

INDIA, GLOBAL EMERGENT ACTOR IN THE 21ST CENTURY INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM, UNDER THE MODI ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract. *Under Modi administration, India began the implementation of a distinct kind of international policy, that some academic scholars defined as a “particular Modi doctrine”, while others considered rather to be a continuation of Modi’s predecessors, with some “little changes of style and manner”. But, it is important to notice India’s present engagement into a type of foreign policy based on multi-alignment rather than on traditional non-alignment practices. Modi opened multiple and various directions in foreign policy (Acting East Policy, for example), while consolidating others (Indian Diaspora, privileged relations with the US, Japan, Russia, constructive relations with China, enlarged relations with ASEAN etc.). The paper is trying to reveal some of the major points that prove India’s tendencies to act as a distinct global actor within the 21st century dynamic international system, among other emergent powers.*

Keywords: *Modi doctrine, Indian foreign policy, emergent power, global actor.*

Introduction

A Proper “Modi Doctrine” or a Continuation of Certain Older Key-Directions in Today’s Foreign Policy in India?

According to the doctrine, even though domestic policy has represented the underlying key element in the investiture speech delivered by Narendra Modi (the speech delivered on August 15th – Independence Day – did not mention foreign policy), after the first 100 days, Modi’s mandate displayed a *more and more accentuated direction towards a foreign policy agenda*¹. This was considered necessary by Indian public opinion as well as by the government, on account of India’s economic rise, its geopolitical status of regional power, the influence of

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¹ Tanvi Madan, *Indian Prime Minister Modi’s Foreign Policy: The First 100 Days*, www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

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the Indian diaspora from outside the country, the demand for energy, the increased role of the country in various multilateral and regional groups². Thus, to ignore this dimension in favour of an initially exclusive focus upon domestic policy seemed to be a flawed policy.

The doctrine agrees that one cannot *discuss a drastic gap* between the lines of foreign policy initiated and promoted by Modi's ancestors and his politics. Therefore, the theory of radical differences between Modi's diplomacy and everything that existed before does not hold up; one cannot discuss a "*Modi doctrine*", in the literal sense of the term. It is more likely to talk about a *continuity* policy in terms of overall Indian politics, *which "Modi rendered more intense, ampler and more powerful"*. In addition, the doctrine notes "changes in style and approach" in Modi's diplomacy, which can eventually have an impact on the external political substance of India, under Modi's governance³.

Overall, drawing the line after the first 100 days of Modi's mandate as Prime Minister of India, we note certain *positive aspects*, also noted as such by the doctrine: increase in intensity of high-level visits to and from India (therefore, increase in the country's level of international engagement); India's concrete interest in obtaining concrete results from these visits; acknowledgement up to a certain level of the role of the states in the Indian federation in the concrete enforcement of its foreign policy; increased use of the e-diplomacy by the federal government; opening of the Modi government towards learning from the diplomatic experience of previous governments (create a crisis cell to monitor the situation in Iraq; send special delegates to Iraq; open new a line to provide information and help; high level involvement of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in helping the families of the Indian people affected by the evolutions of the conflict in Iraq etc.)⁴.

In another view, India's foreign policy in Modi's administration is characterized by *a unique combination between traditional non-alignment policy and its strategic diversification and autonomy*⁵. Modi intended to create and expand diplomatic relations with a multitude of states, with the stated purpose of maximizing the benefits and minimizing the risks, in the process of fulfilling the Indian objectives of foreign policy. This is how India's participation in a series of multilateral and cooperation forums, such as BRICS, engaging in diplomatic relations with all the countries in the P-5 group (including the development of the traditional bilateral relation with Russia or use of the India-China-Russia triad)⁶ must be regarded. Experts warn that India's involvement in various diplomatic relations must not lead to the interpretation that all the partnerships have the same substance and value or that, through this policy, India removes its excessive external dependency; instead, the interpretation should be that it enables India's freedom to act, externally)⁷.

² *Idem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ www.brookings.edu/research/options/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

⁶ *Idem*. Tanvi Madan, *Indian Prime Minister Modi's Foreign Policy: The First 100 Days*, www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

From a different perspective, one may consider that India has never grown apart from its old non-alignment policy, which it successfully enforced during the cold war, when it had not identified common interests with any of the two powers in conflict. Thus, during the cold war, India and other states rejected what they saw as “the policy of power”⁸, in which their role (India’s and that of other countries from Africa and Asia, which had assumed a common position with India) could not be that of a “simple supporter of a side”, a role considered to be “degrading and humiliating for the peoples of Africa and Asia, who had conquered their independence”. The policy of non-adhesion, amended at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia/1955, was initiated by India, which developed an active diplomacy, with the aim of creating a third block (of the so-called “non-aligned” countries), with the role of balancing a dualist order⁹. The root of the non-alignment policy (which much later on, under the Modi governance, generated the direction of “diplomatic diversification” or “strategic autonomy”) lies in the oriental concept of “*Peaceful coexistence*”. At this point, India is “completed (in its overall strategic thinking) by another Asian giant, China, whose strategy and diplomacy include the same concept of the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence’”¹⁰. This diplomatic approach, initially implemented by Nehru, originates in the Hindu philosophical concept *Pancha Shila* (*The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*) and references the same concept which is also developed in China (based on the same vision of the multipolar order, in which the states are sovereign and they are engaged in relations of mutual respect and mutual benefits). If two Asian regional giants (China and India) include the same concept (“The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”) in their strategies (even though, in both types of strategies, the countries see themselves as “emergent power”, “ascending power”), a concept with similar content, *showing the existence of a common Asian conceptual-strategic background, which is to be identified, explored and implemented, in order to create an authentically Asian regional order and to stabilize both East Asia and South-East Asia, during the 21st century, from a personalized, domestic perspective*, not from an external (Western) perspective, we consider that this is a positive signal for the initiative to *assume a continental approach to common strategic points*, adopted by various Asian regional powers, despite the wars, past conflicts and points of diplomatic tension or blockage still existing in their current diplomatic agendas.

The involvement of the Asian countries in multilateral and regional forums is regarded by the experts as *a desire of these states to identify more and more common points on their diplomatic agendas and to determine a common approach from case to case*, to the various items on the agendas of these Asian forums. However, *we are far from identifying the preliminary elements of an authentic Asian regional*

⁸ See details in Henry Kissinger, *Ordinea mondială, Reflecții asupra specificului națiunilor și asupra cursului istoriei* (orig. title: *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*), Rao Publishing House, translated by Adriana Mădescu, Bucharest, 2015, pp. 168-169.

⁹ Devin T. Hagerty, Herbert G. Hagerty, *India's Foreign Relations*, in Devin T. Hagerty, ed., *South Asia in World Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC, 2005, Oxford, UK, printed in USA, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰ David Cohen, *A clash of security concepts: China's effort to redefine security*, in China Brief, The Jamestown Foundation, vol. XIV, issue 11, June 4, 2014.

order, such as the order built by and through the European Union. The approach of South-East and East Asia towards “a sole Asian order” is at an early stage, as there is still a stage of diverging political interests, which predominate despite the common Asian conceptual-strategic background, based on similar ideas, principles and traditional views.

*The similarity between the two concepts (Indian and Chinese) regarding peaceful coexistence*¹¹ (mutual respect for territorial sovereignty and integrity; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in domestic issues; mutual equality and benefits; peaceful coexistence)¹² is amazing and still insufficiently explored in the bilateral framework relation between India and China (where the starting point is, particularly, a common regional strategy, this concept which both emergent powers acknowledge individually, in their own foreign policy strategy).

Main Key-Directions of Modi Doctrine

The priorities of the government led by Narendra Modi include: cyber-security, trade and power partnerships (*Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership*), the “Asian Solidarity” project, renewable energy, countering terrorism¹³, a maritime strategy of security in the “Indian Ocean region”, diversification of diplomatic partnerships with a multitude of countries, strategic autonomy, a well-grounded diplomatic relation with the United States, a constructive relation with China, based on trust and cooperation, development of the traditional relation with Russia (in a bilateral, trilateral and multilateral framework), improvement in the attractiveness of the Indian economy for foreign investors, by developing the economic diplomacy of India to its full potential, as well as a policy that pays attention to India’s neighbouring territories¹⁴.

The “Neighbours First” Diplomatic Direction

In this direction, leaders of the SAARC organization, including Pakistan, were invited to the ceremony during which Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister. A series of visits to Bhutan, Nepal¹⁵, Myanmar and Sri Lanka followed, substantiating the diplomatic approach of “the three Cs” (connectivity, cooperation and contact).

¹¹ “The Five Principles were proclaimed by Myanmar, India and China, during the visit of the Chinese Minister Chou En Lai’ to Myanmar, in 1954. Thus, China and India signed agreements to adhere to this set of principles, in New Delhi, on June 28th 1954 (China and Myanmar signed such agreement in Yangon, on June 29th 1954); these agreements set a proto-basis for a common approach of the certain Asian countries to their foreign policies. But, as shown in the *Common Sino-Indian Declaration*, the purpose is to apply these principles not only to the relations among the signing countries, but also to the general framework of international relations”. See www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng and www.chinaview.cn, 08.04.2008. www.mofa.gov.mm/foreignpolicy/fiveprinciples.html.

¹² Henry Kissinger, *quoted op.*, p. 169.

¹³ Arun Mohan Sukumar, *A data-driven analysis of Mr. Modi’s foreign policy interventions in his second year in office indicates no sharp disjuncture from the stated views of previous governments*, www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed, accessed on February 8th 2016.

¹⁴ www.brookings.edu/research/options/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

¹⁵ Two buffer states between the two Asian giants, Asia and China.

To counter the critiques regarding “a failed or blocked diplomatic relation” with Pakistan, Modi tried to build *a ring of diplomatic engagements against terrorism*, with the countries which had commercial relations with Pakistan. According to the analysts, the idea of concluding bilateral treaties on countering terrorism with countries from the Middle East (United Arab Emirates) or of visiting countries in Central Asia, as well as Saudi Arabia, in order to receive diplomatic support and initiate a common battle front against terrorism, represented the substantiation of a diplomatic direction of “containment”, assumed by Pakistan.

We also must note Modi’s insistence with the UN, in order to adopt *an Extended Convention on International Terrorism*, as another diplomatic instrument in this direction¹⁶. At the same time, in this diplomatic approach, India ratified the *Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh*, which had been suspended for the past 40 years. Once Sirisena was elected president in Sri Lanka, the Modi government strengthened its diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka, paying the first visit paid by an Indian Prime Minister to this country, in 30 years. In addition, diplomatic relations with countries like Nepal and the Maldives were stimulated (relations left uncultivated until that point).

The doctrine notes the fact that, ever since the beginning of his mandate, there were clear signs that relations with neighbours would be treated extremely seriously by the new government, as this diplomatic approach was treated as a priority¹⁷. Invitations were sent to the leaders of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries and to Mauritius, asking them to participate in the government investiture ceremony; visits to the neighbouring countries were among the first events to be organized, after assuming the mandate (Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and again Nepal, at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and of the Prime Minister); the importance of the actions taken by the governments of *states in the Indian federation* in order to improve relations with India’s neighbouring states is acknowledged – at least *de facto*¹⁸.

The doctrine considered that the priorities of the Modi government (economic growth and development) cannot be fulfilled without stability around India’s borders and in its immediate (regional) vicinity; in addition, it was considered that “a climate of instability on the borders” may prevent India from achieving its *role of regional and global player*, from ensuring its relation with the West and with East Asia¹⁹.

The relation with Pakistan is defined by this doctrine, in a rather controversial manner (a dynamic approach, in process of improvement; or a bad approach; or a complex approach, with both opportunities and challenges). Bilateral visits²⁰

¹⁶ <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pm-modu-global-push-aggressive-foreign-policy-will-it-work/1/487299.html>, accessed on February 8th 2016.

¹⁷ Tanvi Madan, *Indian Prime Minister Modi’s Foreign Policy: The First 100 Days*, www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

¹⁸ *Idem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

were organized and paid, since they were required in order to build a “relation based on trust between the two nations, as a prerequisite for any sort of meaningful change in this relation” (according to Modi).

The “Act East Policy” Direction

The “*Look East Policy*” (from which the current strategic direction, “Act East Policy”, derives) dates back to 1991, with the purpose of creating a partnership with ASEAN in 1995, followed by the adhesion to this regional forum, in 1996. The experts consider that other forms of implementing this policy are the following: the decision to support trans-regional cooperation, in forms such as BIMST-EC in 1997 (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan); the Kunming initiative (reuniting Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar), in 1999, launched by the Yunnan province, which was interested in creating economic synergies with neighbouring regional areas²¹, or the first Indo-ASEAN Summit, held in 2001.

The preoccupation of the Modi government (on the new “Act East Policy” strategic direction) focused not only on the diplomatic part, concerning India’s neighbours, but also on *creating a regional role for India, in the global Asia-Pacific policy* (considering the strategic global role to be played by the Pacific Ocean for the great powers, in the 21st century, India is interested in assuming an important role in *the Asia-Pacific area*, in order to have access to the global power play). Transforming the traditional “*Look East*” policy into an ambitious direction of foreign policy (“*Act East*”)²² was a key-point in Modi’s political vision, ever since before becoming Prime Minister. Acting on this diplomatic direction, Swaraj, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited a series of countries such as Myanmar, Singapore and Vietnam; she participated in the East Asia Summit, the Regional ASEAN Forum, the India-ASEAN meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs; she also met with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. Other visits (to China, Australia) aimed at improving the relations required for India to become *an active player in the Asia-Pacific area, a key area for the entire global order of the 21st century*. To implement this policy, the Ministers from the federal states of India were also encouraged to develop relations with the states in the region (ministers of the Indian federal states West Bengal, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, being encouraged to visit Singapore)²³.

On the same diplomatic direction, Prime Minister Modi acted to strengthen the relations with Australia, China and Japan, through a series of visits; he built an excellent diplomatic relation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, up to the level

²¹ Philippe Pelletier (ouvrage dirigée par), *Géopolitique de l’Asie*, collection *Nouveaux Continents*, Nathan Publishing House, Paris, 2006, pp. 209-210.

²² Danielle Rajendram, *From Look East to Act East – India shifts focus*, www.dw.com/en/opinion-modi-resshapes-indias-foreign-policy-a-18159829, accessed on February 8th 2016.

²³ Lawrence Saez, *Killing Nehru: an evaluation of Modi’s foreign policy and economic diplomacy*, presentation at SSAI Panel Discussion, www.soas.ac.uk/sputh-asia-institute/events, accessed on February 8th 2016.

of India stating that it “has a special relation with Japan”, which becomes a source of investments and technology, know-how, modernization of the Indian infrastructure, in terms of defence, as well as a strategic partner.

In addition, *any step taken by India in the Asia-Pacific area must take into consideration its relationship with China, the other Asian giant*, in full economic and political expansion. Modi had already visited China when he was Chief Minister of the Indian state Gujarat, in order to attract Chinese investors to his state. Commentators have described India’s relationship with China as *a complex one, based on both competition and cooperation*. There are certain differences between the two actors, as well as India’s concerns regarding the security, in the context of China’s political rise, of China’s relations with Pakistan and of China’s activities in the vicinity of India. At the same time, China has the same security concerns, regarding the friendship relations of India with the Tibetan leaders, regarding the military modernization planned by the Modi government, the modernization of Indian infrastructure, as well as India’s developing relations with countries seen by China as “newer and older allies of the US” (Japan, Australia, Vietnam)²⁴.

The Indian Diaspora Direction

The doctrine considers that “giving an impulse to the relation with the Indian diaspora”, when establishing the diplomatic contacts of the Indian Prime Minister and of other Indian officials in numerous countries on the visited continents, is “*a diplomatic achievement*” of the Modi government’s policy, acknowledging the role of the large Indian communities abroad, in “influencing the domestic policy of certain countries”²⁵.

A recent Indian official strategic document²⁶ mentions that the security and safety of Indian citizens in other countries are important, with the Indian diaspora being the second largest diaspora in the world, with almost 28.5 million Indians throughout 206 nations/territories. According to the official document, this number includes approximately 11.5 million non-resident Indians (NRIs) who are citizens of India and another 17 million people of Indian origin (PIOs) who have maintained close relations with their country of origin. Most of the people in these two categories of Indians live in coast states or in regions affected by instability, which adds a dimension of national protection and security of the people, as a response to India’s maritime challenges²⁷.

²⁴ Tanvi Madan, *Indian Prime Minister Modi’s Foreign Policy: The First 100 Days*, www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan. Ian Hall, *Is a Modi doctrine emerging in Indian foreign policy?*, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 69, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 247-252, 02 Feb. 2015, <http://indianexpress.com>, accessed on 11.01.2016.

²⁵ Ashok Sajjanhar, *Modi gets an A plus for his handling of foreign policy in 2015*, 1 January 2016, www.daily mail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3381352, accessed on February 8th 2016.

²⁶ *Ensuring Secure Seas. Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, Indian Navy, Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2, October 2015, Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defense (Navy), 2015, New Delhi.

²⁷ Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (moia.gov.in/index.aspx).

An Active Involvement in Multilateral Forums

At the end of the first half of his mandate, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already been engaged in dynamic activity in the media (presentation and support of the strategic directions of his policy), with 61 interventions regarding his foreign policy (interviews, speeches, press releases, dialogues and interaction with the media, receptions etc.), only 14 of which took place in India; the rest took place abroad.

Modi's engagement (as a Prime Minister, as well as a policy-maker in the field of India's foreign policy) in the multilateral and regional forums was seen as "unprecedented", with Modi presenting India's viewpoints and his view, in all the important groups (SAARC/South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation, Shanghai Organization, the UN, the South-East Asia Summit, the G20 Group, BRICS, the India-Africa Summit, the India-Pacific Island Cooperation Forum etc.)²⁸. At the G-20 Summit in Antalya, Modi emphasized the importance of *regional trade partnerships* (acknowledging, for example, the value of a regional strategic agreement, such as TPP/Trans-Pacific Partnership), supporting the idea that India's engagement in regional trade is not in contradiction to its engagements before OMC, concerning the international trade and its major role for India's foreign policy²⁹.

In addition, we must also note the increasingly important role played by India in a unique forum of partnership and negotiation with Brazil and South Africa (*IBSA Dialogue Forum, IBSA Summit*), which is practically a recipe for a regular assembly, formalized at the level of Ministers of Foreign Policy, a forum dedicated to talks and cooperation among the largest democracies on the planet and to consultancy in fields with regional and global subjects (reformation of the global institutions of economic and political governance, terrorism, climate changes, the WTO/Doha Development Agenda), which was held starting June 6th 2003 (in Brazil, where the document known as the "*Declaration of Brazil*"³⁰ was issued). The forum also covers the issue of *trilateral cooperation in concrete projects/field* (discussed in six Forums called "People to people", in 14 work groups and through "Focal Points", which concern officials from the Ministries of Foreign Policy in the three countries). We are discussing a participation of India in a *South-South type of cooperation*, in which a *specific approach of the South to global issues* is progressively formed, even with regard to regimes of global governance (as this field ceased to be monopolized by the approach of the West or North, regarding the global agenda).

India also asserts itself as a *global actor in the emergent multipolar order of the 21st century*, by using the *BRICS framework*, the framework of the emergent economies of the world. In one opinion, India's status of global power (more and

²⁸ Arun Mohan Sukumar, *A data-driven analysis of Mr. Modi's foreign policy interventions in his second year in office indicates no sharp disjuncture from the stated views of previous governments*, www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed, accessed on February 8th 2016.

²⁹ *Idem*.

³⁰ India to host 6th IBSA Summit, <http://voiceof.india.com/features/india-to-host-sixth-ibsa-summit/12213>.

more visibly shaped as one of the pillars of foreign policy, of an India increasingly aware of its importance and the role it can play in the global order of the 21st century) is *already asserted and acknowledged by other actors* and, in addition, it is one which *progressively takes an institutionalized form*)³¹. Using the increasingly improved instruments of participation in the multilateral cooperation and negotiation forums of the world *as a traditional direction of its foreign policy, India was quickly acknowledged as a global power*. India created its own strategies and viewpoints, according to its interests, in each of these multilateral forums, *also contributing to the creation or consolidation of certain major multilateral regimes*. It is considered that India does not have another option in order to be able to influence global regimes (some in full process of formation, others in a consolidation stage), rather than *openly assume* the status of global power, in this order of emergent and existing powers.

Simply adhering to the sets of international regulations and multilateral regimes, to institutions and forums of multilateral cooperation, *already organized on the basis of other powers' agenda*, is no longer an objective of India's foreign policy, as compared to the perspectives ahead, at the beginning of this century: according to the doctrine, India must focus on breaking the norms, on the challenge faced by the present order or, in another alternative, it should focus on creating new rules, new global regimes (climate changes, energy, cyber-security, nutrition, oceans), in partnership with other powers, in order to creatively influence the new global order. India's hosting of the Sixth Summit in New Delhi, in June 2013, to celebrate 10 years since the creation of this Forum³², is also an expression of India's increasing importance in multilateral forums, with a key role to play in the global order of the 21st century.

Innovative and Positive Aspects of the Modi Doctrine

The foreign policy developed by Modi was seen by commentators as one in which India prefers to use *several diplomatic directions simultaneously, in order to fulfil its objectives, engaging in cooperation with countries which are considered rivals among themselves*. Thus, India simultaneously develops distinct diplomatic relations with Iran, as well as with Israel, inviting investors from these countries on the Indian hospitable market; it cultivates traditional diplomatic relations with Russia, which it does not question; while participating at the same time in various American projects and strategic views or concluding weapon purchasing contracts with the US.

At the beginning of the 21st century, India engages both in diplomatic relations *with the countries in ASEAN* (transforming the traditional "Look East" policy into the "Act East" ambitious trend)³³, and is also preoccupied with

³¹ See the *Shaping the Emerging World. India and the Multilateral Order* anthology, review www.brookings.edu/research/books/2013/shaping-the-emerging-world.

³² India to host sixth IBSA Summit, <http://voiceof.india.com/features/india-to-host-sixth-ibsa-summit/12213>.

³³ Tanvi Madan, *Indian Prime Minister Modi's Foreign Policy: The First 100 Days*, www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

*improving its relations with Japan and China*³⁴. This type of foreign policy implemented by India was regarded as a possibility to simultaneously cultivate several diplomatic relations, focusing on *earning the status of global power*.

The policy *towards Pakistan* is also included in the diplomatic positions assumed by the Modi doctrine, considered to have positive results. Thus, it is considered that, during the Modi governance, Indian policy towards Pakistan has become more courageous, visionary and capable of rendering concrete results, in the medium and long run (it will force Pakistan to come with a peace offer advantageous for India)³⁵. Thus, the policy implemented by the Modi government focuses on surrounding Pakistan and isolating it among the neighbouring countries and targeting its relation with its strategic partners, for the Indian state to no longer feel threatened (by the presence of terrorist nuclei on the territory of Pakistan, with particular interests in the Kashmir province, in India's view). Through his numerous visits abroad, through the offers of advantageous partnership made to these partners, Modi attempted to reduce Pakistan's political position of favourite country, in relations with countries such as China, America, Afghanistan, the entire Arab world – a position traditionally assumed by these countries.

Far from the minimizations faced during his numerous visits, a part of the Indian doctrine considers that *Modi has opened a new diplomatic line, as compared to his predecessors, taking the initiative to change a status-quo disadvantageous for India, regarding Pakistan*. More precisely, the doctrine notes that *the fast and "spreading" actions taken by India regarding Pakistan*, based on the Modi doctrine, are meant to isolate Pakistan from its allies. Diplomatic events such as the following must be construed from this perspective: Modi's visit to the US; his participation in the Paris conference on climate changes, where his speech and vision were highly appreciated by the Obama administration; renewal of the interest of the two countries in a bilateral nuclear agreement; cultivating diplomatic and economic relations with China; Modi's visit to Afghanistan and cultivating diplomatic relations with this country; Modi's visits to the Arab world, to the United Arab Emirates (where commercial and terrorism-countermeasures issues were discussed); attracting Bangladesh in this Pakistan-containment policy; Modi's visits to countries which India considers to be part of the "Islamic world", such as Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, envisaged by the same concept of isolating Pakistan in the Islamic world.

Another good point which the doctrine considers that Modi has gained is that of having simultaneous diplomatic relations, based on commercial cooperation and partnerships with countries that do not get along well with each other (Israel and the countries in the Muslim world)³⁶. The doctrine could also see the

³⁴ Ashok Sajjanhar, *Modi gets an A plus for his handling of foreign policy in 2015*, 1 January 2016, www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3381352, accessed on February 8th 2016. Also, Patrick M. Cronin, Darshana M. Baruah, *The Modi Doctrine for the Indo-Pacific Maritime Region*, 02 December 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/12/the-modi-doctrine-for-the-indo-pacific-maritime-region>.

³⁵ Sunil Rajguru, *How Modi made Pakistan irrelevant in India's foreign policy*, Politics, 26.12.2016, www.dailyo.in/politics/narendra-modi-india-pakistan, accessed on February 8th 2016.

³⁶ *Idem*.

following actions as “diplomatic lines” designed to diplomatically isolate Pakistan: Modi’s visits to countries such as Brazil, Australia, Germany, Canada, the visits to Myanmar and Bhutan; the offers of economic cooperation and investments in India, made to countries such as the United States of America, Great Britain, Turkey and others. A *much more ambitious* diplomatic policy is implemented, exceeding the plain objective to isolate a key-country for India’s interests in the region (Pakistan). An entire visionary diplomacy, focused on *abandoning the zero sum game and on the simultaneous engagement of several actors* (which can be in divergent relations with each other, but not with India), quickly takes shape.

At the end of 2015, Modi had already implemented a visionary diplomatic strategy, paying visits to 28 states and receiving visits from chiefs of 12 states (including the US, Germany, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan)³⁷.

Another important achievement of Prime Minister Modi was the development a personal friendship with President Obama, with other leaders from countries considered “Occidental” or from the chain of Occidental alliances (with Angela Merkel, with Shinzo Abe), as well as concluding an agreement of civil nuclear cooperation with Australia. In its relations with Japan, Modi’s policy aims at the performance of improving diplomatic relations from bilateral commercial and economic relations, to a *strategic partnership* (based on the decision to modernize the railway infrastructure, with the aid of Japanese investments in the so-called “Bullet trains”)³⁸.

Among other aspects considered innovative and positive in the strategy of Modi’s global diplomacy³⁹, the doctrine also enumerates the following: organizing and hosting the largest diplomatic summit ever organized in India, the *African Summit*, attended by numerous chiefs of states or governments from Africa; discussing with the UN the possibility *that UN considers including India in the UN Security Council, as a permanent member*; supporting the resolution of the UNGA to declare *June 21st the “International Yoga Day”*; taking the traditional cooperation and friendship relation with Russia to the level of a *“privileged and special strategic partnership”*, for fields such as defence, nuclear power, prospecting hydrocarbons, economy and trade⁴⁰.

As noted in the doctrine, another innovative aspect of Modi’s doctrine⁴¹ is that the Indian Prime Minister repeatedly asserted the *principle of “Asian Solidarity”* (in various Asian forums in which he participated, as well as during his visits to Asian countries). This strategic and diplomatic principle envisages a *continental*

³⁷ Ashok Sajjanhar, *Modi gets an A plus for his handling of foreign policy in 2015*, 1 January 2016, www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3381352, accessed on February 8th 2016.

³⁸ *Idem*.

³⁹ Modi’s diplomatic direction of transforming India “from a firm, trustworthy regional superpower” into “an Asian power with something to say in global issues” was not analyzed much in the media, according to analysts such as Sunil Raman, www.firstpost.com/india/pm-modis-foreign-policy-breaking-new-grounds-is-the-current-indian-media-coverage-enough-2490802.html, 1st of November, 2015, accessed on February 8th 2016. See also, Nitin A. Gokhale, *Modi, Japan and Diplomatic Balancing*, Sept. 03, 2014, <http://the-diplomat.com/2014/09/modi-japan-and-diplomatic-balancing/>, accessed on 3 March 2016.

⁴⁰ Ashok Sajjanhar, *Modi gets an A plus for his handling of foreign policy in 2015*, 1 January 2016, www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3381352, accessed on February 8th 2016.

⁴¹ *Idem*.

security that is obtained at three levels: through extended regional economic partnerships, through cyber-security architecture for the regional ASEAN Forum, as well as by promoting the resolution of disputes with the aid of multilateral rules.

A Constructive Relation with China

In relation to China, seen by India as a new emergent superpower, Modi's foreign policy is defined by the experts as "*nuanced*" (on one hand, India develops a dimension of economic cooperation and regional stability in relation to China; on the other, India is preoccupied with developing a dimension of cooperation with countries such as Japan and Australia, to support the American effort of limiting China's power in Asia)⁴². The dimension of economic cooperation between India and China cannot be ignored and, according to the trend developed by Modi, it *will be progressively encouraged*, in order to turn India into a vast consumption market for Chinese products and for large investments in China. At the same time, this dimension is also used as a peaceful method to solve border disputes (at the meetings with the Chinese homologues, India expressed its concerns about China supplying Pakistan with funds, know-how, labour force, in order to build infrastructure in the Kashmir province)⁴³.

Concerning this framework-relation between the two Asian giants, there is a *relaxed, open diplomatic line of bilateral cooperation in clear fields* (Chinese investments worth millions of dollars in Indian railway infrastructure, commercial relations), as well as a diplomatic line focused on *methods to solve "border disputes"*, which is developed with certain difficulty. Thus, it is what analysts called "a long territorial dispute", marked by the moment of India's defeat in the border war against China, in 1962, following which a Line of Actual Control was drawn, which currently serves as a *de facto* border, between the two actors⁴⁴. This diplomatic direction assumed by India, developed concerning the "border disputes" with China, has reached a deadlock, because it has *a definition of LAC different from China's*; on a positive note, both actors have agreed to observe the *status quo*, regarding the LAC.

India's second diplomatic direction is generated by this actor's concern regarding *China's view on ascension* and the manner in which this Asian giant considers fit to act according to it in the region; this diplomatic direction results from the manner in which India perceives the presence, the actions or the statements made by China regarding this region (known as the "South China Sea" direction, as well as the "China's interests in South Asia" issue)⁴⁵.

⁴² Sanjay Pulipaka, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/11/08/indias-look-east-policy-needs-a-multilateral-vantage-point>, accessed on 3 March 2016. Sajjad Ashraf, *The rise of China and India: a global game changer?*, 13 March 2013, www.eastasiaforum.org. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pm-modu-global-push-aggressive-foreign-policy-will-it-work/1/487299.html>, accessed on February 8th 2016.

⁴³ *Idem*.

⁴⁴ Liu Zongyi, *Border dispute remains "biggest obstacle" in Indo-Chinese ties*, www.dw.com/en/border-dispute-remains-biggest-obstacle-in-indo-chinese-ties/a-17921807, accessed on February 8th 2016.

⁴⁵ Ashok Sajjanhar, *Modi gets an A plus for his handling of foreign policy in 2015*, 1 January 2016, www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3381352, accessed on February 8th 2016.

China is seen by India as *a competitor in the region*, as a “challenge that India must accept” and find diplomatic strategies meant to remove the danger of direct conflicts, as well as identify the points of common cooperation. India noted with concern the support provided by China to Pakistan, as China involved Pakistan in a USD 46-billion worth project (in the *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor* project), which crosses claimed by India; such Chinese initiatives in the vicinity of Pakistan, through ample economic projects, are regarded by India as “blocks on the path of direct cooperation” between the two regional giants.

In its relationship with China, India demands that the latter respects areas considered to have “strong sensitivities” for India in its relation with its neighbours (India’s relation with Pakistan enters this category, therefore any Chinese actions towards this country is regarded by India as a barrier on the path of developing bilateral China-India relations). Similarly, another area of blockage in the India-China relation is India’s perception regarding China’s expansion in the South China Sea, China’s claim to declare a surface of 3.5 million square kilometres, including the Paracel and Spratley islands, “one of its historical areas” being regarded as “unrealistic”⁴⁶.

On the other hand, in its relation with India, China insists on the development of aspects related to bilateral cooperation, as well as cooperation in regional and multilateral organizations (both cooperating in organizations such as BRICS, BASIC, G-20, forums where, for example, China and India announced that they would found a BRICS Bank, together with Russia, South Africa and Brazil)⁴⁷, aspects which lead to the continued cooperation between these countries and the maintenance of peace in the border area subjected to disputes.

As Chinese expert Liu Zongyi had the inspiration to declare, relations between China and India can be defined, in terms of *development potential of the diplomatic relations*, as follows: “Chinese-Indian relations include both cooperation and competition. However, while cooperation has no limits, competition is limited”⁴⁸. This perception of the Chinese experts *of the development perspectives in the relations between the two Asian colossuses is that it is a promising one*, not only for the possibility that the two countries capitalize the results of the “win-win” cooperation, but also for the stability of the entire continent. At the same time, it is a *visionary* diplomatic perspective, without abandoning the decision to solve border disputes peacefully (a key point on the agenda of the two powers); however, this subject is not treated as being in complete opposition to or leading to an insurmountable blockage in diplomatic relations between the two regional actors. In other words, they do not allow the subject of the border disputes to become so decisive that it can change the course of other diplomatic directions, which are based on cooperation between the two countries.

In the spirit of Asian values which propose a peaceful approach, a “win-win” form of cooperation, on the common perception of the actors involved that “they

⁴⁶ *Idem*.

⁴⁷ Liu Zongyi, *Border dispute remains “biggest obstacle” in Indo-Chinese ties*, www.dw.com/en/border-dispute-remains-biggest-obstacle-in-indo-chinese-ties/a-17921807, accessed on February 8th 2016.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

are part of a great family” (the Asian Community), the two regional emergent powers strive to find methods of *cooperation* (on the two directions considered a priority by both actors: regional stability and economic prosperity, countering terrorism), *instead of dichotomist approaches*, of *multiplying* the methods of cooperation, instead of reducing them, of *emphasizing* the positive aspects of commercial cooperation and those common projects in which they are already involved.

If the Modi government considers that objectives such as the economic reform, an open market for the investors in building infrastructure and in the manufacture sector are a priority, the cooperation with China can be improved in these matters as well (with China becoming a supplier on the Indian market of equipment, technology and know-how, for low prices; construction of Chinese industrial parks; training railway workers; development and modernization of the Indian railway system)⁴⁹.

Pragmatism, Continuity and Better Engagement, for the Relationship with the US

In the relationship with the US, India promised to implement a series of reforms in the economic sector. During Modi’s mandate, Barack Obama was the first US president invited as a chief guest, to celebrate the Day of the Republic, on which occasion India and the US signed an ambitious document, which follows the visionary path of the US regarding the “concept of US presence in the two Oceans, Indian and Pacific”: *Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region*. According to this strategy, India would be a partner of the US, in the process of ensuring maritime regional security and expanding its commercial connections in the Asia-Pacific area. Other aspects regarding which the two countries signed engagements or they manifested their interest in cooperating closely are the following: defence, countering terrorism, internal security, exchange of information and strengthening of the laws⁵⁰.

The Modi government strived to continue the development of a deep, constructive bilateral relation with the US and to develop the potential of this diplomatic relation in order to fulfil the Indian objectives assumed (economic growth, challenging an emergent China, need for power)⁵¹.

Conclusions

At the beginning of the 21st century, during the Modi administration, India asserts its position as emergent power, focusing its foreign policy on strategic objectives and directions, such as “the First Neighbours”, “Act East Policy”, the *Mausam* Project/2014, dedicated to strengthening the cultural connections and the cooperation with countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), a consolidated

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ *Idem*.

⁵¹ www.brookings.edu/research/options/2014/08/28-modi-100-days-foreign-policy-madan.

cooperation with the ASEAN countries, creating a more dynamic strategic partnership with other power centres (Russia, USA), a mutually advantageous and open relation with China, at forums such as BRICS, the East Asia Summit and many other forms of involvement in trans-regional cooperation projects.

Besides these objectives, in the process of increasing economic prosperity and opening towards foreign investments, India has initiated and strengthened diplomatic connections with a multitude of states, in all the regions of the globe, particularly envisaging the economic and commercial aspects of cooperation with these states. The strategic objective pursued especially during the Modi administration, as of 2014, *that of turning India into a real centre of global power*, able to shape and influence (by itself or in partnership with other centres of regional and/or global power) regional political subsystems and even the international political system (also subjected to the increasing pressure of emergent powers, at the beginning of the 21st century, therefore *a system in full process of dynamic transformation*) takes shape as *a central objective* of the Indian foreign policy. Thus, this country becomes a credible actor, which will become an important voice in the configuration of the 21st century global world.

In the context in which, when establishing their strategies to project power at global level, the great centres of global powers take more and more into consideration *the regions of the Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean, which become key-areas*; as a result, the importance of certain regional actors such as India increases and they begin to form global objectives, *derived from new strategic paradigms*, such as the paradigm of the “Asian Century” or the paradigm of the “Pacific Century”.

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