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Beyond Constitutionalism: Dr. Ambedkar's Strategic Pragmatism in Shaping India's Foreign Policy Outlook

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ABSTRACT

While Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is predominantly recognized for his seminal role in drafting the Indian Constitution and championing social justice, his perspectives on India's foreign policy have remained relatively underexplored in academic discourse. This study revisits Ambedkar's lesser-known yet intellectually robust contributions to India's international outlook, situating his views within the broader framework of strategic pragmatism. Contrary to the dominant doctrine of non-alignment, Ambedkar advocated for a realist and interest-driven foreign policy grounded in the principles of national sovereignty, reciprocal diplomacy, and geopolitical foresight. Through a qualitative analysis of his speeches, parliamentary interventions, and writings complemented by relevant secondary sources this research highlights Ambedkar's critiques of ideological rigidity and his forward-looking stance on global power dynamics. By contextualizing his views within the immediate post-independence milieu and India's evolving domestic imperatives, the paper argues that Ambedkar's strategic pragmatism offers enduring insights into contemporary foreign policy challenges. Ultimately, this exploration expands the understanding of Ambedkar's political thought beyond constitutionalism, affirming his relevance as a theorist of international affairs.

Keywords: Foreign Policy; National Interest; Geopolitics; Realism & Strategic Pragmatism

INTRODUCTION

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar jurist, economist, and social reformer is widely celebrated for his foundational contributions to constitutionalism and the pursuit of social justice in India. However, his perspectives on international relations and foreign policy remain significantly underexplored in mainstream academic discourse. Although Ambedkar did not occupy any formal role in India's foreign policy establishment, his speeches and writings reveal a sophisticated and pragmatic understanding of global affairs, marked by a clear prioritization of national interest over ideological commitments. In an era shaped by the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War, the aftermath of World War II, and the broader decolonization movement, Ambedkar's views stand out for their realist orientation, strategic foresight, and commitment to sovereign decision-making. Ambedkar

approached foreign policy through a rationalist and realist lens, emphasizing adaptability, historical awareness, and ethical responsibility. His worldview was deeply informed by global political and economic developments, including the Great Depression and the rise of fascism and imperialism, which he critiqued for their corrosive effects on human dignity and freedom. Significantly, his vision resonates with the spirit of Article 51 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution, which calls for the promotion of international peace, just relations among nations, and respect for international law. Ambedkar's reflections, though often overshadowed by his domestic reform agenda, underscore his belief in justice and equality not only as national imperatives but as universal principles guiding India's role in the global community.



AMBEDKAR'S INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Ambedkar's approach to foreign policy was shaped by his education and exposure to global ideas. Having studied at institutions like Columbia University and the London School of Economics, he was deeply influenced by Western political thought, particularly pragmatism, espoused by thinkers like John Dewey.

Pragmatism, which emphasizes practical outcomes and real-world applicability over abstract ideals, resonated with Ambedkar's broader philosophical outlook¹. Ambedkar's pragmatic orientation is evident in his critique of utopian ideals and insistence on grounding policies in socio-political realities. He viewed foreign policy as a tool to advance national interests and safeguard sovereignty rather than as an arena for moral grandstanding or ideological experiments. This perspective marked a departure from the idealistic tendencies of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, who envisioned India as a moral leader in global politics². His vision extended beyond national borders, emphasizing the need for a robust economic framework that supports a nation's sovereignty and international standing. This paper delves into the pragmatic elements in Ambedkar's views on foreign policy, exploring their historical context, core principles, and contemporary relevance. It aims to address the following research questions: (a) What were the foundational principles guiding Ambedkar's approach to foreign policy? (b) How did Ambedkar's pragmatism shape his critique of prevailing foreign policy strategies in post-independence India? (c) In what ways can Ambedkar's insights inform contemporary Indian foreign policy?

PRAGMATISM IN AMBEDKAR'S FOREIGN POLICY THOUGHT

Pragmatism, as a philosophy, underscores the need to evaluate policies based on their practical outcomes rather than rigid adherence to ideologies. Ambedkar's pragmatic orientation resonates with this philosophy, as he consistently advocated for a foreign policy that prioritized India's national interests over ideological alignments. Ambedkar's intellectual framework was deeply rooted in pragmatism, which he applied across various domains, including social, economic, and political issues. His pragmatic approach to foreign policy was shaped by his understanding of India's unique geopolitical context and socio-economic challenges.

For Ambedkar, foreign policy was not an abstract exercise but a strategic tool to secure the nation's sovereignty, economic stability, and social cohesion. Ambedkar argued that the primary objective of foreign policy should be the protection and promotion of national interests. He believed that ideological commitments should not override pragmatic considerations. In a speech delivered in the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar remarked that "foreign policy must be grounded in the realities of power dynamics

and national capabilities"³. This statement underscores his belief in realism over idealism. For him, the pursuit of national interest involved safeguarding India's sovereignty, ensuring economic security, and fostering strategic alliances. Unlike leaders who envisioned India as a moral compass for the world, Ambedkar stressed the need for *realpolitik*. He cautioned against aligning with superpowers based on ideological affinities, advocating instead for a flexible approach that prioritized India's specific needs and circumstances. In his critique of idealistic internationalism, Ambedkar noted that nations frequently behaved with self-interest, irrespective of their declared ideals. For instance, he was wary of India's alignment with the Soviet Union or the West, urging a more independent foreign policy stance. He argued that over-reliance on any bloc could compromise India's autonomy. Throughout his talks, he emphasised that economic and security considerations, not ideological pledges, should guide a country's foreign policy⁴.

Ambedkar was critical of the idealistic underpinnings of Indian foreign policy under Nehru, particularly the emphasis on non-alignment and moral leadership. While he recognized the value of ethical considerations, he viewed them as secondary to practical necessities. Ambedkar argued that an overemphasis on idealism could render a nation vulnerable in the face of geopolitical realities⁵. For instance, Ambedkar expressed scepticism about India's policy of non-alignment, questioning its practicality in a world divided by Cold War rivalries.

He warned that a rigid adherence to non-alignment could isolate India or limit its strategic options. Instead, he advocated for a pragmatic approach that allowed for selective alliances and collaborations based on mutual benefit. Furthermore, Ambedkar's insights into sovereignty and foreign policy reflect a profound understanding of the dynamics of international relations and their impact on national integrity. For Ambedkar, sovereignty was not merely a theoretical concept but a practical tool to safeguard India's independence, dignity, and progress. His understanding of sovereignty was deeply rooted in his study of history, politics, and economics, which enabled him to anticipate the challenges that newly independent India would face in a rapidly changing global order. His belief in self-reliance, non-subservience, and a pragmatic approach to international relations continues to resonate with India's diplomatic strategies. For Ambedkar, sovereignty was not just about territorial integrity but also about economic independence and social cohesion⁶. Ambedkar emphasized that political sovereignty must be accompanied by economic sovereignty. In his writings, he argued that dependence on foreign powers for economic sustenance undermines a nation's political autonomy. He famously stated that "a democratic society cannot afford to be at the mercy of foreign nations for its survival"⁷. He advocated for a balanced foreign policy that neither aligned India too closely with



any major power bloc nor isolated it from the global community⁸.

Ambedkar believed that national security was fundamental to preserving India's sovereignty and ensuring its development. He was keenly aware of the strategic challenges India faced in its immediate neighbourhood. He warned against complacency in dealing with Pakistan and China, two nations he perceived as potential threats to India's security. He emphasized the importance of a robust defence policy and infrastructure to safeguard the nation from external and internal threats. In one of his speeches, he highlighted the strategic significance of industrialization for national security, arguing that a self-reliant economy was essential for a strong defence system⁹.

His awareness of India's geographic vulnerabilities, including its extensive land borders and proximity to volatile regions, shaped his views on national security. He pointed out the strategic importance of controlling key regions like Kashmir and the north eastern frontier to prevent external aggression¹⁰. He also advocated for policies that would strengthen India's border security and military preparedness. His views on defence policy were particularly prescient, as he advocated for a strong military and strategic alliances to counteract regional instability¹¹. Ambedkar underscored the importance of a robust national security framework. He advocated for a well-equipped and modernized military to defend India's sovereignty. His emphasis on national security was intertwined with his foreign policy views, as he believed that a strong defence mechanism was essential for effective international relations. Ambedkar was particularly concerned about the allocation of resources, emphasizing that excessive defence spending, necessitated by insecure borders and a lack of reliable alliances, diverted funds from essential social and economic programs¹². He believed that while peace was desirable, it could not be achieved at the cost of national security. His support for a robust defence policy was evident in his insistence that India must modernize its military and invest in technological advancements. His emphasis on strategic autonomy is reflected in India's efforts to diversify its defence partnerships and develop Indigenous military capabilities¹³.

Although Ambedkar did not directly shape India's foreign policy, his ideas on human rights and social justice have implications for its international engagements. As a strong advocate of human rights, Ambedkar sought to dismantle the oppressive structures of caste, gender inequality, and economic exploitation that plagued Indian society¹⁴. His advocacy for universal human rights was evident in his contributions to the drafting of the Indian Constitution, which enshrines equality, liberty, and fraternity as its core values.

Articles such as 14 (equality before the law), 15 (prohibition of discrimination), and 17 (abolition of untouchability) reflect Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive society¹⁵.

Ambedkar's insistence on equality and non-discrimination aligns with India's commitment to global human rights. India's participation in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 reflects this alignment¹⁶. Ambedkar's vision also resonates in India's advocacy for decolonization and support for oppressed nations. He believed that India's foreign policy should reflect its moral responsibility to stand against colonialism, racial discrimination, and imperialism¹⁴. This perspective influenced India's support for anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa. For instance, India's advocacy for the right to self-determination for colonized nations echoes Ambedkar's belief in political and social equality. Similarly, India's focus on inclusive development in global forums aligns with Ambedkar's vision of social justice¹⁷.

Social justice, for Ambedkar, was not merely an abstract principle but a tangible goal that required systemic reforms. He defined social justice as the removal of social inequalities and the establishment of conditions for the upliftment of marginalized communities¹⁸. Ambedkar's fight against caste-based discrimination was a struggle for social justice, as he sought to create a society where all individuals could enjoy equal opportunities. His views on social justice have implications for India's role in fostering global solidarity. He believed that justice is indivisible, and that India must contribute to the global struggle against inequality and oppression⁵. This philosophy underpins India's developmental assistance programs and its support for South-South cooperation. India's initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and its contributions to UN peacekeeping missions, reflect its commitment to equitable and sustainable development. These efforts resonate with Ambedkar's belief in addressing the root causes of social and economic disparities.

STRATEGIC VISION FOR SOUTH ASIA: NAVIGATING RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's views on India's foreign relations, particularly with its immediate neighbours, reflect a rarely acknowledged yet profoundly strategic understanding of South Asian geopolitics. His stance was shaped by a blend of historical awareness, nationalistic commitment, and a pragmatic approach to international diplomacy. Ambedkar firmly believed in the importance of cultivating peaceful and cooperative relationships with neighbouring states. However, he warned against allowing idealism or moral rhetoric to obscure the fundamental imperative of national security. He viewed foreign policy not as a vehicle for abstract principles, but as an instrument for safeguarding sovereignty and promoting national interests. This realism becomes particularly evident in his analyses of India's relations with Pakistan and China two countries that have continually influenced India's strategic calculations since independence.



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's reflections on India's relationship with Pakistan were informed by a realistic appraisal of the deep ideological divisions resulting from Partition. He anticipated that religious nationalism and divergent political trajectories would obstruct the prospects of lasting peace between the two nations. In his writings and speeches, Ambedkar stressed that diplomatic engagement with Pakistan must be approached with caution and grounded in strategic foresight, rather than moral idealism alone¹⁴. He underscored the enduring relevance of securing the North-west Frontier, a region he viewed as critically vulnerable to external aggression and internal destabilization. This view reflected his broader concern for national sovereignty and security in a volatile post-colonial context. Ambedkar's insistence on military preparedness complemented his recognition of diplomacy as a necessary but insufficient tool in managing hostile relations¹⁹.

Furthermore, he critiqued the Nehruvian model of foreign policy for its idealistic tendencies, advocating instead for a balanced approach that safeguarded India's long-term interests²⁰. His foresight regarding the potential for persistent conflict with Pakistan particularly over issues such as Kashmir demonstrates a grounded and prescient understanding of regional politics that continues to resonate in India's contemporary strategic thinking.

STRATEGIC SCEPTICISM TOWARDS CHINA

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's views on China reveal a sharp strategic foresight that diverged markedly from the dominant Nehruvian vision of post-colonial solidarity. Unlike the idealistic and morally driven narrative promoted by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, encapsulated in slogans like "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai", Ambedkar adopted a sober, realist approach to India's northern neighbour. He was deeply sceptical of China's intentions, particularly in light of its growing militarization and assertive actions in Tibet. For Ambedkar, the Tibetan plateau was not only a civilizational concern but a vital strategic buffer zone that shielded India from direct Chinese military presence. He warned that China's takeover of Tibet in the 1950s effectively dismantled this buffer, bringing a hostile power directly to India's doorstep. Ambedkar openly criticized the Panchsheel Agreement (1954), which laid the foundation for peaceful coexistence between India and China, arguing that it was overly idealistic and naive in the face of China's historical expansionism. He viewed the agreement as a diplomatic misstep that failed to account for China's hegemonic ambitions in Asia. As Telumbde notes, Ambedkar firmly believed that India must adopt a posture of strategic deterrence when dealing with Beijing, underpinned by strong defence capabilities and vigilant diplomacy¹⁹. He contended that China's ideological alignment with communism, its authoritarian governance model, and its appetite for territorial assertion made it a fundamentally incompatible partner in India's foreign policy

vision.

Ambedkar's scepticism was vindicated during the Sino-Indian War of 1962, which shattered the illusion of mutual brotherhood and exposed the weaknesses of India's non-aligned and conciliatory stance. The conflict underscored the strategic naiveté of the Nehruvian approach and reinforced Ambedkar's earlier warnings about the risks of engaging China without adequate military and geopolitical safeguards. He argued that diplomacy, while necessary, must be reinforced by credible deterrence to prevent unilateral actions by aggressive powers such as China. Furthermore, Ambedkar's broader critique extended to the shifting dynamics of regional power. He foresaw China's ambitions to become a regional hegemon, capable of reshaping the balance of power in Asia. He also warned of China's influence in South Asia and beyond, cautioning that India's failure to assert itself strategically could result in long-term geopolitical marginalization. His emphasis on national interest, military preparedness, and strategic flexibility continues to resonate in contemporary Indian foreign policy debates, especially amid renewed tensions in Ladakh and ongoing concerns about China's expanding footprint through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In short, Ambedkar's views on China were neither reactionary nor ideologically driven; rather, they stemmed from a pragmatic understanding of global power politics. He recognized that in an unstable international environment, sovereignty must be actively protected through a balanced combination of diplomacy, vigilance, and strategic capability. His insights remain a critical reference point as India recalibrates its China policy in a complex and competitive geopolitical landscape.

ENGAGEMENT WITH GLOBAL POWERS

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's strategic pragmatism was not limited to regional diplomacy; it also informed his vision for India's engagement with major global powers. He believed that India should adopt a flexible and interest-driven approach to international relations, one that maximized economic and strategic gains without resulting in dependence on any single bloc or power. Ambedkar's writings reflect his preference for a multipolar world order, where India could assert itself as a sovereign actor with independent decision-making capacity in global affairs¹⁹. Unlike the idealism of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ambedkar's worldview was shaped by a realist understanding of international politics. He was particularly cautious of the ideological influence of communism, which he saw as antithetical to democratic values and individual freedoms. He warned against the romanticization of communist regimes, especially in the Soviet Union and China, and stressed the need to protect India's fledgling democracy from external ideological interference²⁰.

In this context, Ambedkar advocated for closer ties with established Western democracies, particularly the



United States and the United Kingdom. He believed that such alliances, grounded in shared democratic values and institutional stability, would provide India with the political support and economic aid necessary for national development. These partnerships, he argued, could strengthen India's democratic institutions, enhance technological advancement, and fortify its sovereignty in a rapidly polarizing world order⁵. Ambedkar's vision stood in contrast to Prime Minister Nehru's non-alignment doctrine, which emphasized neutrality and equidistance between the Western and Eastern blocs during the Cold War. While Nehru saw moral leadership and global peacebuilding as central to India's foreign policy, Ambedkar prioritized national security, institutional development, and strategic alignment based on democratic compatibility. His support for engagement with Western powers was rooted not in ideological subservience but in a pragmatic assessment of India's developmental needs and global positioning. His insights foreshadowed the later shift in Indian foreign policy, particularly post-1991, toward deeper strategic cooperation with Western democracies.

UN AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's principled yet pragmatic stance on international institutions offers enduring insights into India's evolving role in multilateral diplomacy. While he supported India's proactive participation in global forums such as the United Nations, his approach was grounded in realism. Ambedkar emphasized that international cooperation must serve national interests, and that India should engage in multilateralism not for symbolic inclusion, but to shape outcomes that reflect its developmental goals and strategic priorities²⁰. This vision remains especially relevant as India expands its participation in global institutions like the G20, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Ambedkar's scepticism regarding the unequal power structures embedded in institutions like the United Nations was particularly prescient. He criticized mechanisms such as the veto power of the five permanent members (P5) in the UN Security Council, which he saw as violating the democratic ethos and undermining the principle of sovereign equality¹⁹. His concerns mirror contemporary critiques of global governance frameworks that disproportionately favour a handful of powerful nations while marginalizing the voices of the Global South. Today, India echoes Ambedkar's call for reform, advocating for the expansion of the Security Council to include emerging powers, including itself, as a permanent member a step that would align with Ambedkar's belief in India's rightful place on the global stage⁵. Ambedkar's vision also emphasized the moral and ethical responsibilities of nations in global governance. He believed that India, as a constitutional democracy committed to social justice, had a duty to contribute constructively to global problem-solving efforts,

including poverty alleviation, peacekeeping, and equitable development. However, he firmly maintained that such commitments must not compromise India's sovereignty or economic independence. This balance between global cooperation and strategic autonomy is a central feature of India's current multilateral engagements, including its leadership in the Global South Summit and advocacy for inclusive development during its G20 presidency. In platforms like BRICS, India champions reforms in international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF, calling for equitable representation and voice for developing nations. This approach aligns with Ambedkar's broader concerns about economic justice and the structural disadvantages that post-colonial countries face in global systems.

Similarly, India's active participation in climate negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its leadership in launching the International Solar Alliance (ISA) reflect a continuity of Ambedkar's vision of responsible internationalism grounded in practical benefit. Ultimately, Ambedkar's critique of global institutions was not a rejection of internationalism but a call for its democratization. His insistence on fair representation, sovereignty, and developmental equity serves as a guiding framework for India's contemporary foreign policy, which seeks to position the country as both a responsible stakeholder and a reformist voice in global governance.

ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy, as Ambedkar viewed it, was deeply intertwined with a nation's economic goals. For him, a strong and self-reliant economy was the foundation of effective diplomacy and international engagement⁹. In his writings, Ambedkar emphasized the need for industrialization, self-reliance, and economic diversification as foundations for a robust foreign policy²¹. He was particularly critical of policies that prioritized ideological goals over economic pragmatism. For example, he questioned India's reliance on Soviet-style planning, arguing that it should adopt policies tailored to its unique socio-economic context. Ambedkar's emphasis on economic pragmatism aligns with his broader critique of utopianism in governance. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar believed that economic self-reliance was fundamental to the preservation of national sovereignty and an effective foreign policy.

He consistently argued that excessive dependence on foreign powers for critical resources, technology, or industrial output weakened a country's ability to act independently in the international sphere. In his seminal work, *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution*, Ambedkar advocated for a stable and self-sufficient economic system, particularly in the areas of currency regulation and trade autonomy, underscoring the dangers of external economic dependence²². He warned against prioritizing foreign markets



over domestic development and urged the creation of strong indigenous industries to reduce vulnerabilities in global trade. His vision of economic sovereignty is closely aligned with the modern idea of "strategic autonomy," a principle that continues to shape India's foreign engagements.

At the same time, Ambedkar was not opposed to global economic integration. He recognized the value of international trade as a tool for economic growth and diplomacy but cautioned against trade relationships that perpetuated inequality and economic dependency. His critique of colonial economic practices highlighted how unbalanced trade had contributed to India's underdevelopment during British rule²⁰. Consequently, Ambedkar supported protective tariffs and policy instruments designed to shield emerging Indian industries from premature exposure to foreign competition. His support for selective engagement in global markets mirrored the "infant industry" argument in classical economic theory, aiming to develop self-sustaining industries before opening fully to globalization.

Ambedkar warned against policies that favoured imports over domestic production and emphasized the need for a balanced and just trade system that would protect economic sovereignty while enabling beneficial partnerships abroad²³. A central tenet of Ambedkar's economic thought was the strategic role of industrialization in achieving national independence and international leverage. He viewed industrial development as vital not only for increasing domestic productivity and employment but also for enhancing India's bargaining power on the global stage. His support for state-led industrialization was grounded in a critique of laissez-faire capitalism, which he believed deepened structural inequalities and failed to address the socio-economic needs of a post-colonial society⁵. For Ambedkar, a robust industrial base also contributed directly to national defence by reducing India's reliance on foreign military imports and enhancing its technological self-sufficiency. Ambedkar's approach to economic diplomacy emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in fostering political and economic stability. He recognized the geographical and economic imperatives of working with neighbouring countries to achieve shared goals such as poverty reduction, trade facilitation, and public health improvements. His vision prefigured the modern concept of economic diplomacy, where trade and investment function as instruments of foreign policy¹⁹.

While Ambedkar supported regional cooperation, he was cautious of ideological pan-Asianism that lacked clear strategic objectives. He advocated for pragmatic engagement with neighbouring states based on mutual benefit and common interests rather than ideological solidarity³. Moreover, Ambedkar recognized the centrality of resource management in shaping both domestic policy and international relations. He emphasized the strategic value of natural resources such as water, minerals, and energy,

advocating for their equitable distribution and sustainable management as part of India's broader development agenda. His role in crafting India's early river basin policies illustrates his recognition of the connection between internal resource governance and transboundary water diplomacy an issue that remains critical in today's foreign policy context²⁴. Ambedkar's pragmatic approach to foreign policy continues to offer vital insights into India's contemporary strategy in a multipolar world marked by global economic interdependence, shifting alliances, and resource conflicts. His emphasis on adaptability, self-reliance, and strategic collaboration provides a robust intellectual foundation for navigating the challenges of the 21st-century global order.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's pragmatic approach to foreign policy offers enduring lessons for contemporary India. In an era shaped by shifting geopolitical alliances, economic interdependence, and technological transformation, his emphasis on adaptability, strategic engagement, and development-oriented diplomacy remains strikingly relevant. Ambedkar prioritized national interest and sovereignty over ideological alignments, advocating for a flexible foreign policy that was responsive to global realities. While Nehru envisioned India as a moral beacon of non-alignment, Ambedkar underscored the importance of strategic alliances, economic self-sufficiency, and military preparedness as the cornerstones of an effective international policy posture.

In the current global context, Ambedkar's ideas find echoes in India's increasing engagement in multilateral platforms such as the QUAD, BRICS, SCO, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. His critique of idealism in foreign policy foresaw the limitations of moral posturing without sufficient economic and defence capabilities. He believed that India must engage with the world from a position of strength, advocating for foreign policies that enhance national resilience and long-term strategic interests¹⁹. His early warnings about the threats posed by China's expansionism, his emphasis on democratic solidarity, and his call for greater defence capacity anticipated many of the diplomatic and security challenges India has faced in the post-colonial world order⁵.

Ambedkar's commitment to economic diplomacy reinforces the importance of aligning foreign relations with national development goals. His advocacy for balanced trade, technological advancement, and resource sovereignty continues to guide policy approaches that aim to integrate domestic progress with global engagement. As India aspires to become a major economic and strategic actor on the global stage, Ambedkar's insistence on self-reliance, indigenous innovation, and equitable global integration serves as a relevant framework. His thoughts align with contemporary debates on sustainable development, South-South cooperation, and the role of emerging economies



in reforming the global economic architecture²⁰. Furthermore, Ambedkar's call for democratizing global institutions remains highly pertinent. He opposed elitism and exclusion in international decision-making structures and was critical of the undemocratic nature of institutions such as the United Nations Security Council, particularly its veto mechanism. Today, as India demands permanent membership and a reformed global governance system, Ambedkar's vision continues to inspire the push for inclusive and equitable representation in bodies such as the UN, WTO, and IMF²⁵. His commitment to fairness, international justice, and the sovereignty of developing nations aligns with India's leadership role in advocating for the interests of the Global South.

Beyond national borders, Ambedkar's intellectual legacy has gained global recognition. His philosophy of social justice, resistance against systemic oppression, and advocacy for dignity and equality have resonated with marginalized communities worldwide. Scholars and civil rights activists across continents especially in Africa, Latin America, and among African-American thinkers in the United States have drawn parallels between Ambedkar's anti-caste activism and anti-racist struggles. Leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and thinkers in the Black Liberation movement found inspiration in Ambedkar's ideas on structural inequality and emancipatory politics²⁶. His transformation from a national reformer to a global icon is evidenced by the increasing international academic engagement with his work and the recognition of Ambedkarite thought in discourses on global justice and decolonization. Although Ambedkar is more widely remembered for his monumental role in drafting the Indian Constitution and championing social reform, his foreign policy reflections reveal a coherent, pragmatic, and deeply strategic vision.

His insights on regional diplomacy, economic sovereignty, and global governance were grounded in the realities of a newly independent nation navigating a complex international system. He advocated for foreign policy rooted in national interest, informed by ethical considerations, and oriented toward long-term stability and justice. While his recommendations occasionally diverged from the policies adopted in his time, they now appear prescient and offer valuable guidance for India's contemporary foreign policy challenges. As India continues to assert its place in a multipolar world, Ambedkar's realism and foresight offer a timeless blueprint for crafting a resilient, equitable, and globally engaged foreign policy.

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