

INDIA IN THE 21st CENTURY

Foreign Policy Perspectives
in a Complex World



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India's Engagements in South and South East Asia

Siuli Mukherjee

The post-Cold War scenario had opened up a new horizon for the countries of the world. India, a major player in South Asia had to redefine her national interest in the changed milieu and also reassess her strength in negotiating with other powers. There were contradictions and divergence of opinions which had cast their shadows over the regional milieu. But India engaged herself in searching for a greater atmosphere of peace and prosperity of the region. India took the advantage of the changed ecological environment. She also revised her old linkages with the South East Asian region. Against this backdrop, this chapter is segmented into four sections. The first section will focus on the evolution of the Regional Organization in South Asia named SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and find its future prospects. The second part will highlight the South Asian Free Trade Area or SAFTA. The third section deals with an analysis of the different challenges faced by South Asia as a region. The last part will uphold India's engagement in South East Asia through her policies of 'Look East' and 'Act East'.

I. SAARC—EVOLUTION AND FUTURE PROSPECT

The formation of regional organizations across the world reflects the identical aspirations of the nation-states in geographical proximity to search for greater prospects and seek solutions of their common challenges. The world had already



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What are the important perspectives of Indian foreign policy today, in the third decade of the 21st century? Should India opt for multi-alignment, in place of non-alignment? Should India pursue its economic diplomacy more vigorously? Will India be able to counter-balance China in the near future? In which directions India's bilateral relations with the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, EU, Israel, and other West Asian nations are heading? What is the future of QUAD, of which India is a member; and how will India deal with the new Taliban Government in Afghanistan? How does India view its relations with the UN and the Global South? Has any strategic culture developed in Indian foreign policy? What are the institutional mechanisms behind Indian foreign policy? What the future holds for India, from the viewpoints of foreign policy? This volume has tried to find answers to all these crucial questions surrounding Indian foreign policy today. A combined effort of experienced academics, this book, therefore, promises to be immensely helpful for students, researchers, civil service aspirants, policy planners, and others interested to know the real perspectives of Indian foreign policy today and the future of India in global politics.

Aneek Chatterjee is a senior academic and noted analyst on international relations. Presently, he is teaching at the Post Graduate Department of Political Science, Hooghly Mohsin College, West Bengal, India. Earlier, he served as Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Presidency University (formerly Presidency College), Kolkata. He was a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Virginia (USA) and a recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach in reputed foreign universities. Dr. Chatterjee has authored and edited 15 books and written nearly one hundred articles and book chapters. His books are followed in more than five hundred universities across the globe.



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