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**Внешняя политика Индии на
современном этапе: основные ориентиры**

**The India's foreign policy at the present
stage: main landmarks**

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Аннотация. В статье исследуются основополагающие принципы индийской внешней политики и показано, что главным является принцип продвижения и реализация своих национальных интересов. Большое место в работе занимает рассмотрение основных ориентиров внешней политики Индии, где национальные интересы рассматриваются не просто в качестве некоего теоретического концепта, но и в качестве практической модели поведения. Исследование ведется через рассмотрение таких проблем, как поддержание системы национальных интересов данного государства, где, как и в большинстве стран мира, центральное место занимает безопасность. В работе анализируется и другая характерная черта индийской внешней политики – независимость. Главное внимание обращается на то, что сильные внутренние предпосылки способствуют тому, что Индия в незначительной степени подвержена внешним политическим воздействиям, что позволяет ей более уверенно продвигать свои национальные интересы на международной арене. Внешнеполитическая стратегия Индии в полной мере осуществляется в контексте ее национальных интересов и ориентирована на реализацию центральных задач, стоящих перед политической элитой государства. Главная цель внешнеполитической стратегии нынешнего правительства страны – содействие экономическому развитию Индии и привлечение иностранных инвестиций. Ключевым приоритетом внешней политики действующего премьер-министра является реализация инициативы «Делай в Индии», которая нацелена на существенный рост промышленного сектора, столь важного для Дели. Индийские правящие круги опираются на положение о том, что разногласия между двумя основными центрами силы современности продолжают расти. Премьер-министр считает, что Индии необходимо не быть втянутой в борьбу между США и КНР, поскольку это будет препятствовать реализации цели экономического развития, а также существенно усугубит ситуацию в области национальной безопасности. Тем не менее, Дели не готов сужать экономические связи с любой из сторон в пользу третьей.

Немаловажным интересом для Индии является расширение контактов с приоритетными региональными объединениями (АСЕАН, ЕС, СААРК) и крупными державами (Россией, Японией, Австралией), что, в первую очередь, будет способствовать привлечению дополнительных инвестиций в экономику страны, а также, сформирует комплексную систему договоренностей для страхования своих экономических и политических рисков.

Ключевые слова: Республика Индия, ООН, внешняя политика, геополитические интересы, международное сотрудничество

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Abstract. The article examines the fundamental principles of Indian foreign policy and shows that the main principle is the promotion and realization of their national interests. A large place in the work is occupied by the consideration of the main guidelines of India's foreign policy, where national interests are considered not just as a kind of theoretical concept, but also as a practical model of behavior. The research is conducted through consideration of such problems as maintaining the system of national interests of a given state, where, as in most countries of the world, security occupies a central place. The paper analyzes another characteristic feature of Indian foreign policy – independence. The main attention is drawn to the fact that strong internal prerequisites contribute to the fact that India is slightly exposed to external political influences, which allows it to more confidently promote its national interests in the international arena. India's foreign policy strategy is fully implemented in the context of its national interests and is focused on the implementation of the central tasks facing the political elite of the state. The main goal of the current government's foreign policy strategy is to promote India's economic development and attract foreign investment. The key priority of the current Prime Minister's foreign policy is the implementation of the "Do in India" initiative, which aims at significant growth of the industrial sector, so important for Delhi. Indian ruling circles rely on the position that the differences between the two main centers of power of modernity continue to grow. The Prime Minister believes that India should not be drawn into the struggle between the United States and the People's Republic of China, as this will hinder the realization of the goal of economic development, as well as significantly aggravate the situation in the field of national security. However, Delhi is not ready to narrow economic ties with either side in favor of a third. An important interest for India is the expansion of contacts with priority regional associations (ASEAN, EU, SAARC) and major powers (Russia, Japan, Australia), which, first of all, will help attract additional investments into the country's economy, and also form a comprehensive system of arrangements for insuring its economic and political risks.

Keywords: Republic of India, UN, foreign policy, geopolitical interests, international cooperation

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Introduction. India is one of the countries that, without exaggeration, can be called unique in terms of ethnic diversity, religious composition and unique history. Thus, "the peoples living here speak 450 languages (and according to some authors, the number of languages in this country exceeds 16,001... India is the historical homeland of four religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism)" [5]. In addition to the listed religions, in India, up to 15% of the population adheres to Islam, and there are also many adherents of Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Baha'iism, and ancient animist cultures.

The Republic of India is the second state in the world in terms of population and seventh in terms of territory and occupies a significant place in the system of international relations, which is

facilitated by its favorable geopolitical position: maritime trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean pass through its territory, it is located between the growing China, the Middle East, rich in oil and gas resources, and Africa, which is gaining economic strength. India is also at the center of the South Asian sub-region and is the only state that shares land or sea borders with all other countries in the sub-region. In addition, the state has significant potential in military-strategic and economic relations. India is a nuclear power and also has the second largest active military force in the world after China.

India's economy has been growing at 7% of GDP annually since 2020, “which is faster than any economy in the world and the fifth largest in the world in terms of nominal GDP. According to analysts, India could become the third largest economy in the world by 2030, after the USA and China” [11]. India is also demonstrating significant progress in the field of information technology, allowing many experts to increasingly declare a new “Indian technological miracle” in recent years.

Materials and research methods. At the moment, India does not have a single official concept of foreign policy, although there are doctrines on certain issues, such as the Indian nuclear doctrine (from 2003) [12], military doctrine (from 2004), naval doctrine (as amended in 2015), etc. In this regard, it seems relevant to formulate the main features, principles and directions of India's foreign policy, based on an analysis of historical events that largely reflected the features of Indian foreign policy; statements and speeches of Indian politicians; international documents and concluded agreements; as well as analysis of the practice of implementing foreign policy strategy.

Research results and their discussion. India's aspiration to become a regional and global power is demonstrated by the fact that it successfully carried out three nuclear tests in 1998. This step was supported by almost all political forces within the state, which indicates another distinctive feature of its foreign policy - the absence of a direct connection between domestic and foreign policy, in other words, foreign policy does not depend to a large extent on which political forces came to power [12]. A national consensus has emerged in the country between various parties and coalitions on the most pressing foreign policy issues, which explains the unchanged views of successive governments regarding India's role in the system of international relations.

This feature is associated with another important feature of Indian foreign policy, which is that in its international activities India has always relied on the ideas and views of the leaders of the movement for the independence of the state and demonstrated the features of its cultural and philosophical heritage. Political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and Ram Manohar Lohia laid down the conceptual content of the state's foreign policy and its strategic goals. Such a foreign policy is designed to help combine the country's national interests with the larger goals of creating a fair and equitable world order. It includes the ideas of justice, tolerance, non-violence, the idea of global governance and global peace as an integral union of all peoples, which were also enshrined in the Constitution of India [16].

The next key principle of Indian foreign policy is a development mindset. A development-oriented foreign policy implies setting and implementing goals simultaneously in the global, regional, and local dimensions, that is, within the framework of India's bilateral relations with other states.

An important component of India's foreign policy is to help maintain global peace and prosperity. According to the Indian leadership, the national interests of the state can be fully realized in a world free from discrimination and arbitrariness of individual countries, based on justice and fair play [19].

This provision is also reflected in the content of the concept of “Pancha Shila” - the five principles of peaceful coexistence, which were formulated in the India-China agreement of 1954:

- 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 coexistence [17].

The principles of “Pancha Shila” formed the basis of the ideas of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which India was a member. Reliance on the principle of non-alignment or non-alignment has long characterized Indian foreign policy. This concept not only implied a refusal to join the political and military blocs that existed in the second half of the twentieth century, it ensured the independence of foreign policy judgments and actions, and also allowed the state not to become an instrument in achieving the goals of the great powers. The principle of non-alignment became an axiom, creating a practice of continuity in Indian foreign policy for a significant period of time. Subsequently, no new Indian leadership could abandon the principle of independence of judgment and action in foreign policy activities or neglect these values, which were enshrined in the constitution of the state [6]. Otherwise, society would regard such actions as direct damage to national interests.

In the context of intensifying geopolitical competition in the world, the idea of non-alignment has lost its original meaning, which necessitated the creation of new approaches that would become relevant in the transformed geopolitical situation. The attitude of the world community towards the Non-Aligned Movement is also undergoing changes. In the last decade, the definition of a “Global Swing State” (this term additionally refers to Brazil, Indonesia and Turkey) has begun to be used in expert circles regarding India, which means the importance “for the United States to develop relations with countries that, although do not meet all the value standards of Western countries, but due to their growing political and economic influence they are capable of strengthening the existing world order” [7] from the perspective of establishing a general counterweight to the growing power of China.

India itself considers as its key task ensuring, in the context of the idea of non-alignment, the equality of countries with different ethno-confessional compositions of the population and different ideologies, and advocates their cooperation and more active assistance in the fight against international terrorism and solving economic and socio-political problems of the African region [21].

A number of documents relating to Indian foreign policy issues state the concept of a multipolar world order. In particular, on August 15, 2023, speaking at the Moscow Conference on International Security, Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh announced the formation of a multipolar world in which there is no single dominant force [2].

Nevertheless, in recent years, Delhi has increasingly listened to Washington’s position. If in the period from 1995 to 2005, India voted in solidarity with non-aligned states against the initiatives of the United States in 80% of cases at the UN, today the picture is changing: following Washington, unlike most non-aligned countries, Indian representatives voted in favor of sanctions against Iran, against the Program of Action to Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, against the Kyoto Protocol, and so on [20]. The large-scale state visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the United States, which took place in June 2023, confirms that the multi-billion dollar contracts concluded between the two states, including in the defense sector, serve to establish a mutually beneficial alliance in confronting China [9].

Thus, the transformation of the global political situation and India’s gradual transition to the status of a great power have led to a shift in emphasis in its foreign policy: thus, the country continues to follow the principles of peace and non-participation in military blocs, but still interaction with the Non-Aligned Movement is difficult to consider at the moment as a priority for Delhi’s foreign policy. This does not mean that India has limited or minimized its cooperation with developing countries: it continues to develop it, but based on the global and regional changes that have occurred, as well as taking into account changes in its own status. Due to its economic successes, India has transformed from a recipient of foreign economic assistance to a donor: for example, through the ITEC program, the country is providing large-scale support to Afghanistan, including the construction of roads and hospitals; provides the Myanmar government with a loan for a road construction project worth more than \$100 million [18]. Moreover, “Recently, the Indian government has sharply increased its lending to African countries, becoming one of the

most important financial donors in the region, along with China. In total, the Indian authorities issued interest-bearing loans worth about \$32 billion to 42 countries” [4].

It is worth noting that in relation to Russia, India is promoting the idea of equal partnership. Thus, “in the first half of 2023, trade turnover between Russia and India almost tripled. The main share of trade turnover is made up of Russian exports – mainly raw materials” [3] – oil, fertilizers, diamonds.

As a result of strengthening foreign policy positions, the current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi abandoned the use of the terms “non-alignment” and “strategic autonomy” in his rhetoric. In addition, these terms have ceased to be used in the annual reports of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, which are one of the official sources that allow an objective study of changes occurring in Indian foreign policy. This gives reason to believe that the current leadership of India is not so categorical in relation to the policy of non-alignment with any of the parties competing on the world stage and hiddenly shows that different courses of events are possible depending on the degree of support for one or another side of India’s development. However, despite such actions, maintaining “strategic autonomy” continues to be one of the main tasks of the Indian leadership, which means pursuing an independent political course.

The next basic principle of Indian foreign policy is support and active participation in the activities of the United Nations. The UN has always been important to India’s foreign policy and has been perceived as an effective global governance body. This attitude arose due to the fact that the UN was an important and most suitable platform for India and other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, which provided an opportunity to disseminate their ideas and assert their sovereignty at the international level.

Today, however, New Delhi’s attitude towards the UN’s international role is also changing. India is increasingly expressing doubts about the organization’s ability to be an effective instrument for maintaining peace and developing effective mechanisms for resolving such significant international issues as disarmament, the prevention and resolution of international conflicts, and the protection of human rights. Representatives of India point to the passivity of the Security Council in relation to many problems and see the reason for this in its “non-representative nature”: according to the leadership of India, the UN today does not represent the entire world community, since most developing countries still find themselves outside the Security Council, a key body UN decision-maker. India believes that it is necessary to reform the Security Council, and, along with Japan, Germany and Brazil, is seeking to achieve the status of a permanent member of the UN Security Council (at the initial stage, probably without the right of veto) [15, 4].

The fact that the UN, created with the main goal of preserving peace, is not able not only to prevent them, but also to qualitatively influence their course, was stated by N. Modi during his speech at the G7 meeting in May 2023. Once again, the Indian the leader called for reform of the UN, “since the international organization does not currently reflect the current realities of the world” [10].

However, it seems that the implementation of this goal may be limited not so much by the refusal to recognize Delhi’s demands as legitimate, but by the unwillingness of UN member countries and permanent members of the Security Council to make concessions and allow changes to the UN Charter, that is, to recognize the cessation of the world system that has been formed as a result of the Second World War. Consequently, despite India’s active participation in the initiatives of the UN General Assembly, it is obvious that the Indian leadership views with a sufficient degree of pessimism the reality of reforming this organization and granting India the desired status within the Security Council.

Modern Indian foreign policy is characterized by a transition from intensive participation in large-scale associations at the global level to a policy of forming groupings with a limited number of states, including those located outside the South Asian region and countries neighboring India, which have traditionally represented the sphere of its vital interests. Strengthening interaction with Brazil and South Africa, intensifying relations with the United

States, including the conclusion of “Agreement 123” (2008) on cooperation in the use of peaceful nuclear energy, an agreement on the repair and maintenance of US Navy warships at Indian shipyards, including in Goa (2023), etc. - can be seen as evidence of India's desire to move beyond the region and seek recognition as a global power.

Apart from economic and political factors, the Indian diaspora is an important basis for India's expanding global engagement. According to the latest UN estimates for the period from 2020, the Indian overseas diaspora numbers about 18 million people [13]. In countries such as the US and UK, they have achieved significant socio-economic success and are the ethnic group with the highest income. Thus, researchers from Johns Hopkins University counted 19 people of Indian origin in the British House of Commons alone, including Prime Minister Rishi Sunak [13].

Conclusion. As researchers rightly note, in recent decades, “both economic and political analysis with subsequent forecasting has become a very thankless process” [1], but in the 21st century, two important factors indicate India's new status in international affairs.

Firstly, the country is increasingly visited by leaders of major states to consider issues of deepening economic interaction and cooperation on priority global issues, such as international terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental disasters, and the spread of epidemics. An example of this is also the fact that in 2018, the Indian Prime Minister was invited to speak at the opening of the World Economic Forum in Davos and at the Asian security summit “Shangri-La Dialogue” in Singapore [14]. Other examples are the meeting of Vladimir Putin with the Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi in Samarkand at the end of the SCO summit, which took place in September 2022, and the meeting of the Prime Minister of the Republic of India with US President D. Biden in June 2023. These official contacts can be seen as a demonstration of significant respect, which had not previously been shown either to the heads of India or to the state itself.

Secondly, the serious perception of India by world leaders is also evident in the content of Indian-Chinese relations: trade between the two powers is beginning to develop at a rapid pace and a fundamentally important dialogue is being resumed on a wide range of issues. Just a few years ago, Beijing left all requests from Delhi to begin considering the nuclear issue unanswered. But today, discussion of the most relevant and strategically important topics has become an integral part of the strategic partnership between India and China. However, despite obvious successes, Indian foreign policy in the new millennium turned out to be not fully prepared for the modern challenges of the global world and changes in the world political system, experiencing a clear conceptual crisis. And although the country has managed to gain high international authority in recent years, a number of the following internal factors remain that negatively affect India's foreign policy:

- poor infrastructure development;
- insufficiently effective social policy, in particular in the field of healthcare and education;
- social isolation and marginalization of certain segments of the population;
- regional disparities;
- an underdeveloped public administration system as a whole.

Today, there is a growing lack of trust between the population and the political elite of the state, which has been unable to resolve ethnic disputes and determine the best methods for maintaining the country's national identity, which would meet the expectations of India's many peoples. As a result, open discontent and disappointment of the population began to be expressed more and more often; in addition, the situation is aggravated by the unresolved problem of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which periodically leads to an increase in conflict relations with Pakistan.

In many regions of the country, the role of the state is at a fairly low level or practically absent, which indicates the weak effectiveness of public administration and explains the reasons for outbreaks of aggression and terrorist acts. Attempts by the leadership to divert the population's attention from such problems only lead to aggravation of India's complex relations with

neighboring countries. Let us add that many diplomatic posts in foreign embassies and missions remain vacant for a long time [5], since complex issues of bilateral relations often face the problem of bureaucratic approvals and are not resolved for years.

In terms of Delhi's relations with world powers, interaction with China, the United States and Russia continues to play a key role. In addition, India's foreign policy remains committed to strengthening its role in the South Asian region, protecting its interests on regional and international agendas in the global arena, and establishing itself as a global actor.

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