

**FOREIGN POLICY AND WORLD PEACE: FROM
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TO ATAL BIHARI
VAJPAYEE (1947-2002)**

**SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS
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**BY
SAPTARSHI MONDAL**

**UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
DR. SHIBASHIS CHATTERJEE
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA**

Synopsis

Foreign Policy and World Peace: From Jawaharlal Nehru to Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1947-2002)

Indian foreign policy can be read in many registers. However, many systematic studies are available on the normative dimensions of Indian foreign policy. Of the various normative goals of Indian foreign policy, peace has always been one of the most important ones. The sources of peace in Indian foreign policy are many. While Indian foreign policy makers were deeply influenced by the ancient Indian idea of the whole world being a family, the post-independence context brought in the need for cultivating peace as a precondition for India's material development as well. India had also maintained a rich record of promoting the idea of world peace in various international platforms and contributed handsomely to UN peace keeping missions. Indian leaders have consistently talked about the need to bring peace and non-discriminatory world order together. However, the actual practice of foreign policy shows marked departures from such universal pacifist norms. Hence, there is a need to investigate both what the concept of peace has meant in Indian foreign policy, and what explains the gap between idea and practice over the year. The central theme of this proposed research rests upon India's manifold contributions to world peace and the making of a just world order from the era of Jawaharlal Nehru to that of Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1947-2002). The reason for selecting this time frame is to limit the study to a manageable time-frame.

Research Problem

This study is primarily an attempt to assess the significance of peace in Indian foreign policy. The basic scope of the research can be highlighted as follows.

Firstly, we can identify the interconnection between peace and foreign policy. This research wishes to draw out the interconnectivity of 'peace processes' and Indian foreign policy.

Secondly, this study wishes to find the relationship between the understanding of peace held by Indian Prime Ministers from Jawaharlal Nehru to Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the actual course of foreign policy making. The study wishes to document how the select Indian

Prime Ministers defined the notion of peace as a goal of Indian foreign policy and applied it in practice.

Thirdly, this study is an attempt to map the valuable contributions made by India in the domain of world peace since this idea has remained a chief normative commitment of Indian foreign policy. This study wishes to discuss what India meant by ‘world peace’ and how she had sought to live up to it in practice.

Research Questions

The study formulated three fundamental research questions:

1. How central is peace as a foreign policy objective in India ?
2. What are the principle contributions of India in addressing the scope of peace in world politics ?
3. How consistent is India’s commitment to peace ?

Methodology

The proposed research is primarily based on ‘textual analysis’, which is a useful technique of analysis in social science research. Texts have always been a major source of information and evidence for not only political researchers but also for other social science researchers. Attempt shall be made to find meaning and coherence of key texts, and how these fit together in terms of content, functions, and effect. The study plans to use standard textual or discourse analysis of documents to validate arguments concerning the significance of peace as a theme in Indian foreign policy. The work will use mostly primary documents available in the public domain. The documents and records of government agencies count as the best examples of primary sources. It will also make use of secondary sources including speeches, interviews, diaries and memoirs.

Chapter Summaries

The entire research work deals with India’s foreign policy and world peace with special emphasis on Jawaharlal Nehru to Atal Bihari Vajpayee years (1947-2002). Chapter- I contains the introductory part of the thesis. The main contents of the introduction are what the

research work is all about, the importance of the research problem, literature review, research gap, the research questions, research methodology and lastly the chapter scheme.

The chapter- II discusses ‘The Idea of Peace: Western and Indian Schools’. The main contents of the chapter- II are thoughts from the Western Schools of peace and Indian Schools of peace. The main thinkers of peace from the West discussed here are Voltaire, Kant and Count Leo Tolstoy. The second part deals with the significant Indian thinkers. The main thinkers of Indian schools included are Sri Aurobindo, M. K. Gandhi and Dr. Radhakrishnan. From the Western perspective of peace, Voltaire has contributed significantly to the field of peace existing beyond the arena of religion and spirituality, and demanded civil and religious freedom for his people. Voltaire’s significant work was ‘*Philosophiques sur les Aglais*’. On the other hand, Immanuel Kant is best known for his concept of ‘perpetual peace’. Kant’s most significant works were – ‘*Critique of Pure Reason*’, ‘*Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*’, and ‘*Critique of Practical Reason*’. Count Leo Tolstoy was also known for his ideas of peace and nonviolence. Tolstoy has suggested that government must be free from war and violence. Moving to the Indian school of peace, thinkers like Sri Aurobindo, M. K. Gandhi and Dr. Radhakrishnan have urged for non-violence, peace and freedom. Sri Aurobindo was best known for his ideals of peace, internationalism and human unity. M.K. Gandhi advocated the ideals of peace, non-violence and truth. Hence, Gandhi’s interpretation of history can be described as the “non-violent interpretation of history”. Last but not the least, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was an ‘impressive exponent of Indian philosophy’. Like the other Indian thinkers, Radhakrishnan was an exponent of peace and democracy. He was a democrat, and according to him democracy was the most valuable principle in the modern world.

Chapter- III deals with ‘Nehru’s idea of peace’. This chapter analysis issues and ideas like the national interest and its significance, the meaning of security, external security and internal security, short-term and long-term security, national development, and world order. The chapter chronicles Nehru’s role in international affairs with special emphasis on the Vietnam issue, the Suez Canal issue, and the Congo crisis, the Kashmir issue, the Tibet and China issue, and the Goa issue. The most important part of this chapter is devoted to the analysis of nonalignment and Indian foreign policy. It is noteworthy to say that, Nehru’s visions of world peace have been mostly reflected by the practice of nonalignment; and in spite of external challenges and provocations (especially from China) Nehru never devoid of

the principle of nonalignment. Nehru was highly successful to protect the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa from the atrocities of great powers; and thus he has been globally accepted and recognised as a leader of oppressed nations. Nehruvian foreign policy was based on friendship and cooperation mostly with the independent countries of Asia and Africa. The kernel of Nehru's foreign policy were anti-imperialism and anti-racism and these saw the idea of the world peace from an Indian point of view.

The Chapter- IV is titled 'Indira Gandhi: Pragmatism and Peace'. The main contents of this chapter are the significance of Indira Gandhi era, Indira Gandhi and domestic politics; the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 and its significance; insurgency and the Indian state: the Naxalite and Khalistan movements, transforming democracy : the ideas of friends, neighbours and enemies: an Indian perspective; configuration of great powers: the US and the Soviet dimensions, military intervention and the liberation movement in Bangladesh; the Afghan crisis; Indo-Sri Lanka relations, the non-alignment and Indira Gandhi's contribution; the NPT and the nuclear explosion in India; the significance of the merger of Sikkim in India, and the overall foreign policy administration of Indira Gandhi era. First, the Indira Gandhi era was remarkably different from any other era, as far as the foreign policy is concerned. For example, the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 has strengthened the Indian foreign policy. This Treaty has protected India from the external threats of Pakistan and China in the South Asian region. In case of military intervention and the liberation movement in Bangladesh, India played a key role. India not only assisted Bangladesh to get freedom from Pakistan, but also tried hard to neutralize tendencies of militarization in South Asian region. Indira Gandhi, however, understood the need to strengthen India's military capabilities. She vehemently opposed the NPT and authorized the first nuclear explosion in India. Indira Gandhi became the first Prime Minister under whose regime India achieve the status of nation with nuclear stability. However, USA and Soviet Union jointly finalised the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 1968 and at that time both USA and Soviet Union tried to pressurize India for signing the treaty. Indira Gandhi very prominently resisted this pressure from the states with nuclear-weapons, As far as the non-alignment is concerned, Indira Gandhi has carried out the legacies of her father Jawaharlal Nehru; besides, she changed the basic objectives of India's non-alignment. In other words, she made India strong enough to bargain her national interest not only in South Asia, but in many platforms across the world. Undoubtedly, this element had placed her in a strong and superior position along with the other world leaders. The merger of Sikkim was a major development in Indira Gandhi regime. Her decision making in

foreign policy was also unique; and she also introduced a ‘paradigm shift’ in India’s foreign policy. She had a conviction that India had to protect her territory through the use of military troops, if necessary. Although she made India accept the goal of nuclearization, she also maintained the policy of ‘no first use’ of these deadly weapons. Hence, Indira Gandhi invested in the ideas of peace, democracy and diplomacy in the contemporary world, especially in South Asia, from a position of strength.

Chapter- V discusses the foreign policy trends under PM Rajiv Gandhi. The main contents of this chapter are: (I) the defense policy of Rajiv Gandhi: 1984-1989; reaching out to America; the Russian factor; the nuclear issues; the external challenges from China; engagement with Southern Africa (as far as anti-racism is concerned); the operation Brasstacks, the military intervention in Sri Lanka and its effects; the military intervention in Maldives; the Pakistan policy; and India’s foreign economic policy, and the political crisis in Nepal. Rajiv Gandhi also emphasised on peace, friendship and cooperation in his foreign policy. He tried to build friendly and peaceful relations with the neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal, although these efforts mostly backfired.

The most significant part of this chapter concerns an analysis of the military intervention in Sri Lanka and its effect. The very old problem of ethnic separation in Sri Lanka became particularly serious in the 1980s. In July 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed an agreement with the Sri Lankan President Jayewardene, under which a significant contingent of the Indian army, named as Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), was sent to Sri Lanka to enforce a ceasefire and disarm the LTTE forces. But no sooner the IPKF started its operations, it turned into a regular war between Indian IPKF and the Sri Lankan Tamils, although, in September 1989 – the last phase of Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister – a special ceasefire and no war agreement was signed between the Sri Lankan LTTE and Indian IPKF. However, except the Sri Lanka crisis, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was fairly successful in maintaining peace, friendship and cooperation with the neighbouring countries during his term. His foreign economic policy marked a departure from the past and he introduced a new systemic policy framework for gaining highest returns from external relations; especially from Asia and Europe. Hence, Rajiv Gandhi’s foreign policy was a synthesis of peace, democracy, economic liberalism and anti-racism.

Chapter- VI titled is ‘Narasimha Rao: Capitalism, Democracy and Peace’. It discusses the early life of P. V. Narasimha Rao; the making of the welfare state; the growing

importance of Europe in Indian foreign policy; India's relations with Israel, Gulf and Middle East; India's South Asia policy and beyond - looking east and looking west initiatives, and nuclear armaments and peace. Foreign policy was a significant issue in the entire tenure of P. V. Narasimha Rao. As part of the "Look East" policy, Rao became the first Indian prime minister who traveled to South Korea. The change in Indian foreign policy thinking was caused by two factors. First, New Delhi's own economic crisis and isolation after the sudden end to the Cold War; and, second, India's reassessment of its postcolonial identity and achievements in a realistic and comparative perspective. In the 1950s and 1960s, the newly decolonised countries of South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia were poor economies and weak states. A large, populous and democratic state, Nehruvian India was the leader of the post-colonial world. However, Indian foreign policy towards the East Asia failed as it could not use its cultural linkages productively. A socialist economic model and antagonism with the US prevented good economic and political ties in the Southeast Asian region. During his tenure as India's Prime Minister, Rao completely altered this framework. He visited South Korea, Thailand and Singapore. Singapore was considered as the gateway of East Asia, and an important country in terms of commerce and trade. After the liberalisation in 1991, the 'Look East' policy led countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Korea to provide money, cars and other expertise to the Indian economy. Thus, Rao achieved unexpected success in his foreign policy, particularly towards Asia. Rao had also a quest for nuclear capability but he did not succeed in his ways. During this time, India reestablished friendly and warm relations with Europe, Israel, Gulf and Middle East Asia in a decisive manner. However, Narasimha Rao was successful in implementing peace, friendship and cooperation in his tenure through liberalised as well as decentralised domestic and foreign policy.

Chapter- VII looks at PM Vajpayee's foreign policy agenda. The main contents of this chapter are his vision; foreign policy and nuclear power - the significance of Pokhran II nuclear tests; the non-military confidence building measures (Delhi-Lahore bus diplomacy, Lahore declaration, the Agra summit, unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir, towards India's new peace proposal), composite dialogues between India and Pakistan: challenges and obstacles in the way of peace; the Kargil crisis; the Indo-US relations; a new phase of Indo-Russian relations, and relations with China. This chapter gives particular attention to the non-military confidence building measures initiated by India. On the occasion of the inaugural visit of the bus service from Delhi to Lahore on February 19, 1999, Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee

made a historic and a very landmark visit to Pakistan. Apart from that, the Lahore Declaration was also significant in the context of peace. It was signed on February 21, 1999 by the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the conclusion of the historic Lahore summit. Furthermore the Agra summit and the unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir were also very significant in the context of peace not only between India and Pakistan but also in the context of encouraging peace in South Asia. Yet, the chapter also reflects on the Kargil War and analyzes the reasons for the failure of the confidence-building measures. The chapter finds that despite the Kargil debacle, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee contributed positively by way of peace building and espousing a perspective on peace and stability despite repeated acts of terrorism across the border.

Finally, in the conclusion, I have tried to answer the three research questions. To the first question on the centrality of peace as a foreign policy objective in India, I have attempted to address it by conducting a historical analysis of India's foreign policy under all the Indian Prime Ministers under the period concerned. To find answer to the second question on the principal contributions of India in addressing the scope of peace in world politics, I have discussed the contributions of the Indian Schools on the idea of world peace. This study has delved into the works of Sri Aurobindo, M. K. Gandhi and Dr. Radhakrishnan, and tried to find their uniqueness in contrast to the Western tradition of peace. The third research question is centred on the consistency of India's commitment to peace. Here I have mainly addressed the traditions from the Nehru era to Vajpayee years in order to explain India's thinking, policies, and practices as a whole. In this way, the thesis attempts to relate the notions of 'world peace' to Indian foreign policy practice between 1947 and 2002.

India has also constructively contributed to institution building in many domains of collective action, from international political economy to global governance to the environmental issues. In this critical domain, India has urged for dignified dialogue based on equality and the due recognition of difference. India has also played a vital role in developing soft power resources and the power of ideas although this dissertation has not analyzed this area in details. The moot point, however, is that India's commitment of peace is beyond doubt, her understanding of peace is very much in the Indian tradition, and despite major security challenges, India has not given up on its traditional role as a classic bridging power. India's traditional argument has been to resist global liberalism or any other ideology since plurality gives peace the best chance. This is partly the result of India's domestic trials and

tribulations, the failings of its social order, but an outstanding success so far democratic participation and empowerment are concerned. India's approach to social justice has been through reconciliation and peace building, although her record is not free of blemishes.

In a continuation of sorts, the same approach marks India's foreign policy thinking at large. Hence, the argument that India's foreign policy is a mix of idealism and realism is beside the point. All foreign policies tradeoff between realpolitik needs and normative goals. This thesis finds a continuity across different regimes, personalities, decisional structures, power distribution, and economic realities in the overarching ideas of the need to commit India to the path of peace. Hence, instances of military action, preparedness, growing defence expenditure, cannot be taken as credible renunciation of the broader commitment. In the final analysis, Indian foreign policy has remained committed to diplomacy and peace in the face of enormous provocations. Without a strong tradition in the ideas of peace this consistency cannot be explained.

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