

EDITORIAL

Recent revelation of facts about the India-China war of 1962 candidly reflects upon the vision of the people who were in charge of determining the war strategy and ultimately it also questions Pandit Nehru's role in handling the Chinese aggression. So much water has flown down the Ganges since the debate of 1962 nevertheless the policy of adhocism that characterize our strategy towards china of 1962 has once again led the intelligentsia, army personnel and think tanks to take stock of the entire system of implementing foreign policy and strategy in the 21st Century world.

While we witness a remarkable change in the nature of world politics in the aftermath of the demise of the cold war; while globalization has unleashed new kinds of economic, political and cultural waves and the nation states are grappling to adjust their foreign policies, economic policy and diplomatic styles in accordance with the changing contours of global scenario, the most pertinent debate concerning our foreign policy in that how, India, a claimant of great power status in international system, is addressing the challenges before its foreign policy. How a rising power India perceives the world and how it responds to the challenges posed by the forces of globalization and global power dynamics, are some of the pertinent issues in any discourse on our foreign policy.

No doubt India has made outstanding progress in the field of science and technology in the sphere of space and nuclear science; it has recorded a high growth rate of over eight percent in the last few years and opened its market for global competition. It has immense strength of both skilled and unskilled human resource. It occupied the non-permanent seat of the United Nation Security Council in 2011-12. It has rendered significant contributors in the strengthening of the U.N. through its participation in peace keeping operations. Besides being world's second largest population, fourth largest economy in term of purchasing power, eighth largest industrial economy, world's largest pool of scientists and engineers and above all the world's largest democracy endowed with all the credentials of a major power, its impact in the sphere of foreign relations is subject to scrutiny.

After sixty six years of Independence. India stands at the cross roads in its relations with the rest of the world. There is now emerging consensus in strategic community and the foreign policy experts that India needs to revamp its rising profile as the current foreign policy framework is perhaps not adequate to meet the challenges of the era of globalization. She will have to clarify her choices and candidly define the contours of the foreign policy in the coming years.

Ironically, Indian foreign policy establishment is yet to emerge from the mindset of bipolarity of the cold war years and redefine the foreign policy choices in the fast changing world. She needs to redefine her relationship vis-à-vis United States, her approach to the idea of strategic triangle consisting of Russia, China and India, nuclear doctrine, civil military and her relations with East Asian countries, West Asia, particularly Iran and Israel and the neighbouring countries.

Unfortunately, we could not build up a coherent grand national strategy to project its potentials and safeguard long term peace and prosperity. A glance at the strategic scenario of Asia and Europe reflects the uncertainly looming large owing to economic recession and recent upheavals in Ukraine. The issue of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in Russia have once again created a situation of flux and uncertainty. The postponement of G-8 meeting and expulsion of Russia from this grouping by the U.S.A and her western allies and rescheduling the meeting with a new nomenclature G-7 seems to have generated a new kind of tension between Russia and Western countries over the issue of Crimea's merger in Russia, it signals of another cold war.

In such a situation how India responds to these challenges is a major task before the foreign policy planners and executors in the times to come. Besides these challenges Chinese assertion is rapidly growing; our traditional friends in the neighbourhood like Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, and Srilanka are no more prepared to bank upon us. In addition to it, trans border terrorism, drug trafficking through international borders, Pakistan's strategy to destabilize India and Chinese Strategy to encircle her with a string of bases in the Indian Ocean are some of the overt challenges which require immediate attention. But ironically policy stand is divided on fundamental foreign policy choices and we are being branded as a over soft power. This situation has arisen largely due to likewarm attitude of political class and lack of consenses on the foreign policy issues. Political parties seldom devote attention of these grave issues of foreign policy. We have nor been able to craft a sound trajectory of Indian foreign policy based on principles in consonance with her geo-political reality and her cherished value of peace, friendship and harmony.

Now, it is high time to develop a conceptual framework for foreign policy. It helps us understanding the nature of unfolding trends in global politics Barring a few commentaries in the annual reports of the External Affairs Ministry and Defence Ministry, there are hardly any concept papers on major issues by the Ministry concerned. The policy planners refrain from involving the think tanks at institutional level. How foreign policy can be an instrument of promoting inclusive economic growth, ensuring human security, combining military strength with diplomacy and integrating cultural heritage, are some of the prominent dimensions of the review of India's foreign policy. So, in place of adhocism there should be well defined goals if at all we want attain great power status in the community of nations.

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