MAKING INDIA'S IDEA OF STRATEGIC AUTONOMY SIMPLE.
NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT REVISITED

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ABSTRACT

India's foreign policy decisions and actions are often questioned and debated in the context of great power polarities. Although the context for discussions is relevant, India's experiences in recent history, especially during the Cold War have been underestimated and overlooked. This article argues that challenges during the Cold War and the foundations of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) should be considered fundamental when explaining India's foreign policy decisions and the idea of strategic autonomy that drives its politics on international arena. Even more, considering the NAM principles and building upon post-Cold War decisions, India's idea of strategic autonomy reflects Nehruvian idealistic and moralistic principles combined with PM Modi's realistic foreign policy principles. These principles and the idea of strategic autonomy will be explained through three Indian foreign policy choices. Firstly, India's focus on the region exhibits the desire to build up a strong region to minimise the risks from possible great power rivalries. Secondly, relations with emerging powers like BRICS and IBSA demonstrate the ambition of building up a just world order. Thirdly, India's ambition to reform UN and its economy exhibits its ambitions of raising into a great power status where power and responsibilities are interrelated. Finally, India's idea of strategic autonomy will be explained, where power, responsibilities and moralistic world view are all part of it.

KEYWORDS: India; non-alignment; foreign policy independence; emerging powers; strategic autonomy

> "We will promote a democratic and rules-based international order, in which all nations, small and large, thrive as equal and sovereign…"[1]

Exploring India's role in the launch of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War and its relations with participant countries today is pivotal to understanding India's idea of strategic autonomy in the 21st century. India's economic growth has not only re-opened the debate about country's rise in world arena and raised the question about the form of power it will gain[2] but has also brought up the need to understand its often incomprehensible foreign policy choices. Country's negotiations with US on the matters of nuclear capabilities, confrontational relations with Pakistan and China have characterized India as a challenging negotiating partner and a country with complicated foreign policy. For EU, the FTA negotiations grab most of

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[1] Narendra Modi, 'Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018), *Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs* (Shangri La, 2018), available online at: http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers +Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018> (accessed 11.06.2018).

[2] Eswaran Sridharan, 'Where Is India Headed? Possible Future Directions in Indian Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, (2017), 93(1), pp. 51–68.

the attention to develop the much-criticized strategic partnership into deeper relationship and to overcome the obstacles for more successful economic relations.

As the confrontation between US and Soviet Union has ended, there will be examined to what extent do the continuity of NAM principles exist in the relationships between India and region, BRICS, IBSA and behind domestic and international reforms. The paper argues that despite the absence of confrontation, the aspects of NAM principles are still present in India's current foreign policy to achieve long-desired foreign policy independence, today as strategic autonomy. Even more, country's post- Cold War choices exhibit a model of 'lessons learned' foreign policy.

The request for independent foreign policy has been one of the major goals since country's independence in 1947 and is closely related to the ambition of restoring the great power status.[3] As will be shown in this article, in order to understand and evaluate India's foreign policy decisions, country's experiences during Cold War, dissatisfaction with current world order, India's position and role in current world order, and concerns about future changes combined with the ambition of becoming a great power should be taken into account. As will be discussed later in the article, these aspects will constitute what India considers as strategic autonomy.

The literature has mainly focused on India's foreign policy and its aspirations towards great power status[4] also briefly touching upon the bargaining strategies[5]. Although the NAM was of utmost importance for Third World and was at the centre of India's Cold War foreign policy,[6] relatively little attention has been paid to the interrelatedness of the principles of the movement and India's foreign policy choices after the end of the Cold War. Thus, this article aims to fill this gap by studying India's current foreign policy activities and principles explained through the prism of NAM values in past and in present. Building upon Cold War time NAM principles and that time India's foreign policy decisions, the article will demonstrate how India's current foreign policy has been shaped. In order to explain current aims and principles through Cold War time choices, the article will use India's policy in the region and participation in BRICS and IBSA to show how relations with 'like-minded'[7]

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3   The origins of the great power status lie in Ashoka's Mauryan Empire in 322 – 185 BC.

4   Baldev Raj Nayar, 'India in 2005: India Rising, but Uphill Road Ahead', *Asian Survey*, (2006), 46 (1), pp. 95–106; Amrita Narlikar, 'Peculiar Chauvinism or Strategic Calculation? Explaining the Negotiating Strategy of a Rising India', *International Affairs*, (2006), 82 (1), pp. 59–76; Peter R. Lavoy, 'India in 2006: A New Emphasis on Engagement', *Asian Survey*, (2007), 47 (1), pp. 113–24; Rahul Sagar, 'State of Mind: What Kind of Power Will India Become?', *International Affairs*, (2009), 85 (4), pp. 801–16; Surjit Mansingh, 'Assessing Reorientation of India's Foreign Policy in a Globalized World', *International Studies*, (2010), 47 (2–4), pp. 143–61; Walter C. III Ladwig, 'India and Military Power Projection: Will the Land of Gandhi Become a Conventional Great Power?', *Asian Survey*, (2010), 50 (6), pp. 1162–83; Subrata K. Mitra, 'Nuclear, Engaged, and Non-Aligned: Contradiction and Coherence in India's Foreign Policy', *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, (2009), 65 (1), pp. 15–35; Rohan Mukherjee and David M. Malone, 'Indian Foreign Policy and Contemporary Security Challenges', *International Affairs*, (2011), 87 (1), pp. 87–104.

5   Narlikar, 'Peculiar Chauvinism or Strategic Calculation? Explaining the Negotiating Strategy of a Rising India'; Amrita Narlikar, 'India Rising: Responsible to Whom?', *International Affairs*, (2013), 89 (3), pp. 595–614; Amrita Narlikar and Aruna Narlikar, *Bargaining with a Rising India: Lessons from the Mahabharata,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

6   Cecil V. Jr Crabb, 'The Testing of Non-Alignment', *The Western Political Quarterly*, (1964), 17 (3), pp. 517–42; Irene Brown, 'Studies on Non-Alignment', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, (1966), 4 (4), pp. 517–27; A.P. Rana, 'The Intellectual Dimensions of India's Nonalignment', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, (1969), 28(2), pp. 299–312; Michael Brecher, 'Non-Alignment Under Stress : The West and the India-China Border War', *Pacific Affairs*, (1980), 52 (4), pp. 612–30; Satish Kumar, 'Nonalignment: International Goals and National Interests', *Asian Survey*, (1983), 23 (4), pp. 445–62; Cedric Grant, 'Equity in International Relations: A Third World Perspective', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, (1995), 71 (3), pp. 567–87.

7   Like-minded' countries or nations is a term India uses in its annual foreign policy reports to refer to states sharing the same standpoints and values on matters of UN reform. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2006-2007*, New Delhi, (2007), p. ii, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 10.06.2018) ; Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2008-2009*, New Delhi, (2009), p. 110, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 10.06.2018); Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2009-2010*, New Delhi, (2010), p. 111, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 12.06.2018); Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2010-2011*, New Delhi, (2011), p. 106, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/45_Annual-Report-2010-2011.pdf> (accessed 12.06.2018); Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2011-2012*, New Delhi,(2012), p. xv, available online at:

countries help India to work towards adjusting the international system to its expectations, where its strategic autonomy will be feasible. In addition, the incentives behind domestic economic reforms and the ambition of adjusting the UN will be explained. Finally, based on the explanation of India's foreign policy since Cold War, author will reveal the meaning and importance of India's idea of strategic autonomy. This article attempts to offer a new perspective to understanding India's idea of strategic autonomy by examining country's behaviour through NAM principles and challenges.

1.   History: NAM principles and India's foreign policy during Cold War

The widespread discussion and understanding of NAM has mainly focused on neutrality, ignoring foreign policy independence as an important and integral detail of the movement[8]. More precisely, it was the reluctance to choose sides in great powers' power struggles that initiated the NAM states to declare to be non-aligned, often confused with neutralism. New *de iure* independent states aimed also for *de facto* independence in terms of their political voice, where states' actions and choice reflected their own preferences, not of a particular bloc[9]. Consequently, it was the common concern of developing countries to maintain their foreign policy independence, oppose colonialism and neo-colonialism and western domination[10]. According to Brown[11] Algerian leader Ben Bella has declared that the movement was not aligned even with non-alignment. The NAM was thus a developing countries' response to the fighting blocs, for "the common defence of their interest" to be non-aligned from either bloc[12]. The difference of NAM and neutrality thus stood in the *state* of international actors in the time of confrontation. Neutrality rules out any kind of support for participants in a conflict, in other words, actors refuse to take part in any kind of activities in case of conflict. NAM was thus similar to neutrality in a sense of not taking sides, but with the difference that if their decisions and actions coincide with one of the fighting blocs, it is *their own preference*, their own worldview, not supporting the bloc who has similar standings.

The principle of 'acting and making its own choices' also reflected India's goal to remain independent in foreign policy choices, although posing dilemmas and challenges between national interests on international arena and poverty alleviation at state level. Namely, the economic situation with the aim to raise population's living standards challenged country's defence capacity and vice versa[13]. Preserving state's security thus required alternative measures. The solution for India was a skilful

<http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 12.06.2018); Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2012-2013*, New Delhi, (2013), p. x, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 12.06.2018). Prior to the call for UN reforms by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2005, the term was used by India when explaining cooperation in issues such as peace-building, terrorism, extremism and human rights, etc. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2000-2001*, New Delhi, (2001), p. ii, p. 89, p. 102, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 12.06.2018); Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2004-2005*, New Delhi, (2005), p. 113, available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports>(accessed 12.06.2018). Thus, the term is used when expressing shared values or standpoints on different issues.

[8]   Brecher; Crabb; Werner Levi, 'Indian Neutralism Reconsidered', *Pacific Affairs*, (1964), 37 (2), pp. 137–47; Francis Low-Beer, 'The Concept of Neutralism', *The American Political Science Review*, (1964), 58 (2), pp. 383–91.

[9]   Brown, 1966, p. 517

[10] Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, 'History and Evolution of Non-Aligned Movement', (2012b), available online at: <http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?20349/History+and+Evolution+of+NonAligned+Movement> (accessed 22.06.2018).

[11] Brown, 1966, p. 517

[12] Ministry of External Affairs, (2012b), ch. Evolution

[13] A Appadorai, 'India's Foreign Policy', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, (1949), 25 (1), p. 40; Jerome B Cohen, 'India's Foreign Economic Policies', *World Politics*, (1955), 7 (4), pp. 546–71; Taya Zinkin, 'Indian Foreign Policy: An Interpretation of Attitudes', *World Politics*, (1955), 7 (2), p. 202; Micahel Edwardes, 'Illusion and Reality in India's Foreign Policy', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, (1965), 41 (1), p. 43.

foreign policy, known as non-alignment, which in the context of USA and Soviet Union confrontation was set as a corner stone for Cold War time foreign policy[14].

That time new strategy obtained large-scale support amongst domestic public but raised criticism on the international level. International arena considered NAM as a movement based on neutrality, which was largely a reason for questioning whether it was a mean to maintain India's security and independence by avoiding alliances (while having USA and Soviet Union's support for conflicts with China) or something else[15]. The new foreign policy strategy was soon tested, when over the nine years India was affected by four substantial occurrences: Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962, Chinese 1964 nuclear test and Indo-Pakistani war in 1965 and 1971. As a result of these events and domestic reluctance against the conventional military strengthening, India again encountered discussions about the alternatives serving the goal of both national security and foreign policy independence. Respectively, the idea of nuclear deterrence was born. The new strategy was seen as enabling India to maintain independence in foreign policy decisions and keeping its membership in NAM[16].

Although the preferred choice contributed to keeping NAM principles, it faced economic and political obstacles. Wars with China and Pakistan had led India to economically difficult situation and brought along food crisis in mid-1960s, which made country dependent on US food. India's position was further complicated due to agreements with Soviet Union about military equipment. This placed India again in a situation where on one hand the country had to remain consistent on the principles of NAM while on the other hand to act in a context where the meaning of the chosen strategy was still understood as neutrality, thus missing the reality of its choices. Even more, the relations with two opposing powers were politically complicated by US and Soviet Union endeavours to ban nuclear tests for countries that had not conducted the tests by 1967[17]. To leave the possibility open for future nuclear capability developments, India decided not to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The tests were conducted in 1974, as a response to US decision to send its aircraft carriers to the Bay of Bengal in 1971 supporting West Pakistani forces in Bangladesh War. India referred to the test as a "peaceful nuclear explosive" while demonstrating its foreign policy independence foremost from US, but also from the Soviet Union[18]. In 1987 India decided to start developing nuclear weapons as a response to Pakistan's nuclear weapon capability development supported by China[19]. The 1998 BJP government-lead nuclear tests gave Indian foreign policy makers an impetus to declare "we have set the stage to reclaim our rightful inheritance as a great power"[20].

Despite the fact that the Cold War type confrontation between US and Soviet Union has ended and therefore NAM is not as apparent on international arena as it was during the Cold War, one must keep in mind India's challenges during that time and country's role as one of the founding members of the movement. The NAM was not only a foreign policy tool but also reflected India's foreign policy principles of solidarity and independence that have remained as parts of its current policy. Moreover, as the centres of trade and competition for resources amongst developed countries have moved to Asia and Africa respectively, but the Cold War time power distribution in international institutions remains, NAM principles are at least as relevant as they were in the past[21]. Rising economies and powers expect their political voices to be heard equally to their economic weight.

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[14] Appadorai; Zinkin.

[15] Edwardes, p. 55.

[16] Edwardes, p. 57.

[17] Baldev Raj Nayar and T.V Paul, *India in the World Order: Searching Major-Power Status*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2003), p. 164, p. 174.

[18] Nayar and Paul, pp. 175–81.

[19] Nayar and Paul, p. 199.

[20] Madhup Mohta, 'An Enguiry into India's International Identity: The next Great Power?', in *Indian Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. by Atish Sinha and Madhup Mohta, New Delhi: Academic Foundation; Foreign Service Institute, (2007), p. 34.

[21] S.D. Muni, 'India and the Post-Cold War World: Opportunities and Challenges', *Asian Survey*, (1991), 31 (9), p. 869.

## 2.	Today: India's foreign policy choices after the Cold War

The end of the US- Soviet Union confrontation and India's financial crisis in the beginning of 1990s entailed the change of direction in state's foreign policy, focusing on economic reforms and redefining relations with other states. India acknowledged the importance of economic growth as a factor in domestic poverty alleviation and for the realization of national interests in the international arena[22]. As the Cold War ended, the relationship based on "anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-racist" principles needed to be renewed, where new relationships were established and developed through economy and commerce[23]. This principle has remained integral for establishing relations with actors who help to serve India's foreign policy interests or pose some kind of foreign policy challenges to India. In other words, focusing on economic aspects enable actors with different interests to cooperate.

Therefore, India's 21st century's strategic partnerships with two of the biggest economies, USA and EU rely heavily on trade and technology cooperation. In addition, the partnership with USA has touched the boundaries of strategical issues like cooperation on counter-terrorism, defence trade, joint military exercises, civil nuclear cooperation and energy dialogue[24]. Although not as successfully as the other side would hope. The aspirations towards more politically strategic partnership have been also one of the priorities in relations with EU. Again, the established relations rely on pragmatic considerations on the contrary to India's moral principles and solidarity towards Third World that is still dominant, when discussions about possible allies arise. Even more, India's dissatisfaction with the dominant world order is also distinguishable in its bargaining strategies[25]. However, the focus on economy and commerce still enables India to build up relations with desired partners.

Another distinctive feature of India's foreign policy after the end of the Cold War has been the aim to adjust international institutions consistent with changes in international system. The support for strengthening and reforming the UN as a multilateral forum, restructuring the international economic system and preserving independence in its decision-making has become an integral part of India's foreign policy[26]. Furthermore, the dissatisfaction with the world order- today hegemony and unipolarity is still present:

> "The demise of one of the blocks has not done away with the pressing problems of the world. On the contrary, renewed strategic interests bent on domination grow stronger and, even, acquire new and more dangerous dimensions for underdeveloped countries."[27]

### 2.1	Strengthening the region: Looking and Acting East

India's policy in Asia has been shaped by events in world politics. Asian countries were amongst India's foreign policy priorities already in 1950s, but the challenges during the Cold War kept country occupied with rather reacting to changes than implementing a preferred policy. The 1990s on the contrary, on one hand enabled and on the other hand induced the country to focus on strengthening relations with neighbouring countries. New focus on the region was derived from the economic reforms and 'Look East Policy' (now known as 'Act East Policy'), when country was in need for new trade

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[22] Mansingh.

[23] Muchkund Dubey, *India's Foreign Policy: Coping with the Changing World*, New Delhi: Pearson, (2013), p. 24.

[24] Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2012-2013*; Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2013-2014*, New Delhi, (2014), available online at: <http://www.mea.gov.in/annual-reports.htm?57/Annual_Reports> (accessed 12.06.2018).

[25] Narlikar, 'India Rising: Responsible to Whom?'

[26] Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2013-2014*.

[27] Ministry of External Affairs, 2012b, ch. Evolution

partners. Even more, the collapse of the Soviet Union as India's close trade partner both in military and consumer goods and a supporter of India's diplomacy in UN, was one catalyst for searching new policy options[28].

Hence, India in 1990s was not only interested in new trade partners, but was also committed to build up its vision of integrated region as a response to changing international order. Next to the new strategy built upon economic considerations stood also the combination of changes in world arena- globalization and the success of regional integrations like ASEAN, EU, NAFTA, APEC. Focusing on improving relations with neighbours was also a mean for tackling the possible problems posed by the new world order. The recent history had provided India numerous valuable experiences. In addition, the tendency for regional integrations after Cold War prompted India to undertake changes in foreign policy means to achieve its goals of foreign policy independence. By building up closer relations with regional associations, India prevented the risk of being left into isolation. India thus decided to direct its policy towards South and South East Asia[29].

The reasons behind India's decision to focus on the region are multidimensional embodying domestic, regional and international factors. In addition to the desire to avoid extensive impacts from possible great power rivalries, India's determination for integrated, peaceful and stable region has been influenced by considerations for country's economic development and social harmony[30]. Good relations with neighbouring countries serve the purpose of economic growth providing a precondition for economic sustainability to decrease dependency and vulnerability from major powers.

One of the cornerstones for India's 'Act East Policy' has been participation in ASEAN. PM Modi has attached substantial importance to ASEAN, when addressing the association as "… an example and inspiration" for acting in "… a world that summons us to rise above divisions and competition to work together."[31] ASEAN and India share a vision of more integrated and peaceful region, and the relationship serves either side's goals to increase economic growth. In addition, it also contributes to India's aims of closer relations with other states and ventures in the region. The close relationship and economic integration with ASEAN has facilitated India's engagement with East Asia Summit (EAS), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and bilateral relations with ASEAN countries. The emphasis on ASEAN has been a strategically important step to improve close relationships with other regional groupings and countries, and thereby to pave the way for the role of a stronger regional actor.

Indo-Pacific has obtained remarkable attention by India. The importance to India was especially emphasized lately in PM Modi's speech at Shangri La Dialogue when he rejected the possible view of a region "… as a strategy or as a club of limited members."[32] Even more, PM Modi underlined that "India's own engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region – from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas - will be inclusive."[33] Pacific has become a new centre for world trade attracting India to pay more attention to the region. As an example of the importance India has attached to the region, India has more trade agreements in the region than in any part of the world.[34]

2.2 Working towards just international system: Empowering emerging powers

Another mean to execute India's foreign policy strategy of autonomy has been forming extensive partnerships with other emerging powers. As a result, there is an overlap of countries in different platforms, as can be seen in cases of India's partnership

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28 Thongkholal Haokip, 'India's Look East Policy: Its Evolution and Approach', *South Asian Survey*, (2011), 18 (2), p. 245.

29 Thongkholal Haokip, 'Recent Trends in Regional Integration and the Indian Experience', *International Area Studies Review*, (2012), 15 (4), pp. 377–92.

30 Government of India Ministry of External Affairs, *Annual Report 2012-2013*.

31 Modi, 'Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018)'.

32 Modi, 'Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018)'.

33 Modi, 'Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018)'.

34 Modi, 'Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue (June 01, 2018)'.

with BRICS and IBSA. Although the established forms of cooperation might not have gained their full operational impact, they serve as a good platform for forming common positions and necessary alliances for specific situations or events[35].

IBSA, where the participant countries overlap with BRICS members is not as outstanding in international arena as BRICS, but enables for India to use it as a forum for discussing and establishing common positions on mutually important matters. With the purpose of raising developing countries' voice in international system, it is argued to be a new representative of Non-Alignment[36]. Institutions' ground principles of changing and reforming Western dominated institutions have given India friends in one of the driving principles of its foreign policy. In fact, when establishing IBSA Dialogue Forum, three countries prioritized the Charter of the UN and discussed reforming UN Security Council[37]. India, Brazil and South Africa aim for reforms in the UN to strengthen the role of the developing countries in the international system- an aim that was also one of the driving forces of NAM. Three middle-powers have been actively negotiating the conditions beneficial for developing countries in international institutions. Next to India and Brazil's cooperation for the reform of UN Security Reform is the common stand for conditions that would take into account developing countries advantages in WTO[38]. It has been even argued that IBSA has an implication for soft balancing through their cooperation in international organizations by aiming "to transform the global order in favour of emerging powers in the medium-term"[39]. Although the cooperation between IBSA countries is very much value-based, the pragmatic considerations for the expansion of trade should not be excluded.

Although BRICS' public profile has focused on empowering developing countries' economies, it serves for India twofold purpose: raising the voices and profiles of emerging markets and powers, and working towards more just international system, where the Western dominated institutions have alternatives or complementary opportunities. BRICS speaks with its economic, demographical and geographical power. According to statistics published in 2017, BRICS represents around 41% of world population and 29% of land mass[40]. Together they combine a considerable amount and a variety of world resources and in international trade.[41] In 2016, BRICS share of world export accounted for 18.2% and share of world import

[35] Sanjukta Banerji Bhattacharya, 'Engaging Africa: India's Interests in the African Continent, Past and Present', in *The Rise of China & India in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Critical Interventions*, ed. by Fantu Cheru and Cyril Obi, London: Zed Books, (2010), pp. 71–72.

[36] Abdul Nafey, 'IBSA Forum: The Rise of "New" Non-Alignment', *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, (2005), 61, pp. 1–78.

[37] India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum, '1st IBSA Summit Meeting', *Joint Declaration*, (2006), par. 8, par. 10, available online at: <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/images/stories/documents/declarations/1st_summit_declaration.pdf> (accessed 22.06.2018).

[38] Daniel Flemes, 'India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) in the New Global Order: Interests, Strategies and Values of the Emerging Coalition', *International Studies*, (2009), 46 (4), pp. 404–5.

[39] Flemes.

[40] BRICS, 'General Information, Economic and Social Indicators Comparison of BRICS Countries', *BRICS Joint Statistical Publication 2017*, (2017), p. 19, available online at: <http://www.brics2018.org.za/sites/default/files/documents/Statistics/BRICS Joint_Statistics Publication 2017.pdf> (accessed 23 June 2018).

[41] Brazil exports 44.2% of world's soy beans, 41.3% of world's raw sugar, making it the biggest exporter for both products in the world and 20.2% of world's iron ore (2nd biggest exporter in world after Australia). Russia exports 11.1% of world's crude petroleum (2nd after Saudi Arabia), 9.3% of refined petroleum (2nd after USA) and nearly 12.2% of coal (3rd after Australia and Indonesia). India exports 15.3% of world's diamonds (2nd after USA) and nearly 10.6% of world's jewellery (4th after Switzerland, China and USA). China is the largest exporter in world, exporting 41.2% of world's automatic data processing machines and its units, 23.6% of world's electrical machinery and its parts and 36.1% of world's telephones 's, making it the largest exporter in world in all previous product categories. South Africa exports 24.5% of world's platinum, making it the biggest platinum exporter in the world, 5% of world's iron ore (3rd in world after Australia and Brazil). The data is based on year 2017 exports World Trade Organization, 'Statistics Database', (2018), available online at: <http://stat.wto.org/Home/WSDBHome.aspx?Language=E> (accessed 24 June 2018); Trade Map, 'Exports', (2018), available online at: <https://www.trademap.org/> (accessed 24 June 2018).

for 14.6%[42], compared to 5.4% and 4.8% respectively in 1992[43].[44] The emerging powers are aware of their importance and weight in the world economy. As a consequence of BRICS growing economic weight, the entity has taken a common position that existing international institutions and organizations need to be changed, where the current economical weight of the BRICS countries, other emerging economies and developing countries will be taken into account. The dissatisfaction with the standstill of the IMF and UN Security Council reforms has lead the rising economies to search for alternative solutions to show and execute their influence in world affairs. The signing of agreement establishing New Development Bank (NDB) dealing with infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other developing countries is the beginning of their initiative.

At the same time when signing the NDB agreement, the treaty establishing BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) was signed, which is another step closer supplementing USA dominated financial system. The two new institutions complement for Third World countries World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), which are dominated by Western powers. Although the new institutions cannot yet compete with WB and IMF, in case they should become fully operational, it serves as an alternative to current conditions-based institutions. If developing countries will be using DNB instead of WB, the BRICS will be dominating and influencing the respective countries and balancing other major powers in the international system.

Yet, notwithstanding the similarities between BRICS and IBSA, there are substantial differences in their essence that also reflect India's aims in these ventures. IBSA was founded on the initiatives of three respective countries to enhance South-South cooperation between three continents. One of the founding objectives was to reform the international system in a way that would take into account the voice of developing countries. BRICS on the other hand was first used as an acronym for fast growing economies; the actions were institutionalized five years after the term was taken into use based largely on future prospects. Another factor of difference points to IBSA as representing the democratic states of BRICS as well as the matter of standing closer to Western values than Russia and China.

The purpose of the two for India is similar- to increase the participation and share of developing countries in international policy-making. Although BRICS is more visible in international arena and has taken ambitious objectives on examples of NDB and CRA, it is and will be most likely dominated by China. BRICS includes China as India's neighbour and long-term source for disagreements in regional and world matters, e.g. China's reluctance to India being permanent member of UN Security Council. In IBSA, on the contrary, India is equal with other members, furthermore, IBSA's members are directly or indirectly related to NAM and thus share the same values.

2.3   Reforming the unfunctional structures: Attracting the W(r)est

India has been an active G4[45] country speaking for the reform of the UN Security Council and having been elected seven times as a non-permanent member[46]. It has also announced its ambition to become a non-permanent member of the Council

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[42]   World Trade Organization, 'Statistics Database', *Statistics*, (2017), available online at:
<http://stat.wto.org/Home/WSDBHome.aspx?Language=E> (accessed 24 June 2018).

[43]   World Trade Organization, 'International Trade and Market Access Data', *Statistics*, (2018), available online at:
<https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/statis_bis_e.htm?solution=WTO&path=/Dashboards/MAPS&file=Map.wcdf&bookmarkState=%7B%22impl%22:%22client%22,%22params%22:%7B%22langParam%22:%22en%22%7D%7D> (accessed 24 June 2018).

[44]   Author's compilation based on WTO database. 1992 data by WTO excludes India's exports and imports in military goods, fissionable materials and bunkers.

[45]   G4 comprises of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, who all aspire to become permanent members at UN Security Council and support each other's demands in it.

[46]   United Nations Security Council, 'Countries Elected Members of the Security Council', (2018), available online at:
<http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/elected.asp> (accessed 20.06.2018).

during the period of 2021-2022[47]. These efforts have played an integral role in performing its vision of becoming a great power, where one precondition for achieving such purpose is making itself visible among international actors.

India has been consistent in reinforcing the foundations of its visibility in a world arena and also in relations with great powers. One of the most outstanding declarations was in 2014 when PM Modi made a statement at UN General Assembly and declared the need for the reform of UN to reflect 21st century international system[48]. Although the declaration itself was nothing new, PM Modi's speech about the need for changes reflected more than just a desire to reform UN. It spoke about mutual responsibilities of international actors, where the poverty eradication, fight against terrorism and tackling other global challenges is the responsibility of all[49]. Thus, reforming the UN extends further from India's aspirations to change the international institution merely according to its own interests. Namely, India views the UN as a multilateral forum who has the chances, but even more importantly, the responsibility for collective action, dialogue and engagement for the purpose of peace, equality and development. Changed UN thus serves twofold purpose for India: on one hand, it enables to pursue its own interest, but on the other hand, with rights and opportunities come responsibilities to all actors participating in international system. PM Modi's speech thus is an example illustrating the driving principles of India's foreign policy that stands also for the solidarity of and for all.

Next to India's ambitions of reforming the international structures, equal attention has been paid to domestic reforms. Modi has undertaken substantial reforms on India's bureaucratic machine with the aim to raise India's ranking in World Bank's 'the ease of making business' index from 134th to 50th[50].[51] Other aspects of reforms lie in raising population out of poverty and improving country's poor infrastructure[52]. The purpose of the reforms is threefold: to attract foreign direct investments for continuous economic growth, develop relations with other actors, and to raise its international economic profile. India's economic reforms are amongst other purposes as a prerequisite for being noticed in the world and to expand country's global role[53]. The rise of its economic profile is expected to give India economic power, which in turn is another factor enabling country to raise its influence in world affairs[54]. India's aims for wealth combined with BJP and Hindu nationalist's goals of leading the country to the great power status adds thus a geo-economic dimension to India's foreign policy, where wealth accumulation is expected to pursue state's political objectives[55]. India aspires towards economic strengthening of the

[47] Permanent Mission of India to the UN, 'Security Council', *India and UN*, (2018), available online at: <https://www.pminewyork.org/pages?id=eyJpdiI6InV4bXg3M0N2TUdSVlA1bEp4cDlvS3c9PSIsInZhbHVlIjoiR3pyOTBsRDNkXC9zQTlEU0x5Mnl1bGc9PSIsIm1hYyI6IjE2NTBjZTRiNDkyMzhlNTA0ZjkwMjY2Y2NhZThlNDIxM2E2MTI2YTY2ZTk2ODYwYjMyMDA2NmJmYmFlMjQ1ZDQifQ==&subid=eyJpdiI6IjJFV21yWW9E> (accessed 22 June 2018).

[48] Narendra Modi, *Statement by H.E. Narendra Modi*, *General Debate of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, New York, 27 September 2014, available online at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/gadebate/pdf/IN_en.pdf> (accessed 22.06.2018).

[49] Modi, *Statement by H.E. Narendra Modi*.

[50] The Economist, 'Remaking India: Yes, Prime Minister', *The Economist*, DELHI, 18 October 2014, available online at: <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21625857-more-moderniser-market-reformer-narendra-modi-relies-his-bureaucrats-yes-prime-minister> (accessed 21.06.2018).

[51] Although there have been improvements in India's rise in the ranking, the ambition of being among top 50 has not yet been met. In 2018, World Bank placed India on 100th place The World Bank, 'India Jumps Doing Business Rankings with Sustained Reform Focus', *Press Release*, (2017), available online at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/10/31/india-jumps-doing-business-rankings-with-sustained-reform-focus> (accessed 24 June 2018).

[52] The Economist, 'Reviving India's Economy: Modi's Mission', *The Economist*, Mumbai, 24 May 2014, available online at: <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21602709-new-prime-minister-has-good-chance-resuscitating-countrys-underperform-ing> (accessed 14 October 2014).

[53] Niranjan Sahoo, 'Decoding Modi's Foreign Policy', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 23 September 2014, available online at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/09/23/decoding-modi-s-foreign-policy> (accessed 14 October 2014).

[54] Samuel P Huntington, 'Why International Primacy Matters', *International Security*, (1993), 17 (4), p. 72.

[55] Deborah Cowen and Neil Smith, 'After Geopolitics? From the Geopolitical Social to Geoeconomics', *Antipode*, (2009), 41 (1), p. 42.

country to maintain the competitiveness in the international arena both in economic and political terms[56]. According to geo-economists, economic power is the new strategy to gain primacy, "a state with primacy can establish, or at least strongly influence, 'the rules of the game' by which international politics is played…"[57]

3. Strategic autonomy explained

Strategic autonomy as a term is not new in debates about India's foreign policy. The term has been used mainly to explain India's foreign policy in relations with USA[58], but also to provide Indian foreign policy decision makers support and guidance in a changing international system[59]. The concept has been very well adopted in explaining India's foreign policy ambitions by referring to foreign policy independence. Nonetheless, there is more about strategic autonomy than making and maintaining its independence in foreign policy.

Strategic autonomy for India on one hand is the *de facto* freedom to make its own choices and actions, but on the other hand is meant to serve also other third world countries' interests on international arena. In other words, India's understanding of strategic autonomy entails next to India's own interests also aim of bringing other *less heard* countries' voices to international arena. Even more, it's about justice in terms of creating the international system where all states' voices will be heard and decisions are made on value-based consensus. Such idea is often misunderstood and confused with 'opposing some states and allying the others.' India's relations, or even expectations to states do not depend merely on what kind of benefits they bring to India. On the contrary, for India, the *power of established powers* means responsibilities in international arena next to pursuing merely one's own interests[60]. Strategic autonomy for India is both about power-politics and responsibilities.

Although the idea of idealistic and moralistic principles in India's strategic autonomy has developed from Nehruvian non-alignment principles, PM Modi's view of India's role in international system has added the economic and traditional power aspects to policy implementation[61]. Strategic autonomy is a substantial part of India's grand strategy of great power status, where the responsibilities and autonomy work together. The building up of close relations with its neighborhood and other emerging powers, and domestic and international reforms is thus twofold. Firstly, Cold War- time experiences taught India a valuable lesson of misconceptions between established powers and developing ones in terms of expectations and understandings. The post- Cold War period has in some way continued it, as India's course is still often questioned by established powers. The latter is even intensified in the context of India as a rising power. India, thus, emphasizes the relations with region and emerging powers not only in terms of economic development, but also as actors with similar understandings and expectations of the world system. In some way, the relations can be described as expectations without expectations. States interact with each other in expectations to change the international system, but without expectations to 'ally or oppose.' Secondly, building up on all above, India's idea of strategic autonomy is very well aware of the interdependent world, where

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[56] Sanjaya Baru, 'Geo-Economics and Strategy', *Survival*, (2012), 54 (3), pp. 47–58; Vincent Cable, 'What Is International Economic Security?', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, (1995), 71 (2), pp. 305–24; Huntington; Edward N Luttwak, 'From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce', in *The Geopolitics Reader*, ed. by Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, and Paul Routledge, Taylor & F, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 125–30.

[57] Robert Jervis, 'International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?', *International Security*, (1993), 17 (4), 52–67, p. 53).

[58] Guillem Monsonis, 'India's Strategic Autonomy and Rapprochement with the US', *Strategic Analysis*, (2010), 34 (4), pp. 611–24; C. Raja Mohan, '"India: Between 'Strategic Autonomy' and 'Geopolitical Opportunity'"', *Asia Policy*, (2013), 15, pp. 21–25; Howard B. Schaffer Teresita C. Schaffer, *India at the Global Hightable: The Quest for Regional Primacy and Strategic Autonomy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016; Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 'India's Strategic Autonomy Dilemma and the Rapprochement with the United States', New Delhi, 2009, available online at: <https://idsa.in/event/IndiavsUS_gmonsonis_200309> (accessed 22.06.2018).

[59] Sunil Khilnani and others, *Nonalignment 2.0 A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*, New Delhi, India, 2012, available online at: <http://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/NonAlignment 2.0_1.pdf> (accessed 23.06.2018).

[60] Narlikar, 'India Rising: Responsible to Whom?'

[61] e.g. see Narlikar 2017

decisions need to be made in a context of 'liking to some and not liking to others.' Why then not to make value-based decisions and maintain its coherent foreign policy.

4. Conclusion

The confrontation between two superpowers ended almost two decades ago, but NAM principles have remained an integral part of India's foreign policy. Although there is a difference in the focus of research, a similar conclusion was made by Pant and Super[62] when studying India's grand strategy in 21st century challenges.

Dissatisfaction with the existing world order, whether it to be bipolar or unipolar combined with the support for the same principles as during Cold War is one of the driving forces of the foreign policy. The end of the confrontation changed international system primarily for the Western world, but did not bring any major developments to Third World, including India[63]. Memberships in decisive bodies of international institutions remained unchanged reflecting Cold War time international order. Despite some substantial reforms in India (and in wider Asia), economic and technical flourishing took place mainly in North America and Europe. The continuing dominance of post- Second War world order in international institutions and economic developments has kept developing countries' place in the architecture of international system the same as during Cold War. India with other developing countries in today's international arena stands on behalf of the common interests for the equality of voices in international arena.

As a result, India has built up the relationships on common interests that in many ways are based on shared understandings of the world order, whether it to be in international system or in parts of the international system. This shared understanding of the world order speaks on behalf of the changes, which should incorporate an arrangement considering the voice of the developing world and emerging powers. India has skilfully chosen the strategy and principles upon which to build the partnerships that serve the purpose of changing the dominant world order where the voice of Third World, including India, will be heard.

In pursuing its foreign policy objectives and choosing the rightful strategy, India has through time focused on adapting to either on-going or future changes in the world arena. End of the Cold War enabled to focus on achieving long wanted regional integration, but the endeavours were equally derived and amplified by the desire to remain active player in the new world order. Focusing on the region was first step to conform to the world in its immediate neighbourhood. Being a skilled player in achieving its medium-term foreign policy aims and taking into account the historical relationships, the economic cooperation served India's and its partners' interests in economic growth and shared vision of more integrated region.

Today, the means for continuing NAM policy have changed accordingly to the world order, but principles remain largely the same. Nehru's foreign policy principles and vision of a 'just' world order have been dominating in India's post-Cold War world affairs with PM Modi's realistic foreign policy goals. Foreign policy ambitions of becoming a great power combined with dissatisfaction about the governing international institutions; and the focus of its foreign policy towards like-minded countries to work for the equitable, multi-polar world order, have directed India's actions against the current systemic concentration of power.

Strategic autonomy as a strategy and a purpose exhibits a major difference between India's and Western foreign policy thinking. For India, idealistic and moralistic principles enable simultaneously foreign policy with realistic aims, challenging Western dualistic and binary foreign policy thinking. The combination of somewhat contradictory principles enables to work with like-minded countries towards mutual interests, while also develop relations with other competing actors and great powers. The success of Indian policy is thus very much dependent on international actors' willingness to accept and understand the reality of post-Western world.

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[62] Harsh V Pant and Julie M Super, 'India ' s " Non-Alignment " Conundrum : A Twentieth-Century Policy in a Changing World', *International Affairs*, (2015), 91 (4), pp. 747–64.

[63] Muni, p. 864.