

RISING INDIA

INDIA'S ROLE IN NEW WORLD ORDER OF 21ST CENTURY

A philosophical and Objective Analysis

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In 1893 Swami Vivekananda had stated " I can see India Rising".
The time for Rising India has come, now.

"India's geographical position in the Indian Ocean predisposes it to play a major role in managing, in conjunction and in collective fashion with other littoral states, the transition from a colonial, exploited past to a peaceful growth-oriented destiny. It is recognized as a "status-quo" power because it has no territorial ambitions except the protections of its own territorial integrity. But its "sphere of influence" lies in the age-old relationships with peoples as diverse as Afghanistan, Vietnam Africa, Australia, Europe, China and Middle East".

1. It should be a collective responsibility of all nations to make this world peaceful, secure and prosperous. India will be and must strive to play a lead role in shaping world environment, ideology and philosophy of peaceful co-existence, security and survival. Our previous Prime Minister Mr Manmohan Singh in his address to US Council on Foreign Relations had categorically stated that all nations must strive and must contribute to make Copenhagen a success. He was referring to the challenges of climate change, but the same holds good to ensure enduring world peace and meaningful human survival. Similar views have been forcefully expressed by Shri Narendra Modi the present Prime Minister of India.

Collective effort.

2. It is an undisputed fact of human survival that individuals turn to collective security endeavor because individual effort and capability may be unequal to the task at hand and inadequate in many ways. Unequal because forces of nature and many of the challenges and threats cannot be faced or countered individually and inadequate because many individuals find themselves incomplete except in group. This holds good for individual, a small nation, or most powerful nation (the so called superpower!) A group may be lived or enduring impetus to form the group may owe its existence to history: pure chance or accident. This philosophy should be able to answer the question as to why one the most powerful nations in the world had to seek cooperation of world community and specifically few nations (including India) to combat the war against

global terrorism. There are limitations to individual power and these limitations as well as impediments are going to increase day by day. Therefore there is a need to explore new ways and mechanisms of collective behavior dealing with struggle for peaceful survival and betterment and / or conflicts.

India-Centric.

3. India has also been subjected to various types of threats and challenges over the decades. Indian defence forces and security challenges purely for defensive purpose cannot deal effectively with any adversary bent upon war of attrition. Mechanisms raised purely for defensive purpose cannot deal effectively with any adversary bent upon war of attrition and annihilation. Purely defense forces and defensive, inward looking philosophy and vision are condemned to fight every few years on their own territory also in a disadvantageous position, because the initiative does not lie with them. There is a need to learn from the experience of some of the major world powers specially the American experience of 9/11 and the events thereafter. The American-led NATO forces now involved in the war of attrition and annihilation in various countries of middle East and North Africa. It is time for India to convert its defense forces philosophy in to Armed Forces.

Costly Exercise.

4. Look at the cost of war in terms of human lives, resources and finances which a lone superpower has paid and will continue to pay at least for the next decade. It is this realization that has prompted and encouraged USA to enter into strategic partnership with India. It is the realization and desire to develop mechanisms to bolster the concept of collative security which is attracting various nations of the world towards India to enter into strategic partnership in different fields of human development and survival.

5. India has travelled a long, rough and lonely road to get to present position where it is today. It has been a very eventful, challenging and a journey full of struggle. From a position of backward nation of snake charmers, "half naked faqirs" and so on, India is now accepted and gradually emerging major power player; by those very powers who called and addressed us and treated us that way. What has made them to change their outlook towards India and expectations from India?

Intrinsic Worth.

6. India is a rising power by several indicators of potential, capacity and capabilities; this being gradually realized and recognized by key players in international system and international governance. The indicators include the world's second largest population, the fourth largest army, the fourth largest economy (in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), the world's largest pool of doctors, engineers, IT professional (after the USA) emerging academic order and a large middle class with increasing purchasing power which equals the total population of America and is still growing.

7. India is a mature and stable nuclear power, a regional military power, has a bright future in the 21st century and is being invited, pulled to play a lead role in ensuring regional security, stability and in enhancing world security. This has been possible due to strategic vision, philosophy of the leadership in different fields and levels of governance. (some of the self appointed, self styled, self proclaimed, armchair experts, analyst and some of the critics who are encouraged and funded by our adversaries as well as competitors may not agree with my view point).

8. Thought we have our own shortcomings and inadequacies; having come so far, we must not lose our focus and direction, since the challenges of 21st century and emerging world order demand even more courageous resolves, decisions and actions. India's advance and progress in nuclear field, spacecraft, space science, missile technology and information technology etc. is not the result of some accident.

9. India is also the world's largest democracy. The people of India hold many fundamental freedoms that the citizens of western democracies enjoy. India is rightly accepted as one of the important poles in the multi-polar world of today. India has been the traditional supporter of many important norms of international relations, especially those relating to sovereignty, peaceful settlement of disputes and UN peacekeeping efforts.

Focus

10. Since the end of cold war India has emerged as one of the most active contributor of troops and resources for UN peacekeeping operation. India is also slowly and steadily getting integrated into the major power system of world governance. India will be able to remove likely sources of potential conflicts in international system in years to come and will help in power transition in emerging multi-polar world of 21st century. World is expecting India to emerge not only a regional power, and not only a pillar of global economy but also an anchor of regional and global security. Without Peace, security and stability both India and the world cannot achieve the goal of economic development and meaningful, purposeful existence, sustenance of our society. India has no other option but to play a lead role and for this India must continue to rise in every aspect of human existence and development.

11. History is full of examples and repeatedly reminds us that nations and political establishment that amass superior material capability – economic, technological, military might often attempt to refashion their ambitions and also the world environment world order, according to their so called “national interest” and ideals. (Intervention in North Africa, Middle East, Iraq, and Afghanistan are glaring examples). In this process, the international system often generates intense conflicts between rising and established powers and also within the nation state. This results in international tension and invites international intervention. Since India is an emerging power, we should be prepared to respond to various unforeseen eventualities and contingencies when called by international community and United Nations.

12. However we must always remember that India has never mounted any violent challenges to the world order. India has not entered into partnership or alliances with any world power for armed aggression against any country despite various pressures and promised incentives. Does it not speak of maturity of political, and strategic diplomatic, vision that India's nuclear test in May 1998 was the result of the long standing concerns over national and regional security as well as our national experience with some of our neighbors. It is reasonable for India to aspire for status of major emerging power and member of UN Security Council.

Resistance to India.

13. Some nations question the basis of India's aspiration to achieve power projection capabilities and status. There are various attributes. India's existing geopolitical status, geographical location, which offer India to play a lead role in exercising influence to ensure regional security in Middle east, Central Asia, ASEAN region and of course in Indian Ocean region. We should also remember that India is one of the world's most enduring civilization entities which attributes to our desire to have a leadership role in international affairs. There is a powerful resistance from some powerful nations to permit India to be part of international system, which has been by and large managed by just, few basically to protect and further their own so called national interest!!

14. John Her in his work "Idealist Internationalism and Security Dilemma – World Politics" has stated that "in an anarchical international system, struggle for more power occurs sometimes intensely, other times in more muted fashion or less visibility, especially among State that wield highest level of capability". **Concept and philosophy of "new axis of evil"; "either you are with us or against us". "we will decide the future of the world system", are the bi-products of such thinking. Creating world opinion against Lebanon, Syria and Iran is part of such thinking. There is a tendency among established powers to extend their own power as far as possible, to exercise dominance over other and to reduce middle power to the status of subjects.**

15. Since possession of the nuclear weapons and delivery system is one of the major attributes and defining characteristics of "powerful nation" the attempt is to deprive the emerging nation of such instruments, often under the garb of concern for world order, international security. **(Reluctance and resistance on the part of some major world powers to understand Iran's desire and attempt to acquire expertise and facilities for the purpose is another example).** After 1998 nuclear explosion India was subjected to all sorts of sanctions and pressure by powers that be. However it is to the credit of India's capacity to undergo hardship that those very powers who imposed and enforced sanctions against us are now offering "strategic partnership".

16. When one suggests India's role in the major power system, it is not just to gain status or prestige but for national survival with dignity and protection and welfare of smaller nations, since, even in 21st century smaller nations are constantly in danger and prospects of domination and exploitation by the major powers. This is evident right from the beginning of the 21st century (Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Georgia Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria are example).

Elements of Power.

17. Since the discussion is about “**Rising India’s capabilities and role to shape the global system**”, we need to be aware of the fact that power (military, technology, economic industrial power projection capability) and strength (economic, industrial, technological, knowledge and internal stability capabilities) often go hand in hand. They are linked with each other and can’t be seen in isolation.

18. It is undisputed fact that when small and middle powers strive to develop and attain capabilities and capacity of a powerful nation, major powers do not take kindly and they do not support the aspirations of other nations and this unfortunately develops in a collision course and also in ideological confrontation (**attitude of some major powers towards Iran is a glaring example**). The resolution of such ideological conflict and perceptions of major power system is always a major problem. While trying to aspire for and attain a major power status to play a lead role, India will have to be very careful about the concerns and apprehensions of our neighbors. **China our next door neighbor and an adversary will not like us to build even basic infrastructure like roads in our own border areas on one pretext or the other. Both Pakistan and China do not want India to prosper and be stable. Hence Pakistan has always been and will continue to adopt a course of confrontation no matter how accommodative and submissive India attempts to.**

Areas of interest.

19. India will have to develop capabilities and capability to ensure security and stability of our “areas of interest” and accordingly decide on “area of influence”, Geo-strategy, geo-politics and geo-economics will play vital role in such calibration. India’s area of interest extends up to Pacific Ocean and South China Sea in East to Mediterranean Sea in West, Central Asian, region in North and Indian Ocean region in South.

20. “Indian Ocean” need not necessarily be considered as “India’s Ocean”, but the security and stability of India Ocean region is crucial. Stability of Indian Ocean region is crucial and important to ensure India’s security, industrial, economic progress and stability. Indian Ocean is the only ocean which doesn’t wash shore of any of the world major power. The Indian subcontinent extends more than 1500 miles along its maritime latitudes. Indian Ocean and India are flanked by two of the world’s sensitive areas. To the East there is Southeast Asia, ASEAN which because of its resurgent economy and emergence of powerful China has again become sensitive to the ambition and ideological fervor of that country. The increasing hold and influence of extremists and terrorist group in some of the countries in this part is the cause of concern not only to India but to most of the nations of the world including China, USA, Australia and Japan. To the West is Middle East (West Asia).

21. Geographic location of China would always remain a constrain to fulfill ambition of world dominance. May be there is a realization of this impediment which has encouraged China to establish military and industrial alliance with countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and others. It should not be seen as encirclement of India in geostrategic terms: since this will reflect inadequacy of depth of strategic thinking. There is a need to consider other aspects also. Of course such military presence would always be advantageous to China's interests. Indian Ocean would continue to hold key for industrial, economic and military progress as well as dominance and hence China would like to ensure easy, uninterrupted transportation, communication, imports and exports to further and sustain her dominance in the world. **To counter China's adverse designs and plan India must concentrate on studying the existing and possible fault lines within China, and how these can be exploited by interested powers, nations, neighbors, if they are forced to do so by China's adventurist designs. India never exploits others weakness but a time has come for India to be aware of the fault lines of our adversaries.**

Island-bases.

22. The island group which provides the land bases, staging posts and launch areas / jump off areas for geo-strategic initiative and military operations are of equal interest to major global players as well as to India's vital national interests. Mauritius, Madagascar, Lakshadweep, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Indonesia island group and Diego Garcia are among those which assume importance. It is of special interest to note that Diego Garcia has been developed as major US Air and Naval power base in this region and played a pivotal role during first Gulf war and in America's war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

23. Due to its geographical location which results in geo-strategic advantage India is the only recognizable power to play a lead role in this region in ensuring security and also responds to a crisis situation which may emerge suddenly and unexpectedly. India's immediate response during "**Tsunami Crises**" is a most recent example. It is due to our naval capabilities duly supported by air force that India could respond to request for help and assistance in disaster management. Same may hold good in other contingencies also. **It is hearting to note that India's Disaster Management Capacity, Capability, and Response mechanism has improved over the years. In many cases we are a step ahead of leading world powers.** Some of the world powers have developed expertise in creating manmade disasters in carious part of the world on different pretexts and to establish the so called global peace and stability. Even the Noble Peace Prize has been awarded to some who have encouraged, executed war and conflicts in the name of "world peace"!! It is a harsh and undisputable (thought debatable) reality of 21st Century and human history.

West Asia

24. The West Asian region (Middle East) is in competitive struggle since 1947-48. There has not been even one decade since 1947, when in this region has not witnessed Conflict, Confrontation, War, Destruction and Destabilization of governing regimes. Events in this region have not only impacted India's long term national interest, economy, security and stability, but also of entire world. As has been in the past, in 21st century also this region will play a significant role in shaping world environment. Emerging threats due to emergence of ISIS is a new challenge to India and the world. We should never ignore the fact as to which Leading Power in the world created and encouraged ISIS to start with.

25. Emergence of terrorist groups and increasing cooperation among terrorist group and sea pirates should not be seen in isolation. Indonesian straits are vulnerable to terrorist strikes. The terrorist groups are also strengthening their presence and hold in Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. These are part of grand strategy of the terrorist organizations and the powers that support terrorist violence. One may ask as to which is the nation in this part of the world to which major powers and UN can look up to respond to any undesirable, unwarranted situation and eventuality? India seems to be closest which can respond to an emergency. Since 2001 no nation in this part of the world has displayed capacity, capability and will to control Terrorism and Fundamentalism except India. Pakistan has been in fact protecting, sustaining, enhancing and exporting terrorism.

Chinese Outreach.

26. It is likely that calculation of China's long geo-strategic interests in the region have prompted and encouraged China to develop facilities and maritime infrastructure in Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistan. It is for this reason that China is building up rail, road connections through Pakistan and also seeking increasing facilities in North Africa.

27. **In our own "interest and in global interest, India needs to develop power projection capabilities and strategic reach to be able to play a lead role in crises management and crises resolution, when called upon by the UN. Are we in that position today?" What capacity, capability, and time frame do we need?**

Frontline Pakistan.

28. Throughout the cold war America had developed relationship with Pakistan based on America's long term geo-strategic and geo-political interests. America's interests in Pakistan were basically focused on Pakistan's eagerness and willingness to provide military bases and facilities to conduct surveillance, spying activities on Soviet Union's bases in what is now referred to as Central Asia. Once Soviet forces entered Afghanistan, Pakistan became the forward base and staging ground for America's (CIA's) operations against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and dismemberment of Soviet Union, **America somehow ignored Pakistan till the clandestine nuclear trade was exposed! America was also building up Pakistan as a counter against India as cold war strategy. China**

too has built and continue to support, sustain Pakistan as a counter to India and this will continue in future too.

28. After 9/11, again Pakistan came on US radar and priority list in geo-strategic calculations. Unfortunately India kept away from Pak-Afghan region for reasons best known to the politicians and few diplomats only. Now that the Pak-Afghan region has become a main breeding ground for terrorism, India has no option but to take a lead to re-establish peace and stability and help the world. America is very keen to seek India's help in Afghanistan. India has very rightly kept away militarily. With its vast and in-depth experience in combating insurgency and terrorism India can play a lead role without getting militarily involved. India has made good contribution towards reconstruction of Afghanistan and re-establishment of governing mechanism. America should not be permitted to "outsource" war against terrorists in Afghanistan to India. India can ofcourse cooperate in various other ways, other than direct military involvement. **Some of the Western Power have already drawn blueprint for dismemberment of Pakistan (by depriving Pakistan the sea coast of Sindh and Blochistan). India rightly has never been a party to further disintegration of Pakistan. Is there a need for rethinking?**

Afghan Imbrolio.

29. Apart from other aspects India-US strategic partnership would aim to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. **US must accept the ground reality and fact that it is the combined effort and co-operation between India-China-Russia and Iran which can bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. America has made the biggest strategic blunder by keeping away Russia and antagonizing Iran for some reasons. Even now it is not too late to get Russia and Iran on board if we want a lasting peace in Afghanistan and reduce nuisance value of Pakistan.**

30. The student of geo-politics and strategy can see the future of the India-US partnership with optimism, confidence as well as some concern. There is going to be convergence of national interests of nations on global and regional issues. The fast moving changes in the global geo-political, geo-strategic and economic structures and interdependence among large number of nations despite their geographical locations, distances but common interests offer us the opportunity to look beyond self (national) interests. India has always been the advocate and follower of the philosophy of "Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam"- "entire world is one family".

Convergence.

31. There is a need to establish strategic partnership in all aspects of human development, human survival and security. If the nations (especially powerful and influential) are to effectively tackle multiple challenges that confront the world today and also the challenges of the emerging world, there is a need for all nations to work together. **India has the potential, capabilities and capacity to be a leading partner.**

32. “The international system as it is presently constituted is a near-oligarchy major powers wherein other nations are often consigned to the role of objects of decisions of major powers”. (Baldev Raj Nayar and T.V. Paul – India in the world order). Accordingly, for reasons of their own security, stability and development, nations like India must have an ambition to enter the global/ international system and governing mechanism (the exclusive club of major power / UN security Council) through the expansion of their capabilities, capacities and inbuilt endurance to stay on course in case of an adverse situation.

India’s Role and India’s Political and Corporate Leadership

33. It is for India’s leadership to evolve system and develop capabilities to be able to graduate to the role of regional power and major power, since India enjoys the preeminent position in the Indian Ocean region. India has acquired strong credential for a lead (major power) role in the world affairs and for progress, prosperity and peace for human kind. We must be aware and accept that even major power (members of the super club) realize, acknowledge and accept and are reticent about coming forward to support India in its aspiration and legitimacy of lead role. Mr. Ross Babbage, an eminent Australian scholar has very correctly stated that: **“there would be advantage in not obstructing the gradual achievement of these aspirations. This is not only because they are largely inevitable but also because many of India’s fundamental values and interest are broadly compatible with those of the West. India’s deeply entrenched democratic heritage, its successful market economy, its open culture and English language and its role as a rising, strong but essentially statuesque power provides a basis for enhanced relationship”**.

“Would the world like to read the writing on the wall and seek the opportunity to use India’s Academic, Intellectual, Spiritual, and Soft Power to build a peaceful, progressive and stable world for our coming generations”?

Lt Gen (Dr) DB Shekatkar, Served at Army HQ New Delhi as Deputy Director General Military Operations, Additional Director General Military Operations and Additional Director General Perspective (Strategic) Planning. He has successfully combated insurgency in North East India, Terrorism in Punjab, Kashmir Valley and Assam. He was member of joint working group dealing with India – China disputes and also as a member of expert group dealing with boundary issues. He also participated in Indo-US Defense Co-operation initiative, which ultimately resulted in Strategic Partnership between two nations. Presently he is President of forum for India’s Integrated National Security (FINS).