



India's Neighbourhood Policy during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government

Zahoor Ahmad Malik

Research Scholar, School of Studies in Political Science, Vikram University. Ujjain (M.P)

Email: rajazahoor786.s@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Neighbourhood policy assumes a basic part and is an imperative part of a foreign strategy of a nation. It has a prime hugeness in describing the crucial national and security interests of a nation. India has close authentic, religious, financial, ethnic and semantic association with every neighbouring state. India's relations with its neighbours, therefore, constitute a critical component of its foreign policy. Amid the UPA government, the expansive methodology of India's foreign policy towards its neighbours was to keep up serene and amicable relations with all. The UPA Government came out with a foreign policy which was purposeful, result-oriented and pro-active by giving high priority to relations with all its neighbours. The essential goal of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Government was to enhance the worldwide and territorial environment for maintaining India's development procedure and general advancement.

KEYWORDS: India; Neighbourhood; UPA Government; South Asia

INTRODUCTION

In International politics, the neighbouring nations assume a significant part and the pattern of relationship with the neighbours is therefore of paramount importance. The relationship between the two neighbouring nations is constantly noteworthy from the regional politics as well as from the perspective of world politics at large. There is no denying the way that the quick danger to any nation emerges from its neighbourhood. Naturally, the support of peace, dependability and fellowship with neighbouring states are viewed as essential to a country's foreign policy. India has additionally concurred most noteworthy priority to its neighbourhood. Different Indian governments have on and on made approach attestations such that despite the fact that a major nation, India does not act like a big brother; it has faith in amicable cooperation, peaceful settlement of disputes and good neighbourliness; it does not interfere in the

internal affairs of its neighbours and wishes to live with them on a footing of equality and partnership of mutual benefit, and that it doesn't try to an authority part, nor has it any hegemonic or expansionist aspiration.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

After independence, Indian policy makers understood the need and essentialness of neighbouring nations and at whatever point it was possible, they endeavoured to develop sincere relations with them. During the cold war period, one of the guideline establishments of India's foreign policy approach was to create a deliberately secure, politically stable, financially helpful and concordant neighbourhood. India's neighbourhood policy during the cold war was guided by the principle of peaceful co-existence. Nehru's policy of Panchsheel acted as a layout for



India's approach towards its neighbours. During this era, every single Prime Minister of India had given an unmistakable sign of India's longing to keep up a vital separation from conflicts and to search for a serene settlement of debate through quiet concurrence and fabricate agreeable relations with every one of the neighbours. From the mid-1960s to 1980s India's foreign policy was guided by 'Indira Doctrine' which is based on realistic approach and concentrated on India's immediate neighbourhood. The doctrine named after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was oriented by her view that India's security interests are comparable with the region as a whole, therefore, New Delhi had a legitimate extraterritorial enthusiasm to intercede in the inward issues of neighbours that forces risk to India's national interest and territorial predominance. The doctrine also stressed on the fact that the conflict in the neighbouring states should be negotiated always with India's immediate help and without the intervention of superpowers. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi attained the office of the Prime Minister of India and attempted to create such an atmosphere in South Asia that the fear of big brother or South Asian Hegemony of India could be evacuated through maintenance of low profile and cooperation in South Asia. Rajiv Gandhi believed that non-interference, peaceful coexistence and non-alignment should be the guiding principles of India's relationship with its neighbours. He wanted to advance the idea of the regional development of South Asia.

The return of the Congress to power in 1991 coincided with the end of the Cold War and India embarked on the path of economic liberalisation. The wide scale financial changes of this period pulled in the neighbours except Pakistan to look for more profound monetary engagement with

India. The emergence of the United Front Government in 1996 with I.K. Gujral minister and later as Prime Minister is seen by many as marking a new phase in India's approach towards her neighbours based on the Gujral Doctrine of magnanimity and non-reciprocity, unilateral initiatives and peaceful solution of disputes. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Governments that came to power in India after the Gujral era continued seeking after a policy approach towards the neighbouring nations in South Asia that tries to make an arrangement of dependence at the organisation and common society levels, however meanwhile, activated by the political authenticity of the global order. India went ahead to associate itself both financially and politically with diverse provincial associations and other critical nations.

UPA GOVERNMENT

The return of the Congress with its coalition partners of The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004 and 2009 stamped another new period of India's approach towards its neighbours. The UPA Government came out with an intentional, result-arranged and ace dynamic foreign approach, giving high need to relations with every one of its neighbours. The UPA government were extremely pragmatic in their respective neighbourhood policies towards South Asia that was reflected in carving a benevolent face of India in the region. The UPA government kept on pursuing a pragmatic policy approach towards the neighbouring nations in South Asia and moulded India's foreign arrangement with a craving to make an external situation supportive for peace and strength in the region, guaranteed a quickened monetary advancement and the shield of its national security. In the quest for this enlightened national interest, India endeavoured a far reaching



engagement with the world and the significant forces, with its broadened neighbourhood and its accomplices in the developing world and the Non-alignment Movement. The UPA government connected India both financially and politically with different regional associations and other essential nations with a goal of making a quiet, steady and prosperous neighbourhood. The UPA government appended the most noteworthy need to close and great neighbourly political, financial and social relations on the premise of sovereign fairness and shared admiration. During the UPA government, India laid a lot of stress on monetary reconciliation and it is working bilaterally through unilateral gestures and asymmetrical economic concessions to integrate its immediate neighbours into its economy. India's quick development amid this period offered a chance to its neighbours to quicken the procedure of monetary development and to work towards financial reliance among the states in the area. It was the hard endeavours of the UPA government that the SAFTA was marked in the SAARC and Afghanistan was given the participation which thusly given full regional identity to the SAARC. The UPA government saw the SAARC as a stage to reinforce the monetary, political and social linkages through the activities of peace, soundness and financial integration. A basic component in India's long-haul procedure of monetary incorporation with its neighbours is the advancement of outskirt framework which can encourage the quicker development of products and individuals over the borders.

Amid the UPA government, India's neighbourhood strategy additionally remained a theatre of different sorts of contention, as an uncertain regional question, ethnic, environmental and outskirt related strains inside and in addition between the states in the area. In spite of the fact

that, India's approach to deal with these contentions was evolving, however, it couldn't manage and use its approach measures in a well way. The changing security, structural planning of South Asia, particularly because of the rising Chinese profile in the subcontinent, turned into a noteworthy concern toward the UPA government. Terrorism also remained a scar for the region and the recent attacks across India only reflect the extent to which terror-networks have spread throughout the country and the region. The basis of this terrorist action lie unmistakably in the area. India keeps on working with and convince its neighbours to guarantee that they don't give backing to terrorist exercises in any structure. In the case of Pakistan, the levels of collaboration that India got were very little responsive.

Despite the fact that the UPA government made hard endeavours to fortify India's relations with its neighbours, however, its approach couldn't gain much ground because of the way that its strategy has infrequently encroached on collation interests. The UPA government failed to satisfy its driven plan as it was not able to set forward an exceeding political structure to connect with itself with its immediate neighbours. The UPA government neglected to take auspicious choices and deferred activities which antagonistically influenced the relationship. The UPA government's cautious approach and conveyance shortfall impeded the advancement of India to build up an all the more well disposed and productive relationship within the neighbourhood. Self-doubt, fears about losing strategic autonomy, and domestic political concerns altogether restricted New Delhi's ability to change its relations with South Asian neighbours. In short, the time of UPA Government was neither exceptionally ruddy nor had a dim shade. It proceeded with its trip on a



smooth plain and gave over to the successor Government with a trust of a more solid, capable and prosperous country.

POST-UPA GOVERNMENT

The NDA government that came to power in India in May 2014 showed another section in India's neighbourhood strategy. During the oath taking ceremony of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it had invited all the heads of the SAARC countries which gave rise to the expectations of developing peaceful, cordial and friendlier relationship with the neighbours. The post-UPA government under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that neighbourhood is the first area of consideration of its administration and it will stretch the need to advance the discretionary and well disposed relations with the immediate neighbours. In his first abroad visit to Bhutan, Modi flagged that India is a great deal more genuine in taking its neighbours on board for its general development and extending India's impact to the more extensive Asia Pacific. Narendra Modi also went by to Nepal for the reciprocal and the multi-parallel reasons and gave signs of building up a positive connection with the neighbours on the premise of collaboration and integration.

The neighbourhood policy of the Narendra Modi government is based on the bold initiatives and it offers a fresh opportunity to deal with different things differently. His neighbourhood strategy is marked by certifiable endeavours to build up a superior association with neighbours and resolve the remarkable contrasts. The area approach activities of the Narendra Modi government can be seen from the visits he has made to the neighbouring nations amid the first year in the office. Narendra Modi visited many neighbouring countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Sri

Lanka, Myanmar etc. and looked for different measures for the advancement of economic and political cooperation across the neighbourhood. The visit to the neighbouring nations has offered every nation a particular proposition for amplifying collaboration in a more extensive scope of segments.

In the near future, Prime Minister Modi's best bet is to pursue his neighbourhood policies, bilaterally and needs to reach out to all of the SAARC countries separately that may prove to be his most realistic path to success. Modi should find a way to manufacture certainty and should connect and step for everybody its neighbours take. If there is not the political will inside India for this, then Modi's drive will go no place. The other thing which is fundamental is to fortify track II diplomacy and people to people contact.

CONCLUSION

India would lean toward a quiet, prosperous neighbourhood receptive to its own particular needs and wishes. Be that as it may, from the beginning of its history as a free nation, India's foremost difficulties have incorporated the advancement of inward union and the administration of its frequently disturbed relations with its neighbouring nations. It is, therefore, pertinent that proactive steps must be taken to determine at the earliest the long standing political and monetary dispute with the neighbours who might minimise misperceptions about India and advance shared trust amongst the neighbouring nations. There is no denying the way that India's neighbourhood strategy which would influence the neighbouring nations would contribute essentially to enhance the nature of the nation's administration and bring measures to manage interior security circumstance viably. India must give careful



consideration of the building of a domestic consensus on key issues in the perspective of the overall circumstance, so as to manage the rising difficulties in its neighbourhood strategy. The Indian government, which assumed charge after the general elections in May 2014, has rightly comprehended that if India needs to assume a noteworthy part in Global Politics, then it should have the capacity to have an accord among its neighbours. The new government has comprehended that it needs the endeavours to shed its alleged Big Brother strategy and needs to include the neighbouring nations in tricking through delicate discretion instruments, for example, exchange and accelerating the development, subsequently proclaiming the need if required later on to push India's military vicinity in the pleasing nations.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bandyopadhyaya, Jayantanuja., *The Making of India's Foreign Policy*, Allied Publishers, Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2006, p. 67.
- [2] Baru, Sanjaya., *India and the World- Economics and Politics of the Manmohan Singh Doctrine in Foreign Policy*, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore, 2008, No. 53, p. 3.
- [3] Chander, Prakash., *India: Past and Present*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi, 2003, p. 261.
- [4] Chatterjee, Aneek., *International Relations Today: Concepts and Applications*, Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt.Ltd. New Delhi, 2010, p. 210.
- [5] Chattopadhyay, Pratip., *The Politics of India's Neighbourhood Policy in South Asia*, South Asian Survey, New Delhi, 2013, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 94.
- [6] Chaturvedy, Rajeev Raajan., *Neighbourhood First: Modi's Foreign Policy Mantra*, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore, 3 October 2014, No. 346, pp. 1-4.
- [7] Dutt, V.P., *India's Foreign Policy: Since Independence*, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, 2007, p. 130.
- [8] Gregory, Shan and Sultan, Maria., *Towards Strategic Stability in South Asia*, Contemporary South Asia, 2005, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 135-140.
- [9] Jain, S.B., *India's Foreign Policy and Non-Alignment*, Anamika Publishers & Distributors (P) LTD., New Delhi, 2000, p. 227.
- [10] Jayapalan, N., *Foreign Policy of India*, Atlantic Publishers & Dist, New Delhi, 2001, p. 13.
- [11] Mohan, C Raja and Chauhan, Rishika., *Modi's Foreign Policy: Focus on the Diaspora*, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore, 11 April 2015, No. 204, pp. 1-14.
- [12] Sharma, Reetika, Gorla, Ramvir and Mishra, Vivek., *India and the Dynamics of World Politics*, Dorling Kindersley (India) PVT. Ltd. New Delhi, 2011. p. 1.19.
- [13] Sisodia, S.S., *Foreign Policy of India: Indira Gandhi Era*, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 3-4.
- [14] Srivastav, Abhay., *Indian Foreign Policy*, Mohit Publications, New Delhi, 2011, p. 100.
- [15] Tripathi, Ambikesh Kumar., *Contemporary Challenges to India's Foreign Policy*, International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research, July 2012, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 91.
- [16] Vaughn, Bruce., *Indian Geopolitics, the United States and Evolving Correlates of Power in Asia*, Geopolitics, 2004, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 440-444.