

# The Pretentious Non-Aligned Policy of India in the Present Era of Geo-Politics

In the routine course, the presidency of G-20 for 2023 fell on India. Taking this occasion handy the PM Modi and his government have been incessantly harping that, the prestige of India internationally has increased and that people of India shall be proud for India's G-20 presidency. Modi even boasts that India's G-20 presidency will work to promote the universal sense of "oneness". With vogue and unrealistic slogans of theme of "one earth, one family, one future" he announced that India's G-20 presidency will be made a presidency of healing, harmony and hope and he called on the people to join together to make India's G-20 presidency for the success of the theme announced by him.

On the other hand, External Affairs Minister claims that India can play a "stabling" and "bridging" role when the world no longer offers an "optimistic picture" and stated that India can contribute towards the "de-risking the global economy"; in political terms "in some way, help depolarize the world".

With such claims the BJP government led by Modi, through its so-called foreign policy had grown into a "world leader" representating global south stating that "countries wanted to talk to us because there is a belief that we are in touch with key players and we can influence them, we can shape the thinking, we can contribute, sometimes we are prepared to say things which may not be possible for everybody to do so". It is clear that with such claims, Modi and the BJP government intends to impress people. Particularly middle-class by claims- that India's prestige has increased internationally due to the foreign policies adopted by Govt and thus to gain good-will and electoral advantages from the people in the coming general elections of 2024.

However, the role played by India in the context of Russia-Ukraine war claimed by the BJP rulers that India's stand was guided by its national interests holds no water; neither such stand had enhanced the prestige of India in international affairs nor India is capable of helping in depolarizing the world. Such a claim belies the actual situation of India and the reality.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the imperialist America (USA) has been attempting to establish its hegemony interests and USA leaders with their goal for

primacy in the international system. The recently launched national security strategy of USA and its documents primarily focuses on the current decade as a 'decisive' one in which the US seeks to sustain US leadership, improve US economy, build on a vast network of alliances and partnerships. They advocate curbing China's rise, weakening Russia's capabilities, securing Europe behind US leadership and building satellite alliances with countries conform to US interests and values.

US seek to sustain US leadership, counter China as its strategic competitor and Russia as a disrupter and boost US competitiveness and defend 'democracy'. It seeks to invest in the "tools of America power and influence". It seeks to build "the strongest possible coalition of nations". US strategists want to weaken Russian capabilities as they see Russia especially when in alliance with China or any other country as dangerous to US geopolitics. US is using the conjecture of Russia-Ukraine war for global primacy.

With its phenomenal economic reach that widened during globalisation, China is the 'near peer' to US though it is no match to the US militarily; China began building counter institutions. It looked for accommodation with the US in its "peaceful project". But since it is not acceptable to US, China turned from competitor to threat.

USA is now championing trade restrictions against its enemies, promoting trading blocks among its alliances, and turning the "free trade" among nations in to a "foe trade", leading to formation of "friend trade" groups and the glorification of "economic nationalism".

On its part China too has increased its outreach in South Asia. It started to further its strategic ends in the region through loans, financial incentives, and mega infrastructure projects and institutionalized with the launch of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), enabling itself to access Indian Ocean, promote political and security ties in region, harbor military vessels and submarines and take certain islands and ports on lease. In the African continent China emerged as the largest trading partner and the fourth largest investor.

Many countries of the South believe that they are unlikely to get Western help when they need it the most. Many in the South are dependent on Russian energy, fuel, fertilizers, wheat, commodities and defense equipment. Most of the Southern Countries would not like to be a party of security or military alliances of US or Chinese or Russian sides.

But US is putting massive pressure on these countries. Recently US Congress passed a bill "Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act" advocating, pressuring, monitoring and punishing African States and leaders who engage with Russia. In response the South African Foreign Minister Ms.Pandor, rebutted stating that

“African Countries that want to relate with China, let them do so, in whatever particular form of relationship with China”.

On the other hand China is waiving debt owed by 17 African countries. Similarly there is a similar pushback from Latin America and West Asian countries.

Now it is this in background of international situation, the India’s foreign policy has to be examined.

### **India’s Foreign Policy**

The stance of BJP Govt foreign policy is lauded as if it has spelled out “its version of non-alignment” and is seeking to keep a balance in the growing polarization between the US and European Union on one side and Russia on one side”. They argue that since India has traditional ties with Russia and strategic ties with US and Europe, India is adopting “its version of non-alignment” policy.

But on examination it can be found that India has no policy on foreign affairs leave alone “its version of non-alignment” policy as being projected. It never had any principled foreign policy and even the BJP government under the leadership of PM Modi has any principle based foreign policy but a foreign policy based on political opportunism. It is also incorrect to state that India is having traditional ties with Russia, but it had its longstanding ties with the Soviet Union, which is not at all the present Russia of Putin. Neither the BJP government’s foreign policy is guided by the “national interests” as being claimed.

It is no secret that the Indian economy is totally chained to the imperialist neo-liberal policies and its financial institutions like IMF and World Bank, and guided by the policies of WTO and arbitrated by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the control and directions of the US and the west (Europe Union). More over India is being claimed by US as its strategic partner and even flattered that it (US President) could understand the stand of India in the context of Russia-Ukraine war, and making every effort to draw India, wholly in to its bear’s hug. India is already a willing member of QUAD and AUKUS which are intended to pushback China from Indo-Pacific region. India has a military Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with US. India is participating in military exercises such as US led RIMPAC (The RIM of Pacific Exercises) and hosting them frequently to be conducted in India.

No doubt India had developed to International North-South Transport Corridor and sends a military contingent for the Vostok exercises routinely conducted by Moscow with China. But these attempts pale at the enormity of the ties of India with US in economic, military and ideological fields. Neither its membership in G-20, ASEAN like international forums is of any substantial consequence in international affairs.

In 2022, India again started making free trade agreements. India signed bilateral trade agreements with UAE and Australia and in talks for FTAs with EU and Gulf Cooperation Council and Canada for others. It joined US led Indo Pacific Economic Framework of Prosperity (IPEF). It gave economic assistance to Sri Lanka, made trade agreements with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

All these actions indicate that India is acting in accordance with the Indo-Pacific strategy of US, acting at its behest to push back China from South Asian region.

That India chose to abstain from resolutions at UNSC, UNGA, IAEA, Human Rights Commission and other multi-lateral platforms seeking to censure Russia for the invasion and humanitarian crises do not mean that it adopted a non-alignment policy, but it reveals that it did not want to criticize and condemn US and European Union for making efforts to expand NATO and causing security concerns to Russia and to not to point out that US is utilising the situation of Russia-Ukraine war, for boosting its armament sales by inciting Ukraine against Russia and attempting to fuel the war to continue further. This has nothing to do with the India's national interests. In reality it is its evasion of indicating US and its allies that led to the war. Abstaining from voting served no purpose. It does not mean that India is adopting a principle based foreign policy but that adopts a policy of political opportunism.

It also does not mean that India is adopting a principle based foreign policy, when it abstained on an UNSC vote calling for Myanmar to end violence and release political prisoners, and not criticising Iran, for killing the activist Masha Amini and very recently abstaining from voting on UN resolution on Israel asking the international Court of Justice for its opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's 'prolonged occupation' and annexation of the Palestinian territory.

On the contrary it has chosen to abstain from those votings, since in India too the human rights are being grossly violated, political opponents are being regularly incarcerated under UAPA and NIA acts and the animosity and vulnerable sections are being targeted to violence with impunity and that India does not want to be criticized and found fault for all these reckless indiscretions being committed by it.

While US is inciting India for the animosities existing between India and China due to India-China war in 1962, India is acting as a pawn in the hands of US, in its strategy to pushback China from contending with US for influence over the world; opposing the world under US hegemony and to create its own influence over the world.

With such pretenses of India as a non-aligned country it is intending to obtain leadership of the global south which is asserting in geopolitics to be neutral.

But at the most it can become an unsuccessful broker to end the Russia-Ukraine war somehow or other with such inconsequential slogans such as "this era is not for

war" etc through the presidency of G-20 in 2023 and project itself as a capable world leader.

But, however neither US and its European and Western allies allow the war to be ended without ruining Russia and its might nor Russia's Putin will end the war surrendering to US and its allies compromising the 'security concerns of Russia threatened by NATO, its expansion and the hegemonic diktats of the US.

If India really wants to play a key role and help to depolarize the World in international affairs, it should sincerely strive to oppose imperialism and create a world that gives conditions of peace and security that will permit all countries to grow and flourish safe from foreign exploitation, loot and military aggression, with open opportunities to all.

Such principles of foreign policy of India will make people of India proud, but pretensions of non-alignment policies will not be praised, but will be understood as the tricks played by BJP to attract voters for its success to governmental power in 2024 general elections!