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STUDY GUIDE

AIPPM

**BALANCING ACT: REDEFINING INDIA'S NON-ALIGNED
STANCE IN TODAY'S GEOPOLITICAL CHESS GAME**



LETTER FROM SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 6th edition of DPS Kolar Model United Nations! As we gather from October 4-6, 2024, under the theme "IGNITING CHANGE - Youth Leadership for Global Progress," we are reminded of the immense potential young leaders like yourselves have in shaping the future.

These study guides are your starting point, providing valuable insight into the global issues that demand our attention, from climate change to artificial intelligence and global equity. But they are just that – a starting point. The real value of this MUN comes from your own research, critical thinking, and the innovative solutions you bring to the table.

I urge you to dive deep into your committee's agendas, not just seeking solutions but also understanding the complexities behind them. This conference is about more than passing resolutions; it's about learning, listening, and growing as global citizens. Diplomatic success comes not just from speaking but from understanding different perspectives, building consensus, and forming meaningful collaborations.

Outside the formal sessions, take time to engage with your fellow delegates. Often, it's in the casual conversations and brainstorming moments where the best ideas and lasting friendships are formed.

As you prepare for this exciting journey, trust in your own voice, challenge the status quo, and don't be afraid to take bold steps. This MUN is your chance to lead, inspire, and ignite the change you wish to see in the world.

Looking forward to the debates, discussions, and ideas you will bring. Let's make this a transformative and impactful experience for all.

Warm regards,
Navya Parwani
Secretary General
DPS Kolar MUN

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AIPPM

Balancing Act: Redefining India's Non-Aligned Stance in Today's Geopolitical Chess Game

The contemporary global landscape is characterized by rapid changes in power dynamics, economic interdependencies, and security challenges, compelling nations to reassess their diplomatic strategies. At the forefront of this re-evaluation is India, a nation that has historically championed the principle of non-alignment since its independence. As we gather for the AIPPM committee in this Model United Nations, we embark on a critical exploration of India's non-aligned stance within the intricate web of today's geopolitical chess game. This agenda seeks to dissect the evolving nature of India's foreign policy in the context of increasing polarization among global powers, regional conflicts, and the rise of multilateral forums.

India's non-aligned policy, established during the Cold War, sought to navigate the ideological divides of the time while promoting peace, development, and cooperation among nations. However, the geopolitical landscape has dramatically shifted in recent decades. The emergence of new powers, the resurgence of nationalism, and the proliferation of non-state actors have transformed international relations, presenting both opportunities and challenges for India. As the world's largest democracy and a rapidly growing economy, India finds itself at a crossroads, necessitating a nuanced redefinition of its non-aligned approach that reflects the realities of the 21st century.

This agenda aims to critically analyze the implications of India's non-alignment in light of the current geopolitical tensions, particularly with regard to its relationships with major powers like the United States, China, and Russia. As the Indo-Pacific region becomes a focal point of strategic competition, India must carefully navigate its partnerships while maintaining its autonomy and preserving its interests. The need for a balanced approach has never been more pressing, as India seeks to assert its role as a regional leader and a responsible global player amidst rising global uncertainties.

Furthermore, this discussion will delve into India's engagement in multilateral platforms, such as the BRICS, G20, and the Quad, and their impact on its non-aligned stance. As these forums grow in prominence, India is presented with the opportunity to shape a collective agenda that aligns with its interests while fostering cooperation among diverse nations. However, the challenge remains in striking a balance between collaboration and maintaining a distinctly independent policy that upholds India's long-standing commitment to non-alignment.

In conclusion, this agenda on "Balancing Act: Redefining India's Non-Aligned Stance in Today's Geopolitical Chess Game" is not merely a reflection of India's past but a proactive blueprint for its future in a rapidly changing world. As delegates, we are tasked with analyzing the intricate relationships and power dynamics that define our times, ultimately striving to provide innovative solutions that ensure India remains a key player on the global stage while adhering to its foundational principles of non-alignment. Together, we will engage in constructive dialogue and strategic deliberation, paving the way for a more resilient and adaptive foreign policy framework for India.

Table Of Content

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Overview of India's foreign policy
- 1.2. The concept of non-alignment
- 1.3. Changing global dynamics and India's position

2. Historical Context

- 2.1. Origins of the Non-Aligned Movement
- 2.2. India's role in founding NAM
- 2.3. Evolution of non-alignment during the Cold War

3. From Non-Alignment to Multi-Alignment

- 3.1. Post-Cold War shifts in foreign policy
- 3.2. Emergence of strategic autonomy
- 3.3. Defining multi-alignment in Indian context

4. India's Strategic Partnerships

- 4.1. Relations with the United States
- 4.2. Engagement with Russia
- 4.3. India-China dynamics

5. Regional Dynamics

- 5.1. India's neighborhood policy
- 5.2. Role in South Asian geopolitics
- 5.3. Engagement with Southeast Asia and Indo-Pacific

6. India in International Organizations

- 6.1. Role in the United Nations
- 6.2. Participation in G20, BRICS, and SCO
- 6.3. Push for UN Security Council permanent membership

7. Economic Diplomacy

- 7.1. Trade policies and agreements
- 7.2. Foreign investment strategies
- 7.3. Energy security and diplomacy

8. Security Challenges and Responses

- 8.1. Counter-terrorism efforts
- 8.2. Nuclear policy and disarmament
- 8.3. Cybersecurity and emerging threats

9. Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

- 9.1. Promotion of Indian culture and values
- 9.2. Diaspora engagement
- 9.3. International aid and development cooperation

10. Climate Change and Environmental Diplomacy

- 10.1. India's stance in global climate negotiations
- 10.2. Renewable energy initiatives
- 10.3. International Solar Alliance

11. Balancing Competing Interests

- 11.1. Managing relations between rival powers
- 11.2. Reconciling economic and strategic interests
- 11.3. Domestic considerations in foreign policy

12. Case Studies

- 12.1. India's response to recent global crises
- 12.2. Successful diplomatic initiatives
- 12.3. Challenges in maintaining strategic autonomy

13. The Way Forward

- 13.1. Potential scenarios for India's global role
- 13.2. Strategies for effective multi-alignment
- 13.3. Balancing principles and pragmatism in foreign policy

14. Bibliography

Introduction

Overview of India's foreign policy:

India's foreign coverage, frequently defined as a "Balancing Act," revolves around preserving strategic autonomy while engaging with global powers in a multipolar world. India balances its relationships with America and Russia, fostering robust protection and financial ties with both no matter the geopolitical tensions between them. The country has deepened its engagement with the US via projects just like the Quad, whilst keeping its traditional defense relationship with Russia, exemplified by means of the acquisition of a crucial army device. Simultaneously, India manages a complicated courting with China, marked via both financial cooperation and protection worries, especially along their disputed border and in the Indo-Pacific place. Energy diplomacy performs a vital role, with India balancing ties between the United States-allied Gulf states and Iran to stable its electricity needs. Regionally, India's "Neighbourhood First" policy makes a speciality of fostering balance and cooperation with its South Asian buddies. On the global stage, India champions multilateralism and reforms in worldwide establishments, positioning itself as a frontrunner of the Global South in forums like BRICS and the G20. Through its pragmatic and flexible diplomacy, India seeks to protect its sovereignty, promote monetary increase, and decorate its role as rising international electricity.

The Concept of Non-Alignment:

India's non-alignment policy originated from its own colonial history and peaceful struggle for independence. The policy was designed to ensure that India's foreign policy remained free from the political and economic influence of Western capitalism and Soviet communism.

The term "Non-Alignment" was first used by India's first defence minister, V.K Menon, in a 1953 speech at the United Nations. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru later popularized the term from 1954 onwards. In a speech in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Nehru outlined five principles that would become the bedrock of NAM policy.

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Mutual non-aggression
- Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs
- Equality and mutual benefit
- Peaceful co-existence

These five principles, known as the Panchsheel

Changing global dynamics and India's position:

India's position in the emergent global order has been made much more significant with the progress of the world toward a multipolar system, having a variety of key powers. India is leveraging this shift to strengthen its strategic partnerships, urge reforms in global governance, and present itself as a leader of the Global South.

Within the perspective of an emerging multipolar world, India is cultivating relations with both Western and Eastern powers while keeping in balance her relations with the US, European Union, Japan, and Australia with close defense and economic ties with Russia. Its engagement in the Quad and Indo-Pacific strategy is a revealing expression of its pursuit of a balancing act vis-à-vis China's increasing influence, while it pursues complex bilateral relationships with Beijing.

India is also vocal on reforms in global institutions such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, where it aspires to a bigger role in decision-making, if not a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. It is also playing an active role in energy security and climate change initiatives, driving processes such as the International Solar Alliance and advocating for sustainable energy transitions.

India has joined the endeavor for equitable growth, addressed climate challenges, and given humanitarian aid, hence appearing to be for the voice of the Global South. In balancing its relations with China, the US, and Russia, management of disruptions in the global economy stands as looming challenges for India.

Historical Context

Origins of the Non-Aligned Movement

The Non-Aligned Movement has its origins from what has been referred to as the first large-scale Asian–African or Afro–Asian Conference, held on 18th– 24th April, 1955. It is popularly known as the Bandung Conference (taking on the name of the City where it was held – Bandung, Indonesia). The Conference was attended by delegations from twenty-nine (29) governments, mostly from Asia – owing to the fact that most of present-day African states were still under colonial control.

The Bandung Conference was convened to discuss peace and the role developing countries in the face of the raging cold war, as well as economic development and the decolonization of countries under colonial occupation. In other words, Bandung was convened out of a desire by the convening countries not to be involved in the East-West ideological confrontation of the Cold War, but rather to focus on national independence struggles and their economic development.

In 1961, drawing on the principles agreed at the Bandung Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement was formally established at the First (I) Summit held on 1st – 6th September, 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The twenty-five (25) countries that attended the First Summit were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Congo-Leopoldville (DRC), Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen and Yugoslavia.

India's role in founding NAM:

India, led by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, played a key role in founding the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to avoid siding with either the US or the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Nehru believed newly independent countries should stay neutral and not get involved in the power struggle between superpowers. His vision of non-alignment focused on maintaining peace, mutual respect, and avoiding interference in the internal matters of other nations.

Nehru's Panchsheel principles - peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and non-aggression - have all become NAM's basic ideas. India was heavily involved in organizing the Bandung Conference of 1955, which helped to unite the countries of Asia and Africa against colonialism and imperialism. India was involved in organizing the 1961 Belgrade Conference of developing countries, where NAM was formally founded with 25 member states.

India's contribution to NAM went beyond political neutrality. Nehru was an advocate of global disarmament. He urged all countries to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons, offering them only for defense purposes after negotiations on a dramatic simplification of complex small issues were squared away completely. And he called for the colonization efforts of countries that were pushing upwards to be completely rewarded while also weighing in on an important United Nations vote by upholding free China against attempts to replace it with Communist China. He also put forward the process through which new nations achieved

their independence, gave advice on running their countries and helped with skills usually needed in this modernized, mechanized world. He emphasized economic development and cooperation between developing countries, seeking self-reliance of nations based on their own resources. Through NAM, India rose to become the harbinger of peace and independence for new nations.

Evolution of non-alignment during the Cold War

The NAM arose in the Cold War to challenge the bipolar world generated by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. It aimed at permitting the newly independent nations, basically coming from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to remain neutral and not align into either superpower bloc.

The main stages of development in the movement:

- **Origins (1945-1955):** The origins were both anti-colonial and anti-imperialist, inspired by the sovereignty and economic independence of leaders such as Nehru, Nasser, and Tito.
- **Bandung Conference (1955):** A background conference to the NAM, which was constituted in 1961.
- **During the 1960s and 1970s,** the NAM expanded with more nations joining on the pretext of non-alignment. It also included those who had economically independent nations joining causes against apartheid and Palestinian rights.
- **Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s,** internal divisions and economic hardships continued to blur that movement, as many members were forced to begin showing alignment with one superpower over the other. Clearly, the relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement waned after the Cold War; it has since begun to find a new direction on such issues as economic inequality and global climate change.

From Non-Alignment to Multi-Alignment

Post-Cold War shifts in foreign policy

- **Revising Non-Alignment:** The termination of the Cold War, coupled with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, saw the initial rationale of NAM in neutrality within the East-West conflict turn less relevant. It needed to redefine its role in a world without bipolar superpower tension.
- **Economic Focus:** NAM focused on the problems of the global economy after the Cold War, emphasizing economic inequalities, challenges to development, and fair trade. Poverty reduction, relief of debts, and growth in developing countries became central to its agenda.
- **Opposition to U.S. Power:** Most NAM nations resisted U.S. hegemony as it arose as the sole superpower. Accordingly, they criticized U.S. intervention and called for a balanced structure of global powers—promoting the rise of powers like China and India—to counterbalance U.S. power.
- **Peacekeeping:** NAM focused on world peace and conflict resolution. The movement supported UN peacekeeping missions and strived for peaceful solutions of regional conflicts, particularly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, consistent with its commitment to stability.
- **South-South Cooperation:** The movement aimed to boost economic and political ties among developing countries. NAM encouraged regional partnerships to increase support and lessen reliance on former Cold War powers, promoting collaboration within NAM and groups like BRICS.
- **Tackling New Challenges:** NAM confronted new global challenges, including globalization, environmental issues, and terrorism. It needed to adapt to these threats while upholding its core principles of sovereignty, independence, and non-alignment. This meant addressing global issues like climate change and terrorism in line with NAM's foundational values.

Emergence of strategic autonomy

Strategic autonomy in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) emerged as a way for countries to maintain their independence and make their own decisions without being forced to choose sides between major powers. Originally, during the Cold War, NAM focused on staying neutral and safeguarding the sovereignty of newly independent nations. However, after the Cold War ended, the world shifted, and so did NAM's role.

Rather than aligning with any single superpower, NAM countries sought to protect their freedom to act in their own interests, both politically and economically. They advocated for multipolarity—a world where power is shared among many nations instead of being dominated by one. India played a key role in this, carefully managing relationships with the U.S., Russia, and others.

Today, strategic autonomy remains vital, allowing NAM countries to engage globally on their own terms while protecting their sovereignty from undue influence or intervention.

Defining multi-alignment in Indian context

Multi-Alignment is a series of parallel relationships that strengthen multilateral partnerships and seek a common approach among the grouping towards security, economic equity and the elimination of existential dangers like terrorism. Below are a few forums where India's Multi-Alignment Approach is clearly evident:

- International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC): A 7,200-kilometer multi-modal transport corridor that combines road, rail and maritime routes, connecting Saint Petersburg (Russia) to Mumbai. International North-South Transport Corridor offers a platform for India to collaborate with Russia, Iran, and the Central Asian Republics towards fostering a Eurasian Free Trade Area. Once fully operational, INSTC is expected to reduce freight costs by 30% and the journey time by 40% compared to the deep-sea route via the Suez Canal.
- BRICS: BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, seeks for economic, political and security cooperation including people-to-people exchange through a well-planned mechanism. India was instrumental in co-founding the New Development Bank (NDB), a new multilateral initiative expected to rival the World Bank.
- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: QUAD is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a "free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region and counter China.

India's Strategic Partnerships

Relations with the United States

India's relationship with the United States has undergone a remarkable transformation from the post-Cold War period to today. Historically, during the Cold War, India maintained a policy of non-alignment, avoiding close ties with either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, India and the U.S. began moving toward greater engagement, leading to the robust strategic partnership we see today.

A. Post-Cold War Period:

- After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India shifted its foreign policy, seeking new partnerships.
- India's economic liberalization in the early 1990s attracted U.S. investment and boosted trade relations.
- Diplomatic ties strengthened with key visits, such as U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to India in 2000.

B. Strategic Partnership Today:

- **Defense Cooperation:**
 - India is designated as a **Major Defense Partner** of the U.S.
 - Joint military exercises, technology sharing, and strategic agreements like **COMCASA**, **BECA**, and **LEMOA** enhance military collaboration.
 - Both countries are part of **the Quad** (with Japan and Australia) to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Economic Ties:**
 - The U.S. is one of India's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade surpassing \$190 billion.
 - Major U.S. tech companies like Google and Microsoft have a strong presence in India, while Indian IT firms contribute to the U.S. economy.
- **Shared Geopolitical Interests:**
 - Both nations focus on countering China's assertiveness, regional security, counterterrorism, and climate change.
 - Cooperation in maintaining freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific.
- **People-to-People Ties:**
 - The large Indian diaspora in the U.S. strengthens cultural, economic, and political relations.

- o Educational exchanges and professional contributions by Indian-Americans bolster ties.

Engagement with Russia

India's relationship with Russia has evolved from a Soviet-era alliance to a strategic partnership marked by strong defense ties, growing economic cooperation, and shared geopolitical interests. While the dynamics have shifted with India's expanding global alliances, Russia remains a key partner in India's strategic and defense policies, reflecting a resilient and multifaceted relationship that continues to adapt to the changing global landscape.

A. Post-Cold War Era:

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, India and Russia worked to transition their long-standing alliance into a modern partnership. Despite the major geopolitical shifts, Russia continued to be an essential partner for India, particularly in defense and energy.

Defense and Military Cooperation:

- **Strong Ties:** Russia remained a major supplier of military equipment to India, continuing a tradition of providing advanced technology and support.
- **Collaborative Projects:** The two countries worked together on key defense projects like the **BrahMos missile**, and engaged in joint military exercises that strengthened their defense relationship.

Economic and Energy Relations:

- **Energy Collaboration:** India and Russia deepened their energy ties, with Russia becoming an important source of oil and gas. The **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant** symbolizes their growing cooperation in nuclear energy.
- **Economic Growth:** While defense was the primary focus, the two nations also began exploring other economic opportunities, looking to expand their relationship beyond just military cooperation.

Geopolitical Cooperation:

- **Shared Goals:** Both countries supported each other in international forums like **BRICS** and **SCO**, advocating for a multipolar world and working together on global issues such as counterterrorism and climate change.

B. Today's Relationship:

Defense and Strategic Ties:

- **Ongoing Partnership:** Russia remains a crucial defense partner for India, continuing to supply military equipment and work on advanced defense projects.

- **Joint Ventures:** The countries maintain their collaboration on high-tech defense systems and joint military exercises, highlighting their strong strategic bond.

Energy and Economic Cooperation:

- **Energy Investments:** India and Russia continue to collaborate in the energy sector, with Indian investments in Russian oil fields and ongoing nuclear projects.
- **Broadening Economic Ties:** While defense remains a key area, both nations are working to diversify their economic relationship, exploring new opportunities for cooperation in technology and trade.

Geopolitical and Diplomatic Relations:

- **Balancing Act:** India's growing ties with Western nations like the U.S. require a careful balancing act in its relationship with Russia. Despite this, Russia remains an important partner, supporting India's global aspirations.
- **Mutual Support:** The two countries continue to back each other in international forums, working together on global challenges and promoting a balanced world order.

India-China dynamics:

The relationship between India and China has evolved from cautious engagement with resultant economic growth after the Cold War to the current complex dynamic. Despite progress in trade and economic ties, border disputes and rivalries affect their interactions. Both nations must navigate their differences while collaborating on global issues and ensuring stability in their relationship.

Post-Cold War:

1. Early Engagement and Economic Ties:

New Beginnings: Improvement in relations after the Cold War began between India and China, which were strained since the border conflict in 1962. In the early 1990s, there was renewed engagement.

Both countries introduced key economic reforms, thus opening up possibilities of trade and cooperation. They signed agreements to boost trade and investment.

2. Diplomatic Updates:

These include the establishment of mechanisms by India and China to manage their relationship: Special Representatives' talks on boundaries and the India-China Joint Economic Group.

Growing Trade: The bilateral trade rose, hence making China a key partner for India. Both sought to bolster economic ties regardless of disputes over their border.

3. Border Problems and Policy:

Border Disputes: Border disputes persisted despite better relations. Both countries aimed to resolve them through dialogue, though tensions sometimes arose.

Strategic Rivalry: With China's growing power, India considered it as a rival with the view of China's increasing role in South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Current Relationship:

1. Strategic and Economic Links:

Major Trading Partners: It is one of India's major trading partners, engaging in a wide range of sectors. Trade imbalances and competition continue.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): China's BRI with its infrastructure projects in South Asia has raised strategic and economic implications for India. It refused to join it, citing issues of sovereignty and transparency.

2. Border Conflicts:

Border dispute: Critical, the clash between the two countries in 2020 in the Galwan Valley explained the critical tension that existed between them. The efforts to ease tensions are still fragile.

Military Deployment: Military build-up along the borders by both countries has raised the tempo in regional security.

3. Diplomatic Relations:

India and China are the participants in multilateral forums such as BRICS and SCO, on one hand taking up global challenges together, while on the other trying to manage tensions.

Strategic Rivalry: China's rising influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean worries India. The nations manage a complex relationship of economic cooperation and strategic competition.

4. Cooperation vs. Conflict:

Climate Change and Global Challenges: Despite tensions, India and China cooperate on climate change and environmental protection at international forums.

Regional Influence: India and China have rivalry at influence in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific-a very important aspect of their relationship.

Regional Dynamics

India's neighborhood policy

India's neighborhood policy, also known as its "Neighborhood First" policy, focuses on strengthening ties with its immediate neighbors to promote regional stability, security, and economic growth. Here are some key aspects:

- The intention of having bilateral relations is in closer affinity with the neighboring countries like Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives.
- Enhancement of trade, investment, and connectivity form an essential element of this group. Efforts at this front are articulated through the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement and other connectivity initiatives.
- The key focus areas of India are on counter-terrorism and security cooperation, especially with countries such as Pakistan and China. It is engaged in constant discussions and initiatives to address the challenges of security in the region.
- India takes an active role in regional organizations such as SAARC and BIMSTEC. It focuses on regional integration and cooperation as a means to regional development.
- India also provides relief and assistance to neighboring countries when they have distress situations - be it a natural calamity or any kind of economic issue - thereby further enhancing its soft power and goodwill.
- Diplomatic Engagement uses high-level visits, dialogue, and diplomatic missions to further strengthen relationships and solve bilateral issues.

Role in South Asian geopolitics

India plays a significant role in South Asian geopolitics due to its size, economic power, and strategic location. Major elements includes:

- With regional leadership, India is the largest country in South Asia, and, invariably, takes the lead in all efforts and assumes a critical role in SAARC and BIMSTEC forums.
- India's rising power that acts as a counter to China's ascendance in the region is also evident in strategic partnerships and infrastructure development initiatives that must be continued.
- India is a regional security provider as it engages to battle acts of terrorism, piracy in the seas, and issues of instability with its neighbours on issues relating to defense as well as intelligence sharing.
- India acts as an anchor economic hub in South Asia that provides the world economies with markets, investments, and trade through itself to other countries. Initiation of SAFTA and regional connectivity initiatives only speak volumes of its importance.
- India leverages its cultural and historical connections with South Asian countries to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations.

Engagement with Southeast Asia and Indo-Pacific

India's engagement with Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region is guided by its "Act East" policy and a focus on maintaining a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

- **Act East Policy:** Increase economic, strategic, and cultural engagement with the Southeast Asian countries through more trade and investment and connectivity.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Strategic partnerships for development: India has developed strategic partnerships with key countries such as Japan, Australia, Vietnam, and Indonesia, focusing on defense cooperation, maritime security, and regional stability.
- **Economic Integration:** India is an active participant in the regional economic frameworks, including ASEAN and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It, however, had to disengage from RCEP to protect domestic industries.
- **Maritime Security:** Promote freedom of navigation and overflight in the Indo-Pacific; engages regional partners to enhance maritime security and address common threats such as piracy etc.
- **Multilateral Engagement:** Engage the Indo-Pacific with multilateral forums, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), in support of a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

India in International Organizations

Role in the United Nations

India has been an important actor for the United Nations. It not only assumes significant roles in its peacekeeping operations but also advocates strongly for reforms of the UN, including the Security Council's size, which would be expanded to include "emerging powers" like itself. It has been supporting and promoting multilateralism as the best way to advance global actions on terrorism, health, and nuclear disarmament. India has been actively contributing towards sustainable development efforts aimed at poverty eradication and climate change, keeping the economically needed solutions in balance while focusing on equitable solutions. It also plays an important role at the world level because of low-cost vaccines and medicines provided by it and for its involvement in UN cultural and human rights debates. Thus, the interaction of India with the UN reflects its interest in world peace, development and an international order which is just, more inclusive and equitable.

Participation in G20, BRICS, and SCO

India actively engages in global forums to enhance its international influence and address major global challenges. Its participation in the G20, BRICS, and SCO highlights its strategic priorities and commitment to regional and global stability.

G20: This comprises India's involvement in the discussion of global economic stability, sustainable development, climate issues, and the like. It also marks the case of developing countries and insists on the proper trade facilitation practice.

BRICS: In this context, India emphasizes the rise of its economic cooperation with the member states, supports the project of a New Development Bank for infrastructure development, and secures reforms for an international order toward a multipolar world.

SCO: India participates in regional security discussions, sharing counter-terrorism efforts, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges while seeking to maintain strategic balance in the light of Chinese and Russian influence.

Push for UN Security Council permanent membership

India remains to be a very active aspiring contender for a permanent seat at the UNSC since the post-World War II structure doesn't feature the current geopolitics that have taken over the world. It has enough reasons to justify its demand; for instance, some of the creditable contributions include being among the leading nations in UN peacekeeping missions, world-level diplomacy, and economic growth. It forms part of an overall call for reform at the UNSC by the inclusion of new world powers for effective representation of globalization. India believes that having a permanent seat will increase influence and

effectiveness in international decisions because it would serve the strategic goals of increased leadership and representation of the world's concerns.

Economic Diplomacy

Trade policies and agreements

The overall thrust of India's trade policies will likely continue to be on the growth of the Indian economy, expansion of the Indian market, and strengthening of international trade relationships. Even since the 1990s, India opened up its economy by lowering tariffs and non-tariff barriers, which provided high foreign investment and trade. The "Make in India" initiative is a focus on the development of home-based manufacturing and a business environment friendly to the environment in India. Export promotion in India is also being availed of from the benefits of programs like MEIS and SEIS by incentives to both merchandise as well as services export.

India has a trade agreement with the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). Since this region seeks more economic integration, an increase in economic activity among South Asia can be expected. Other bilateral agreements include the United States, Japan, and Australia among those corresponding towards having a greater trade and investment potential. India's case is that it is not entering into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to not inconvenience the domestic industries. Although it is a party to the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council, India's deepening and expanding market access will provide greater benefits economically to the latter than to the countries which have signed FTA with India. These policies and agreements really show this give-and-take in order to really safeguard and foster domestic industry.

Foreign investment strategies

India's foreign investment strategies aim to attract global capital, enhance economic growth, and foster technological advancements.

- **Liberalized Policies:** Norms of FDI gradually get liberalized for investment in India in sectors like defense, retail, and aviation, among others with the idea of foreign investment induction. This also comes with relaxation in the restrictions of ownership and control.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** There have been stressed initiatives in ease of doing business in the form of reforms in regulations, easier procedures, and lesser bureaucratic red tape to improve and facilitate business. "Startup India" supports start-ups with incentives and simplified registration.
- **Sector-specific incentives:** The government provides sector-specific incentives, including tax sops and subsidies to attract investments in key sectors like technology, manufacturing, and infrastructure. An example is the Production-Linked Incentive scheme aimed at domestic manufacture.
- **Investment promotion agencies:** The bodies of FIPB and DPIIT will be housed in these institutions with smooth procedures for foreign investment.
- **Investment Zones:** Development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and industrial corridors provides infrastructure and regulatory benefits to attract foreign investors.

Altogether, these strategies will contribute to a conducive investment climate, accelerate the economic growth of the country, and more intelligently integrate India into the world economy.

Energy security and diplomacy

India has de-emphasized dependence on any region, promoted diversity of sources for energy, and powerful international partnerships in an energy security strategy. India has accumulated large reserves through significant investment in diversified portfolios of oil, natural gas, renewable energy, and nuclear power with an eye to offering stabilized energy sources to the country. India has built strategic petroleum reserves to safeguard the country from the potential supply shocks and the excessive price volatility in international oil markets. Not only that, India is building additional renewable energy capacity-more in solar and wind power-to fuel its economy less on fossil fuels, thereby increasing sustainability. In terms of energy diplomacy, India has adopted aggressive bilateral and multilateral partnerships for securing energy supplies and further advancing technology sharing. India signs agreements with major energy-producing countries and regions in order to have stable supplies and investment in infrastructure. Along with this initiative, regional cooperation in energy under the umbrella of SAARC would prove to be a very vital step towards maintaining higher connectivity and integration with neighboring countries. This would further India's energy security, spread international cooperation, and accelerate the transition toward cleaner sources of energy, which in turn would further strengthen its global economic and strategic position.

Security Challenges and Responses

Counter Terrorism efforts

India's Counter Terrorism policy is built on an integrated strategy of intelligence, legislation, and international cooperation. It provides robust capability through organizations such as RAW and IB to predict terrorist action and it has surveillance mechanisms to track the threat. The legislation is strong with Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the National Investigation Agency Act, which allows the authorities to inquire and prosecute terrorist crimes.

Higher profile incidents have in place the National Security Guard and Border Security Force by India. The country shares international collaboration through varied bodies such as the UN and Interpol, where intelligence and best practices are exchanged. There are attempts at engaging communities while working toward prevention through intervention and alternative paths for populations at risk. This is largely because of Pakistan and Bangladesh, as some of these terror groups can infiltrate through borders, and they have used India's western borders as a passage to enter into Pakistan. Such efforts collectively make India strong enough to handle terrorism and therefore increase national as well as global security.

Nuclear policy and disarmament

India's approach to nuclear policy and, thereby, to disarmament reflects the intent to maintain security alongside advocacy for global nuclear arms control in this end. Herein lies the balance between deterrence and further fairness in the nuclear order.

Nuclear Policy: India follows a No First Use policy, that is it does not admit it will use nuclear arms unless one uses them first. It maintains a credible minimum deterrence where it focuses on having an adequate nuclear arsenal for the safety of the country without having more than what it needs.

Disarmament: India advocates for a comprehensive global nuclear disarmament through international forums but is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as India considers the NPT discriminatory. Instead, it supports a gradual, verifiable disarmament process in which all nations participate.

Therefore, India's nuclear policy seeks to be consonant with the broad goals of national security but facilitates achieving and promoting disarmament goals worldwide. Being committed to the responsible deterrent posture that supports a framework of equitable disarmament everywhere, India stands ready to contribute to a safer and more stable international nuclear environment.

Cybersecurity and emerging threats

Cybersecurity in India is a two-pronged approach. First, it looks at the development of a strong and robust digital infrastructure that will fortify the nation against threats. It sets forth a clear framework of safeguarding its digital assets, ensuring a safe cyberspace, and adds a

layer of cybersecurity awareness. It has some of the prime initiatives initiated for protecting critical information infrastructure protection in the form of NCIIPC, the key center aimed at safeguarding the vital sectors of the economy. Some of the key cybersecurity challenges that India faces include: Attacks by state and non-state actors, ransomware, and vulnerabilities resulting from new technologies such as AI. The innovative technologies bring with them risks such as sophisticated cyber-attacks and vulnerabilities through connected devices. India has taken the engagement seriously with the international partners and has actively participated in the global forums and agreements, such as those on cyber norms as well as in sharing information. The country is enhancing its incident response capabilities and resilience through national teams and sectoral teams as well as through public-private partnerships. Overall, the cybersecurity strategy of India will enhance its digital defenses to keep pace with new threats and inspire global cooperation for the establishment of a secure and resilient cyber environment.

Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

Promotion of Indian culture and values

India supports all forms of national and international missions to promote its culture and values. It is indulgently supportive of its rich traditional art and literature, festivals, and preserves its rich cultural heritage with some such missions like the National Mission for Manuscripts.

The world at large has realized India's cultural diplomacy also, especially through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, which facilitates interchanges of cultures and international events to offer each corner of the globe a celebration of India's heritage. Indian cinema, music, dance, and cuisine broadly represent it; this is what is making the world a better place to understand Indian culture.

The heritage of India extends and strengthens diplomatic relations as well as good-will among the rest of the world through this 'soft power'. Examples of culture exports which are most popular include Bollywood and yoga. Alongside this, it supports institutions in other countries to promote their knowledge of India's heritage and values. In short, India's heritage is preserved, along with international relations and global cultural exchange.

Diaspora engagement

India interacts with its diaspora as part of and an essential element of its approach to leverage the global Indian community.

- **Government Initiatives:** The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and other related departments represent the Government as the instrument through which it interacts with the diaspora; it interacts through consular arrangements and meets the needs of the expatriates.
- **Cultural and Social Links:** It hosts functions and festivals, led by institutions such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, to nurture and enhance cultural links with the diaspora.
- **Economic Contributions:** the economic contributions of the diaspora to India's economy are remittances, investments, and entrepreneurship for which India promotes through incentives to such investments.
- **Political and Diplomatic Relations:** outreach to the diaspora aids India in strengthening diplomatic relations with Indian community-hosting countries and primarily determines foreign policy and global interests.
- **Educational and Professional Networks:** India supports Indian students abroad and develops professional exchanges through scholarships and partnerships with international institutions.

International aid and development cooperation

India illustrates international partnerships in supporting sustainable development is on international aid and development cooperation with a focus on humanitarian assistance, knowledge sharing, and bilateral and multilateral action in order to address global challenges.

- Indian aid is directed towards countries of the African continent and South Asia through grants, technical support, and infrastructure projects covered by sectors like education, health, and agriculture.
- It provides assistance in the form of medication, food, and financial assistance when there are calamities and emergencies, and hence, it can be seen that India is committed to the cause of global solidarity.
- It supports South-South cooperation through giving out knowledge, technology, and resources to other developing countries through technical training and cooperative project efforts.
- Apart from bilateral aid programs, India cooperates with international organizations, such as the UN, for the support of global funds and development initiatives.
- India builds capacity by providing training and expertise to the other nations to develop skills and systems toward effective development.

India's international aid and cooperation priorities are to strengthen global partnerships, ensure sustainable development, and alleviate humanitarian needs to promote growth and solidarity among people.

Climate Change and Environmental Diplomacy

India's stance in global climate negotiations

India's stance in global climate negotiations emphasizes the need for equity and fair burden-sharing, especially between developed and developing nations. Advocating for the principle of *common but differentiated responsibilities* (CBDR), India argues that countries with historically higher emissions should bear a larger responsibility in addressing climate change. The concept of *climate justice* is central to India's position, as it calls for policies that allow developing nations to pursue economic growth without sacrificing development for climate action. India has also made significant commitments to renewable energy, particularly through its solar power initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Additionally, India advocates for greater financial and technological support from developed nations to facilitate its transition to clean energy and adaptation to climate impacts. As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, India is committed to reducing its carbon intensity while ensuring that its developmental needs are met in a sustainable way.

Renewable energy initiatives

India's renewable energy initiatives focus on sustainable energy and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Major programme includes :

- Solar Power: The National Solar Mission targets 100 GW capacity by 2022. India also leads the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to promote global solar energy use.
- Wind Energy: India targets 60 GW of wind energy by 2022 under the National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy, combining wind and solar projects.
- Hydropower and Biomass: Investments in hydropower and biomass energy aim to provide clean energy, particularly in rural areas.
- Electric Mobility: India aims for 30% electric vehicle (EV) usage by 2030 to reduce pollution and fossil fuel dependence.

These initiatives contribute to India's efforts toward sustainable development, energy security, and climate change mitigation.

International Solar Alliance

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a global initiative co-founded by India and France in 2015 during the Paris Climate Conference (COP21). It aims to promote the widespread use of solar energy in countries located between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, often referred to as "solar-rich" nations. The ISA seeks to make solar energy affordable and accessible by reducing technology costs, encouraging investment, and fostering innovation. While initially focused on tropical nations, it has expanded to over 120 countries globally. ISA's key programs include scaling solar applications for agriculture, developing solar mini-grids, and promoting solar rooftops. By fostering international cooperation, the ISA plays a significant role in accelerating the deployment of solar energy, addressing energy security challenges, and supporting global efforts to combat climate change. It is a vital

platform for promoting sustainable energy solutions and helping countries transition to clean energy.

Balancing Competing Interests

Managing relations between rival powers

India manages relations between rival powers through a balanced and multi-aligned foreign policy, focusing on strategic autonomy and diplomatic engagement.

- **Non-Aligned Approach:** India continues its legacy of non-alignment, avoiding aligning with any particular power bloc and maintaining relationships with key global players.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** India fosters strong partnerships with rivals, strengthening defense and economic ties with the U.S. while maintaining close relations with Russia, especially in defense and energy sectors.
- **Balancing China:** While engaging in trade with China, India counterbalances its influence by partnering with Indo-Pacific nations and joining the Quad (with the U.S., Japan, and Australia) for regional security.
- **Diplomacy and Multilateralism:** India advocates for a multilateral world order and actively engages in global forums like the UN, G20, and BRICS to navigate rival interests and promote diplomatic solutions.

This strategy helps India balance relations between competing powers while preserving regional stability and its global standing.

Reconciling economic and strategic interests

India aims to reconcile its economic and strategic interests through a pragmatic approach that fosters growth while ensuring national security. By emphasizing economic growth, India engages in trade partnerships and foreign investments, participating in free trade agreements and global markets to boost exports, particularly in technology, manufacturing, and infrastructure. Maintaining strategic autonomy is crucial; India balances its relationships with major powers like the U.S. and Russia, avoiding over-reliance on any single country. As it seeks economic advancement, India invests in strengthening its defense capabilities, partnering with regional powers through initiatives like the Quad and ASEAN to address security concerns, especially regarding China. Additionally, India diversifies its energy sources by investing in renewables while maintaining partnerships with oil-exporting nations to ensure energy security. This comprehensive strategy ensures that India's economic ambitions align with its strategic objectives, fostering long-term stability and security in a complex global landscape.

Domestic considerations in foreign policy

India's foreign policy is quite influenced by domestic considerations and informs its international relations and strategic choices. This depends much on the ruling government's priorities and public opinion within its civil society, such that political considerations dominate foreign policy decisions. So, in large measure, India's nationalist sentiments and electoral considerations will define its interactions with other countries. This is true for economic

development, where the government is targeted to attract foreign investment, strengthen trade relations, and attain energy security. And of course, all these will drive diplomatic engagements, especially in sectors such as technology and manufacturing.

The foreign policy of India is also influenced by matters of other elements, which include domestic security concerns over terrorism and regional stability issues with countries such as Pakistan and China. Other than that, issues of social nature like the problems of human rights and environmental issues will also impact India's international image; therefore, while dealing with such problems domestically, the government has to maintain a constructive attitude.

Beyond that, India can leverage its rich cultural heritage as a tool for soft power by enhancing cultural exchange, goodwill abroad, and national pride. On the whole, India's foreign policy is this complex interplay of international aspiration and domestic reality, balancing strategic interest with the threats it faces back home.

Case Studies

India's response to recent global crises

India's response to recent global crises highlights its proactive role in international affairs and commitment to multilateralism. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India significantly ramped up vaccine production, becoming a major supplier globally through its "Vaccine Maitri" program, which provided vaccines to various countries in need. In relation to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India maintained a nuanced stance, advocating for dialogue and diplomacy while preserving its longstanding relationships with both nations, focusing on humanitarian impacts and ensuring energy security. Furthermore, India actively participates in international climate negotiations, reaffirming its commitment to climate action and offering assistance to countries affected by natural disasters. Additionally, amidst rising global food prices, India has prioritized food security for its population while engaging in discussions to support other nations facing food shortages due to geopolitical disruptions. Overall, India's responses reflect a dedication to humanitarian values and a balanced approach in addressing complex international issues.

Successful diplomatic initiatives

India has launched several successful diplomatic initiatives that have bolstered its global standing and strengthened relationships with various countries:

- **Act East Policy:** Aimed at enhancing ties with Southeast Asian nations, this initiative focuses on trade, investment, and cultural exchanges, countering China's influence and promoting regional stability.
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** Co-founded with France, the ISA promotes solar energy among member countries, reflecting India's commitment to renewable energy and global climate action while fostering cooperation among solar-rich nations.
- **Quad Security Dialogue:** Comprising India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia, the Quad focuses on promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. This initiative has strengthened security cooperation and joint military exercises to address common challenges.
- **Neighborhood First Policy:** India emphasizes strengthening ties with neighboring countries, enhancing cooperation in trade, infrastructure development, and security, particularly with Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.
- **BRICS Engagement:** India actively participates in the BRICS group, focusing on economic cooperation, political dialogue, and addressing global challenges such as terrorism and climate change.

These initiatives demonstrate India's strategic approach to enhancing its influence, fostering regional cooperation, and addressing shared global challenges.

Challenges in maintaining strategic autonomy

Maintaining strategic autonomy presents several challenges for India as it navigates a complex geopolitical landscape. One key issue is balancing relationships with major powers such as the United States, Russia, and China, which can lead to tensions and conflicts of interest, complicating independent foreign policy objectives. Additionally, regional instability, particularly concerning ongoing tensions with Pakistan and China, often necessitates alignments with certain powers for security support. Economic dependencies also pose a challenge; India's growing ties, such as reliance on energy imports or technology from the West, may limit its autonomy. Domestic political pressures, including nationalist sentiments and public opinion, can further influence foreign policy decisions, occasionally conflicting with the goal of maintaining strategic independence. Finally, India's commitment to multilateralism and global norms may clash with the interests of major powers, requiring a nuanced approach to effectively manage international relationships while preserving its strategic autonomy.

The Way Forward

Potential scenarios for India's global role

India's global role is evolving, influenced by various geopolitical, economic, and social factors, leading to several potential scenarios. One possibility is India's emergence as a key global power, where continued economic growth and technological advancements enhance its influence over international policies related to climate change, trade, and security. Additionally, India may solidify its position as a regional leader in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific, fostering stability and cooperation through initiatives like the Neighborhood First Policy and the Act East Policy. In a multipolar world, India could also maintain a balancing act between major powers like the U.S., China, and Russia, ensuring strategic autonomy without over-reliance on any single nation. As global concerns about climate change intensify, India might take on a leadership role in promoting sustainable development and renewable energy. Conversely, increased tensions with China or Pakistan could shift its focus toward military strengthening and defense alliances. Lastly, India could emerge as a mediator in regional conflicts, enhancing its soft power and diplomatic influence.

Strategies for effective multi-alignment

To achieve effective multi-alignment in its foreign policy, India can adopt several key strategies. First, it is essential to clearly prioritize strategic interests, which will guide diplomatic engagements with key global powers. Emphasizing flexible alliances allows India to adapt to changing geopolitical dynamics, focusing on specific issues like trade and security without being tied to formal commitments. Strengthening regional partnerships is also crucial, as enhancing ties with neighboring countries and regional organizations can create a robust network of allies in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Active participation in multilateral forums such as the UN, G20, BRICS, and ASEAN helps amplify India's voice and advocate for a rules-based international order. Balancing economic and security interests ensures that trade engagements do not compromise national security. Additionally, leveraging cultural diplomacy fosters goodwill and mutual understanding across nations. Investing in diplomatic capacity equips India to navigate complex international landscapes effectively. Lastly, establishing a crisis management framework will enable India to respond swiftly to international challenges, protecting its interests while enhancing its global influence through a multi-aligned foreign policy.

Balancing principles and pragmatism in foreign policy

- **Core Values and National Interests:** Align foreign policy with India's core values, including democracy and human rights, while prioritizing national interests such as security and economic growth.
- **Realpolitik Approach:** Recognize the need for a pragmatic approach when addressing immediate challenges, ensuring national security may require flexibility in adhering strictly to principles.
- **Diplomatic Flexibility:** Maintain flexibility in diplomatic engagements to adapt to changing geopolitical landscapes, allowing partnerships with countries that may have differing ideologies.
- **Engagement with Global Issues:** Actively engage in global challenges like climate change, terrorism, and sustainable development, demonstrating commitment to a rules-based international order while seeking practical solutions.
- **Strategic Alliances:** Form alliances with countries sharing similar values to uphold principles while addressing practical concerns, such as security threats and economic collaboration.

- **Crisis Management:** Prioritize pragmatism in times of crisis, making decisions essential for immediate stability and security, even if they diverge from established principles.

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