

# Iranian-Indian Relations: Transportation Factor

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## Abstract

The emergence of future powers is one of the most important features of the contemporary international system. The collapse of the Soviet Union and a new wave of globalization of the economy and the movement of Russia and China towards a market economy in the early 1990s forced governments around the world to reconsider their foreign policies. At this time, India was experiencing the worst economy of its time. The demonstration of the inefficiency of state socialism made New Delhi to think for change. In the present study, by using explanatory-analytical method, we seek to answer the question "How and with what methods and tools does India pursue its strategy towards becoming a world power?" The proposed hypothesis for the question is that "India seeks to achieve the position of a global superpower by special emphasis on domestic strategies and relying on a pragmatic foreign policy." Therefore, due to the increasing importance of emerging powers during the transition of the international system, the analysis and examination of characteristics, perspectives and global effects of their empowerment can deepen our understanding of the evolving international system.

**Keywords:** India, superpower, realism, foreign policy, pragmatism

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## **Introduction**

The growth and expansion of communication devices and the acceleration of the globalization process have led to significant changes in power exchanges in the international environment. The process that should have begun was the end of the Cold War, which shaped the new idea in the international arena in such a way that with the increasing global bodies and the end of the bipolar atmosphere and the dual rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States, we have witnessed the formation of new powers in the context of an unsafe international environment in order to gain the greatest power and interests (Arghavani Pirsalami and Pirankho, 2018: 66).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India abandoned the trend of the socialist economy and turned into the dominant current of the Cold War. With this tool, it sought to change past attitudes and trends resulting from Nehru's thoughts. After the Cold War, Indian politics changed from a Neo-Realist to a Neo-liberal nature and associated itself with the mainstream to renounce its interests (Bajpai, 2010). India's efforts in the era of neoliberal foreign policy to gain foreign investment, entry into world economic interactions, privatizing parts of its economic activities and weakening anti-Western attitudes are highlighted here. In Nehru era and at the international level, this country sought to become an international power. This was stated in Nehru's remarks and its symbol is the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement). India's foreign policy during this period had two factors: independence and non-alignment or neutrality, each of which has its own value. Nehru considered the term "positive

policy for world peace" to be an appropriate term for Indian foreign policy (Adhikari, 2008: 17).

It is politically one of the countries that has been officially accepted as a member of regional and international organizations and has achieved a position that even in recent years has sought to gain a permanent seat on the Security Council. Nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missiles have given India a role as an emerging superpower in international geopolitics (Joseph, 2011: 109). In this article, we assume that India is trying to become a world power and also want to examine how and with what tools India is pursuing this strategy?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Emerging Powers after the end of the Cold War, the US-led unipolar system and the American world order despite its relative decline, are still international issues which are present in world politics. Emerging countries are countries that have had high economic growth rates over the past two decades and have become new economic hubs in the world. (IKenberry, 2014: 6). Therefore, one of the main features of the international system in transition is the emergence of new powers that rely on their economic and military power and will redefine the distribution of their role, influence, and power in the various spheres of the international system, and will likely cause a relative shift of power between traditional and emerging powers. Despite numerous internal challenges and regional oppositions and global resistances, the emerging powers are trying to play an active role in the world economy and politics, in addition to avoiding challenges and fundamental disruptions in the basic norms of the international system, by defining themselves as a revisionist non-Western power belonging to the developing world and will make serious changes in the arrangement of world politics and power (Xing, 2016).

Regarding the indicators for measuring and identifying emerging powers, various factors should be mentioned : industrial and technological development, economic growth rate, GDP, per

capita income rate, having a share of the index in the market of production of goods and services and playing a role in regional and global trade, which are mainly economic indicators. Along with indicators such as improving governance, upgrading and increasing the capacity of government and state to meet the needs of the people, increasing and accelerating access to health services and education, are the characteristics of emerging powers. In general, the term "emerging powers" refers to countries that have a significant advantage over their neighbors in their region and with a growing economy and high military and political balance and close relations with traditional world powers, seeks to improve their international level. Meanwhile, the role of Asian powers, especially India, is more prominent than other emerging powers due to its economic growth, military power and large population, as it seeks to emerge as a first-class power among the world's great powers (Cohen, 2004: 33).

## I- Indian Geo-strategy

The wide diversity of ethnicities in India created many political units, each competing for power. At the same time, cultural homogeneity created a strategic understanding in which the Indian subcontinent was a large world for each of the small political units. During the 16th and 17th centuries, it was a major economic power on a global scale. In fact, at that time, India had become an important hub of the global economic distribution system (Refer to Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Table1. Relative Shares of World Manufacturing Output (%) 1750-1900

Country	1750	1800	1830	1860	1880	1900
Europe as a whole	23.2	28.1	34.2	53.2	61.3	62.0
Third world	73.0	67.7	60.5	36.6	20.9	11.0
China	32.8	33.3	29.8	19.7	12.5	6.2
India	24.5	19.7	17.6	8.6	2.8	1.7
UK	1.9	4.3	9.5	19.9	22.9	18.5
Habsburg Empire	2.9	3.2	3.2	4.2	4.4	4.7
France	4.0	4.2	5.2	7.9	7.8	6.8
German States/Germany	2.9	3.5	3.5	4.9	8.5	13.2
Italian States/Italy	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Russia	5.0	5.6	5.6	7.0	7.6	7.8
USA	0.1	0.8	2.4	7.2	14.7	23.6
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4

Table 2. Per capita Levels of Industrialisation – 1750-1900

Country	1750	1800	1830	1850	1880	1900
Europe	8	8	11	16	24	35
UK	10	16	25	64	87	100
Russia	6	6	7	8	10	15
USA	4	9	14	21	38	69
Japan	7	7	7	7	9	12
China	8	6	6	4	4	3
India	7	6	6	3	2	1

Source: Kennedy, 1987: 149

Table 3. Distribution of World Income 1700-1995 (%)

Country	1700	1820	1890	1952	1978	1995
China	23.1	32.4	13.2	5.2	5.0	10.9
India	22.6	15.7	11.0	3.8	3.4	4.6
Japan	4.5	3.0	2.5	3.4	7.7	8.4
Europe	23.3	26.6	40.3	29.7	27.9	23.8
USA	-	1.8	13.8	21.8	21.8	20.9
Russia	3.2	4.8	6.3	9.3	9.2	2.2

Source: (Madisson, 1998)

In the eighteenth century, production methods in India grew significantly compared to societies in other parts of the world. By this time, India had become a highly developed country, exporting its products to Europe and other countries. India, on the other hand, had an advanced banking system that was efficient and orderly throughout the country, and Indian merchants and trading systems around the world worked well with it. In fact, India was considered an advanced industrial society before the Industrial Revolution (Tanham, 1993: 15).

India's vast wealth attracted various powers over the centuries due to its stable economic management and very successful business activities. Numerous states in the anarchic subcontinent forced governments to come up with ways to ensure their survival on the subcontinent. The evolution of India's strategic orientation has been shaped by a number of factors. The sense of security that came from the geography of the Indian subcontinent was part of this strategic defense orientation (Tanham, 1993: 2-5).

Many states in the anarchic subcontinent have forced governments to come up with ways to ensure their survival on the subcontinent. Thus, the conquest of other governments in the region and the establishment of hegemony in the subcontinent were underway. This was largely responsible for the internal strategic orientation of the independent states in India. The evolution of India's strategic orientation has been shaped by a number of factors. It is clear that India has played an important strategic role in the region in the past (Singh, 1999: 4).

## **II- India and Emerging powers**

In the early 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and a new wave of globalization, the economy was severely affected by political order and the global economy, forcing governments around the world, especially India, to reconsider their foreign policies (Dubey, 2013: 3). Esteghlal was inspired by the ideas and views of the leaders of the Esteghlal movement, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sabahsh Chandra Bose, and several others, who were mainly responsible for presenting India's ideas, strategies, and foreign policies. It goes beyond pursuing an ideal policy. Ms. Indra Gandhi, as the central power, put aside institutional constraints and relied more on common factors with neighbors to manage the country's foreign relations. As India's economic and defense capabilities increased, India began to recognize world politics and power (Genguly, 2015: 2). In the new political framework, India became more interested in international institutions that could enhance India's great power situation. A positive approach by India was to expand relations with the United States and, most importantly, to be self-sufficient in nuclear matters. In the meantime, several factors led to Delhi's new interaction with the West (Mohan, 2015: 132).

Meanwhile, domestic factors such as India's economic reform programmes in 1993, which led to the formation of a new environment for trade with the West, and international factors such as the fall of the Soviet Union forced India to compete with

other emerging markets around the world, so India sought foreign direct investment and access to developed world markets. Although the reforms were slow, economic stability provided economic growth that became the basis for the transformation of India's relationship with major powers. India's economic growth reached a stage after the 1990s that could progress through international engagement. At this juncture, New Delhi sent an important message to the international community with its remarkable economic growth that one can no longer ignore a country with high economic potential. There was a fundamental shift in India's quest to lead the Third World, under which India realized that it could essentially realize its potential as a great power to itself. During India's Cold War, many saw international and regional security issues through the Third World and its anti-imperialist worldview. While today India's foreign policy orientation is increasingly focused on promoting its national interests and international power, India's foreign policy in the years following the Cold War has, in a remarkable way, made India a global power (Genguly, 2015: 4).

Following this, New Delhi's domestic economy moved away from the conservative model of short-stature economic development, and by concluding free trade agreements and raising defense spending and strengthening the Indian navy, it became effective in reaching the top maritime power in the region, and significant changes were made on the fronts of Indian foreign policy and domestic policy (Genguly, 2015: 5).

### **Geo-Strategic Importance of India**

Free elections and the growth of India's political parties have clearly shown that India has the largest and most vibrant democracy in the world. Some southern Indian states are on the verge of achieving sustainable levels and replacing population growth in the near future. Extensive educational facilities and media, which have penetrated into every corner of Indian villages, have rapidly increased awareness, knowledge and literacy among the people. Along with its continental size and strategic location,

India's large population can become a huge asset and human capital with efficient and powerful governance. The rise of India as a major power and its geographical and strategic connections are important points for the growth of its economic, military and technological capabilities. The following are some of India's most important achievements in positioning it as an emerging world power.

**Economic and Technological Power:** Economic strength and control or mastery over core technologies is critical requirements of a major power. Nehru, well aware of history and international relations, was acutely conscious of India's need to catch up with the missed industrial revolution so as to not only improve the well-being of the people, but to translate India into a world power, industrially and technologically. With great foresight, he established what he called the temples of modern India, heavy industries in all core sectors. The initial state-controlled activities in core sectors, including defense manufactures, were designed to create the industrial and technological capabilities required to sustain both defense and development goals with minimum external assistance. Particular attention was paid to high technology, atomic energy and space sectors, which were 'salient for the purposes of power politics (Ashley, 1995: 285).

India has world-class technology institutes. These are institutions that produce new technology. In addition to information technology, they produce technical branches of engineering, and on the other hand, these institutes have produced top scientists with high ranks. Indeed, India has three vital elements of the global economy in the 21st century: information technology, biotechnology and space (Perkovich, 2009: 45). India's technology growth has been impressive over the past decade. India's power in software not only allowed it to conquer the global market, but also provided an opportunity to achieve certain milestones for rapid progress. India, for example, has seen rapid growth in the development of advanced computers. on the other hand, India has built significant capabilities in strategic



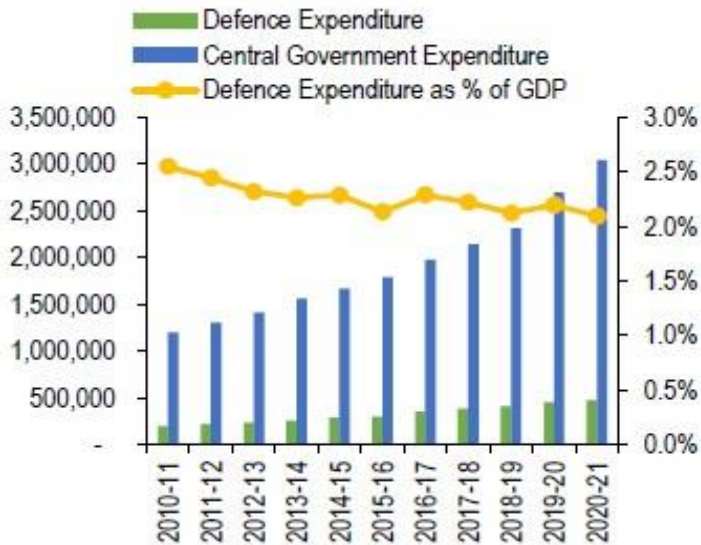
areas such as avionics, communications, satellites, and so on. By using these facilities, India can not only be successful in shaping the thoughts of others about itself as well as presenting a desirable image of itself, but it can also look at this factor as a source of income (Gupta, 2009: 16).

According to the Global McKinsey Institute of India, due to its technical manpower and large middle class and expanded market to become one of the three global economic powers, while requiring democracy and strong participation to increase its employment growth rate and create 90 million non-farm jobs from 2023 to 2030, it needs to provide GDP growth of 8 to 8.5 percent for this country and this emerging power can be empowered in the economic field) It's been narrated in Ibef: 2021: 1).

**The Nuclear Capability:** With the end of World War II, the need for great powers necessarily arose in nuclear states, so India declared itself a nuclear state in 1998 after poker experiments., and added to india's statutory and positions, sending the world the signal that India's nuclear status is an irreversible reality. "India's experience of security over the last five decades, including an ultimatum from China, and the U.S. nuclear entry with powered carrier to the Bay of Bengal during the India-Pakistan War of 1971, necessitated the exercise of the nuclear weapons option" (Adhikari, 2008: 17).

**Military Power:** India's military strength and position can be assessed and analyzed in several indicators. with a large population and 3773,300 armed forces, it ranks first in the world in the armed forces index. The country has 14,140 active forces and 1,089,700 militias in the active forces index. Its proximity to the Indian Ocean and its access to open waters have improved its naval and air power index and made it the sixth most powerful sea and air power. (Boland Akhtar, 2009: 49).

Table 4. Defense Spending as a Percentage of GDP and Total Central Government Spending (2010-11 to 2020-21) (in Rs Crore)



Source: Union Budget 2010-20, Central Statistics Office; PRS. Note: Figures for 2020-21 are Budget Estimates and for 2019-20 are Revised Estimates.

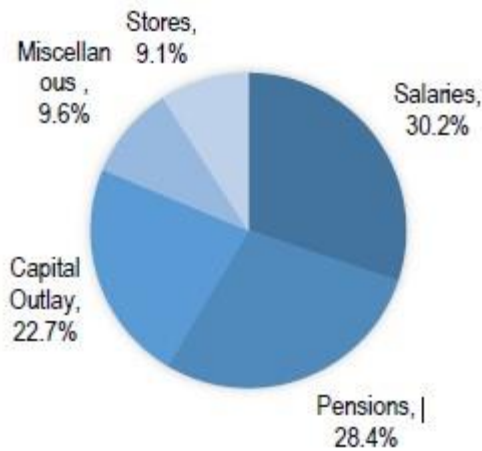


Figure 1. Combined Ministry of Defense Spending for 21-2020 (in %)

Sources: Expenditure Budget, Union Budget 2020-21; PRS.

The importance of mastering strategic technologies has not diminished for the Indian leadership. India's scientist President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam has emphatically argued India's need to establish firm control over certain core technologies, so as to ensure India's security and strategic flexibility (Abdul kalam, 1998: 187). India has already built and is continuing significant R & D capabilities in core areas such as electronics, space, nuclear science, and the material sciences. As Steven Cohen puts it: "Although India is the weakest country among great powers at the moment and is still unable to do great things, it is able to surprise. India will have one foot in the 'developing' world and one in the world of advanced economic and military powers for the indefinite future (Cohen, 2004: 35).

**GeoPolitical Importance:** India's Geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean would be of great significance in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where Asian balance of power would be of critical relevance. India sits astride some of the most crucial sea-lanes of the world. Indian ocean is Home to Nearly 70% of the maritime traffic of the world. India's own maritime interests are enormous. Historically, India doesn't lie in the middle of the trade routes involving China and the West, or China and the East, or Europe and West Asia, Japan and Asia. But India itself was the source of extensive economic resources and trade in the past. India's maritime trade with China, west Asia, Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia was extensive. Because India itself was the center of most trade activity in the past, it's geo-strategic importance, both for Indian Ocean region and Asia as a whole was significant.

One of India's most important advantages is the use of islands and coastal areas, which has doubled the importance of classifying the country, such as the Suez Canal. The Straits of Hormuz and Malacca are among the most important and sensitive points in the global oil trade and supplying that are shipped around the world through the Indian Ocean, hence the volume of exchanges will increase and the position of the Indian star will increase day by day (Pishgahi Fard and Khaniha, 2011: 164).

India's geo-strategic relevance assumes great importance when various parameters of its national power are taken into account. India is currently the world's third-largest economy, a major energy consumer, one of the fastest growing and largest markets, a large manufacturing and commercial nation and a major military power. All of these extends India's strategic borders well beyond its geographical boundaries. so, India's strategic borders extend from the Gulf to the Straits of Malacca, covering the entire Indian Ocean, and to the north, well into the East and Central Asia.

### **III- India's Efforts to Become a World Power**

The process of transfer or relocation of power is one of the most important features of world politics and one of the determining factors in the relationship between traditional powers and emerging powers. India is one of the emerging powers that has taken great strides in various fields, which has led to its emergence in the last decade as an emerging power in South Asia.

**Strengthening a Democratic Political System:** India is one of the most important examples of democratic integration in a post-colonial region. The Indians consider themselves the greatest democracy in the world, and this idea has been endorsed by other actors in the international arena. On the importance of democracy, Singh says, "Democracy is a human heritage and does not consider it the opposite of development, and states that India's fifty-year history of democracy has shown how democracy can overcome the problems of underdevelopment" (Mohan, 2007: 103). And in this way, he has tried to achieve superior power.

**Federalism:** The word federalism comes from the Latin word "Foed us" which means treaty or agreement. According to Finner, "a federal government in a country where part of the power is in the local area, while the other part is devoted to a central body composed mainly of the local association." Therefore, it can be said that large countries with large populations, free and multicultural are facing many problems in

establishing a center of democratic government. Thus, these types of states begin their journey with a federal democratic system to maintain their unity. As a result, like the United States, Switzerland, and Canada, India opts for federalism. Many scholars have argued that federalism is essential to the success of democracy. In this way, federalism always helps India to successfully solve the problems of multiculturalism, multilingualism and different religions and to strengthen Indian democracy (Manzurul Karim, 2013: 3).

**Selective Behavior:** The Constitution of India, which is the supreme law of the country, guarantees the right of the Indian people to vote. In addition, Indian governments and leaders always hold elections after taking office. In this approach, people always have the opportunity to use their power or choose their favorite candidate. This not only means that the government or leaders of India always have a firm respect for the election verdict, but it also means that the leaders of India always accept the choice or view of the people (The Constitution of India, Original 324).

Table 5. Guide to General Elections and Electoral Reform, New Delhi, 2000

Acceptable Percentage	Eligible Voters	Electoral Districts	Election Year
45.5%	173213635	489	1952
47.7%	193652069	494	1957
55.4%	216372215	494	1962
61.3%	249003334	520	1967
55.3%	274094493	518	1971
60.5%	321174327	542	1977
57.0%	355590700	542	1980
64.1%	399816294	542	1984
62.0%	498906429	543	1989
56.7%	514126380	543	1991
57.9%	592572288	543	1996
57.9%	602340288	543	1998
60.0%	620400000	543	1999
58.07%	671487930	543	2004

58.8%	7166985101	545	2009
66.40%	834101479	545	2014
67.40%	910512091	543	2019

Source: (Ahuja, 2000: 281)

Thus, from the table above it can be easily said that after its independence in 1947, over the last few decades, the number of elections and the turnout in the Lak Shaba elections has increased by about 60%. This enrichment of the political participation of the people pushes India towards democracy.

**E-Government and Reducing Internal Problems:** One of the characteristics of India's current society is the existence of secular attitudes in this society. India's constitution affirms india's secular nature. Secular attitudes in India can be a tool to prevent conflict in India's diverse religious community on the one hand and a factor in removing some Hinduism dogma from the development process. Since the shadow of Hindu principles, such as avoiding the castes of originating and some of the methods and superstitions arising from these principles, still dominates Hindu society, secular reading of Indian society can be considered a political act according to the Indian constitution. Because using this tool they can get rid of the potential concerns and conflicts of Indian society and pursue the goal of Indian society towards development (Sheikh Attar, 2009: 13).

India's large population is a problem for Indian democracy. "India wants to use e-government to achieve national cohesion and convergence. E-government means providing services to the people through the internet. Using e-government to provide better services, local people use the Internet for easy access to government services. To strengthen local languages, there is transparency in government policies and the like, which will change the relationship between the people and the people in general, in other words, it reflects the responsibility of the government. On the other hand, it shows the needs of the people. The e-government plan has special programs for the villagers and its purpose is to provide more

services to the villagers, gain their satisfaction and trust, monitor government plans, register land, property and assets, receive information about the number of products, registration and taxes and record changes (Kumar, 2010: 41).

**Economic Growth:** The 1990s are considered a turning point in India. Trade liberalization, privatization of state-owned industries and factories, annual growth experience of about 7%, direct democratization of the economy in the form of quick and short-term plans and even the implementation of large-scale projects from this time began with the presence of "Indian Economy Architect" Manmohan Singh, India's 13<sup>th</sup> prime minister. It should be noted that the average annual growth of the Indian economy from 1990 to 2007 was 8.3% per year, which means doubling per capita income and reducing poverty in the country. India's GDP growth of 2.1 percent annually between 1950 and 1970 reached 9.8 percent in 2006, making it the second largest economy in the world. (world bank.com, 2013).

On the other hand, according to the World Bank, India's economic growth in 2016 was 7% and in the first quarter of 2017, it had the fastest economic growth in the world. India's economic growth rate during the period 2018-2019 was 6.8 percent, which was lower than 7.2 percent in previous year. It was while India wanted to become a \$ 5 trillion economy by 2024 in terms of GDP. But despite the slowdown in global economic growth, India's economic growth rate in 2020 reached 7.5 percent (Kapila, 2016: 12).

**International Environment:** India's foreign policy towards the outside world has changed dramatically over the past decade and a half. This shift in perspective and economic priority in foreign policy has brought India closer to the major powers and even its regional rivals, including Pakistan and China. Another change in India's foreign policy is the move away from the idea of Third World leadership and the realization that it has the potential to emerge as a major power in the international system. Therefore, India intends to expand its influence in different regions of Asia

and Oceania by membership and participation in various regional and international meetings and investments (Zhao, 2007: 50).

**South East Asian Nations:** The policy of looking east was implemented in the early 1990s in conjunction with India's economic reforms. Politically, the view of the East was taken at the right time. This policy sought to restore India's traditional ties with its Eastern community - which had been shattered by its policy of non-alignment and cooperation with the Soviet Union. Economically, the promotion of economic cooperation has been the most important core policy of looking to the East policy. When the policy of looking to the east began, India economically outnumbered many ASEAN members. It was backward and India's access to this part of the world was considered essential. In the economic and military spheres, the policy of looking east seeks to realize India's strategy of becoming a world power. Indian officials and scientific circles do not limit India's interests to a specific region such as the Indian Ocean, the Pacific or Asia, but they know that they should defend the interests of India wherever is possible. (Zhao, 2007: 50).

**Pakistan:** In addition to the claims made by the two countries over the Jammu and Kashmir regions, India's foreign policy has led to a two-pronged approach to the issue and a rejection of the globalization plan in order to draw global powers to the issue and take advantage of the inequality between themselves and Pakistan., however, this procedure was implemented in 1990 in accordance with changes. The upcoming developments led India to have a friendly and peaceful relationship with its neighbor and avoid any conflicts, so while holding bilateral meetings to strengthen stability and establish a four-way peace process from 2004 to 2007 in order to strengthen economic ties, in 2008, with the abolition of visas between the two countries and in 2011, following a joint meeting of mutual cooperation between them, a new horizon was opened in the two countries bilateral relations. (Taheri and Bayat, 2019: 197).

**Afghanistan:** India is one of the developing and influential



countries in the South Asian region. In its strategic plans, it has made South Asia one of its top priorities. India considers Afghanistan a part of South Asia and that is why Afghanistan is of special importance in India's foreign policy. India's grand foreign policy doctrine divides countries into three concentric circles, the first of which includes its immediate neighbors, including Afghanistan. In the environment of this circle, India seeks to gain a hegemonic position through which it can confront the presence of other powers in the region (Shafiee et al., 2012: 120). Afghanistan is a mediator in the periphery of India to confront other powers, including Pakistan. In addition, it is a platform for Indian influence in Central Asia. India's participation in bombing Taliban positions through the Northern Alliance, using Tajik air bases, is a clear example of India's desire to deepen its strategic influence in Afghanistan and gain access to Central Asia (Khatzman, 2007: 47).

#### **IV- The Importance of Chabahar**

The Chabahar port is a key issue for India due to its stratifying position in terms of economic exchanges. China and Pakistan have led the country to use Chabahar port as a rival band with Gwadar port in Pakistan's Balochistan province, which has freed India's access to Afghanistan by sea, thus providing a balance for regulating the political-security relations of the two nuclear rivals India and Pakistan. India's access to Chabahar port not only enables New Delhi to thwart Pakistan's military presence in the Oman Sea and the Northern Indian Ocean and break the strategic blockade of its two rivals, China and Pakistan, but also by bypassing Pakistani soil, it paves a safer route through Iran to Afghanistan. Given India's membership in the North-South International Corridor, the route will allow New Delhi access to markets in Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and their energy reserves, as well as Turkey, Russia and ultimately northern Europe (Tahmoursi, 2021: 2).

**The Strategic Importance of Chabahar Port:** Chabahar, as

the only international port of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has a unique political and economic status. Pristine agricultural beaches in different seasons and its proximity to Pakistan have increased the importance of this port city. The presence and activities of India and Afghanistan directly and interested countries like Russia, Japan, China and Central Asia on the one hand and gaining benefits from Chabahar port for economically active countries is one of the grounds for establishing an international regime in Chabahar. The Chabahar Agreement is a very important strategic decision that will help India move transit routes to Afghanistan and the Central Asian region and beyond. With India's membership in the Shanghai Organization and welcoming of other countries, including Russia, Chabahar port is an opportunity to increase their contacts and cooperation within the Shanghai Organization. In fact, it is the closest access to the open waters of central Asia's landlocked countries (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), thus highlighting the transit and exchange capabilities of Chabahar and its port. Direct access to open waters and being out of the Persian Gulf and not being vulnerable in times of crisis, have made Chabahar port a safe and affordable international communication gateway for countries such as Afghanistan, India as well as other Central Asian countries (Shukla, 2017: 21).

Based on its security, strategic and political interests, the Indian government is working to prevent the growth of instability in the country and Pakistan's growing influence in Afghanistan with minimal military presence, while largely affecting the situation in Afghanistan. Indians, on the other hand, do not want the Taliban's dictatorship to be repeated based on their political interests in Afghanistan. Indian analysts urged Indian authorities to open friendship channels with tribal leaders in southern Afghanistan in 2011, among which the Afghan Taliban have greatly reduced their influence and paved the way for the elimination of militant groups such as the Haqqani Network by carrying out development projects in areas controlled by pashton

tribes (Shiri kerfti, 2011: 21).

It seems that fundamental changes are needed, such as pursuing regional policy and prioritizing classified provinces such as Kabul and Kandahar. The presence of moderate Taliban commanders in the provinces and attention to small projects are necessary to meet the needs of local Afghans in India's political strategy. In addition to these three changes, India can adopt new policies toward regional powers such as Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Central Asian governments. The most important new policies that Indian regional experts say will work to advance New Delhi's goals in Afghanistan include proposing close cooperations with multilateral bodies (including NATO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and reducing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. (Especially on the Durand Line).

India is well aware that Chabahar is a port that plays a key role in Iran's communication position in the region, especially in the North-South corridor, as well as the "Katai" Corridor, which connects Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Expanding and improving the capacity of Chabahar port is of fundamental interest to India; this can be in the interests of both Iran and India. India's relationship with Iran will also help New Delhi gain access to the consumer goods and energy markets of Central Asia and Afghanistan (Bhattacharjee, 2017).

**India's Cooperation with Iran:** In September 1958, when the North-South Corridor Agreement was signed in St. Petersburg between the Transport Ministers of Iran, India and Russia, Chabahar was introduced as a strategic port in this corridor and its land routes to the Turkmen border which were the shortest ones. The Kuala Lumpur transport route was introduced in the Eastern Corridor and the feeding route of Central Asian countries. The port of Chabahar is India's outlet for the Indian Ocean in the Greater North-South International Transit Corridor, providing New Delhi with access to Central Asia, Russia, and eventually European markets, and allowing India to trade with Central Asian countries. There will be no need to transport their goods through

Pakistan (Dehghan, 2017).

The development of Chabahar port due to its stratification location and direct and indirect location in the path of several important international highways has made it one of the most stratifying transit places, the location of Chabahar in the North and South World Corridor and the appropriateness of its communication route to enter emerging areas such as Central Asia and Afghanistan and the Caspian Countries has led to India's increasing dependence on Iran. This means that the structure of the Oman Sea and the structure of the Indian Ocean can be connected to three continents of Africa, Asia and Oceania (Mohammadi and Ahmadi, 2018: 54-55).

Therefore, India pursues its economic goals in the Persian Gulf region and central Asia and balances them with its regional rivals, China and Pakistan, from investment in Chabahar city in such a way that the Central Asian market is a large market with a large population that can be a very good market for foreign goods. Also, the country's goods can be exported to different parts of the world, which will be a significant volume of trade. It builds relations between these countries that can be politically-security-beneficial for both sides and expand the influence of China and Pakistan in these areas, which will increase the political-security weight of these countries. Given the importance of this issue and its effects, Iran should put more pressure on Indians to reap the benefits by investing more and fulfilling their obligations on time.

One of India's strategic plans in recent years has been to invest economically in Afghanistan to influence regional security equations and make a profit through the port of Chabahar. The Indian government issued a statement stressing that Indian companies would implement the Chabahar port development project. India's main goals of presence and investment in Iran can be considered as follows: to meet its own domestic needs, compete with China, expand its presence in Central Asia and accelerate the process of becoming a strategic navy (Azami & et al., 2016: 4).

## Conclusion

The end of the bipolar world and the U.S.-Soviet double competition in international scene provided a platform for revising the foreign policy of many countries, while India, as a case study of this article, was able to take advantage of the benefits such as political stability and a relatively stable democratic environment. Extensive geography and abundant human resources must be gradually emerging with power. The country enjoys more than 8 percent economic growth and has been successful in implementing macroeconomic policies and has lifted millions out of poverty alongside strengthened the armed forces and is displaying military power throughout the Indian Ocean. Its growing development of bilateral relations with major powers and peripheral regions, along with active presence in international organizations and new institutions, will be indicators of this strength.

In response to the role of Chabahar port in India's emerging power, the upcoming article examines India-Iran relations and the role of this international port. The results of this paper showed that the geopolitical position of Iran and the Chabahar visa for entry to this international port just for Indian engineers and its presence in central Asian countries in order to benefit from the markets of these countries to sell its goods has benefited the country a lot, in addition, India has used this international port in order to supply the required energy for its growing industry and has been able to use this international port to influence other countries. The total aim of these steps is expanding its trade and making profit for its economy. Therefore, Chabahar should be considered a geographical location with considerable geopolitical value and weight, which can be important for India from three economic, political and security perspectives.

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