

## ***India's Approach to the War in Ukraine***

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The international community has been intensely scrutinizing India's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022. The United States, India's foremost strategic partner, expectedly desired India to play a constructive role by influencing President Vladimir Putin to put an end to his military intervention in Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine also urged India to help restore normalcy by engaging in talks with President Vladimir Putin of Russia. While Russia asked nothing of India, it showered praise on India for its balanced role in view of its abstention from the UN Security Council Resolutions: one condemning the Russian military action and the other calling for an emergency meeting of the UN General Assembly to discuss the Ukrainian crisis.

Interestingly, China and Pakistan in the initial months of the Ukraine War appeared to be broadly on the same page with India. China, like India, abstained from the UN Security Council Resolutions sponsored by the Western powers. And Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan landed in Moscow for a bilateral meeting with President Putin on the day the Russian invasion took place and did not criticise Moscow's action. Prime Minister Imran Khan says that he visited Moscow despite the US advice against it, and it could be one of the reasons for his ouster from power. Interestingly, the Russian Ambassador to Pakistan said that Imran Khan would not have visited Moscow if he would have known Putin's plan to invade Moscow. Even after his return to Islamabad, Imran Khan did not drastically alter his position.

On the surface, it appeared that the three nuclear weapon powers of Asia were considerate towards the Russian military action in Ukraine. China has been at odds with the United States for the last several years and it accused Washington of implementing a containment of China policy. It has consistently developed closer strategic, trade and energy ties with Russia in recent decades

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*(This article was received from the author on 24 July, 2022)*

and preferably seeks a coordinated tactic with Moscow to resist unilateral US policies in the current global order.

Pakistan's recent efforts have been to build closer ties with Russia to counterbalance the Indo-Russian strategic partnership and to seek Moscow's cooperation in Afghan affairs post-US withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. By seeking closer relations with Russia, Islamabad aspires to counter or at best moderate consistent Moscow's backing to India on Kashmir and other issues in South Asia.

India, on the other hand, has had deeper strategic relations with Russia for decades. While the origins of it go back to the Cold War days, India has continued to maintain defence and security ties with Russia even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United States always objected to India's closer security relations with the former Soviet Union during the Cold War, but never expressed concern about Indo-Russian defence and security ties until very recently. Washington's policymakers did not, in fact, consider Russia as a major security threat for decades after the Soviet collapse.

The changed threat perception of Russia is reflected in low-key American responses to Russian intervention in Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and even its assertive role in Syrian affairs. Yet, to check growing Russian clout, the US Congress enacted CAATSA or Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act. The closer strategic relations between India and the United States discouraged prompt US sanctions under CAATSA against New Delhi's purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia.

Nonetheless, India, Pakistan and China have their own strategic calculations and there has never been a synchronized response to developments in Ukraine. The Western countries had little to feel good about China's abstention from UN Resolutions and in any case, did not have abundant leverage to influence Chinese voting behaviour in the United Nations. Moreover, the Sino-Russian strategic partnership to counter the US and its allies has been too well-known and the US and its allies could do little to prevent or discourage the trend. Pakistan's policy, on the other hand, drew no attention in Western capitals and had little to cooperate in sanctioning Russia and it was obvious that Islamabad would do what Beijing would say or do on such cases.

While the world was weary of the Chinese policy, it watched Indian foreign policy stances and moves on the Ukraine issue. First of all, this is the result of India's rising role as a credible player in global affairs. Secondly, India's deft diplomacy had managed to nurture a deep and extensive strategic partnership with the United States despite New Delhi's friendship and

cooperation with countries, such as Russia and Iran. Third, the Biden Administration perhaps weighed the possibility of the Modi government using its diplomatic skill to resolve the Ukrainian issue in view of his personality and friendly bond with President Vladimir Putin. In fact, there are not many world leaders whom US President Joe Biden could look up to for such a role.

There is no qualm that the Ukrainian crisis put India's diplomacy under penetrating international observation by friends, foes and even indifferent parties. There was another side to India's dilemma and difficulties. The United States and its allies put India to test to ascertain whether India would be on board with them to maintain and manage the current global order. The continuing questions over the Indian position are: Is India trying to just balance its ties with the US and Russia? Is India refraining from taking a clear and concrete position on Russian military intervention in Ukraine? Is India hedging against any negative fallout of the Russian invasion and US reaction? Is New Delhi just trying to walk a risky diplomatic tightrope to protect its interests?

In reality, India is trying to do nothing of the above. India does not have a treaty alliance with the United States to commit itself to a united position. Nor India is an alliance partner of Russia. There is no declared Cold War between the power blocs either. Traditionally, India is opposed to the formation of military blocs. It is also opposed to the violation of the territorial integrity of any country by another country. India has maintained good and cooperative relations with the US, Russia, Ukraine, Japan and the EU member countries. At a critical stage of the global political and security transition, it was essential for New Delhi to safeguard its longstanding cooperation and cordial ties with Washington, Moscow, Kiev, and other European countries. It was perhaps considered by the Ministry of External Affairs that the prudent way to do so would be to refrain from taking sides, urging the warring parties to resort to dialogue and diplomacy, and peacefully resolve the crisis.

To do that, India supported the Russo-Ukrainian initiative to hold unconditional dialogue, expressed its opposition to violence and loss of human lives, and sent humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. According to the Minister of Health of Ukraine, India provided 187 tonnes of medicines and healthcare facilities to Ukraine, abstained from condemning the Russian military action and rather called for an immediate end to armed hostilities. Simultaneously, India did not oppose Western sanctions openly and rather went along with the Western sanctions where it was feasible. It was reflected in the decision of the State Bank of India to refrain from handling trade with Russian entities that were under Western sanctions. In March 2022, the State bank of India

(SBI) decided not to process any transactions involving Russian companies under Western sanctions, and an announcement by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) not to accept cargoes of Russian crude oil and Kazakh CPC Blend cargoes on a free-on-board basis. Of course, these steps were taken not to support the sanctions or oppose Russia, but to protect India's vital economic interests. Both the US and Russia are India's strategic partners. Hence, India could not have remained non-aligned in the traditional sense of the term in the current standoff between Washington and Moscow. Both Biden and Putin desired India to take their sides. But India's options were rather limited, though its advice was not only ideal but also relevant.

India appropriately adopted an autonomous path in its diplomatic response to the Ukraine issue. But could India have done more? A global player needs to do more than just protect their national interests. It has to offer more for the maintenance of order, peace and stability in world affairs. Could India have opposed the expansion of Russian military activities beyond the two provinces in Donbas? Could India have asked for a halt to further NATO expansion? Could India have demanded the imposition of Western sanctions on Russia in ways that would not hurt the economies of developing countries?

### **Safety of Indian Students**

In such a complex crisis as the Ukrainian one, what India initially aimed at was carrying out its responsibility to protect its core national interests. Keeping in mind the domestic political demands, it was imperative for the Modi Government to first ensure the safety and security of its nationals in Ukraine and evacuate them back to India.

India is relatively far from Ukraine in terms of its geography, but it was evidently more anxious over the impact of this war on India per se than many other countries. The reason is not difficult to fathom. And this is flawlessly revealed in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's conversations with the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France, and Poland, fellow heads of government of Quad and the President of the European Council.

In all these conversations, Prime Minister Modi gave primacy to the safety and security of above 20,000 Indian citizens, most of them were young students, who were badly trapped in Ukraine when Russia invaded that country. As Russia's war machine was unleashed in several cities in Ukraine destroying property and loss of human lives, innocent Indian nationals began to flee for their lives. India had absolutely no role in the events and factors that led to this war. India maintained cooperative relations with Russia, Ukraine, NATO

member countries and the United States. Yet India became one of the worst victims of this war.

While the Western world, especially the United States and its European allies raised eyebrows over India's voting pattern in the United Nations and the UN Human Rights Commission, they seemed quite oblivious of the potential consequences of this war over thousands of stranded Indian citizens in the war zones. Bullets and bombs in Ukraine did not distinguish between foreigners and individuals who were parties to the war. India could still bear the economic consequences of this war to a certain extent, but the concern over the threat to the lives of thousands of Indian citizens rightfully raised serious concern in India.

Those who expressed surprise over India's hesitation to condemn the Russian aggression in the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions did not appreciate that despite the possible adverse consequences of the war on Indian citizens Prime Minister Narendra Modi boldly and repeatedly expressed concern over the violation of international law, disrespect to the principle of state sovereignty and breach of territorial integrity of the state. Significantly, Prime Minister Modi did refer to the need for observing international law, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity in his conversations with Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Modi government understood the concept of diplomatic grey zones during a crisis. India was aware that Pakistan was made a major non-NATO ally when India was facing repeated cross-border terrorism that was abetted, assisted and encouraged by Pakistan for decades. Even during the current crisis in Europe, India understands the compulsions of NATO to stay away from direct conflict with Russia. All nations have their limitations and strategic calculations, and they take positions during crises as per their respective national interests. Prime Minister Modi appropriately attached primacy to the safe homecoming of stranded Indians in Ukraine and expected that the Western powers would understand India's position in the Ukraine War.

### **Indo-US Summit and 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue**

The most important test of Indian diplomacy in the wake of the Ukraine War was to interact with the United States to convincingly convey the Indian position that differed from that of the US response and yet preserve the bilateral strategic partnership. Prime Minister Modi and President Joe Biden held a virtual summit that was followed by an in-person dialogue between the

Indian Foreign and Defense Ministers with their American counterparts on 11 April, 2022.

It was a moment of anxiety and curiosity for the international community to know the outcome of the Indo-US dialogue at the highest level in less than two months of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The governments of the key countries that were eagerly following the developments were Russia, China, Pakistan and the American allies in Europe and Asia. The foreign policy establishments in all those countries had diverse sorts of expectations.

Russia wanted India to remain as one of the handfuls of nations that took a neutral stand on the issue of the Ukrainian War or defied the Western diktat to isolate Russia politically and punish Russia economically through sanctions. Russia, of course, has been one of the key countries having strategic partnerships with India. Moreover, Moscow has been highly encouraged by the voting behaviour of India at the United Nations and the Indian willingness to buy Russian energy resources.

China obviously desired India to keep opposing the US sanctions policy and maintain its apparent neutrality on the Ukrainian issue which could lead to writing the obituary of the QUAD security dialogue initiative and culminate in creating roadblocks in the progressive trajectory of the Indo-US “strategic partnership”. Beijing has been apprehensive of the Indo-US defence and security cooperation as a pillar of perceived American strategy to constrain Chinese emergence as a Hegemon in the Indo-Pacific.

Pakistan, the so-called all-weather ally of China, has had a similar wish to see the Indo-US strategic partnership, especially in the field of counterterrorism, fall apart. Islamabad has been witnessing with tormented breath the slow-but-steady rise of Indo-US defence and security collaborations and the painful-and-sharp decline of its alliance relationship with Washington.

The European and Asian allies of the United States, while coordinating their respective approaches to address the crisis in Ukraine with Washington appeared hopeful that the Biden Administration would have direct interactions with the Indian government at the highest levels and succeed in roping in India to join them in a synchronized mode to tackle the Russian aggressiveness.

But the outcome of the Indo-US summit and the 2+2 dialogue appeared to have disappointed them all. First of all, India-US strategic partnership and defence collaborations did not fall apart and rather got further reinforced with newer resolve to boost cooperation. Secondly, India did not follow the Western strategy on Ukraine like a shadow. Thirdly, India said or did nothing to counter the US policy to back to Ukraine and punish Russia. Fourth, India appeared to

have persuaded the Biden Administration that its approach toward the Ukrainian crisis in no way strengthens Russian power or policy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveyed to President Joe Biden the following Indian stands that: A). India upholds the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty. B). India condemned the brutal killings of civilians in Bucha city and called for an independent investigation. C). India has spoken to both the Ukrainian and Russian Presidents calling for dialogue and ending the violence and D). India supplied humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and would continue to do so.

As per the media reports, President Biden appreciated the Indian humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and did not put any other diplomatic or political pressure on the Indian Prime Minister. Moreover, the summit-level conversations comprised several global, regional and bilateral issues where the two countries have been collaborating to address the challenges and make use of the opportunities.

The Indian Cabinet Ministers and the American Secretaries too attended the virtual summit to take directions and hold deeper and more expansive discussions. It was downright clear after the dialogue that the Indo-US strategic partnership would remain stable and vigorous amidst a grim war in Europe that involved talk of even a possible nuclear exchange. Significantly, the two sides simultaneously resolved to address the “destabilising consequences” of the war on the global economy and the international order. But, more significantly, the high-level interlocution stayed focussed on the recent developments and budding threats to peace, prosperity and political stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Both India and the United States have been aware of the fears and apprehensions in many countries that there could be a replay of Ukraine in the Indo-Pacific. There have been persistent attempts by China to annex Taiwan with the mainland and also, to dislocate the current balance of power in this region to establish a Chinese hegemonic order. There was no mention of China in the joint statements issued after the dialogue, but there was little doubt that the elephant in the room was occupied in the centre of strategic dialogue. The need for an open, free, and inclusive Indo-Pacific was re-emphasized.

When President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Modi later met in Tokyo during the in-person QUAD summit, the Ukraine issue was surely discussed. Biden criticised the Russian invasion, but Modi was more focussed on the consequences of the war and how best to handle those. The White House

readout on this discussion is quite instructive.

The best part of this exercise was that the Ukraine issue was not allowed to overshadow the dialogue either at the summit level or at the cabinet level. The exchange of views was comprehensive, and intensive and pivoted around further buttressing the bilateral strategic partnership. The virtual summit and the in-person cabinet-level dialogue indicated that the real challenge to American and Indian security, in the long run, comes from the Indo-Pacific region and differences over an event in Europe should not undermine joint efforts to promote cooperation on Indo-Pacific affairs.

### **Modi Mission to Europe**

Another major challenge to the Indian position in the Ukraine War came from Europe. The European Union has been one of the largest trade partners of India and foreign investors in India. The Ukrainian War posed the severest of tests to the European economy, regional order and security of frontline states of the Union. And thus, the Indo-EU relations apparently came under stress when Russia invaded Ukraine and India stayed away from condemning aggression. The leaders of major powers from within the EU openly asked India to take a position and not sit on the fence.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked upon his maiden 2022 travel abroad in the month of May to three countries in Europe, Germany, Denmark and France for obvious reasons, the dominant factor was communicating with European leaders on the evolving Ukrainian War. After all, the Russian invasion of Ukraine sparked a graver strategic crisis in Europe decades after the relative calm. There were, of course, serious conflicts in Bosnia, Georgia, Azerbaijan/Armenia, and even in Crimea, but none of those confronted the foundation of the European security system the way the Ukraine War did.

It shook the confidence of the European Union to maintain strategic stability and peace in the continent. Years of efforts to engage Russia in the post-Cold War era had crystalized a relationship between Moscow and Brussels that was marked by mutual trade, investment, movement of people and a high level of political engagement. More significantly, the trust that Russia did not pose a threat to European security permitted close energy cooperation between Russia and the EU, which eventually made the latter dependent on Russian energy resources to a considerable extent.

In addition, Russia and the United States, Europe's principal security provider, had also evolved a mutual partnership in sectors as diverse as space



cooperation to arms control to the maintenance of nuclear non-proliferation regimes. There were substantial differences between Washington and Moscow on several issues of international affairs, but such divergences did not threaten to spark a new Cold War between them. The US and the European countries in the meantime kept on following a policy that led to the roping-in of East European countries, once part of the rival Soviet-led Warsaw Pact Organisation, into the European Union and an enlarged North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Russia could do little to save its former strategic space that the Soviet Union had carved out during the Cold War era falling into the sphere of influence of the Western powers. The Ukraine crisis appears to be the last issue that tested Russia's strategic patience and went beyond Moscow's tolerance. Moscow repeatedly warned against making Ukraine a part of NATO and when that did not happen, President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine.

The Ukrainian War now has ominous consequences for the peace and stability in Europe and portends an unstable global order in the foreseeable future. It was essential for Prime Minister Modi to make a trip to certain European countries to explain India's position on the Ukrainian War which is so divergent from that of the EU. Secondly, it was also necessary to hear the European leaders and understand their points of view and future plans.

Such summit-level interactions with the militarily most powerful EU member country, France; and the richest EU member country, Germany, were aimed at not only mutual exchange of views but also meant for ensuring that India's relations with the European countries are not muddied by the war in Ukraine. France is a resident Indo-Pacific power, the second most important source of Indian arms imports, and a key strategic partner of India that shares to a great extent India's worldview. Germany is the strongest economic powerhouse in Europe, a dominant player in EU's decision-making bodies and has deeper economic ties with India. Prime Minister Modi's primary goal was to preserve India's ties and wide-ranging cooperation with these two European heavy weights despite certain divergences on the issue of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Prime Minister Modi also held summit-level meetings with five Nordic countries - Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland - which are smaller in geography and demography but economically and technologically advanced European countries. India is the only second country after the United States that engages the Nordic countries together in constructive cooperation in a range of sectors. Given the consensus-based decision-making in the EU, the political significance of maintaining cordial ties with these countries cannot

be underestimated. Moreover, given the level of their economic development and technological progress, cooperation with these countries is indubitably desirable.

The Ukrainian War reunited the NATO member countries, gave political coherence to the European Union on matters of defence and security policy and strengthened the trans-Atlantic ties that had suffered considerable mistrust during the Trump era. Thus, Prime Minister Modi's Europe visit had strategic relevance. In the presence of the Indian Prime Minister, the European leaders openly condemned Russian aggression and PM Modi boldly expressed India's stand by emphasizing cessation of violence and holding dialogue and discussion to resolve differences and end the war. He was of the opinion that no country would win the war, all would face the consequences and the developing countries would be the worst hit. It needs emphasis that the European leaders unequivocally condemned the Russian aggression, but Prime Minister Modi extended India's help to deal with the adverse consequences of the war.

The joint statements issued reflected both the views and heralded a novel diplomatic understanding. There was no need to highlight only the convergence of views in the joint statement. But cooperation in counterterrorism, cyber security, green and sustainable development, alternative sources of energy, decarbonisation and environmental security and several other themes were discussed and announced.

### **Foreign Minister's Public Diplomacy in Europe**

While Prime Minister Modi held summit-level discussions with his counterparts from several European countries, it was also important to conduct public diplomacy. It was the turn of the Foreign minister to handle that.

Critical questions on Indian positions on the war in Ukraine and several other foreign policy issues confronted Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar when he participated in GLOBSEC, 22 held at Bratislava, Slovakia. Jaishankar's responses to questions were masterly. His replies and retorts reflected India's current position in the world as an influential actor, constructive leader of the Global South and an independent major power. It was an exercise in public diplomacy. The Indian Foreign Minister reached out to the public abroad, who have been fed with certain kinds of distorted ideas, impressions and selected facts about India and Indian foreign policy, to clearly explain to them what India stands for on international affairs and issues.

The major issues raised during the interview were India's position on the Ukrainian War, especially not condemning the Russian invasion, Indian purchases of Russian oil despite Western sanctions, Indian decision to restrict the export of wheat amid a global food crisis, and India's foreign policy strategy in the wake of a bipolar world order represented by the United States and the People's Republic of China.

It is quite understandable that the United States and its European allies have been lobbying hard through bilateral dialogues and even in international forums to make Indian policies aligned with the Western approaches to Russia-Ukraine War. India is a strategic partner of the United States and a trade and investment partner of the European Union and is also a democratic polity, plural society and a market economy. Thus, a strategic partner and an economic partner asking India to support their policy on a critical security challenge in Europe is not something that should surprise anyone.

However, India took certain positions that could not have been completely in tune with the Western policy of arming Ukraine, sanctioning Russia to cripple its economy and weaponizing the international financial systems, like SWIFT. At the same time, it was necessary for India to explain the Indian stand of avoiding condemnation, safeguarding against escalation, promoting dialogue and realising peaceful resolution of the dispute. India appears to have made the US and the European Governments understand through its diplomatic dialogues and discussions the rationale behind its policies, and that explains why India's relations with the strategic partners and economic partners have not been derailed.

Nonetheless, the popular perceptions among certain sections of the attentive public in the United States and Europe appeared as if India is a country that was siding with Russia, ignoring the deaths and destruction in Ukraine, bypassing the Western sanctions and funding Russia's war in Ukraine by buying oil and indirectly helping Russian war efforts by refusing export of wheat despite the war making it difficult for Ukrainian wheat to reach the international market.

The questions that were raised at the time of the interview at Bratislava perfectly mirrored such misperceptions of Indian policy among the Western public. The Indian Minister had quite a task to accomplish. In a polite yet assertive, simple but effective language, he explained that India was not supporting the war, India condemned the Bucha killings, India made efforts to encourage Ukrainian President Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin to resolve differences through dialogue, India, like the European countries,

bought Russian oil to fulfil energy requirements amidst acute shortages in the market, India restricted wheat exports to keep the speculators at bay and that like the American and European people, common people in India were also suffering because of the war in Europe.

While the focus of the interview was on the Russia-Ukraine War, there was an attempt to corner him by the interviewer to take a definite stand in a scenario where a bipolar global power structure would emerge and explain whether India would be in the camp led by the US and Europe or in a bloc led by China and Russia. Jaishankar refused to view the world power structure in that mode and asserted that India would not be a camp follower and would carve out its own way. A country where one-fifth of mankind lives and a country that ranks fifth or sixth among the economies in the world would have its options when bloc politics dominate world affairs.

The fact remains that even in the current scenario marked by strategic divergences between the US and China, not many countries are in a position to take sides! A large number of American allies, including in Europe, look up to China for economic cooperation and up to the United States for security partnership! The world now and even in the future will be more convoluted and cannot be viewed in binary terms.

### **Concluding Observations**

In the backdrop of the Ukraine War, many political leaders or top bureaucratic personnel from globally influential countries either visited Delhi or held intense conversations through virtual mode with their Indian counterparts in recent days. What is significant is leaders from both sides of the strategic divide tried hard to impress upon the Indian government their views and policies on the Ukrainian issue. The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov landed in Delhi to discuss their respective views and policies. And, on the other hand, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Delhi and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison held summit-level interactions with the Indian Prime Minister. The American Deputy National Security Advisor Daleep Singh, German Foreign Policy and Security Advisor Jens Plotner and British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss were other top officials, who visited Delhi and held intense discussions with Indian leaders and high officials.

The G7 meeting that took place in Germany among the richest seven countries and special invitees from Asia, Africa, Latin America and European

Union assumed great significance in view of the prevailing all-pervasive global insecurities amidst the war in Ukraine. The Ukraine War has badly affected the energy market, created an international food crisis, disrupted the global supply chains, and contributed to the global economic downturn and inflationary pressures and India too has been hit by all these developments. As a responsible member of the international community, India tried to cool the tempers in multilateral meetings of members of the opposing camps, came forward to contribute towards combating the pandemic, addressing the food crisis and backing the efforts of the G7 and G20 to ensure global warming mitigation and confront several non-traditional security threats.

Prime Minister Modi's speech at the G7 meeting underscored the rise of India as a global player that is at the forefront of efforts to deal with multiple global crises, such as gender inequality, food crisis, energy crunch, and related economic challenges caused by the persistent COVID-19 pandemic. Modi's diplomacy succeeded in making the BRICS summit statement include the principle of national sovereignty and territorial integrity! In Germany, while the G7 members demonstrated unity against the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Modi re-emphasized the need for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the crisis.

It is important to note that India's role as a global player has become evident. It is also manifest that India has emerged as a centre of power itself in the evolving global order. India's strategic autonomy, reflected in its policies in addressing global challenges, has positive content and overtones. India is opposed to Cold War of any kind; it seeks cooperative ties with all countries; it upholds the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy and, above all, India is on the road to acquiring self-sufficiency in terms of economic, military and diplomatic capabilities to protect its national interests.

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