

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

A HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The concept of “human security” provides a broader framework for a realistic assessment of the contribution of nation-states to international peace and security. The individualistic notions of human rights that developed Western states led by America have tried to impose on the rest of the world and which form the core of their doctrine of humanitarian intervention have found little resonance in developing countries. Evidence shows that developed nations have at times not hesitated to use military means allegedly to enforce human rights in other countries. This paper assesses India’s foreign policy, its contribution to international peace and security and its role in addressing the structural inequalities in the world economic order through the human security perspective.

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The concept of “human security” requires a change in focus from the physical security of a state to the socioeconomic security and development of its people along with their civil, personal and physical security. There is also a need to decouple security from nation-states by shifting attention from citizens to the people of the world at large—the emphasis should be on all human beings and not just the people of one country. A state’s foreign policy must incorporate such

a changed understanding of security in its relations with other states. Citizens of a particular country would realise freedom from fear and want through security and development in a peaceful world mediated through a peaceful region. Although “human security” only became a common part of academic discourse in the 1990s, it had already been in existence for a while and practiced by some states. A historical study of a country’s foreign policy from the human security perspective enriches the understanding and execution of the concept.

Compared to the human rights perspective, the human security outlook provides a larger framework to evaluate the contributions of different states towards humanitarian causes for a number of reasons. First, the international regime of human rights is riddled with controversies as developed states prioritise civil and political rights over economic and social ones, while developing countries prefer the opposite. In fact, human security requires all rights be equally protected if human beings are to be secure. Second, human rights are claims and rights of individuals against states. However, they do not correct the inegalitarian international structure that leads to human insecurity. On the other hand, human security necessitates an egalitarian world order to enable each state to provide security to its own people. Third, the human rights regime’s preoccupation with the enforcement of the rights of individuals may call for international intervention taking an intense form bent on regime change even at the expense of minimum human security. Alternatively, human security also looks after socioeconomic and security factors of the people during peacekeeping operations. Fourth, the human rights perspective does not address global problems like climate change, environmental pollution or terrorism, which compromise the rights of individuals. The human security perspective in contrast considers all global problems for a secured life of individuals. Therefore, the latter viewpoint provides the broadest framework to analyse and understand a country’s contribution to international peace and security. It locates the problem of human insecurity in structural inequalities between the developed and developing countries, in the neglect of Third World security concerns

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during peacekeeping operations and in global problems like climate change and environmental pollution.

From a human security perspective, the preservation of territorial integrity and the strengthening of state institutions remains a priority for the secured living of individuals. While the human rights perspective asks for the enforcement of individual rights in failed states, it remains reticent on a prior strengthening of state institutions so that states do not fail. The concept of human security is not obsessed with territorial and military security and believes that the foreign policy of a country should also strive to attain other important goals for a better life of its citizens. People of a country not only have the right to freedom from fear, they are also entitled to freedom from want. While the conventional notion of security emphasises the former, human security respects both. Freedom from fear and freedom from want are interrelated because it is only in a relatively peaceful environment that people can achieve developmental objectives while conversely, people deprived of basic needs and minimum benefits of development will be constantly involved in fighting for scant resources. Citizens of a particular country can live a peaceful life of dignity and development only when the region where the country is situated and the world are safe places without conflict, where the socioeconomic concerns of all are addressed and an egalitarian international order is established. State institutions of developing nations need to be strengthened and properly represented in international organisations for the better lives of their citizens. The United Nations (UN), which undertook the objectives of peace and development in the world at its establishment, still provides the best platform to judge a particular country's foreign policy from the human security perspective. Moreover, certain global problems like climate change and environmental pollution require the attention of the developed and developing world alike.

THE POLICY OF NONALIGNMENT: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE COLONISATION AND MILITARISATION OF WORLD POLITICS

India's historical experience under colonial rule shaped its nonalignment foreign policy after independence. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru steered the country's foreign affairs during the turbulent Cold War that engulfed the

world. At the time, military alliances led by the superpowers were being forged in different regions. Nehru's strong belief and fear that by joining a regional military alliance India could again slip under colonial rule in another form led him to craft the nonalignment strategy. He realised that given the asymmetry in power India would not be considered an equal partner in any alliance system. The country would have to surrender its newfound independence though it would receive material and military support from whichever superpower it aligned with. Nehru however firmly believed such support could never be turned into long-term development. Moreover, involvement in Cold War politics would only lead to a greater militarisation of the world, which would sabotage the world peace and stability that were necessary preconditions for the development of all newly independent countries. A nonaligned foreign policy could grant India the necessary manoeuvrability and independence of action for long-term development. The concerns of newly independent states were different from those of the superpowers and although Cold War politics bifurcated the world into East and West, many developing countries preferred not to become entangled in it. The policy of nonalignment brought the economic underdevelopment of Third World nations to the fore, eventually leading to the North–South division of the world on an economic basis.

Thus, the fear and apprehension of great powers, the bitter experience of colonial rule, the militaristic nature of Cold War politics and the urge for independence of action and socioeconomic development were the driving factors behind India adopting a nonaligned foreign policy. This however did not mean neutrality. Switzerland was neutral during the World Wars and remained aloof from European power politics. India and its nonaligned allies did not want to abstain from participating in world politics. Rather, they wished to contribute positively to international peace and security by mediating Cold War disputes and addressing the structural inequalities between developed and developing states.

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INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: A HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The meaning of peace varies around the world. For Third World states, peace is not just the mere absence of conflict but rather entails a long-term project of socioeconomic restructuring. These countries need both financial and technological assistance from the developed world for all-round development. During peacekeeping operations, socioeconomic factors must be stressed. The definition of Third World security was articulated by AR Mudaliar, head of the Indian delegation to the deliberations on economic and social matters at San Francisco in 1945. He stated that after the Second World War while great emphasis was being laid on security and armed strength to prevent aggression, it was the causes that led to the war—economic and social injustices—that needed to be highlighted. Mudaliar was unanimously elected the first president of the Economic and Social Council at the first session of the UN General Assembly perhaps because of his contribution towards developing an alternative perspective on security. Mudaliar's understanding on security reflected the general mood of Indian foreign policymakers particularly Nehru.

India's interpretation of peace and security contributed to the development of a Third World perspective and altered the classical understanding of peace and security that gives primacy to military factors. The former favours peace achieved through peaceful negotiations and persuasive methods. For example, in the case of Libya, while India agreed with American and British contentions that international terrorism posed a grave threat to international peace and security, it abstained on a March 1992 resolution that imposed air, arms and diplomatic sanctions against the North African state. India's argument was that punitive action had been contemplated without exhausting persuasive and diplomatic means (CSR Murthy, "UN Peacekeeping in Intrastate Conflicts", *International Studies*, vol38, no3, New Delhi: Sage, 2001). Moreover, the North–South division is not merely geographical. Rather it represents a bifurcation of the world based on levels of economic development, industrialisation and differences in history and culture, which ultimately lead to differences in the understanding of peace and security across a divided line. As James Patrick ("International Crisis: A View from the South" in Shreesh Juyal and B Ramesh Babu (Eds), *The United Nations and World Peace*, New Delhi: Sterling, 1990) observes:

“Perceptions of threat, time, pressure and probability of military hostilities pervade various Western definitions of crisis. But developing states have a different definition of security as they face the crisis of underdevelopment and this problem is intertwined with their concerns about security”.

The difference in the security perspective was evident in the UN operation in Somalia. Beginning in the aftermath of the Cold War, this was a unique action as it provided a yardstick to measure each country's potential for and contribution to peacekeeping. Unlike the operation in the Congo, there were no restraining factors linked to the potential for a direct clash between the two superpowers. The situation in Somalia allowed for an atmosphere of “free-play” to all the actors involved. The exacerbation of the situation and the eventual withdrawal of American and Western troops indicated their incapability and impatience with the ground socioeconomic conditions as well as their overemphasis on the conventional understanding of security. Comprehending social conditions leads to a better understanding of the political situation. Due to the militaristic turn taken by the American spearheaded *Operation Restore Hope*, the UN forces in Somalia were dubbed as new warlords, imperialists and an occupation army. With this backdrop, India decided to take part in the UN operation. After the withdrawal of American and Western troops, the UN action became a largely Third World effort. After many Indian soldiers lost their lives, there was increasing pressure from the media calling for India to pull out. However, many clan leaders like Mohamed Farrah Aidid, Ali Mahdi Muhammad and Mohammed Said Morgan wrote to the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, asking that the Indian contingent be retained.

Apart from the political leaders who expressed their desire to seek assistance specifically from India in reconstructing Somalia, Radio Mogadishu also appreciated the Indian Navy's patrol vessel *INS Sukanya's* commendable support to the UN Children's Fund in carrying basic drugs and medicines, blankets, high-energy foods, immunisation equipment and vaccines to the civil war affected people. India's stress on supplying essential commodities like water was admirable

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from a human security perspective. Its contingent drilled two high-capacity water wells in Baidoa and Bardera using indigenous equipment, which later led to the use of Indian equipment in boring hundreds of tube wells in remote areas for supplying water to villages. The Indian Brigade revived the Bonkai Orphanage and its soldiers took on the task of teaching the orphans. Engineers from the Indian Army built mosques in Oddur and Wajid in deference to the religious beliefs of the local people. The Sixty-sixth Infantry Brigade also took effective measures to rehabilitate a large number of refugees. Aidid's remarks below on India's role underline the importance of the Third World security perspective and India's conformity to it for the maintenance of human security.

"It is well known to Somalis that Indians would not be trigger-happy like the Americans. Coming from a developing country, they understand the problems of another developing country".

Expounding India's similar security perspective, Brigadier MP Bhagat, who headed the Indian Brigade stated:

"We will open fire only when the situation is out of control. Minimum force will be used with all caution and warning that is what we are preaching".

As DP Merchant reiterated:

"Security does not come only by rifles and bullets ... We want to demonstrate that peace can be brought by cultural exchange" (Srikant Paranjape, "UN Peacekeeping in Civil Strife: Situations of Somalia and Yugoslavia (with special reference to the Indian Role)" in B Mody Nawaz and BN Meherish (Eds), *India's Role in the United Nations*, Bombay: Allied, 1995).

India's contribution to international peace and security from the human security perspective was also reflected in its role in the Congo. During operations, it used force as a measure of last resort, that is, only after the situation went out of control, which proved to be a useful tactic in ending the civil war. The Indian battalion was the largest single unit under UN command and its contributions ensured the cohesion of the newly emerged nation-state. In other places like Mozambique, as part of the UN mission, India successfully brought two warring camps to the negotiating table and conducted elections, preparing the ground for pacifications and greater human security.

According to Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, India's participation in UN peacekeeping operations significantly relates to its national interests. Participation in the Korean and Cambodian operations demonstrated India's stake in the stability of East and Southeast Asia. Historical and traditional links with Cambodia were strengthened through the operation there and political links

were cemented. Indian participation in UN peacekeeping operations in Angola, the Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda and Somalia demonstrated the country's interests in the wellbeing and stability of the newly emerged African nation-states. India's vital energy interests and traditional relationship with West Asia were demonstrated by its participation in UN peacekeeping operations in the Gaza and Sinai, Iran and Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen. India has a stake in the stability and wellbeing of the people of West Asia. As Nambiar argues, it is unlikely that any other single country has contributed as much towards UN peacekeeping in West Asia. In Afghanistan as well, India has confined its role to socioeconomic restructuring and shunned large-scale military participation. At best, it has expressed a willingness to train the Afghan National Army as part of its conscious avoidance of a big military role.

India's common colonial past with many African and Asian countries has led to shared interests and stakes in each other's stability and influenced the former's participation in peacekeeping operations in the developing world. Throughout history, India has had healthy cultural relationships with many Asian states through its rich cultural heritage, which in turn has influenced its participation and role in UN operations. Moreover, its increasing energy requirements have shaped its will to contribute to peacekeeping in energy-rich areas like West Asia. As a developing country, India cannot afford to adopt a power-centric approach to realise its energy needs. Thus, India's traditional cultural relationships, common anti-colonial struggles, shared platforms such as the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) based on convergent views of the Cold War and similar socioeconomic problems have defined its interests and approach to peacekeeping. Indian national interests are tied with the maintenance of peace and security in the Third World. As a developing country, India understands the problems of other developing states and tries to contribute to UN peacekeeping operations from a human security perspective. According to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Report (*Yearbook 2000: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, New York: Oxford

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University Press, 2000), by the close of the twenty-first century, conflicts in Asia and Africa would be far more numerous than in Europe and South America. Most would be intra-state and would precipitate civil war situations. Therefore, human security would require peace achieved through a Third World security perspective for years to come.

INDIA'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES IN THE WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER

The convergence of Indian national and Third World security interests has been reflected in the country's role in the UN. Since inception, India has desired that it be a broadbased organisation reflecting the concerns of Third World countries. New Delhi has always advocated the principle of universality of membership to minimise Western domination. To this end, it has effectively mobilised the support of Afro-Asian countries to take an anti-colonial stance. For securing their greater representation in various councils and committees, Indian delegates have persistently though cautiously attempted to bring about changes in the UN. They have succeeded in putting across a resolution in the General Assembly to expand membership of the Security Council.

At the time of independence, India and other Third World countries envisaged greater manoeuvrability and flexibility within the limitations imposed by the world economic system. India played an important and effective role at the 1955 Bandung Conference in developing an economic agenda for the developing world. This included technical assistance, the establishment of a special UN fund for economic development and the stabilisation of commodity trade and prices, etc. Documents of the Indian government's Second Five Year Plan reveal that planners were aware of the similarities in developmental problems of Third World countries and conscious of the scope for joint action. Indian representatives played a pivotal role in initiating debates and discussions, which led to an amendment of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Developing countries were thereby permitted to impose import restrictions with the aim of implementing their programmes and policies of economic development. The dialogue led to nominal gains in other areas as well. For example, a blanket ban on the increase of customs charges was accepted, resulting in developing countries receiving a fairer share in international trade.

Indian representatives also played a leading role in persuading the UN to designate the 1960s as the First Development Decade and undertake preparatory measures for setting up the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). At the first UNCTAD meeting in 1964, to address the structural inequalities between developed and developing countries, India stated that preferential treatment should be accorded to the exports of developing nations. Such a system had to be non-discriminatory and applicable to all such countries. It also emphasised the industrialisation of the economies of developing countries apart from the removal of nontariff barriers and a reduction or removal of tariff barriers. At the second UNCTAD meeting, India proposed a scheme of general and non-discriminatory preference in favour of manufactures and semi-manufactures from all developing countries and argued that it had to be nonreciprocal (KM Seethi and P Vijayan "The Political Economy of India's Third World Policy" in Rajen

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Harshe and KM Seethi (Eds), *Engaging with the World: Critical Reflections on India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009).

From a human security perspective, India's role in addressing the gap between the developed and developing world has been commendable. A major source of human insecurity and tension in developing countries were the long years of colonial economic exploitation, resulting in underdevelopment and the neocolonial exploitation of the world economic system after independence. India used the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and its committees and the UNCTAD for mobilising support for the cause of developing countries by sponsoring resolutions and bringing amendments to resolutions sponsored by other countries. India has contributed \$100,000 to the UNCTAD trust fund for least developed countries. It is also an influential founding member of the Group of 77 (G-77/Third World caucus) which was formed by the concerted efforts of developing states. Over the years, the group has adopted formal resolutions at ministerial level meetings to address the unequal distribution of benefits in the international economic order. Given the failure of UNCTAD I and II, India tried to

use other platforms like NAM and the G-77 to increase the influence of developing countries in the UN and effect a new international economic order (NIEO). At the 1970 Lusaka Summit, NAM countries acknowledged that structural imbalances in the existing world economic order were responsible for continued economic dependency and poverty. Under India's leadership, they demonstrated solidarity in international bargaining with developed countries at the Algiers Summit in 1973.

The UN General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Establishment of the New International Economic Order* on 1 May 1974, which contained provisions to stem the structural exploitation between developed and developing countries. For instance, the full sovereignty of states over their natural resources and all forms of economic activity was declared along with a call for the equal participation of all nations in the solution of global economic problems. The objectives of the NIEO included raising the prices of raw materials exported by developing countries, the creation of export-oriented economies in the Third World based on cheap labour and abundant natural resources, easy access to the markets of developed countries and the quick and easy transfer of technology from developed to developing states. The NIEO agenda calling for a true global redistribution of wealth found little support in developed nations and by the 1980s, it was politically dead, superseded by the new concern of the growing debt levels of developing countries. In 2003, the UNCTAD and World Bank became co-owners of the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System to manage the debt levels of developing states. The NIEO's recommendations became increasingly irrelevant with the onset of globalisation.

The success of developing countries in addressing the structural inequalities in the world economic order has been marginal. Based on a largely inegalitarian structure, the liberalisation policies adopted by developing states after the end of the Cold War have led to more inequalities and exploitation. In fact, globalisation has led to a division in the Third World camp. India's policy had already shifted due to stagnation in the domestic market and a balance of payment crisis in the 1980s–90s. It adopted the New Economic Policy in 1991 and undertook measures for macroeconomic stabilisation and structural adjustments as per the directives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. These measures led to a gradual withdrawal of the state from the market, encouraged private investment, increased reliance on external private

capital for economic development and led to a gradual privatisation of public enterprises, etc. India became a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) even though the latter legitimised the existing structural inequalities of the world economic order and developing countries continued to face discrimination in the multilateral trade organisation. By the time the Uruguay Round was launched, more than half the developing states had become dependent on developed countries, the IMF and World Bank. The developed nations in turn exploited this vulnerability and succeeded in breaking Third World unity. India, which had so far led the developing states and been a factor in their solidarity, shunned its traditional policy and moved closer to developed countries like the United States of America.

Third World unity, which had slowly gathered momentum, soon lost significance. From a human security perspective, India's capitulation to globalisation will have long-term negative results for human beings throughout the developing world, even though it may have brought short-term growth to the Indian economy. In recognition of the long-term negative impacts of globalisation, former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee while addressing the NAM Durban Summit had said:

“Protectionism, currency speculation and the flight of capital have been a setback to the economies of many developing countries. Pressures on developing countries have intensified as the new architecture of the multilateral regime in trade, investment, development cooperation, environment and human rights shrinks the political space available to developing countries” (Rumki Basu, “Development and Security: Changing Paradigms”, *International Politics: Concepts, Theories and Issues*, New Delhi:, Sage, 2012).

Likewise, Pakistani scholar and economist Mahbub-ul-Haq had argued that human security would be attainable only through sustainable development with an emphasis on equity, sustainability and grassroots participation. A peace dividend to underwrite the broader agenda of human security needed to be built


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India needs to revitalise groups like the G-77, restore major economic functions to the UN that have been taken away by other multilateral financial organisations like the IMF, World Bank and WTO and strengthen NAM, which could function as a collective organisation for developing countries to address the structural disparities between developed and developing states. Over time, the G-77 faced many problems arising out of its structure and method of work. Growing disparities among developing countries, its unwieldy size along with the ineffective method of consensus for decisions, led to the formation of smaller groups for carrying out effective dialogue with developed nations. India took the initiative of setting up the G-15 in 1989 with the expectation that the developed countries of the G-7 would take this forum seriously and do business with it. The G-15 however met the same fate as the G-77 as power equations within it changed and the G-7 successfully co-opted some members of the G-15. Nonetheless, the G-7 was soon considered too limited a forum for the coordination of global macroeconomic policies to overcome the global financial crisis, especially as Brazil, China and India were becoming major economic players. India shifted focus from general purpose groups like the G-77 to issue-specific groups like the G-20 and region-specific groups like IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) and BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa). The G-20 however functions as an institution maintaining the status quo in international monetary and financial systems, as the majority of countries are outside its ambit and the more developed and powerful countries exercise their clout within the group.

India's interests fall squarely with those of other developing countries and may be realised within the UN and fora like NAM and the G-77. For instance, a number of shipments of generic drugs exported by India were confiscated by developed countries in 2008 and 2009 without justification. Many developing countries of the G-77 opposed this action and also supported India's protest against agricultural protectionist policies during the Doha Round of the WTO. India's attempts to amend the *Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement* to prevent developed countries from usurping its bio resources have been supported by other members of the G-77 (Muchkund Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy: Coping with the Changing World*, New Delhi: Pearson, 2013). Indian national interests converge with the human security perspective as it is a developing country and faces similar problems of structural inequalities in the world economic order as any other developing state. New Delhi understands the socioeconomic problems of its counterparts, which has helped in its contribution to UN peacekeeping from a Third World security perspective.

CONCLUSION

India's contribution to international peace and security has been commendable from a human security perspective. In the post-Cold War era, developing countries have not only become theatres of intrastate conflicts, but have also been at the receiving end of the inegalitarianism of the world economic system. India as a developing nation, with similar anti-colonial experiences, growth trajectories, Cold War experiences along with its long-term cultural and historical transactions with other post-colonial states, understands the predicaments of other developing countries far better than Western developed nations. India's insistence on using the military option only as a measure of last resort and emphasis on negotiations as well as socioeconomic restructuring in civil war affected Third World countries bear testimony to its contribution to human security. Indian endeavours towards a democratic world economic order is grounded in the fact that it too is a victim of the inequitable system. However, New Delhi's rising economic clout and the developed countries' policy of divide and rule has forced it to break with its traditional policy of leading and uniting Third World countries in working towards a democratic economic structure. India has joined issue-specific and region-specific economic groups for economic benefits and lost interest in ineffective general purpose Third World groupings. Without addressing the structural inequalities in the world economic order, any benefit derived from the status quo is bound to be temporary and uneven. Sustainable development, which is key to human security, will only be achieved by addressing structural inequalities. As a rising economic power however, India too faces certain tensions akin to other rising powers. It has therefore courted developed countries and *de facto* legitimised the inegalitarian economic system for short-term economic benefits though it is still a developing country. Nonetheless, India's national interests still lie in collective bargaining with other developing states. 

Human security would be attainable only through sustainable development with an emphasis on equity, sustainability and grassroots participation. A peace dividend to underwrite the broader agenda of human security needs to be built in a new partnership between the North and South based on justice emphasising equitable access to global market opportunities and economic restructuring.