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Foreign policy of India under Modi government

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Abstract

A major problem in India's foreign policy is its illusion that it is somehow competing with China. We are certainly a budding rival of China, the only one with sufficient physical size and population to offset its power. But we are a long way from actualizing the potential. In the meantime, we urgently need a strategy to do so. Because of the enormous difference in economic and military power between India and China, what we need are asymmetrical means of dealing with Beijing. We have substantial soft-power assets, but those can only be effective together with the real currency of hard power cash and exportable military goods. The broad thrust of India's foreign policy remains is legitimate and worthwhile. But what is needed is retrenchment and focus. We cannot take on China across the-board. Our South Asian neighbourhood is a priority, and Modi's outreach to the Persian Gulf has great value because that is the most important external region for India.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Modi government, Indian economy etc.

Introduction

Foreign Policy can be defined as a set of principles, decisions and means, adopted and followed by a nation for securing her goals of national interest in international relations. Foreign Policy defines the goals of national interest and then tries to secure these through the exercise of national power. "Foreign Policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment." George Modelski. The Ministry of External Affairs of India (MEA), also known as the Foreign Ministry, is the government agency responsible for the conduct of foreign relations of India. With the world's third largest military expenditure, second largest armed force, fifth largest economy by nominal rates and third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, (NBR. 2 April 2009) India is a regional nuclear power, a nascent global power and a potential superpower. India has a growing international influence and a prominent voice in global affairs. India faces serious economic and social issues as a result of centuries of economic exploitation by colonial powers.

India's foreign policy has always regarded the concept of neighborhood as one of widening concentric circles, around a central axis of historical and cultural commonalities. (27 July 2008 at the Way back Machine) Pranab Mukherjee, the former Finance Minister of India and former President of India with former US President George W. Bush in 2008. As many as 44 million people of Indian origin live and work abroad and constitute an important link with the mother country. An important role of India's foreign policy has been to ensure their welfare and wellbeing within the framework of the laws of the country where they live.

Objectives

1. To access the foreign policy of India under Modi government.
2. To access Modi's policy regarding China, Pakistan and United States of America.

Methodology

The present study is purely based on secondary sources of data. An extensive literature survey has been done. Secondary data include both quantitative and qualitative is collected from different sources, including books, Reports, research papers, newspapers, magazines, Minister officials and websites is used for the purpose of study.

Major shifts of Indian foreign policies from Nehrouvian era

Indian foreign policy is undergoing a paradigm shift (Neelam Deo 14 December 2016).

It has had several such shifts over the last seven decades, but over the course of time, these have amounted to continuity. Foreign policy analyst C. Raja Mohan best described this phenomenon as “transformation through incremental adaptation”. While Indian foreign policy under successive prime ministers has adjusted to changing global geopolitical dynamics, Modi has brought to it a new energy and clarity of articulation. His bold moves, while taking the country closer to the United States, and repeated outreach towards Pakistan and China, despite some setbacks, combined with rapid changes in the global matrix, are taking India into uncharted waters. To assess the shifts in India’s foreign policy undertaken by previous Indian governments, it is necessary to first identify ‘inflection points’ in the global context. An inflection point refers to a development that fundamentally resets the matrix of the global order. After identifying the most significant geopolitically dislocating inflection points since the end of the Second World War, an attempt will be made to examine the foreign policy shifts under successive Indian prime ministers by constructing a timeline.

Evolution of India’s foreign policy

India itself has changed since the economic reform programme was initiated in 1991. GDP growth rates have risen as a result of economic liberalisation and globalisation. While socialist planning policies are being abandoned, redistributive policies continue simply because in democracies, the more numerous poor matter. However, India remains at the lower end of the middle income countries and continues to suffer low human development indices. Therefore, the primary objective of foreign policy remains a peaceful global and regional environment in which the economy can grow rapidly. Other objectives include, energy, food and water security, safety of the Indian diaspora, and global issues, such as nuclear disarmament, fair trade, and the environment. Apart from the failure to provide good health and education services, what has constrained India from achieving its foreign policy objectives has been the unremitting hostility of Pakistan and its military and nuclear nexus with China. The decades of economic sanctions imposed by the West, combined with the denial of access to high-technology in the aftermath of the Pokhran-I nuclear tests in 1974, slowed down modernisation of the Indian economy. Since India is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council, it has limited bargaining power in international politics. Therefore, although it has been well established that Pakistan engages in terrorist activities in India, the continued diplomatic support and arms supplies it receives from the US and China have worked to the detriment of India’s prime objective of ensuring a peaceful South Asian neighbourhood. In examining the evolution of our foreign policy timeline, it is essential to recall that newly independent India faced an enormous humanitarian crisis, caused by the simultaneous partition of the country, which resulted in unprecedented interreligious violence and the displacement of millions of people. However, despite the partition and the invasion by Pakistani irregulars of Kashmir in 1947, independent India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, a convinced internationalist, worked with the United Nations organisation for a fundamental transformation of the global political and economic order to end colonialism,

eliminate war, promote universal nuclear disarmament, and reduce economic inequality among countries through fairer trade practices. This faith led Nehru to take the Kashmir dispute to the UN, which, with the benefit of hindsight, is being seen as a major error of judgement. But he was also a realist. Despite his lifelong fight against colonialism he kept India in the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly British Commonwealth). Determined to keep out of big power rivalries, Nehru crafted the policy of non-alignment and spearheaded the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) to maintain economic and strategic autonomy. He believed strongly in nuclear disarmament for moral reasons, given the devastation caused by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also for pragmatic reasons as India was a weak military power, compared to the battle-hardened Chinese communist cadres that formed the People’s Liberation Army. Although he made another fatal error by believing that China, another newly liberated Asian country, would not launch a war against India, yet, when the war broke out in 1962, Nehru had no compunction about seeking American diplomatic and military assistance.

If Nehru created the framework of non-alignment for India’s foreign policy, his daughter Indira Gandhi, when she became the Prime Minister, changed the dynamic of the way India engaged with both its neighbours and the big powers. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came to power in 1966 at a time when the Indian economy was stagnating and the country depended on the U.S. for food grains to avert famine. Even the U.S.S.R., which had mediated an end to the India-Pakistan War of 1965, was known to have offered Pakistan help to achieve military parity with India. Moreover, the U.S., feeling trapped in the war in Vietnam, was using Pakistan as an intermediary to China to help bring an end to that prolonged conflict.

China was receptive because its own ideological affinity with the U.S.S.R. had already frayed. And Pakistan, with American aid and weapons, had begun an assault on the Bengali population of East Pakistan, restive because of continued discrimination by a Punjabi-dominated Pakistani army. This caused an unprecedented 10 million refugees to cross the border into India. Not with standing the hostility of the Nixon-Kissinger duo in the U.S., PM Gandhi supported the liberation of Bangladesh after securing a Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union. Thus, she took advantage of Cold War rivalries to promote the breakup of Pakistan in 1971 despite vociferous U.S. and Chinese support for Pakistan, including the deployment of the fifth fleet of the U.S. Navy in the Bay of Bengal. Seemingly inexplicably, but perhaps under western pressure, she signed away the leverage of 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war, held by India, without getting President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s public agreement that the Line of Control (LoC) between Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir would be the international border between India and Pakistan, de jure, in the Shimla Agreement of 1972. A confident Gandhi then went ahead with India’s first nuclear test, Pokhran-I, in 1974, but that was four years after the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force. What followed were debilitating western sanctions and the gradual build-up of a comprehensive technology denial ecosystem, which India continues to struggle against, and which has cost the Indian economy dear. If Indira Gandhi was a bold changemaker her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, had perforce to play the role of an ice breaker. He came into power at a global

inflection point, with the Reagan administration in the U.S. and Gorbachev in the U.S.S.R. pulling Soviet troops out of Afghanistan. This was a period of enormous prestige for Pakistan over its years of working with the CIA to support the Mujahedeen in fighting the Soviet forces. In this fraught setting, Rajiv Gandhi, having put aside his mother's hardline position with both the US and China, reached out to the US for technology. He visited China to begin post 1962 normalisation of relations with the reformist Deng Xiaoping. He also broke the ice in relations with ASEAN and became India's first PM to reach out to the military junta by visiting Myanmar to build a working relationship to contain the Chinese-trained and armed separatists in India's North East. But he blundered too by deploying the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka where he was outmanoeuvred by Sri Lankan President Jayewardene, with India ending up losing the trust of both the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils.

Foreign policies of India under Modi

The foreign policy of the Modi government (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 (Harsh V. Pant. February 2015). The Ministry of External Affairs, headed by External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar 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, (Lakshmi, Rama. "Modi's speech in Nepal shows India is paying attention to its neighbors". The Washington Post. Retrieved 6 August 2014). 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 within the first 100 days of his government, followed by the United States, Myanmar, Australia, and Fiji.

Background

While CM of Gujarat, and under sanction from Western states like the United States, Modi made several foreign trips to foster his business links with major Asian economic powers. This included meeting Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe twice in 2007 and 2012 and building a personal rapport. (Rajeev Sharma June 2014) He also reached out for investment deals with China] (Zeenews.india.com 2014) and Israel, (Moskowitz July 2014), who sought to increase economic ties beyond defence and agriculture, according to outgoing Israeli Ambassador Alon Ushpiz. (The Times of India 5 August 2014). 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 (The Times of India 5 August 2014).

General election

(The Indian Express. 23 February 2014), Though Modi made no major foreign policy speeches during the general election campaign 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 eastern 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 it. 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. Modi's first foreign policy outlook were revealed during the run up for the Prime Ministerial candidature in his party in when he in a Network 18 program called 'Think India, dialogue forum' had outlined the following points. Improving relations with immediate neighbours would be his priority as peace and tranquillity 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. Modi further responded to the many congratulatory messages and phone calls from most world leaders that he received in the aftermath of his historic election victory.

Inauguration

Even before he formally took charge of office Modi, Prime Minister elect, had made his maiden foreign policy statement by inviting all the heads of state/heads of government of India's neighbours 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. Krishna Uppuluri (25 May 2014). The media reacted positively to this in response to their own criticism of his foreign policy.

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 envoys 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. (Businessweek. 10 June 2014, Iftikhar Gilani (10 June 2014)) To take the early movers advantage China was first to send its envoy to India after Modi government 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. (defense news. com. 30 July 2014) Russian Deputy Chairman Dmitry Rogozin visited India on 18–19 June 2014 to reach out the new government led by Narendra Modi. 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. British Foreign Secretary William Hague visited India on 7–8 July. During his meeting with Modi he lobbied hard again for Eurofighter Typhoon as a last minute alternative for Dassault Rafale which is yet to be signed. Prior to his India trip U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry emphasized the importance of US-India in twenty first century and borrowed "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas", a Hindi slogan from Modi's campaign meaning "together with all, development for all" (or simply, inclusive growth) and said America shared this goal and willing to work in full cooperation with the new government to realize it. He arrived in New Delhi on 1 August and held bilateral talks with his Indian counterpart to make the groundwork ready for Modi's upcoming USA visit and also bided a strong lobby to gain support from India for sanctions on Russia amidst the 2014 Ukraine crisis. Swaraj said in regards to 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.

Foreign policy team

Sushma Swaraj, one of the senior most leaders 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. (Hindustan Times. 31 May 2014) 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. (TheDiplomat. 15 February 2015) On 28 January 2015, only a day after the US President Barack Obama's successful India visit Modi government 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 was 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. His secondary aides also include Arvind Gupta (deputy NSA) and MJ Akbar (sworn in as the Minister of State for External Affairs).

Policy initiative

Former National Security Adviser & Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, an academic at Brookings, opined that the Modi Government's foreign policy is one of "strategic incoherence", executed without an "overarching conceptual framework". Ravi Kumar Pillai Kandamath (2018) There has been many policy initiatives since that has been taking the headlines:

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 government in 1992 for better economic engagement with its eastern neighbours 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 particular. (Vietnam News Agency. 18 November 2013) In her recent visit to Hanoi, Vietnam Sushma Swaraj has stressed on the need for an "Act East Policy" that she said should replace India's over two decade-old "Look East Policy" emphasizing a more proactive role for India in this region.

Neighbourhood first policy

One of the major policy initiatives taken by Modi government is to focus back on its immediate neighbours in South Asia. Gujral doctrine was important approach where India made its relation with its neighborhood which is stand on five important principal. (The Economic Times. 3 July 2014, Gateway House. 25 August 2014, and The New York Times. 7 June 2014). Even before becoming the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi hinted that his foreign policy will actively focus on improving ties with India's immediate neighbours which is being termed "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. (The Sunday Times (Sri Lanka). 1 June 2014) 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 learning etc. with the people across South Asia to complement the currently operating Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme program in the region.

Indian Ocean outreach

The Indian Ocean region (IOR), which has long been considered as India's nautical backyard, is steadily turning into a hotspot thanks to growing Chinese strategic presence over the region's numerous strategically located archipelagos. (The Diplomat. 24 February 2015) To counter the recent moves made by China on the name of President Xi's pet Maritime Silk Road project, India started to reach out its maritime neighbours in the IOR with proposals of enhanced economic and security cooperation. (Mid Day. 3 March 2015) 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 Yatra (travel) 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. (The Times of India. 18 February 2015) Ahead of Modi's scheduled visit to Beijing in May 2015, India wanted to project that it commanded a strategic supremacy over the IOR and that its relations with its maritime neighbours were far more cordial than that of China's with particular reference to South China sea.

Cooperation with Pacific Islands

Modi chose to visit 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. (The Times of India. 20 November 2014) 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. (Fiji Live. 20 November 2014) He also expressed his willingness to host the leaders in any of India's coastal town for the next summit in 2015. It was quite significant to see Chinese President Xi following Modi's trail visited Fiji on 21 November (just 2 days after Modi's trip) to meet a similar gathering of leaders indicating a struggle for influence between the two Asian giants in the island countries of south Pacific.

Fast-track Diplomacy

(The Economic Times. 9 September 2014) On completion of the first 100 days of Modi government the External Affairs Ministry published a booklet called "Fast Track Diplomacy" show-casing the achievement made in the foreign policy arena.

In her first media interaction the minister Sushma Swaraj said the catchphrase for her tenure was "fast-track diplomacy" and said it had three faces – proactive, strong and sensitive. Since taking office the External Affairs Minister held round-table meeting with all Indian heads of missions to the SAARC region, ASEAN region and Middle East separately as a follow up measure to carry forward the leads gained by high-profile visits and exchanges.

South China Sea disputes

(Foreign Policy, 27 April 2018) Though India's exclusive economic zone does not extend into the South China Sea, the region is geopolitically important to India as a high volume of its trade passes through the South China Sea. Modi intends India to act as a stabilizing force in the Indo-Pacific Region as a part of Modi's underlying Act East foreign policy initiative.

South Asia policy

(The Economic Times. 3 July 2014) Even before becoming the Prime Minister Narendra Modi 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. 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-learning etc. with the people across South Asia to complement the currently operating Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme program in the region. Total Trade between India and South Asian States (value in US \$millions)

Trade between India and south Asian countries

West Asia policy

Indian External Affairs Ministry refers the region of 'Middle east' as West Asia and not as Middle East which is a more popular attribution, particularly in the western countries. The region plays a vital role in India's economy as it supplies nearly two third of India's total oil import, bilateral trade is also flourishing in recent years particularly with UAE and other Gulf states. Over the years millions of Indian mostly working class have migrated to the Gulf looking for jobs and they account for a sizeable share in the total remittances received from abroad.

Link West policy

In an attempt to strengthen ties with India's western neighbours specially the Gulf countries, Modi proposed this policy to complement his Act East policy concerning East Asia. Although it is called 'Link West' (West of India) which gives it a bigger geographical connotation, it is most likely to focus on the middle-east and some of the India's strategic thinkers are calling it as Modi's middle-east policy. (C Raja Mohan (5 October 2014) The West Asia Approach of India is working successfully and its relations with Middle East are improving since Modi came in power. The "West Asia Approach" of India is now its key strategy to win Middle East. Indian foreign policy makers say that India's interests in the GCC countries are intimately linked with its energy security, trade, employment for Indians and remittances while Middle Eastern foreign policy experts believe that India has showcased itself as "Security Partner" during Modi's visit to UAE. Given the economic and human security interests, the stability and security of the GCC countries is crucial for India because huge flow of remittances comes from GCC to the Indian economy.

Modi's Policy Regarding U.S.A., China and Pakistan. Relations of India with U.S.A. under Modi Government.

(The Times of India 18 March 2005) During the run-up to the general election there was wide-ranging scepticism regarding future of the strategic bilateral relation under Modi's premiership as in 2005 he was, while Chief Minister of Gujarat, denied a U.S. visa during the Bush administration for his alleged poor human rights records. (Wall Street Journal 22 September 2014) However sensing Modi's inevitable victory well before the election, the US Ambassador Nancy Powell had reached out to him as part of greater re-approachment from the west. (Whitehouse.gov. 16 May 2014. Retrieved 14 June 2014) Moreover, following his 2014 election as the Prime Minister of India President Obama congratulated him over telephone and invited him to visit the US. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited New Delhi on 1 August to prepare the grounds for Modi's first ever US visit as Prime Minister. In September 2014, days before visiting the US in an interview to CNN's Fareed Zakaria, Modi said that "India and the United States are bound together, by history and culture" but acknowledged that there have been "ups and downs" in relations. (Wall Street Journal. 21 September 2014) Modi travelled to US

from 27–30 September 2014, beginning with his maiden address in the United Nations general assembly followed by attending a gala public reception by the Indian American community in New York's Madison Square Garden before heading Washington, D.C. for the bilateral talk with Obama. While there, Modi also met several American business leaders and invited them to join his ambitious Make in India program in a bid to make India a manufacturing hub. Burke, Jason (28 September 2014) Later President Obama greeted Modi by calling him a "Man of Action" during their brief interaction at the Gala dinner hosted by Myanmar's President on the eve of ninth East Asia Summit this was their second meeting since Obama hosted a rare dinner for Modi at the White House on 29 September 2014. (The Economic Times. 12 November 2014) On 9 December 2014 US Senate confirmed Richard Rahul Verma as the US Ambassador to India, the first Indian American to hold the office, signalling the Obama administration's will to elevate the relation with India to a newer height. He assumed office in the US Embassy in New Delhi on 19 December 2014. (The Economic Times. 12 November 2014) Modi invited President Obama to be the first US President to grace the 66th Republic Day celebration as Chief guest, an honour typically reserved for India's closest ally. President Obama was the first US President to visit India twice in office and the two leaders now scheduled to hold back to back summits within six months which is being referred as Modi's diplomatic coup by the media. "This Republic Day, we hope to have a friend over... invited President Obama to be the 1st US president to grace the occasion as chief guest."-Modi tweeted. On 26 June 2017, Modi met with U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington, DC where they discussed trade, specifically airplanes and natural gas, and terrorism.

USTR Report8 April 2019,) reported that Under Prime Minister Modi, India-US bilateral trade of goods and services has crossed the goal of US\$100 billion set during the term of President Barack Obama, to breach US\$126.2 billion as of 2017. Either side's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) witnessed a double-digit growth in 2017-with US FDI in India rising by 15.1-percent and India's FDI in the US surging by 11.5 percent (See Figure 1). (Prashant K. Nanda, 14 November 2018) Further, immigration has emerged as a political lightening rod under Trump, even causing an across-the-board decline in international student enrolments. Of those foreign students, Indian nationals accounted for 17.9 percent in 2017-18-second only to Chinese nationals, contributing US\$7.5 billion to the US economy.

Meanwhile, the number of US students studying in India has seen a year-on-year increase—from 4,181 to 4,704 in 2017-18. Importantly, the Modi government ramped up defence trade and force interoperability with the US. One may argue that this has largely stemmed from a convergence of interests with regards to a "free and open" Indo-Pacific, and a consensus on the US being India's "most important partner" amongst 75 percent of New Delhi's strategic community. Trade and FDI between USA and India while as various meeting for the development are mentioned in Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Modi of India After Bilateral Meeting January 2015 India-US Delhi Declaration of Friendship (Chalein saath saath; forward together we go) Declaration to elevate strategic dialogue to a strategic and commercial dialogue, and establish secured hotlines between heads of state and NSAs.

Conclusion

Indian External Affairs Ministry refers the region of 'Middle east' as West Asia and not as Middle East which is a more popular attribution, particularly in the western countries. The region plays a vital role in India's economy as it supplies nearly two third of India's total oil import, bilateral trade is also flourishing in recent years particularly with UAE and other gulf states. Over the years millions of Indian mostly working class have migrated to the gulf looking for jobs and they account for a sizeable share in the total remittances received from abroad. Modi seems to be on a permanent election campaign, unable to take the tough decisions needed for the next wave of reforms. Our worries are undiminished. Pakistan, far from being isolated for its support to terrorism, it is getting enhanced attention because of the compulsion of the great powers like the US, Russia and China to obtain peace in Afghanistan. Indeed, the Russia-Pakistan entente and the Russia-China relationship pose troubling questions for New Delhi. China continues to swarm over us in South Asia.

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