

Principles of India's Foreign Policy

Every Sovereign Country like India has its foreign policy. While keeping in view the fundamental objectives of India's foreign policy, India has adopted and pursued certain principles to realize these objectives. The principles of India's foreign policy and its objectives are closely interlinked with each other. In this article, you can read about the main principles of the foreign policy of India, which is a very relevant topic for the [UPSC](#) international relations segment.

What are Foreign Policies?

Foreign Policies are a set of the plan of action for diplomatic dealings with International nations and bodies and regional grouping. Aspirants would find this article very helpful while preparing for the [IAS Exam](#).

The Constitutional Principles

The constitution of India lays down certain principles in Article 51 under the Directive Principles of State Policy. These principles focus on the promotion of International peace and security-

As per the principles laid down in Article 51, the state shall endeavor to-

1. Promote international peace and security.
2. Maintain just and honorable relations between nations.
3. Foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized people with one another
4. Encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration

Basic Principles Governing India's Foreign Policy

The principles have stood the test of time and are ingrained in international law and India's foreign policy practice. The principles of Indian foreign policy are as follows –

1. Panchsheel
2. The policy of Non-Alignment
3. The policy of Anti- Colonialism and Anti Racism
4. Peaceful settlement of International Disputes
5. Foreign Economic Aid – Support to UN, International Law and a Just and Equal World Order

The principles of India's Foreign Policy are discussed in detail below-

A. Panchsheel

Indian Policymakers understood the linkage between peace and development and the survival of mankind. Without global peace, social and economic development is likely to be pushed to the background. In view of the destruction caused by two world wars, they realized that for the progress of a nation a durable world peace was needed. Thus, the founder of India's foreign policy, Nehru gave utmost importance to world peace in his policy planning.

Also, read about the following –

1. [World War I \[1914 – 1918\]](#)
2. [World War II \[1939 – 1945\]](#)
3. [Global impact of World War II](#)
4. [Cold War](#)

India desired peaceful and friendly relations with all countries, particularly the big powers and the neighboring nations. While signing a peace agreement with China; he advocated adherence to five guiding principles known as Panchsheel.

Panchsheel also called the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence was signed on 29p April 1954 and since then it has become a guiding principle of India's bilateral relations with other countries.

Panchsheel includes the following five principles of foreign policy:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
2. Non-aggression against each other.
3. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
4. Equality and mutual benefit.
5. Peaceful co-existence.

These principles of Panchsheel were later incorporated in the Bandung Declaration, signed in the Afro-Asian Conference held in 1955 in Indonesia. They are the core principles of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and still guide the conduct of India's foreign policy.

B. Policy of Non-alignment

1. Non-alignment is the most important feature of India's foreign policy. Its core element is to maintain independence in foreign affairs by not joining any military alliance formed by the USA and the Soviet Union, which emerged as an important aspect of cold war politics after the Second World War.
2. Non-alignment was neither neutrality nor non-involvement nor isolationism. It was a positive and dynamic concept. It postulates taking an independent stand on international issues according to the merits of each case but at the same time not committing to coming under the influence of any military bloc. Furthermore, Non-Alignment gained popularity in developing countries. Thus, keeping away from the military alliances and superpower blocks was important for the independence of Foreign Policy.
3. India played a lead role in popularizing and consolidating the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). India, under the leadership of [Jawaharlal Nehru](#), convened the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947 to forge the idea of Asian solidarity. Read more on the [Non-Alignment Movement \(NAM\)](#) on the given link.
4. Another Asian Relations Conference was convened by India in 1949 on the question of the independence of Indonesia as India stood firm-against the colonial rule in other countries.
 - A larger Conference, known as the Bandung Conference of 29 countries of Asia and Africa was convened in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955 to forge the Afro-Asian unit. The Bandung Conference was a precursor to the NAM, which held its first Summit in 1961 at Belgrade. Since then, the Non-Aligned Movement has not looked back.
 - The Seventh NAM Summit was hosted by India in New Delhi in 1983. In this Summit, India took up the cause of development, disarmament, and the Palestine issue.

- The conference laid down ten fundamental principles of international relations. The leaders pledged to work together for colonial liberation, peace, cultural, economic, and political cooperation among developing countries.
- It provides all its members, regardless of their size and development, an opportunity to participate in the global decision-making process.

Continued Relevance of Non-alignment:

As NAM was a product of Cold War politics and the bipolar world, many scholars have questioned the relevance of NAM after the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Again, the globalization led to the change in the priorities of even its chief votaries like India, which tried to adopt neo-liberal market economy principles in order to integrate with the emerging global order. This new situation generated the impression as if NAM is sidelined and its relevance is declining. However, if we go deep in the basic features of NAM, it appears to be equally significant also in the changing context due to the following factors:

1. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the NAM can act as a check against undue dominance and hegemony of any country or block.
2. The developed (North) and developing (South) world have divergent views over several global and economic issues. The NAM may provide a forum for third world countries to engage the developed nations in a productive dialogue.
3. The NAM can prove to be a powerful mechanism to forge cooperation, which is essential for their collective self-reliance in the present market-driven global order.
4. NAM can provide an important forum for developing countries to discuss and deliberate upon various global problems, issues, and reforms including the reform of the UN and other international financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF in order to make them more democratic and effective.

Aspirants preparing for the Principles of India's Foreign Policy should also go through the following relevant articles-

1. [Overview of India' Foreign Policy](#)
2. [Objectives of India's Foreign Policy](#)
3. [Achievements of India's Foreign Policy](#)
4. [Foreign Policy Making in India](#)

C. The policy of Anti – Colonialism, Racism and Imperialism

The foundations of India's foreign policy were laid during [independence struggle](#) when our leaders fought the evils of colonialism and racism. India has been a victim of colonialism and imperialism and considers these as a threat to international peace and security. It firmly believes in the equality of all human beings. Its policy is aimed at opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. It always opposed to it in any form.

1. India was the first to bring the issue of Apartheid in the UN in 1946. India raised her voice for the independence of Indonesia and organized the Asian Relations Conference for this purpose.
2. Due to India's consistent efforts through NAM and other international forums, 14 African countries were liberated from the yoke of colonialism in 1964.

3. India firmly opposed the infamous apartheid policy in South Africa. Not only India had cut off diplomatic relations with South Africa in 1949 but also used her influence in the application of comprehensive sanctions (later) against the white minority racist Regime of South Africa.
4. At India's initiative, NAM set up the Africa Fund (Action for Resisting Imperialism, Colonialism, and Apartheid) in 1986 to help the frontline states, which were victims of aggression of South Africa and for facing the brunt of Apartheid. India made a generous contribution to this fund. The end of racialism in South Africa was a great success for Indian policy.

D. Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes

1. The unflinching faith in the peaceful settlement of international disputes is one of the core elements of India's foreign policy. This principle has been included in the Constitution of India, under the Directive Principles of State Policy as well as in the Charter of the UN.
2. India has played a leading role in the resolution of the Korean conflict and supported negotiated settlement of Palestine issue, border problems with neighboring countries, and other such disputes and problems.
3. India is always against foreign military intervention for resolving international problems. This principle continues to be the cornerstone of India's policy.
4. At present, India is in favour of the resolution of peaceful settlement of Iranian nuclear issues, the problem of the democratic upsurge in the Middle East, and so on.

E. Foreign Economic Aid – Support to UN, International Law and a Just and Equal World Order

India has a deep respect for the international law and/or the principles of sovereign equality of nations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations as espoused by the UN.

1. India has played a key role in preserving world peace by helping in the decolonization process, and through active participation in UN peacekeeping activities.
2. India has supported the cause of disarmament pursued by the UN. In 1988, India proposed a very ambitious program of nuclear disarmament before the UN. Although the proposal was not accepted by the other members of the UN but India stands committed to the cause of universal disarmament even today.
3. In order to make the composition of the Security Council more realistic and democratic, India has proposed and supported the reform of Security Council and other UN agencies. India is one of the claimants of permanent membership of the Security Council.

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Frequently Asked Questions related to Panchsheel Agreement

What are the basic principles of Panchsheel?

The five principles of Panchsheel agreement are mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful co-existing.

Who signed the Panchsheel Agreement??

The Panchsheel, or Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, was first formally signed on April 29, 1954, between India and the Tibet region of China. The agreement was signed between then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and China's first Premier (Prime Minister) Chou En-Lai.

Why did China attack India?

A Chinese disputed Himalayan border was the main cause of the war. There had been a series of violent border skirmishes between the two countries after the 1959 Tibetan uprising, when India granted asylum to the Dalai Lama.

Who controls Pangong Tso Lake??

Nearly two-thirds of the lake is controlled by China, with just about 45 km under Indian control. The LAC, running north-south, cuts the western part of the lake, aligned east-west. But India and China have unsettled borders, and the perception of the LAC differs in multiple sectors, including on Pangong Tso. At the lake's north bank, according to India, the international boundary is close to Khurnak Fort, a 19th-century ruin. But the LAC, according to China, is around 15 km west. On the north bank are spurs that jut into the lake, identified as fingers. India says the LAC passes through Finger 8; China claims it is farther west.

Why is the water of Pangong Tso saline?

Salts of the ocean originate from the Rocks. So, lakes without Drainage Rivers to the ocean ends up salty because there is no way out for the salt. Due to this reason, the water of Pangong lake is salty and the Color is blue.