

# National Interest vs Global Responsibility: What should India choose?

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## INTRODUCTION

Time and again realism has proved itself to be prevalent in the global system debarring the other concepts and theories of national interest including Idealism, Liberalism, Marxism and the like. Realism portrays National interest to be the supreme irrespective of any other national or international consideration. As there is absence of International Government in the world order each state must ensure its national interest is preserved and safe smartly with a balance between soft and hard power. As Modi ji's beautiful statement suggests **"this is not an era of war"**

## INDIA and ITS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

India after going through a lot of stumbling blocks post independence both in domestic and international spheres has experienced a lot and has now accumulated sufficient potential and smart power to emerge as an Iron Nation which has capability to drive Global Order. India as a nation has always followed certain moral principles that are rooted in its culture and ideologies of some great personalities produced in it.

Its guiding principles include fundamentals like nonviolence, anti colonialism, anti imperialism, idealism, soft power, favoring diplomacy over military, anti racialism, Asianism, non alignment, multilateralism, neighborhood first and many such.

## INDIA and EVOLUTION OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY

India's foreign policy as suggested by our current Union External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaishankar can be broadly classified into 6 stages-

- 1- Optimistic non alignment (1947 to 1962)
- 2- decade of realism and recovery (1962 to 1971)
- 3- India's regional assertion (1971 to 1991)

- 4- safeguarding Indian economy (1991 to 1998)
- 5- India as balancing power (1998 to 2013)
- 6- energetic engagement (2013 till date)

The crux of India in this 3/4th of a century is its shift from Nehruvian idealism to Strategic Realism and at the end to Economic Pragmatism. India has gone through a lot of painful experiences like four Wars (1947, 1965, 1971, 1999) with the neighbor in our West and a major war with China in 1962. Along with Continuous stand offs, infiltrated terrorism, state sponsored terrorism and what not. But we as a country never give up our ethical and moral guiding principles, though we eventually realized that National interest is Supreme and permanent and there are no permanent friends and permanent enemies in the global sphere.

The consistent good is reflected in our policies like-

1- Panchsheel agreement (in 1950's with China) involved virtues like-

- mutual non-aggression
- mutual non interference
- peaceful coexistence
- equality and mutual benefits
- mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and Sovereignty.

2- Gujaral's Doctrine (1996)- India will treat its small neighbors-

- Magnanimously
- In a good will thing will be done for them, without seeking returns
- respect for their sovereignty

3- Five S's approach in India's Foreign policy-

- Samman (respect)
- Samvad (communication)
- Sahyog (cooperation)
- Shanti (peace)
- Samriddhi (prosperity)

- 4- Look East Policy (1991)
- 5- Act East Policy (2014)
- 6- Connect Central Asia

#### INDIA and ITS CONCEPT OF GLOBAL GOOD-

One such principle is “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”. Just after independence when New Delhi tried to follow these moral idealistic principles, and portrayed the Big-Brother face for South-Asia, countries were quite reluctant to accept us, but now after 3/4th of a century India has accommodate so much strength and optimism through it policies that every country in world tries to follow the footsteps India did and transpire out to be one of the top economies and image of a great country, from a badly poverty hit nation with a huge population. Today India can deal and having win-win with the entire world in terms of all three C’s - Cooperation Competition and Conflict.

Till date India has never first attacked any country, or has never interfered in any of the internal affairs of any country. India has always followed the principle of Defence rather than attack, but this policy has shifted from Defense- Attack- Defense in the reign of our national security advisor and an international asset, Mr. Ajit Doval. Even this shift has a reason as India was often considered weak, as India never defended itself or retaliated with its full force and potential. But now after incurring humanitarian, territorial and military losses, we finally made the above shift, as it was mandatory to reinstate our position in the region and counter proxy wars, infiltration and terrorism. The examples of such strategies include Pre-emptive air-strikes in Balakot, Uri attack, Operation Parakram and such. As it was important to showcase that calm and ethics should not be synonymously considered to weak.

#### INDIA and ITS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD

Not only in near neighborhood India has spread its arms to embrace friendship with every country in every continent, resulting in its multilateral engagement which can be showcased in the form of-

- 1- Treaties of friendship and cooperation
- 2- Strategic partnerships
- 3- Free trade agreements
- 4- Military partnerships and collaborative exercises

- 5- Intelligence partnerships and conferences- Raisina Dialogue

Not only this India is an important part of international organizations which play a key role in world peace, world trade, humanitarian aspects etc-

- 1- BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)
  - 2- G20
  - 3- SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)
  - 4- BIMSTEC (Bengal initiative for multisectoral, technical and economic operation)
  - 5- ASEAN (Association of South-east Asian nations)
- And many such

Apart from being parts of International, intergovernmental and regional organizations, India has also developed individual trade relationships, free trade relationships, infrastructure development projects, Educational collaborations with universities of its neighborhood and far neighborhood, Technological collaborations, shared and individual satellite launch programs, railway networks, road networks, memorandums of understanding etc. with countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, USA, Japan, Australia, Southeast Asian countries, South African countries, Eurozone, European Union, United Kingdom etc. Not only this India has also extended hands for help, passing line of credits to countries like Sri Lanka Bangladesh etc.

#### CONSISTENT MORALS

All these qualities, hands of friendship and cooperation, embracing the needy friends, supplying humanitarian aid in emergency etc. Has the slowly made India actually a Vishwaguru, A dream of its first Prime Minister Mr. Nehru. India is also known by the name of all weather friends by different countries. It's exceptional soft power of yoga, cinema, songs, culture, ethics and morals, mythology, natural beauty, hill stations and beautiful destinations has added to the grace of its position.

Deeds by India such as -

- helping Turkey and Syria with humanitarian aids, despite having not so good relationships with them, amid natural calamity, the earthquakes witnessed- under Operation Dost

- Giving shelter to Tibet religious leader Dalai Lama and a lying them to establish a government in exile in India
- Trying to help suffering neighbors, as done by Indira Gandhi by liberating Bangladesh and by sending peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka for curbing the Civil war and violence
- Taking care of its citizens live in outside anywhere in the world amid crisis like Operation Ganga, Operation Kaveri, Operation Poomalai, Kuwait Airlift, Safe homecoming, Operation Maitri Operation Rahat, Operation Insaniyat etc
- Distribution of vaccines amid the pandemic when even India was suffering along the world
- Respecting Sovereignty of Russia and Ukraine both when entire world is concerned with territorial sovereignty of only Ukraine
- Bold remarks by the leader like “This is not the era of war”

The above mentioned decisions by India have raised its position not only in terms of a sophisticated and hard military power and a nation with very good soft power, But a nation with significantly great smart power and a golden heart which is ready to serve humanity at any cost along with taking care of its national interest and securing its national security.

#### THE PRESENT SCENARIO

In the present scenario as well, it is very much prevalent that only flaunting of hard power by the Russian state has isolated it in various realms like global market, international organizations etc. the continuation of war from more than a year has marked the failure of Moscow as a state and its overall global and national growth and development.

Various other theories emerged along with and after realism, but they failed to answer few real-life world events also somewhere or the other the concepts and the fundamentals were proved wrong.

For example, the concept of **Communism, Socialism, Marxism** etc. as in papers are so utopic and idealist, but when implemented on ground is not at all feasible. For example, **liberalism** claims that the democracy, liberty, economic interconnections between Nations, dependency of nations on others, propagation of liberal ideology considering humans as rational beings

and Nation as ideal, elimination of War and hard power completely and many such premises were not able to prove themselves and failed to be implemented as ground reality. As **the League of Nations found in 1920** at the end of World War 1, World's first inter government organization which was framed on the fundamentals of bringing global peace eventually disintegrated because of conflict in ideology, and World War 2, was witnessed as its result. Another such inter government organization that came into picture in 1945 after the end of the Second World War called, **The United Nations**, wasn't able to prevent and stop and failed to neutralize many violent events that has been a black mark on human modern history humanity, peace and organized world order, like the ongoing **Russia- Ukraine war, Cold war (1947-1991), Syria war, Myanmar Civil war, Tibet annexation by China, Crimea Annexation by Russia, Iran- Iraq war, Korean war, Arab- Israeli war, Afghan wars** etc.

#### THE CONCEPT OF REALISM

Realism is a school of international relations that portrays a pessimistic view of human nature and thus the same for a nation, because of deriving lineage. It talks about the struggle for power maximization and the conflicts and competition that exist for the same. This entire concept is based on national security, state survival and power maximization as presented in realist derived theories like “**Security Dilemma,**” “**Lion Fox theory**” etc and these quotations by the realist thinkers-

- 1- “**Man is a political animal**” - by Aristotle
- 2- “**Animus dominandi**” - by Morgenthau
- 3- “**War of all against all**” - by Hobbes
- 4- “**noble lie**- our rulers will probably have to make considerable use of Lies and deceit for good of their subjects” - by Plato
- 5- “**War is continuation of political activity by other means**” - Clausewitz
- 6- “**Sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia and reality**” – Carr

Morgenthau, the father of Realism Theory of International Relations defines National interest as “**a survival which incorporates, protection of physical, political and cultural identity against and encroachments by other Nation States.**”

A political scientist, Dyke, presents the definition of national interest as " **the values, desires, and interests that States see to protect or achieve in relation to each other.**" To sum up national interest is accumulation of the goals, the interest, claims, demands, pursuit of prosperity and many such that the nation tries to hold while maintaining and defending itself in a group of other Nation States. Not only them, the other realists also keep National interest the supreme and of a state which is often approached through means like diplomacy, economy and military. Foreign policy of a country is fundamentally based on the national interest of that country keeping in view various determinants of Foreign Policy.

Morgenthau elaborates the vital components that are must have for survival or identity of a country into three parts namely, the cultural, the political and the physical identity. The cultural identity consists of the fundamental and cultural values that are inherited by the people of that country from generation to generation. The Political identity refers to the political-economic system persistent in the country as the driving force. The physical identity incorporates the territorial identity of a country marking its borders incorporating geography.

Morgenthau also talks about the non-vital components that influence National interest which are certainly not permanent but situational and circumstantial. These Components include factors like decision makers, public opinion, party politics, regional interest, minority interest, ethnic and moral factors.

Robinson, a European Political Scientist Classifies National interest into 6 categories-

- 1- **Primary Interest**
- 2- **Secondary interest**
- 3- **Permanent Interest**
- 4- **Variable Interest**
- 5- **General Interest**
- 6- **Specific Interest**

As the name suggests the primary interest is those which no country ever compromises on, it includes the vital components of a nation's survival i.e. political, cultural and physical identity of a nation. The secondary interest on the other hand is the extended primary interest including protection of the citizens staying abroad and ensuring diplomatic immunity for the diplomatic staff in the other Nation States. The Permanent interest of a country are the long term ends or goals of a particular country, usually followed as

legacy by every leader. The Variable interests as the name suggests are circumstantial, including the non-vital components of a Nation's survival. The general interest is almost the same for all the countries in existence like international peace, environmental protection, economic upscaling, avoiding war, ensuring food security etc. Specific interests are based on the fundamentals of a particular country like its geographical location, its history, cultural and ideological values, domestic factors, economy etc, it is usually different for every country.

These National interests can be secured by various means like diplomacy, soft power, Propaganda, economic means, alliances, strategic partnerships, geo-political situations, Inter Government and international treaties and conventions, coercive measures (hard power), Sanctions etc.

#### THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

Global responsibility in brief can be defined as the responsibility of a particular Nation towards its contemporary Nation States as in whole, as clearly picturized by the concept of "**Vasudev kutumbakam**" of India. Where we, nations and leaders are not only responsible towards the prosperity, peace, security, and development of individuals within the boundaries of a territory but extending the same for those living outside it. Emergence of concepts like **globalization has certainly faded the territorial boundaries** between the countries and provided opportunities to people to have access to educational qualifications, residential benefits, trade benefits, tourism, escape from extremities imposed in one country by becoming a refugee etc. to their neighbors and far neighbors as well. This has also enhanced the scope of spreading of different ideologies, cultures, languages, and legacies, hence broadening our entire thought process.

In today's era the term Global responsibility includes the assertive responsibilities like, **environmental protection** along with protection of wildlife (wild flora and fauna), **fight against terrorism, promotion of peace and prosperity, increasing global interdependence**, rescue and protection of the weak countries against the brutalities to them by the powerful ones, **humanitarian aid** to the natural disaster or man-made disaster hit countries, etc. It can also be seen to attend to the end named **utilitarianism**,

that is a concept which includes good for maximum, in other words prioritizing the common good above the individual good. It holds the fundamental values of humanity, regarding human freedom, human dignity, respect, equal opportunity, human rights on a global scale. For example, Vienna conventions, COP on climate changes, Sustainable development goals, war on terror etc.

Global responsibility being the wider picture, needs the contribution of all the countries particularly the developed ones in order to make the under developed, developed. A country that belongs particularly to the third world order or the underdeveloped countries can barely contribute in terms of Technology, military, funds, donations etc. to this Global responsibility but can definitely extend their hands in terms of great minds, culture and values, Man force and properly following the decisions taken by global organizations to which it is a part. The second world countries of developing status can make few contributions other than its soft power, great minds, and labor, but that might not be sufficient for bringing out significant positive results, as these countries have a lot of commitments and responsibilities to fulfill within their own territorial boundaries. Hence, the sole responsibility to make contributions and carry the global responsibility lies on the iron shoulders of developed or first world order countries.

Thus the global institutions and intergovernmental organizations like **ICJ** (International Court of Justice), **the United Nations**, **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organizations), **World Bank**, **IMF** (International Monetary Fund), G20 etc. are often headed by the developed countries like, the USA, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, Canada etc. and hence, it is often argued that these organizations function as puppets in the hand of founding countries, thus, promoting their hegemony and dominance in the realm of international relations and geo-politics.

#### NATIONAL INTEREST OR GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY?

The national interest and the Global responsibility both go hand and hand and it is just not possible to choose one above the other or completely accept one and ignore the other. For say If a country is completely ignoring Global responsibilities, will not be able to take care of its national interest as well, as national

interest includes the territorial sovereignty and Security, for which both hard power and soft power is important i.e., a combination called smart power. In order to secure its borders, it must maintain a military, maintenance of a good military requires weapons import, share of Technology, a good space program, missile technology and many such; to ensure presence of all these requirements alone is not possible and hence dependent on another country is required. In order to sustain a country various other requirements like food security, minerals and gasses, energy security, educational qualifications, Technology Institutions and studies etc play a key role, for which a country has to depend on various other countries and barter other country's dependence on it. Hence it is not possible for a country to completely isolate itself from foreign exchange of material, currency, Technology, weapons etc. When a country is dependent on various other countries it must ensure that this dependent is continued for its own proper sustenance, for that the former country has to ensure that proper sustainable development is taking place in the letter countries as well. This takes them to global responsibility, where the issues of global nature are dealt with which is not meant to be solved for and by any single country. Hence, to secure its existence a country should be responsible globally and ensure others existence as well.

#### CONCLUSION

It is often argued that the first world countries or the developed countries impose hegemony and domination with respect to other countries that are developing and underdeveloped. They often try to control their internal matters, and try to influence the type of government and existing government. Impose their ideology on them, impose threat to the existing government with regards to regime change in case of disobedience. We often see such things done by the west with respect to our country, as recently the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi as an MP, was commented upon by various other countries. Also, the removal of art-370 and many such examples have brought in various comments and influences and threats to developing countries.

Not only this previously also in Indo Pakistan war of 1965 the West coerced Prime Minister Shastri to sign The Tashkent Agreement, in turn of subsidized wheat for the starving civilians. The Indo Pk war of 1971 was

also taken care of by these developed country's that led to Shimla Agreement. Despite India being a strong proponent of NAM (Non-Alignment Movement).

Not only in India, but impositions of hegemonic ideas and intervention in internal matters by the developed countries is very common with other countries as well. This hegemony and domination is done in the name of global responsibility as this responsibility is a cover of the underlying idea of superiority. For example, Regime change in Afghanistan by the erstwhile USSR in 1979, invited the USA to ensure its presence in competition of domination. The gulf wars against Iran, The Vietnam war etc. are such examples. The impositions of sanctions on countries like Iran, Russia, the laws like **The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**, covertly supporting Ukraine in ongoing war, backhand control of organizations (like The Bretton woods Organizations), nourishing Taliban with help of Pakistan, then launching global war against terrorism etc. all in the name of developed countries and global responsibilities portrays hypocrisy and underlying National Interest that sustains capitalist economies has time and again proved detrimental to humanity.

National interest can never be fulfilled alone without nurturing Global responsibilities, but the latter should be limited in term of hegemony and interventions in internal affairs and should not pose threats to sovereignty, territorial integrity and democracy of a country.

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