



CHANGING NATURE OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Since Narendra Modi took office as India's prime minister in 2014, New Delhi has been working hard to elevate India to the rank of a great power by solidifying its leadership in South Asia and enlarging its influence in the Indian Ocean. When it comes to foreign policy in general, there have been many achievements. The hopes raised by his government's neighborhood policy and the energy put in advancing it, however, seem to have evaporated five years after Modi began his term by summoning leaders of all SAARC countries to his swearing-in ceremony, which has caused a change in focus to BIMSTEC. Indian foreign policy has developed in a dynamic and complex way, influenced by complex geopolitical changes, economic changes, and shifting regional dynamics. This abstract provides a summary of a critical investigation into the evolving nature of Indian foreign policy, with a focus on its contacts and engagements with surrounding nations. The study looks at how India's foreign policy has changed over time to respond to the particular opportunities and difficulties given by its close neighbors. It looks at the historical background, diplomatic efforts, and strategic factors that have shaped India's relations with its neighbors.

Keywords: *Changing Nature, Indian, Foreign Policy, Neighboring, Countries*

1. INTRODUCTION

Bhutan, Afghanistan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan are among the countries that line India and have differing populaces, economies, and political frameworks. The Local First Policy (NFP), otherwise called the South Asian Foreign Policy (SAFP), is focused on the connection among India and the South Asian countries. India's way to deal with its nearby neighbors is focused on drives to upgrade amicability and participation in South Asia. Its NFP system focuses on fringe countries and has areas of strength for an on encouraging exchange, network, and intercultural trade. To assume a key part in the raising legislative issues of a multipolar world, India should produce long haul associations between its homegrown objectives and its foreign policy objectives. The steady, secure, and serene air of India's neighbors is pivotal for the nation's political and financial turn of events (Das, 2016). As per Mohan (2007), "No country can turn into a certified power on the planet field" except if it appreciates long haul strength in its own area. India's ability to oversee its own local will decide whether it prevails in its desire to become one of Asia's primary powers, guarantee Muni and Mohan (2004). India sees the NFP as one of its essential instruments of foreign policy. The policy has likewise experienced harsh criticism for being vague and problematic. We want to inspect India's NFP according to the points of view of its four prime pioneers. To begin with, we survey Top state leader Jawaharlal Nehru's way of behaving toward his neighbors.

Second, we survey Top state leader Indira Gandhi's policy toward the area. India's foreign policy under Indira Gandhi was undeniably more worried about provincial issues in South Asia than it had been during the country's initial 20 years of freedom. Gandhi's position on the most proficient method to deal with the Indian area changed for various reasons, which are momentarily shrouded in this audit. While talking about India and its neighbors, recognizing her extraordinary position and commitment from different variables, for example, homegrown political turns of events and outside ties and situations is testing.

2. REVIEW OF LITREATURE

Menon's (2016) research offers a special insider viewpoint on India's formulation of foreign policy. The book provides important insights into the elements, difficulties, and concerns that influence India's foreign policy decisions through personal observations and historical study. Menon's narrative style humanizes the difficulties of diplomacy and emphasizes the part that particular people play in forming India's foreign engagements.

The subject of Pant's (2016) book is the immediate area around India and its changing dynamics. It explores the difficulties and chances that India encounters when dealing with its neighbors. The book provides a thorough analysis of India's neighborhood policy, covering important trends, local issues, and future directions for the country's involvement with its neighbors

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The foreign policy strategy adopted by India in the first year under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is evaluated in Roy's (2015) article. It offers a contemporary study of the evolution and consistency of India's international interactions under Modi's rule. Roy's assessment underlines significant policy changes, diplomatic efforts, and tactical adjustments that characterized Modi's first few months in office.

The difficulties and opportunities of India's neighborhood policy are examined in Patnaik's article from 2017 in *India Quarterly*. It evaluates India's interactions with its neighbors critically while taking into account regional dynamics, economic interests, and security-related concerns. The complexity and prospects of India's neighborhood interactions are illuminated by Patnaik's analysis.

3. NEHRU'S IDEOLOGY IN FOREIGN POLICY

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a well-known figure who was instrumental in forming India's foreign policy in the early years of its independence (1947–1964). Several fundamental ideas and methods can help us understand Nehru's foreign policy ideology:

- **Non-Alignment:** The idea of non-alignment was one of Nehru's most important contributions to India's foreign policy. He argued that India and other newly independent countries should maintain their neutrality and refrain from siding with either of the Cold War superpowers, the US or the Soviet Union. According to Nehru, remaining neutral would let India keep its independence and follow its own development strategy without getting drawn into the Cold War's ideological battles.
- Nehru stressed the value of peaceful cohabitation between nations and advocated the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful cohabitation) principles, which included respect for each other's sovereignty, non-interference in domestic matters, and peaceful resolution of problems. These guiding principles sought to promote goodwill between India and other nations, particularly those in Asia and Africa.
- **Decolonization Support:** Nehru was a staunch advocate for decolonization and the right of nations to decide for themselves. He strongly represented India in the conflicts other Asian and African nations were having with colonial powers. His attitude demonstrated his dedication to the advancement of international justice and anti-imperialism.
- Nehru was extremely concerned about the risks posed by nuclear weapons and nuclear conflict. Nuclear disarmament and world peace. He pushed for international nuclear disarmament and emphasised the importance of world peace. His conviction that the use of nuclear weapons would have disastrous effects on humanity guided Nehru's strategy.
- **Promotion of Science and Education:** Nehru had a strong belief in the ability of science and education to advance societies. He promoted international cooperation in science and technology in an effort to position India as a global leader in these disciplines. Nehru's support for organisations like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) showed his dedication to science and education.

- **Strong Focus on Nationalism and Self-Reliance:** Nehru placed a strong emphasis on economic growth and industrialisation in order to strengthen India's sense of national identity and self-sufficiency. He thought that an independent, powerful India would be better able to interact with the rest of the world on its own terms.
- **Engagement with International Organisations:** Nehru, who favoured non-alignment, saw the value of interacting with international bodies like the Commonwealth and the United Nations (UN). He advocated for peace, development, and human rights through various venues while also amplifying India's voice on international concerns.
- **The foundation of Nehru's foreign policy strategy** was his idea of an autonomous, forward-thinking India that could make a beneficial impact on world affairs. His anti-imperialist, pro-peaceful coexistence, and non-alignment philosophies had a long-lasting influence on India's foreign policy orientation and are still felt today.

4.INDIRA GANDHI'S IDEOLOGY IN FOREIGN POLICY

Although India continued to play a significant role on the international scene and among the non-aligned countries during Indira Gandhi's rule, regional issues and concerns took center stage in India's foreign policy. A state-by-state analysis of Indira Gandhi's relations with the states of South Asia would show the interaction between her personality and a variety of other factors that influenced India's dealings with her neighbors, even though it may be difficult to separate the geopolitical factors, domestic political developments, and her personality and style of functioning in the conduct of India's external relations. During Indira Gandhi's time as India's prime minister, Sikkim was annexed and assimilated into India, Pakistan's size was reduced, Bangladesh became an independent and sovereign state in the East, and a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was established. Even though she was instrumental in their development, Indira Gandhi did not start all of these events.

A careful examination of the time period reveals that: (1) regional relations took place within a well-established India-centric and India-dominant geopolitical context; (2) Indira Gandhi's personal style of using massive force to respond to threats had a significant impact on relations with neighbors; and (3) India's relations with other South Asian countries during this period

heavily depended upon the leadership structure in the neighboring countries. Prior to anything else, it's critical to define and examine the range of "peace" and "pragmatism." Peace can signify many different things, including not hurting, not harming, and not causing a lesion or bruising. Pragmatism, on the other hand, refers to a field of application or use. Actually, the term "pragmatism" refers to the use or application of any concepts or methods. Now, in terms of foreign policy, the author is attempting to draw a connection between pragmatism and peace, particularly in post-Nehru (mostly Indira Gandhi era) Indian foreign policy. Here, peace is essentially the guiding concept. It is important to note that Indira Gandhi successfully advanced the Nehruvian ideal of global peace and stability, and as a result, she fostered the Ministry of External Affairs and its staff. By drafting the Indo-Soviet deal of Friendship, she also attempted to use peace pragmatically. Through this deal, she was able to threaten Pakistan while simultaneously elevating India's profile internationally. Therefore, the treaty of friendship served as a peace and cooperation effort. The independence movement in Bangladesh and India's cooperation are yet another noteworthy illustration of peace and pragmatism. However, a lot of academics have claimed that Nehru would have favored a diplomatic solution to the use of force in Bangladesh But Indira Gandhi not only succeeded in stopping the authoritarian and anti-democratic forces in Bangladesh (at the time, it was East Pakistan), but also succeeded in protecting the entire South East Asian area from "violence and unfreedom." The independence of Bangladesh served as the best illustration of how to use peace in a practical way. Therefore, despite the fact that Indira Gandhi received a great deal of criticism for abusing "power," it cannot be denied that she was a pioneer of peace and would be remembered for her practical outlook. It's important to mention that she was a true devotee of Jawaharlal Nehru.

5. NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY: ORIENTATION CHANGE

India might attempt to produce another global personality through its associations with all significant countries, however overlooking the truth of its difficult mainland geography can't. Obviously, Indian discretion has oftentimes centered around India's relations with its neighbors in South Asia. Following this custom, the Modi government's political procedure has stood apart for its accentuation on 'Neighbors First. India should accommodate its conflicts with its little

neighbors, work on its picture, and advance superior network, as per the public authority's essential vision.

The 'Modi convention' oversees India's South Asia policy, which intends to fortify binds with its neighbors while likewise progressing provincial and sub-territorial associations with better serve India's monetary and social development plan. Modi much of the time introduces himself as a visionary and powerful pioneer who is fit for pushing things ahead. A few pundits, quite C. Raja Mohan, have recommended that the Modi government's foreign policy has proclaimed the foundation of an Indian "Third Republic" because of his striking dynamism on the foreign policy front (Mohan, 2015).

➤ **South Asia**

Colombo is of extraordinary significance to New Delhi because of Sri Lanka's geographic vicinity to India and its verifiable, ethnic, and strict binds with India. China's advantage in Sri Lanka expanded after the Western vote based systems blamed Mahinda Rajapaksa for appalling common liberties abominations during the last phases of the nationwide conflict against the Freedom Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Colombo took the risk to fashion more prominent political binds with China as Indian and Western clout and strain declined. In view of this unique circumstance, New Delhi is focused on fortifying its relations with Colombo.

➤ **Maldives**

The Maldives are urgent to India in view of their essential area in the Indian Sea. Nonetheless, India has communicated caution over the Maldives' homegrown policy driven issues. In spite of the fact that it was anticipated Modi's Walk 2015 Indian Sea visit through three little neighboring countries, the excursion to the Maldives must be dropped because of homegrown political turmoil in the country (Transmit, 2015). The two countries traded arrangements in the space of guard, tax assessment, the travel industry, mosque protection, and space research during the previous president Abdullah Yameen's visit to India in April 2016 (Business Standard, 2016).

➤ **Nepal**

Authentic, social, and strict ties exist among India and Nepal. However, during the beyond a decade, various homegrown and territorial conditions have caused a recognizable decrease in their relationship and a developing doubt. At the point when Modi previously connected with Nepal in 2014, he had the option to strike the fitting harmonies and prevail upon the two residents and administrators there. India directed significant salvage tasks and offered genuinely necessary monetary help for post-debacle remaking projects after a serious tremor unleashed obliteration in Nepal in 2015. At the point when Nepal presented another constitution that offered not exactly satisfactory privileges to ethnic gatherings like the Madhesi nation in the country's Terai region, things began to become appalling.

➤ **Pakistan**

Pakistan has consistently assumed a huge part in both the homegrown and foreign strategies of India. Under Modi's course, its importance has expanded significantly further. Amazingly, Modi communicated his confidence in converses with Pakistan by welcoming Nawaz Sharif, the top state leader of that country, to his swearing-in function in May 2014. India deferred the foreign secretaries conversations because of happen in Islamabad in August 2014 in light of the fact that it was shocked by the Pakistani High Chief's reluctance to end dealings with the All Party Hurriyat Meeting (APHC), the heads of the Kashmiri dissident development (Haidar, 2014). The connection between New Delhi and Islamabad was continued in Walk 2015 when S. In Islamabad, Jaishankar met with Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, his partner from Pakistan (Roy, 2015).

➤ **Afghanistan**

Ashraf Ghani was picked as the country's next president in September 2014, which brought about an adjustment of the country's political design. In April 2015, Ghani made his most memorable authority excursion to India. In its battle against the Afghan Taliban, India offered Afghanistan three Cheetal helicopters. During his underlying outing to Afghanistan in December 2015, Modi opened the new Afghan parliament building. Modi visited Afghanistan again in June 2016 and opened the Salma Dam in Herat (Master, 2016). By reinforcing associations with India,

Ghani wanted to reduce Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistani region for exchange and to neutralize Pakistan's negative impact over Afghan undertakings.

➤ **Bangladesh**

As of late, relations among India and Bangladesh have reinforced to the point that Dhaka is maybe New Delhi's nearest essential partner around here. A long-running sea request issue was settled in July 2014 when New Delhi and Dhaka perceived the decision of the Worldwide Council for the Law of the Ocean. At the point when Modi visited Bangladesh in June 2015, the two countries traded the confirmation archives for their territory limit arrangement, which specified that India would return 111 areas to Bangladesh and Bangladesh would return 51 territories to India. Then-outside undertakings serve Sushma Swaraj expressed in parliament that "older sibling" was an image of presumption yet the "senior sibling" represented a mindful mindset, discrediting long-held claims about India's enormous selfless demeanor (Gupta, 2016). During the visit of Indian State leader Sheik Hasina in April 2017, a new credit line of \$4.5 billion with an extra \$500 million for the obtaining of guard gear by Bangladesh was reported

➤ **Bhutan**

India and Bhutan have been amigos for quite some time starting around 2018. The nearest strategic partner and greatest reciprocal guide supplier to landlocked Bhutan is New Delhi. At the point when the new top state leader of Bhutan, Lotay Tshering, showed up in New Delhi in December 2018, India offered monetary assistance adding up to 4,500 crore for Bhutan's twelfth five-year plan. Bhutan has gotten \$2,802 crore from India in the 2019-2020 financial plan (Bhattacharjee, 2019). Bhutan's essential importance for India is featured by the way that it is situated on the Siliguri passage, otherwise called the "Chicken neck," which is the main limited way among India and its segregated north-east states. This connection between the two countries has significant monetary ties.

➤ **Myanmar**

Considering that Myanmar has tremendous land borders with India's upper east and ocean borders in the Narrows of Bengal area, India has critical international, financial, and security

intrigues in Myanmar. Previously known as Burma, Myanmar is home to a sizable outsider populace from India, especially in Yangon. India needs to build its impact in Myanmar by making availability and infrastructural projects. Expanded network with Myanmar is fundamental for the progress of the Modi organization's Demonstration East Policy since Myanmar fills in as India's property connect to the Relationship of South East Asian Countries (ASEAN).

6. THE GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGES IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Globally, India has had huge security repercussions because of the finish of the Virus War and the fall of the USSR. India presently feels more good and is more ready to try different things with its foreign policy because of the general impact. India constructed foreign policy all through the forty years chased after freedom stresses over security considering risks presented by Pakistan and China. Relations with China have improved since the finish of the Virus War, despite a concise freeze in 1998 when Indian specialists, including the safeguard serve, utilized implied Chinese dangers to help their 1998 atomic tests. Better Sino-Indian connections were fundamentally hampered until the Virus War finished and China's relations with Russia moved along.

When Beijing embraced an unbiased position in 1993, guaranteeing that India and Pakistan expected to resolve the issue genially and reciprocally, it most certainly implied a change from its well established predisposition to the Pakistani side on the Kashmir issue. Leo Rose presents areas of strength for a that since the mid 1990s, relations among China and India have been logically improving, with just a concise hiccup in 1998 brought about by the Indian case that China's statement was the main impetus for the tests.² what's more, India and China set to the side their own line debates and carried out certainty supporting measures to ease strains along their broad boundary.

Li Peng, the director of China's Public Individuals' Congress, introduced the relationship during his January 9-17 2001 visit to India like the cooling in ties following the atomic test had not happened. Moreover, it was a commendation to Indian authorities to be alluded to as one of the shafts of a multipolar world. Be that as it may, regardless of this generosity, the Sino-Indian

relationship needs substance. India keeps on having a lot of doubt toward China's drawn out essential objectives right now. The two countries have differentiating foreign policy needs: China's is toward the east, while India's is toward the south, around the Indian Sea. Notwithstanding, the two countries could conflict for control of Southeast Asia, which fills in as a key section point into the Indian Sea and a significant oil supply. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for financial competition over the littoral conditions of the Indian Sea, outstandingly corresponding to the oil and gas assets that China and India both rely upon for their separate monetary improvement plans. Moreover, regardless of being required to be postponed for the present, their limit clashes are as yet not settled.

Regardless of the continuous strains along Kashmir's Line of Control (LOC) with an atomic fit Pakistan, post-Cold Conflict changes have essentially decreased Pakistan's risk. Pakistan, which is far more modest than India concerning region, populace, and cash, can represent a serious risk on the off chance that it can depend on associations with different countries that go about as a sort of competitive edge. Pakistan no longer has the exceptional military and combat hardware attaches with the US and different superpowers that it did during the 1980s, when it was viewed as a cutting edge state fighting off Soviet attack in Afghanistan. Moreover, with the disintegration of the previous Soviet Association and Beijing's superior relations with Russia, its essential significance to China has diminished. Various Indians and Pakistanis additionally figure atomic weapons can forestall one more significant clash with Pakistan. India has had the option to pull together its foreign policy around financial reasons, specifically to work on the nation's admittance to foreign speculations, high innovation, and worldwide business sectors, because of this picture of a to some degree safer climate. India's growing associations with the worldwide economy will build up this propensity. An expanded spotlight has been put on joining territorial financial associations like the Relationship of Southeast Asian Countries and the Asia-Pacific Monetary Collaboration gathering. Likewise, India and South Africa assumed a key part in establishing the Indian Sea Edge Affiliation, which advances exchange among littoral states. The work to reinforce attaches with countries like the US, the European Patron's states, Japan, and Southeast Asian states, which can furnish India with the exchange, ventures, and high innovation the last's administration accepts is expected to produce more fast monetary development, is

another region where change is being seen. The agenda of State leader Vajpayee's outings since he took office again in October 1999 accentuates how critical these states are. Subsequent to venturing out to the US in September 2000, he visited Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Iran before a many individuals. He has underscored the "Look East" move toward set forth by his nearby ancestors considerably more out in the open. India expects that the South-east Asian countries can again assume the significant part they had in the 1990s, when this locale was the nation's top hotspot for exchange and foreign venture.

The third critical change in Indian foreign policy is a fairly more lenient mentality toward South Asian neighbors. Except for Pakistan, this change is driven to a limited extent by a longing to advance more noteworthy financial collaboration that will help India, especially power age by using Nepal's colossal hydroelectric potential and the sizeable gas stores in Bangladesh. The South Asia Relationship for Local Participation (SAARC), the main territorial body in South Asia, has, then again, got negligible help from India. This indifference for SAARC might be the consequence of a greater mission to convince different countries to consider India to be a country with interests that go past South Asia. In particular, India lean towards that different countries manage it on its own benefits and with regards to a bigger Asian locale as opposed to in a restricted reciprocal India-Pakistan setting. India would rather not be compared with Pakistan.

Table 1:After the Cold War, the dynamics of India-China relations have changed.

Aspect	Details
Impact of Cold War End and USSR Collapse	- - Increased sense of security and willingness to experiment with foreign policy as a result of significant security consequences for India
Foreign Policy Structure Pre-Cold War	- centered on worries over security brought on by threats from China and Pakistan
Improved China-India Relations	- After the Cold War, relations with China became more favorable. There was a brief frost in 1998 as a result of India's nuclear tests and claims that China posed a threat.
Impact of Improved China-Russia Ties	- Elimination of a key barrier to improved Sino-Indian ties
China's Shift on Kashmir Issue	- China changed its stance on Kashmir from being pro-Pakistan to being neutral.
Improving India-China Relations	- Continuous progress since the early 1990s - A brief setback in 1998 brought on by Indian concerns over the threat posed by China
Border Differences and Confidence-Building	- China and India worked to normalize their relations. Border disputes were put on hold. - Measures to instill confidence to ease border tensions

7. PRESENT SCENARIO

Due to different geopolitical, economic, and strategic variables, Indian foreign policy has changed over time. Some significant features of this altering nature include:

- Partnership diversification: India has been expanding its network of commercial and diplomatic relationships. India traditionally maintained tight ties with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, but it has since deepened its links with other major powers, such as the US, the EU, Japan, and nations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. India can use a variety of major international entities to advance its economic and strategic goals because to this diversification.
- India has been concentrating on economic diplomacy to improve trade, investment, and technological cooperation with many nations as a result of its expanding economy. The goals of programmed like "Make in India" and "Digital India" are to entice international investment and promote technological collaboration.
- Act East Policy: India's "Look East" strategy has evolved into the "Act East" strategy, which focuses on fostering relations with nations in Southeast Asia and East Asia. This reform places a focus on enhancing connectivity, economic involvement, and cultural exchanges with neighboring nations.
- India has a "neighborhood first" policy and has been working to enhance regional connectivity and collaboration. India understands how important its near neighbors are. The "Neighborhood First" policy seeks to improve people-to-people interactions, trade, and security within South Asia.
- India has been vying for a more significant position in international organizations and platforms. It has argued for the UN Security Council's reform to reflect the realities of the modern world. India's involvement in climate change negotiations as well as its membership in organizations like the G20 and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) underline its aspirations for further global leadership.
- Security and counterterrorism: Given its position and security issues, India's foreign policy prioritizes regional security and counterterrorism cooperation. With important allies, strengthening defense ties and intelligence sharing has been a priority.
- Digital diplomacy and soft power: India has been utilising its soft power resources, such as its extensive cultural history, music, film, and yoga, to improve its reputation around the world. Social media and digital diplomacy have developed into crucial tools for communicating with a global audience.

8.CONCLUSION

The concentrate above makes it obvious that India's "neighborhood first" program had a blended history from 2014 to 2019. India's joint effort with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar showed empowering propensities, regardless of whether relations with Pakistan crumbled and China expanded its essential presence in Nepal, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. India's local technique has accepted a deliberate toward the east turn as its discretionary center has changed from SAARC to BIMSTEC. India's tactical power has developed, however New Delhi has shown to a lesser degree a craving to use its impact to mediate in the neighborhood than previously. Regardless of the way that India dispatched troops into Myanmar in June 2015 as a feature of a counterterrorism activity, this was not extraordinary as New Delhi has recently done comparable tasks in Pakistan, Bhutan, and Myanmar The utilization of hard power against Nepal in 2015 may have been forestalled. Despite the fact that Modi has begun various new projects and has kept on stressing the importance that his organization puts on the area, his area centered foreign policy has experienced troubles, fundamentally as a result of China's raising self-assuredness in South Asia. Beijing's recharged interest in intervening local political questions should be firmly watched. China's endeavors to manufacture a formal discretionary relationship with Bhutan have exhibited how the inner legislative issues of New Delhi's South Asian accomplices can influence its inclinations. India likewise encounters huge institutional issues, for example, an organization that is notoriously sluggish and burdensome. The most effective method to close the hole between political responsibilities and lazy regulatory ability to complete ventures will be India's litmus test in the area. A high place of Indian foreign policy in late many years, India's local first policy has brought about a few serious commitment with neighbors during the period under survey. Be that as it may, these associations require progressing care. To reinforce New Delhi's situation as the local chief, India actually has quite far to go. Past its nearby area, India should adjust to a Donald Trump-drove America that is internal looking. Long-laid out republics in South Asia, West Asia, and Africa are encountering critical strain because of jihadist psychological warfare, which keeps on representing a serious risk to global security.

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