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NEW DIMENSIONS OF NARENDRA MODI'S FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

The foreign policy of Narendra Modi is also referred to as the Modi Doctrine concerns the policy initiatives made towards other states by the current Modi government after he assumed office as Prime Minister of India on 26 May 2014. The Ministry of External Affairs, headed by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is the first woman to hold the office is responsible for carrying out the foreign policy of India. Modi's foreign policy is currently focused on improving relations with neighbouring countries in South Asia engaging the extended neighbourhood in Southeast Asia and the major global powers. In pursuit of this, he has made official visits to Bhutan, Nepal and Japan, United States, Myanmar, Australia, and Fiji.

KEYWORDS: New Dimensions , Narendra Modi's Foreign Policy , policy initiatives .



INTRODUCTION

Swaraj has also made official visits to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Singapore, Vietnam, Manama, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, United States, United Kingdom, Mauritias, Maldives, United Arab Emirates, South Korea, China, Oman and Sri Lanka.

Modi made several foreign trips to foster his business links with major Asian economic powers. This included meeting Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe to build a personal rapport. He also reached out for investment deals with China and Israel who sought to increase economic ties beyond defence and agriculture He was widely appreciated for his endeavour to organise Vibrant Gujarat, a biannual international business summit to welcome investment in his home state which also helped build a pro-development and business friendly image in India.

In 2014 except calling out China's potential aggression along the border with India and making "illegal immigration" from Bangladesh an election issue specially during the later part of his campaign in states like Assam and West Bengal. He also asserted that Hindus outside the country would be able to seek asylum in India should they require. He also pledged to have a "strong" foreign policy, including engaging with China He had asked for External Affairs Ministry to focus more on trade deals instead of other geopolitical initiatives

Improving relations with immediate neighbours would be his priority as peace and tranquility in South Asia is essential for realizing his development agenda. Significantly he pledged to introduce the concept of para diplomacy in India where each states and cities would have liberty to forge special

relation with countries or federal states or even cities of their interest. Bilateral trade going to dominate the relations with most countries except few important global powers with which India shares a strategic partnership.

His maiden foreign policy statement by inviting all the heads of state heads of government of India's neighbors and doing so he had undone his criticism as being a hardliner. Modi's swearing-in ceremony featured nearly all the SAARC leaders along with Navin Ramgoolam of Mauritius who holds an observer status at the grouping. Guests list included Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai, Bhutan's Tshering Tobgay, Maldives' Abdulla Yameen, Nepal's Sushil Koirala, Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif, Sri Lanka's Mahinda Rajapaksa, Mauritius's Navin Ramgoolam. As Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was travelling, parliamentary Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury came instead. Significantly Lobsang Sangay, the Prime Minister of Tibetan Government-in-Exile, was also spotted seating in the spectators gallery.[16] The media reacted positively to this in response to their own criticism of his foreign policy.[17]

Approach of P5 nations

Soon after the new government took over the office important world leaders expressed their willingness to work with Modi government to strengthen their relations with India as it provides them a big market. All 5 permanent member state of United Nations Security Council sent their envoy with to India within the first 100 days from inauguration which is significant given India's long standing bid to get a permanent membership at UNSC.

To take the early movers advantage China was first to send its envoy to India after Modi govt came into power, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited new Delhi on 8 June and held bilateral talks in with his counterpart and also called on PM Modi. In other reactions, China indicated a willingness to reach a final settlement over the contested border disputes. Russian Deputy Chairman visited India on 18–19 June 2014 to reach out the new government Where the two sides discussed the cooperation in joint defence production which is one of Modi's top agenda. Later Modi met President Vladimir Putin in July on the sidelines of 6th BRICS summit in Brazil. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius made an official visit to India from 29 June to 2 July and held high level talks with both External Affairs Minister and Prime Minister. Strategic and defence cooperation was top on his agenda and he expressed hope of speedy completion of Dassault Rafale Jet deal as part of the much delayed Indian MMRCA project under the new government Prior to his India trip U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry emphasized the importance of US-India in twenty first century and interestingly he borrowed "Sabka saath, Sabka vikaas" a Hindi slogan from Modi's campaign meaning "together with all, development for all" and said America shared this goal and willing to work in full cooperation with the new government to realize it. The appeal: "There is no change in our policy. We think that foreign policy is in continuity. Foreign policy does not change with the change in the government.

Sushma Swaraj, one of the senior most leader of BJP, was given the portfolio of External Affairs which is going to be a very important ministry with India's growing role in international affairs. She is the first woman to hold the office. Earlier on her capacity of leader of opposition in Lok Sabha from 2009-2014 She met a galaxy of visiting foreign leaders which apparently helped her understanding of foreign relations. Modi appointed Ajit Doval, a seasoned intelligence officer, as National Security Advisor. Ajit Doval is believed to be close to the RSS, an organization Modi comes from. On 28 January 2015, only a day after the US President Barack Obama's successful India visit Modi govt sacked Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh and appointed Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in her place, Jaishankar was then serving as India's ambassador to the United States. Modi himself is believed to be unhappy over Singh's ability to lead the foreign office and on the other hand impressed by Jaishankar's diplomatic skills in turning the flagging relationship with US into a flourishing partnership.

Act East policy

From the very beginning the Modi led government made it ample clear that India would focus more

and more on improving relations with ASEAN and other East Asian countries as per India's Look East Policy which was formulated during PM Narasimha Rao's govt in 1992 for better economic engagement with its eastern neighbors but successive government later successfully turned it into a tool for forging strategic partnership and security cooperation with countries in that region in general and Vietnam and Japan in an Act East Policy

Neighbourhood first policy

One of the major policy initiatives taken by Modi government is to focus back on its immediate neighbors in South Asia. Even before becoming the Prime Minister he hinted that his foreign policy will actively focus on improving ties with India's immediate neighbours which is being termed as neighbourhood first policy in the media and he started well by inviting all heads of state heads of government of South Asian countries in his inauguration and on the second day on office he held bilateral talks with all of them individually which was dubbed as a mini SAARC summit by the media.[36] Later during a launch event at ISRO he has asked Indian scientists to take the endeavour to develop a dedicated SAARC satellite to share the fruits of the technology like Tele-Medicine, E- program in the region.

Indian Ocean outreach

The Indian Ocean region (IOR), which is long been considered as India's nautical backyard, steadily turning into a hotspot thanks to growing Chinese strategic presence over the region's numerous strategically located archipelagos. To counter the recent moves made by China. India started to reach out its maritime neighbours in the IOR with proposals of enhanced economic and security cooperation The policy towards IOR started to unfold during Sri Lankan president's visit to New Delhi in early February 2015 Following that Modi embarks on a three nations visit to Mauritius, Seychelles and Sri Lanka, although Maldives was also initially part of this outreach but recent political turmoil in that country led to last-minute cancellation of the scheduled visit. It is interesting to see that ahead of Modi's scheduled visit to Beijing in May 2015, India wants to project that it commands a strategic supremacy over the IOR and its relations with its maritime neighbours are far more cordial than that of China's with particular reference to South China sea.

Project Mausam]

On the back of growing Chinese naval activity in the Indian ocean region, which India considers its area of supremacy, the Modi administration have introduced Project Mausam, which is believed to rival the Chinese Maritime Silk Road (MSR) initiative Mausam which means weather or season in many South and Southeast Asian languages is highlighted because of its profound role in cultural exchanges in region as in ancient time maritime trade used to depend on seasonal monsoon winds. The project which is still in the evolving phase, is being worked on with the Cultural Ministry, will focus on the ancient trade and cultural linkages and emphasize on future maritime cooperation in the Indian ocean region stretching from Southeast Asia to East Africa with the central location of India, from where the ocean derived its name.

Cooperation with Pacific Islands

Modi visit to Fiji soon after democracy was re-established in the island country after 8 years. There apart from bilateral meeting, he also met heads of state government from 14 Pacific island states to enhance India's engagement in the region and proposed a 'Forum for India- Pacific Islands Cooperation' (FIPIC) be held on a regular basis He conveyed there India's keenness to work closely with Pacific Island nations to advance their development priorities in this regard a number of measures to strengthen India's partnership in the region were proposed which include setting up of a 'special fund of \$1 billion' for adapting climate change vis-a-vis clean energy, establishing a 'trade office' in India, 'Pan Pacific Islands e-network' to close the physical distance between the islands by improving digital connectivity, extending visa on arrival at Indian airports for all the fourteen Pacific Island countries, 'space cooperation' in space technology applications for improving

the quality of life of the islands, 'training to diplomats' from Pacific Island countries to increase mutual understanding.

Fast-track Diplomacy

On finish of the initial 100 days of Modi government the External Affairs Ministry distributed a booklet called "Quick Track Diplomacy indicate packaging the accomplishment made in the remote strategy field. In her first media Indian External Affairs Ministry alludes the locale of 'Center east' as West Asia and not as Middle East which is a more prevalent attribution, especially in the western nations. The district assumes an imperative part in India's economy as it supplies almost two third of India's aggregate oil import, reciprocal exchange is additionally thriving as of late especially with UAE and other bay states. Throughout the years a large number of Indian for the most part average workers have moved to the bay searching for occupations and they represent a sizeable partake in the aggregate settlements got from abroad.

Link West policy

In an attempt to strengthen ties with India's western neighbors uniquely the bay nations Modi proposed this strategy to supplement his Act East approach concerning East Asia. Despite the fact that it is called 'Connect West' which gives it a greater land essence, it is well on the way to concentrate on the center east and a portion of the India's vital masterminds are calling it as Modi's center east arrangement The West Asia Approach of India is working effectively and its relations with Middle East are enhancing since Modi came in power. The West Asia Approach" of India is currently its key procedure to win Middle East. Indian outside strategy creators say that India's advantages in the GCC nations are personally connected with its vitality security, exchange, work for Indians and settlements while Middle Eastern remote arrangement specialists trust that India has showcased itself as "Security Partner" amid Modi's visit to UAE. Given the monetary and human security interests, the steadiness and security of the GCC nations is vital for

At the tallness of the pressure amongst Israel and Hamas in July India offered an explanatory judgment considering both sides in charge of emitting brutality and requested that Israel stop "unbalanced utilization of compel" in Gaza which was perused by numerous as takeoff from custom of more vocal backings for the Palestinian cause. Outside Affairs Minister Swaraj demanded that "there is positively no adjustment in India's arrangement towards Palestine, which is that we completely bolster the Palestinian cause while keeping up great relations with Israel. " clearing up India's present position on the issue. That may seem like fence-sitting, however it is an approach shared by every single Indian legislature of the previous 20 years taking after the foundation of formal strategic connection in 1992.

Sushma Swaraj in passing a determination denouncing Israel for 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict by saying that "India has neighborly connection with both Israel and Palestine and subsequently any such move may affect its kinship contrarily". Albeit later in a typical signal India went along with others BRICS countries in voting at the United Nations Human Rights Council for a test into the asserted human rights infringement in Gaza. Which created

US secretary of States John Kerry went to New Delhi to set up the reason for Modi's first since forever US visit as Prime Minister., Modi said that "India and the United States are bound together, by history and culture" yet recognized that there have been "good and bad times" in relations Modi ventured out to US from 27–30 September 2014 start with his lady address in the United Nations general gathering took after by going to an affair open gathering by the Indian American people group in New York's Madison Square Garden before heading Washington, D.C. for the respective converse with Obama. While there, Modi likewise met a few American business pioneers and welcomed them to join his aggressive Make in India program in an offer to make India an assembling center point. Later President Obama welcomed Modi by calling him a "Man of Action".

Russia, India's long term strategic ally for more that half a century, enjoys a special privileged strategic cooperation unparalleled in India's foreign relation. But over the years especially after the end of cold war the

relation experienced strain as India started diversifying its defence purchases from an totally Soviet dominated one. But with Putin and Modi, both with strongman image at their home country, at the helm of affairs in their respective foreign policy it is expected to get a push. During the 20th 'India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation' (IRIGC-TEC) held on 5 November 2014 in New Delhi Modi met the Russian deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin and had reassured the visiting side that the new dispensation in New Delhi will continue to attach very high importance to the time-tested and special strategic partnership with Russia. The annual commission meeting have identified new areas of cooperation including prioritising the International North South Corridor Project (INSTC), start negotiating on a Free Trade Agreement between India and the Euresian customs union, focusing on enhancing economic partnership in areas like energy, civil aviation and diamond trade along with Russian participation in Modi's smart city project. Earlier on his first meeting with Putin, emphasising Russia's indispensable position in India's foreign policy Modi went on to saying that even a child in India considers Russia as its best friend. This meeting in Brazil at the sidelines of BRICS summit served well as the familiarisation between the two leaders.

President Putin visited New Delhi on 11 December 2014 for the annual summit, first after Modi assumes office. Trade and energy cooperation dominated the talks as they set a target of US\$30 billion of bilateral trade by 2025 with equal amount of investment in each other's economy. On the backdrop of increasing western sanctions Putin earlier signed a gas deals with China worth US\$400 billion believed to be heavily tilted in China's favour. India too was keen to strike an energy agreement on line of above. During the summit both sides agreed for a joint feasibility study of building gas pipeline through China The two sides signed a total of 16 agreements and memorandum of understanding on various fields. Agreements on long term oil and gas cooperation have been signed between ONGC Videsh and Essar Oil of India and Russia's Rosneft, Gasprom Putin also vowed to install 10 more nuclear reactors in next 20 years including adding more units to Kudankulam plant. Another burgeoning aspect in bilateral relations emerged in the form of Diamond trading, While Russia is the largest producer of raw diamond, India is the global hub of cutting and polishing raw diamonds. Russia has agreed to export raw

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION SUMMIT

Now India is secured permanent membership in Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Earlier India is not a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which is known to be a China backed bloc for military and energy cooperation, holds observer status from 2005 and publicly expressed its wish for a full membership. Although Russia has all along backed India's entry it was Beijing's reservation which held it so long Chinese president Xi Jinping has informed Modi during BRICS summit in Brazil that it is ready to welcome India together with Pakistan in order to project a united front against Islamic extremism in Central Asia including Afghanistan specially after NATO withdrawal. On 11–12 September EAM Sushma Swaraj attended the Dushanbe summit in Tajikistan where India formally put its paper for a full membership and now it is likely to be granted soon according to Chinese officials

Modi delivered his maiden speech in the sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September 2014, where he called for reform and expansion of United Nations Security Council including India's long standing demand of a permanent membership. He expressed his concerns over the relevance of a 20th-century setup in 21st century and the need to evaluate UN's performance in the past 70 years. He had also argued why UN should serve as G-All for global governance instead of several parallel sub-groupings like G7, G20 etc. In the wake of ISIS threat in West Asia and similar in other parts of the globe he urged for immediate implementation of 'Comprehensive on International Terrorism' by the UN and offered India's pro-active role in it citing India as a victim of terrorism for decades. Prior to his speech he along with External Affairs Minister Swaraj met UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and discussed UN governance relating issues.[149] Ridiculing the possibility of any multilateral intervention, a demand Sharif has made in his address at the UNGA on 26 September, on Kashmir related matter he stated that his govt is ready for

'bilateral talk' to Pakistan provided Pakistan should cultivate suitable environment for talks by giving up terrorism policy against India.

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