitalist and the communist. It was difficult for India to choose one bloc so India adopted another way - the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested for this paper is as given below -

1. Indian foreign policy making can be benefited by realism for security and sovereignty of India.

Methodology

Research Question

Research question for the paper will be as below-

1. Will it be possible to frame Indian Foreign Policy that can make India a strong nation in world's view?

Secondary data will be used as methodology for data collection. Books, articles, reports, magazines, newspapers, journals etc. relevant to the topic will be used as tools to data analysis. Methodology for this paper will be analytical, descriptive and somewhat historical.

Discussion

Realism focuses on three 'S' - Statism, Self-help and Survival. Statism means and identity like state would be preserved, sustained and remained live after all hurdles raised by other states and non-state actors and domestic turbulences cannot fracture this identity. Realism believes that there is no central power which can resolve the conflicts of states because there is an anarchy in international system so for states there is only one tool for survival that is self-help. Self-help means only state has to develop the technologies, war heads, weapons, army, diplomacy etc. that can lead a state to survive.

Power comes in main discourse when realism comes for interpretation of relations of states. One, of the famous six fundamental principles of realism given by Hans J. Morgenthau, says that the concept of national interest can be defined in terms of power.' What is power?' question arises in mind. 'Power, put most crudely and simply, is the ability to prevail in conflict and to overcome obstacles. In this sense Lenin, before the Russian Revolution, posed to his followers as a key problem of politics the two-word question, "Who Whom?" It meant: Who is to be the subject and master of actions and events, and who their object and victim? During the 1932 depression, a German protest song called up a related image: We want to be hammers, not anvils" it announced. Who is stronger and who is weaker? Who will get his or her way and who will have to give in? (Deutsch 20-21)

The parameters of power are-the military power, the economic power, total population or human resources of the state the area of state, the natural resources of state etc.

India is a vast country, having an area of over 32 lakh square kilometres and is seventh in ranking in the world only after Russia, Canada, China, the United States, Brazil and Australia. This gives India an advantage as India has plenty of natural resources. India is second most populated country having around 140 crores people. Young population of India is a strength as national power. India has second most human resources in the world.

Besides the above discussion, realism talks about and believes in hard power that is military power. Where does India stand? India's position comes in top five ranking in the world in terms of military power. The ranking signifies role in regional and global security full stop India participate actively inverters of regional and global security through direct action and through the UNO. The Indian armed forces consist of the Army, the Navy, the Air force, the coastal guard and a Defence security corps with a focus on China and Pakistan territorial defence. The main threat comes from Pakistan's and China's borders regularly. The Indian armed forces have an estimated 1.4 million active service personnel, including 1.25 million in

the Army, 65000 in the Navy, 1,40,000 in the Air force and about 12,000 in the Coastal Guard.

India is modernising her military as new types of warfare are coming as threats to Indian security. Drones, cyber threats, state-of-the-art military technologies along with non-state threats are now a challenge to tackle for India.

In 1998, India became a nuclear power as she tested nuclear bombs in Pokhran by 'Operation Shakti'. A harsh reality with this was Pakistan also became a nuclear power in the same year with the help of China. Now South Asia has two nuclear powers one is Pakistan and other is India. Pakistan, being less powerful country before 1998 comparing with India, stood on same platform with India after becoming a nuclear power in 1998. This balance of power was against Indian national interests but it was a reality. India dealt with this problem very successfully by defeating Pakistan in the Kargil War of 1999. India, a declared nuclear power, adheres to "no first use" policy, means it will only use nuclear weapons in retaliation to a nuclear attack and maintaining a "credible minimum deterrence (CMD)" doctrine focusing and maintaining a sufficient nuclear capability to deter potential adversaries. Now some are arguing that there is a major doctrinal shift happening in India whereby New Delhi may abandon its No First Use(NFO) nuclear policy and launch a pre-emptive strike against Pakistan if it feared that Islamabad was likely to use the weapons first.^(Pant 292) Now India has nuclear triad i.e. a three pronged military force structure- consisting of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles(ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missile(SLBMs) and strategic numbers with nuclear bombs and missiles. India has tactical weapons also as nuclear deterrence.

India has multilateral engagement in several regional and global organisations like SAARC, ASEAN, QUAD, SCO, BRICS, BIMSTEC, the UNO and its specialised agencies. India is actively participating in regional and global organisations. There is no doubt that India is benefiting from these organisations and India is leading some of the organisations. At independence, India's international position was weak, her financial and military resources were low.^(Michael 150) Damaged relations between countries always result in mutual or one-sided losses.^(Nalapat 148) Bilaterally India has strong relations with several countries there are strategic partnership with some countries like the UAE, Russian federation, Israel, Afghanistan, France, Bhutan ,Bangladesh and the US. Russia is the largest supplier of military equipment to India followed by Israel and France. With some countries and organisations India has dialogue partnership like ASEAN. In this perspective, it is easy to

watch and analyse that India has built strong relations globally, regionally and bilaterally.

A big challenge for a state is to secure its sovereignty internally and internationally so that its statehood must not come in doubt. A state has four parts- population, a defined territory, a government and sovereignty (supreme power or capacity to enter into relationship with other states independently). Any other institution besides the state may have first three parts but when it comprises sovereignty, becomes a state.

India is facing several challenges internally and internationally to statism. Internal challenges are armed rebellion or internal disturbance by the groups like naxalites, several other armed groups of the North-Eastern states. They create internal challenges to statism. International challenges to statism are terrorism of any forms started by neighbouring states and direct war on borders to capture Indian Territory. India has lost some of her land in Jammu and Kashmir in form of PoK (Pakistan occupied Kashmir) and with this, Pakistan transferred some parts of PoK to China. It is Aksai Chin. India is raising strong opposition to BRI(Belt and Road Initiative) in the name of sovereignty because some part of BRI is coming in Indian territory(PoK).China is objecting to India's growing strategic proximity to the US. It is encircling India strategically and economically through its strategic and economic corridors BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar), CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) and the Trans-Himalayan Connectivity Network. It is raising issues like Kashmir at the UN and establishing footprints in the Indian Ocean. (Mukhopadhyay 225)

Indian foreign policy took a realist stance. Realism and neo-realism, for instance, simply put, argue that the world is an anarchic place with 'states' being paramount sovereign actors shaping international relations. (Pant and Paliwal 108) Relations between states are necessarily antagonistic given the human nature of 'greed' and 'expansionism'. (Pant and Paliwal 108) Indian Foreign Policy can be explained by realism very well. India is not compromising over her national interests at any cost and safeguarding her national interests while negotiating with other states. Nehru embraced the ideas of the German philosopher Kant and the internationalism associated with former US President Woodrow Wilson, but the Indian state veers towards a Hobbesian view of the world wherein India has to depend solely on itself. (Pande 99)

India is a hard negotiator now. India's hard negotiating stance on nuclear issues can be seen as a part of its enduring strategic culture. (Mohan 70) 'India First' policy is being adopted by Government of India as a breakthrough in Indian foreign policy formation.

India has a massive power beyond military terms. The foreign policy of India will be more

effective as it will be backed by India's massive agricultural, industrial, scientific and technological power structures. (Khilnani 148)

India faces a variegated, plural and complex world order following the end of the cold war. All states have been confronted with the difficult choice of reorienting and adjusting to the multiple dimensions of the complexities the world presents today. (Bhattacharya 109) By 2014, the global situation compelled India to conceptualize its foreign policy goals in a different way. It first had to recognise the greater multipolarity and uncertainty that characterised international affairs. Nations were combining on narrower issues rather than broad approaches. To a large extent, world affairs now looked like a global marketplace with less preconceptions and more transactions. (Jaishankar 93)

It is now apparent to discuss that if the Indian Foreign Policy is seen through realist glances, it is easy to analyse that Indian Foreign Policy also inclined towards power-centric and national interest fulfilling policies at its core. There is no confusion about India's national interest in the mind-set among those who are forming Indian Foreign Policy.

From Nehru-era to Modi-era, Indian foreign policy is rotating around the axis of realism because it is not difficult for Indian leaders to understand the importance of power centres of the world and how to negotiate with them to fulfil India's national interests.

Conclusion

Realism helped Indian foreign policy makers to formulate Indian foreign policy towards power and national interests. Core issues of Realism are Statism, Self-help and Survival. India tries to save statehood of herself. This happened with the inclusion of Hyderabad, Junagadh and more than five hundred other princely states to Indian main territory. Jammu and Kashmir became a problem in the row. PoK and Aksai Chin are not our parts. India needs to tackle this problem diplomatically.

Realism is for sure a ray of hope for Indian foreign policy. India is ready to lead globally and can now play from front foot. India needs to maintain healthy relations with neighbouring countries and with great powers of the world.

Kautilya's Arthshastra, Mahabharata, Ramayana with great Indian traditions and civilization can pave the path for such policies that are beneficial for Indian statehood.

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