

## **ISAS SEMINAR**

# **INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES OVER THE COMING DECADE**

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# INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES IN THE COMING DECADE

# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WORLD

- Two realities
  - New balance of power ?
  - Shift towards Asia

# INDIA'S STRATEGIC CHOICES

- Co-option
- A 'pole'

# LESSONS

- No country will “help” India’
- Challenge to present-day ‘haves’
- UNSC
- UNSC
- NSG

# ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY

- Strategic autonomy
- India's traditions
- Ongoing debate in India
- Not a status quo power
- Challenge to existing global order
- Resistance
- Window of Opportunity

# COOPERATE WITH OTHERS

- Must work with other powers
- China, Russia ?
- US counter-strategy
  - Divide
  - Co-opt
  - ‘Swing’ State

# USA

- Many factors that bring India close to USA
- Long-term strategic interests diverge
  - Independent foreign policy, Pakistan, Gulf, 'War on Terror'
- US intentions untested
- India unlikely to be a reliable ally
- Risks of nuclear deal
- Benefits & Costs

# NEIGHBOURS (1)

- How to overcome divisiveness
- Coordinated, coherent strategy
- India as leader of South Asia
  - Magnanimity, Care, Delicacy, Sensitivity
- Fresh thinking needed
  - Prosperous # Languish – economic migrants
  - Social & Political Turbulences

# NEIGHBOURS (2)

- Unilateral concessions
- Non-economic gains – psychology
- Maximum possible integration
- Loved or feared – ‘soft state’
- Core interests – security concerns
- Democracy – popular level # ruling elites
- Dynamics of internal politics – spill-over

# CHINA

- Partner + Competitor – mistrust resurfaced
- Boundary – Tactics
- Tibet
- Prudence – no illusions
- India as upstart wannabe
- Keep India bogged down
- Focused activist policy

# 'LOOK EAST'

- Strategic long-term, important initiative
  - Economic imperatives
  - Strategic space
  - Domestic dimension
- All-round ties developing
- EAS
  - Bridged gap between India and East Asia
  - Community-building – building blocks
  - 21<sup>st</sup> century as 'Asian'

# WEST ASIA & GULF REGION

- Arab world
  - Oil & Gas – Market – Investments – Islam
  - Indians – impact of possible upheaval
  - Strengthen mutual long-term stakes
- Iran
  - Strategic: Pakistan, Gulf, Afghanistan, CARs
  - Economic: Energy security – IPI
- Israel
  - Defence – trade – lobby
- Perspective – active role; manage contradictions
- Regional security structure (like ARF)

# RUSSIA

- Trusted friend & strategic partner
- Deep roots – valuable support
- Contemporary relevance
  - Multipolarity; strategic neighbourhood policy
  - Complementary interests
- Weaknesses
  - Trade and economic
  - Few stakeholders

# CENTRAL ASIA

- ‘Negative security space’
- India as a player in new ‘Great Game’
- Energy
  - Investments
  - Consumer
  - Pipelines and transmission lines
- Web of interdependence

# DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

- Aid as foreign policy instrument
- Expectations of India's leadership role
- India's strategic and political interests

# FOREIGN POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Domestic realities & priorities
  - Coalition governments
  - Foreign policy consensus
  - Private sector
  - State Governments
- Imaginative – skilful – holistic
- National effort – not just MEA
- National interest – prioritize
- Self-confidence; clear-headed policies; institutional structures

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