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INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER NARENDRA MODI

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Abstract

The present foreign policy of India is generally known as Modi doctrine which defines a new course of India's foreign policy since Narendra Modi became the prime minister of India on May 26, 2014. This policy aims at improving relations with immediate neighbour's and South Asian countries, interaction with Southeast Asia, and sound relations with major world players. It is due to the concerted effort of India's last two External Affairs Ministers Sushma Swaraj who was in office between 2014 and 2019 and current minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar that the Ministry of External Affairs has been centrally involved in the execution of these measures. The strategic diplomacy of Modi constitutes several official visits and cooperation to develop economic success and stability in the region. The chief minister of Gujarat also gives experience in international business to take investments from countries such as Japan, China, and Israel. As for the biannual Vibrant Gujarat summit, this endeavor demonstrates Modi's dedication to constructing a favorable climate for business and development. However, this paper focuses on the following issues: Understanding the elements of Modi's foreign policy era and understanding the strategic direction, activities, and effects of Modi's foreign policy on India's international status.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Engagement, Regional Stability, Economic Growth, Strategic Partnerships, Global Powers, Investment, Development.



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Introduction

The foreign policy of India has been in a constant state of evolution right from the time that Narendra Modi began his tenure as the Prime Minister of India from 2014 onwards. This period is discussed as the Modi doctrine, characterized by an active and assertive approach to the foreign policy, with increased attention to the regional integration and relations with the leading world states. In order to drive these policy initiatives, the primary role of the Ministry of External Affairs has been played by Sushma Swaraj, and later Subrahmanyam Jaishankar as the External Affairs Ministers of India. (Chacko & Pandey, 2019)

One of the fundamental principles of Modi's foreign policy is the maintenance of cordial relations with South Asian neighbouring countries. State visits to Bhutan, Nepal, and Japan were made by Modi under the centrist government, demonstrating his strong support for diplomacy in the area.. Typically, such visits were accompanied by travel to such countries as the United States, Myanmar, Australia, and Fiji; such an approach can be viewed as a non-selective overseas visit. It plans to establish the stability of the region and integration and cooperation in the region, along with changing the strategic nature of international relations. The chief minister's popular experience in Gujarat was commented to have greatly shaped the Indian prime minister Modi abroad policy perception. While being the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Modi visited several countries and aimed at improving business ties with large Asian economies. For instance, his friendly encounters with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007 and 2012 fostered a good political relationship that anchored the diplomatic relations between the two nations: India and Japan. Moreover, the invitation to the Chinese investors as well as the invitation to Israel for investment apart from traditional areas of defense and agricultural ties point to a new direction of economic diplomacy of Modi.(Hall, 2019)



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Another solidification of the pro-development, business-friendly image planted by Modi is the Vibrant Gujarat Summit: a biannual international business meeting begun by him. This summit brought huge investment to the state of Gujarat and also helped Modi to prove his diplomatic strategy to build a strong relationship with the world for the development of the region. Modi's foreign policy strategies are mainly economic diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, and newer forms of diplomacy. The global initiatives also included fostering strong bilateral ties, developing regional security, and cooperating with the major powers in the international system to improve India's stature in the World and boost economic growth. This paper focuses on the operational features of Modi's foreign policy which is critically analyzed in this paper by studying key visits, major partners, and significant policies to ascertain an understanding of the nature and essence of Modi's doctrine for determining the position of India in the International system. (Mukherjee, 2015)

2014 General Election

Sources of information exposing Narendra Modi during his campaign speeches in the 2014 Indian general election did not find him placing much emphasis on foreign policy. Yet, he discussed more serious matters, for example, threats of aggression from China in the bordering territories and the question of the illicit immigration from Bangladesh, which affects mainly the states of Assam and West Bengal. He vowed that Hindu refugees living in other countries who are being oppressed would be given political asylum in India. With the self-aware knowledge that he will become the first prime minister of India to be born after the country gained its independence, Modi assumed he had a different vision of foreign policy in contrast to his peers. He pledged himself to a strong foreign policy concentrated on trade with China and decided that the Ministry of External Affairs trade should come before other strategic matters. (Jain, 2014)

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In the election campaign led by Modi, the strategy was aimed an intention to solve some of the issues perceived to be of concern to the Indian population. Promising safeguards to India's territorial integrity he was particularly sensitive to the border issue with China calculatingly constructed for voters who felt threatened by China's aggression. In the same respect, by focusing on the estrangement of immigrants from Bangladesh, Modi touched a raw nerve in Eastern states where the local population has been more often concerned with demography's shifting nature. His words that he would ensure protected status for persecuted Hindus globally addressed more generalized issues concerning the oppression of religious minorities and endeavored to make India a home for persecuted Hindus all over the world.

Foreign Policy Outlook

Some of the views that Modi held on foreign policy were expressed when he was still vying for the position of Prime Minister in 2013 on Think India Dialogue with Network 18. In terms of security, he emphasized the need to increase cooperation with the immediate neighboring countries that are crucial for the stability of the region and the achievement of Kwa's development objectives. Modi, introduced the idea of paradiplomacy in India, it would enable states and cities to conduct their foreign policies. During the debate, he stressed that trade would be the most important factor of foreign relations with India, while strategic partnership would be reserved only for the leading world powers. (Ganguly, 2016)

Concerns with neighbors are clear, and the boosting of relations with the countries nearby shows a practical approach of Modi. It can be seen that Modi wanted to focus on making the region stable to pave the way for economic development in the region within South Asia. This strategy bears consideration of the fact that friendly and cooperative relations with neighbors are beneficial to the stability and progress of the domestic economy. (Malone & Mukherjee, 2014)

Paradiplomacy became one of the cornerstones of the entire change in the concept of Indian foreign policy. Thus, Modi tried to innovate and empower state and city governments to engage in international politics by letting them conclude international treaties in foreign policy to develop economic and cultural cooperation. This wise not only increases India's functioning hold within the community but also advances regional development by capitalizing on strengths and opportunities. (Pant & Joshi, 2014)



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To express his joy congrats, and goodwill, Modi wasted no time replying to tweets and calls from many presidents and prime ministers across the globe showing intentions of actively participating in the international community. Such responsiveness proved the Modi administration's approach to building strong relations and cooperation with other countries. In dealing with leaders of other countries within the initial year of his administration, the focus of Modi was to develop familiarity as well as diplomatic and economic relations. (Basrur &

ullivan de Estrada, 2013)

Inauguration

In the inauguration itself, before being sworn in, Modi invited the chiefs of the government of India's neighboring countries, which points to the intention of multilateralism..Most SAARC leaders attended, including, Members from the following countries were present: Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, Tshering Tobgay of Bhutan, Abdulla Yameen of the Maldives, Sushil Koirala of Nepal, Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, Mahinda Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka, and Navin Ramgoolam of Mauritius, who was an observer. Bangladesh was represented by parliamentary speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury while prime minister Sheikh Hasina was abroad. The prime minister of the Central Tibetan Administration, Lobsang Sangay, is pictured in this excellent portrait. The Indian foreign policy became an apprehension among the international media concerning Modi, but the global media appreciated the starter's multicultural affair. (Mazumdar, 2016)

It was a diplomatic one that the leaders of these countries were at Modi's inauguration; it shows the desire of Modi to foster good and healthy relations with countries next to India. During the swearing-in ceremony of his government, As a sign of his desire to foster cooperation and goodwill in South Asia, Modi extended an invitation to members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This was well received and signified the start of an active and encompassing strategy of India's foreign policy under Modi. This occasion created a good signal going with Modi's administration's external relations. This showed a sharp reversal of Modi's previous approach as a hawk which showed his readiness to involve his country in cooperating with neighbours. The very idea of the gathering as open to everyone was aimed at underlining the necessity of the new epoch in the relations between states of the region and mutual tolerance. (Pant, 2016)

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Initial Actions and Early Diplomacy

Other actions that Modi took in his early months as Prime also clearly pointed to the fact that he was determined to have a muscular foreign policy. During the first hundred days of the government leader Modi visited Bhutan Nepal and Japan, which underlined the role of diplomacy in the region. These visits were soon succeeded by similar visits to the United States of America, Myanmar, Australia, and Fiji, thus pointing to a process of globalization. The main idea of this approach was to contribute to the stabilization of the regions, the development of cooperation in the sphere of trade and investments, as well as strengthening of the multilateral partnership. (Ganguly & Pardesi, 2010)

MODI's recent visit to Bhutan was followed by talks focused on hydroelectric power and other issues on cooperation, new agreements, and confirming India's support of Bhutan's economy. His visit to Nepal was consciously kept short and the main emphasis was laid on recalling the historical and cultural relations and on consolidation of trade and industrial cooperation. On his Japan visit, Modi reposed confidence in the Principal Premium Partnership and looked to boost bilateral trade with the East Asian country and Japanese investment in India's infrastructural development. (Medcalf, 2015)

Both the visits of Modi to the United States and Australia were strategic in the sense that it was a bid to rejuvenate the existing relations between these world powers. In the United States Modi had a one-to-one talk with President Barack Obama and the chief of business tycoons to discuss on strategic relations and economical collaborations. They added that during his recent visit to Australia, he underscored the prospects of a further expansion of the trade and investment relations between the two countries to the Indian migrants living in Australia.(Rajagopalan, 2017)

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Emphasis on Economic Diplomacy

Tester also stressed that the foreign policy of Modi also posts a prominent focus on economic diplomacy. His tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat particularly regarding his ability to attract the much-needed foreign investments shaped his international relations policy. This is because Modi capitalized on the perception people had of him as being pro-business to sell India as a place for investment. (Ramesh, 2017)

It can be clearly said that the various business policies implemented by Modi reflect the Vibrant Gujarat Bi-Annual International Summit that he championed as an example of development friendliness. This summit also brought lot of investment to Gujarat along with highlighting Modi's diplomacy to garner international cooperation for the development of Gujarat.

Their examples include the Modi government's outreach to China and Israel to come and invest in India, which is typical of his economic diplomacy. Thus, engaging with these countries, Modi wanted to extend India's economic diplomacy and decrease its reliance on 'old friends'. His interactions with Chinese and Israeli officials were mainly centered on business and convenient diplomacy, where business relations of export-import, and investments were discussed in the areas of infrastructure construction, service industry and Information technology, and agriculture. (Ranganathan, 2015)

The approach of P5 Nations

Once Narendra Modi came to power, leaders of other nations did not waste much time expressing their desire to deal with the new government of India as they knew opportunities for marketing themselves in the Indian market were enormous. As soon as India added fuel to the fire of its never-ending quest for a seat on the UN Security Council, the five permanent members (P5) responded. Foreign Minister Wang Yi of China visited New Delhi on June 8, 2014, making China the pioneer in sending an ambassador to the Indian capital. Wang expressed a readiness to resolve their longstanding border concerns during his visit, holding bilateral talks and meeting with Modi. From June 18th to the 19th, 2014, Russian Deputy Chairman Dmitry Rogozin visited India. Joint defence production, which is important to Modi, was the main topic of the meeting. During July's 6th BRICS conference in Brazil, Modi also met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. During his visit from June 29 to July 2, 2014,

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French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius met with Modi and had high-level discussions. The contract involving the Dassault Rafale Jet, which was a component of India's postponed MMRCA project, was one example of the strategic and military collaboration he highlighted. British Foreign Secretary William Hague lobbied for the Eurofighter Typhoon to be considered for India's defence acquisitions instead of the Dassault Rafale during his July 7-8 visit. Using Modi's campaign slogan "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas" ("everyone's support, everyone's development"), US Secretary of State John Kerry emphasised the significance of US-India relations. Prior to Modi's August 1 visit to the United States, he advocated for India's backing of sanctions against Russia in the context of the crisis in Ukraine during his August 1 visit to New Delhi. The new government in India has not altered India's foreign

The General Election of 2019

While Amit Shah assumed a large portion of the campaign's responsibilities for the 2019 general election, Modi remained relatively quiet. The party's prime ministerial candidate, Modi, used the Balakot airstrike as a campaign issue and regularly brought up matters pertaining to Pakistan, particularly in the aftermath of the 2019 Pulwama incident. With the start of his second term on May 30, 2019, Modi becomes India's sixteenth prime minister. Heads of state from every BIMSTEC nation made history by attending the inaugural ceremony.

policy, according to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. (Ray, 2014)

Team Engaged in International Affairs

An important position, considering India's increasing global importance, was filled by Sushma Swaraj, a senior BJP leader, as External Affairs Minister. For the record, she was the office's first female occupant. An accomplished intelligence officer, Ajit Doval was appointed National Security Advisor (NSA) by Modi. On January 28, 2015, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar succeeded Sujatha Singh, who had been the foreign secretary at the time. Supposedly, Modi was greatly impacted by Jaishankar's diplomatic skills, and this shift occurred following Obama's visit to India. (Shankar, 2016)

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Policy Initiatives

Shivshankar Menon, who served as national security adviser under the Modi government,

criticized its foreign policy, calling it "strategic incoherence." Nevertheless, several projects

have become well-known:Shivshankar Menon, who served as national security adviser under

the Modi government, criticized its foreign policy, calling it "strategic incoherence."

Nevertheless, several projects have become well-known:

Act East Policy

Under the Modi government, India moved from a Look East policy towards a more assertive

Act East policy to expand cooperation in political economy with ASEAN and other East

Asian nations; Vietnam and Japan among them.(Singh, 2016)

Neighbourhood First Policy

Of them, Narendra Modi's government focused on the issues of enhancing relations with the

immediate neighbors so he revived the Gujral Doctrine which enjoyed the policy of

cooperation with the countries in vicinity. This fact was exemplified by Modi's invitation to

the South Asian leaders during his first term and his subsequent bilateral meetings. He also

suggested a SAARC satellite to pass on the technology benefits in the South Asian

Region.(Sridharan, 2017)

Indian Ocean Outreach

Realising the significance of the Indian Ocean for any nation, the Modi regime tried to

balance rising Chineseetration in the region. Some measures taken in this regard are increased

economic and security partnerships with the neighboring maritime states. Modi pays state

visits to Mauritius and Seychelles, and the state-Republic of Sri Lanka seeks closer

cooperation and partnership.(Varma, 2016)

Project Mausam

To counter this Lost Chines started Project Mausam which was aimed at reviving the

forgotten trade and cultural circuits on the Indian Ocean. This work is devoted to the Indian

Ocean area and pays special attention to the significance of India in historical and future naval

cooperation. (Chacko & Pandey, 2019)

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Cooperation with Pacific Islands

A definitive account of India's relations with the Pacific Island nations can be traced back till

the visit of Mr. Modi in Fiji after the restoration of democracy there. He outlined a Forum for

India-Pacific Island Cooperation as well as several other measures to further strengthen the

relations between the two countries: a special facility for climate change and better

communication technology.

Fast-track Diplomacy

India under Prime Minister Modi improved diplomacy by employing the 'Fast Track

Diplomacy' which is a concept that entails proactive, muscular, and wise diplomatic

processes. As part of this approach, consultations were held in the form of round table

meetings with the heads of Indian missions in different regions, as well as checking the

further developments of top-level visits and exchanges. (Hall, 2019)

Para Diplomacy

Modi provided paradiplomacy inserted the subject into Indian states and cities and

encouraged them to create international relations. The purpose of this policy is explained to be

the promotion of the distributed approach to foreign policy and the strengthening of local

authorities' activities in the field of international relations.

East Asia and South East Asia Policy

Most of the countries were visited by Modi and his foreign minister in the first 100 days of his

government, especially Asian countries. Modi traversed Bhutan, Nepal, Japan, Myanmar, and

Australia stressing integration and synergy of activity in the region. S Swaraj also initiated

several visits to the Asian capitals to consolidate the 'Acting east policy' (Singh B., 2016)

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South China Sea Disputes

Even though India has no claims to the Exclusive Economic Zone of the South China Sea the strategic importance of the region to Indian trade is not inconsiderable. The outlined foreign

policy strategy by Modi entails the transformation of India into a systematic peace-supporting

country in the region of Indo-Pacific.(Basrur & ullivan de Estrada, 2013)

West Asia Policy

"Link West" is the name given to India's West Asia policy, where emphasis is laid on

relations with the Gulf countries important for oil imports, trade, and Indians working there.

Modi's tours to the UAE and other states of the Gulf revealed many strategic advantages for

India in the region.

Stand Against ISIS

The Homemade Minister Rajnath Singh on December 16, 2014, said India has banned ISIS

under the United Nations schedule. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act brought new

bans on ISIS and its associates into force in India stressing the anti-terrorism efforts.(Chacko

& Pandey, 2019)

2014 Israel-Hamas Conflict

India has tried to be neutral in 2014's Israel- Hamas conflict, voicing its opposition to

violence and appealing for a cease-fire. Swaraj also defined that the Indian stance over the

issue of Palestine did not shift away, following the Palestinian people's struggle while

simultaneously maintaining diplomatic ties with Israel.

Overseas Indian Crisis

This was evident in the case of ISIS that emerged in northern Iraq thus posing a real threat to

the lives of Indians working abroad as migrant workers. In attempting to address the problem,

the Ministry of External Affairs provided a hotline and helped to rescue kidnapped nurses and

trapped workers. A similar situation in Libya forced such citizens to be evacuated. The

Ministry of External Affairs arranged charter flights to repatriate distressed Indians caught in

conflict-affected areas. The Houthi conflict which broke out in Yemen required the

evacuation of Indians which was initiated through Operation Raahat. The mission was

accomplished, and the Indian Navy and the Air Force took the lead in the rescue missions that

not only involved Indians but nationals of other countries as well. (Verma N., 2016)

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Relations with North and South America

The author has rightly noted that because of Modi's visa refusal in the past many Democratic critics of the US initially had no confidence in Modi's leadership but the bonds between the two countries have grown stronger. The interaction between Modi and US President Obama started a new chapter of bilateral relations in September 2014 during Modi's visit to America. President Obama was also extended an invitation to attend India's Republic Day festivities in 2015 by him. Modi met with Dilma Rousseff, president of Brazil, at the 6th BRICS conference, where they discussed the future of their partnership. As far as more recent developments are concerned there was a state visit of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to India in January 2020 during which both countries discussed among others trade, agriculture, and health.

It had been 42 years since an Indian prime minister had visited a bilateral relationship, until Modi landed in Canada in April 2015.. From this visit a nuclear deal regarding the supply of uranium to India was signed with Cameco and also there are several MoUs signed to strengthen the cooperation related to cybersecurity, skill development related to information technology, and civil aviation. (**Vijay, 2017**)

European Union-Nations Relations

When it comes to international relations, France is a key player for India. During Modi's April 2015 visit to France, ties between the two nations improved, leading to the acquisition of the Dassault Rafale fighter jet and discussions over nuclear power projects. It was also noteworthy that France backed India's climate initiatives. Better ties with India were a top priority for David Cameron, the prime minister of the United Kingdom. During his 2015 state visit to the UK, Modi met with Prime Minister Cameron and Queen Elizabeth II, focusing on investment and commerce. In April 2015, during his visit to Germany, Modi launched the Hannover Fair, highlighting India's dedication to its "Make in India" programme. One important result was a marked improvement in collaboration on energy, skill development, and technology. (Zafar, 2018)

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Relations with Eurasia

India and Russia's long-standing strategic partnership was reinforced during Putin's visit to India in December 2014. The two countries agreed on several defense and energy cooperation deals, emphasizing the importance of their relationship. (Singh S., 2015)

Relations with Africa

In an effort to attract more African leaders, the third India-Africa Forum Summit was delayed for October 2015. The delay was caused in part by the Ebola epidemic in Western Africa. Maritime cooperation and bilateral relations were the focal points of Modi's March 2015 visit to Mauritius, which was part of his outreach in the Indian Ocean. India exported its first warship with the commissioning of the offshore patrol vessel MCGS Barracuda. (Sharma, 2018)

Collaborations between nations

India is an active member of many important global forums, including the UN, WTO, G20, BRICS, and the East Asia Summit.. Modi's engagement with these platforms emphasizes India's role as a leading voice in global governance. Modi's maiden speech at the BRICS summit called for unity among member states to address global challenges. The establishment of the New Development Bank was a significant outcome. India became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2017, with China and Russia supporting its entry. Modi's participation in the summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, marked India's enhanced role in regional security. Modi's speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2014 emphasized the need for UN Security Council reform and India's demand for a permanent seat. He also called for the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Modi's participation in the 12th ASEAN-India Summit highlighted the importance of connectivity and commerce between India and ASEAN countries. The "Act East Policy" reflects India's proactive engagement with Southeast Asia. Modi's attendance at the East Asia Summit underscored the significance of maritime security and international law. He stressed the aspects of free and safe Sea Lines of Communication. (**Reddy**, **2017**)

The presence of Modi at the G-20 summit in Brisbane was aimed and bringing changes in the economic structure and would like to fix problems such as black money and expatriation costs. He used to have very good relations with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott which

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was noticeable in the summit. Premier Modi in his initial years of the government's

administration was particularly active on foreign policy, though the major focus was paid to the South Asian neighbors. About this, the SAARC summit held in Kathmandu was all about

connective integration, trade, and energy. However, the pleasant diplomatic relations between

India and Pakistan at this summit paved the way for the signing of the South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation or SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy

Cooperation. (Wadhwa, 2015)

Still, Modi's government benefited from the support of such APEC members as China and

Russia for the inclusion of India into the forum. Modi also started the International Agency

for Solar Technologies & Applications, in which 120 countries are working together for solar

energy technologies. The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor launched by India and Japan provides

for improvement of the connection, infrastructural cooperation, and capability improvement

in Africa and Asia. As time goes on, the Indo-Pacific area becomes more and more the centre

of attention for international business. (Verma, 2015)

Conclusion

A new course of foreign policy has been determined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

administration, according to this document. Taking a bold step beyond the cautious approach

of other administrations, the Modi-led government has prioritised economic diplomacy,

regional stability, and tendentious ties in its pursuit of better international relations for India.

His era has been characterized by the emergence of new ideas like paradiplomacy which

brings the states and cities into the foreign policy arena and Act East Policy which looks at

fortifying India's relations with the Southeast Asian nations. Another foreign policy-related

strategy of Modi has been economic diplomacy which is well reflected in his initiatives to

bring foreign investment and to expose India as an investment-friendly destination through a

biennial global investors' summit known as 'Vibrant Gujarat'.

In this respect, it is also important to note that Modi also boasts a similar foreign policy

demeanor that has equally been a balance of power diplomacy, where India has not only had

to engage but also maintain courtesy with the P5 nations, parallel with Modi visiting some of

the most influential world's powers such as United States, Japan and Australia. Project

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Mausam, the works in the Pacific Islands exemplify how India under his administration has sought to develop counter-hegemonic measures against China's overbearing influence in the Indian Ocean and the world. Furthermore, the Modi-led government has been quite involved in multilateral diplomacy at the UN, G20, and BRICS levels and has assertively championed global governance reforms while projecting India as a leader in the management of global affairs.

All the same, criticisms regarding the lack of strategic direction in operations have observed that the Modi doctrine has introduced new vigor to Indian foreign policy, thus placing the country on the international map as an actor agency. With his proactive external relations that seek to guarantee India's long-term stability and prosperity along with the rise of the country's status in the International League of Nations, Modi's foreign policy is best described.

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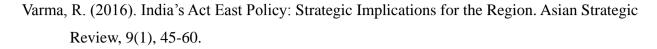


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