

## **‘Emerging trends of India’s foreign Policy’ – A Report**

*Varanasi: 23<sup>rd</sup> January.* A one day Seminar cum panel discussion on ‘*Emerging trends of India’s foreign policy*’ was held here at the Malaviya Centre for Peace Research in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Banaras Hindu University. The Seminar was attended prominently by veteran bureaucrat Shri Shakti Sinha (former IAS and Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi), Dr. Anirban Ganguly(Director, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Research Foundation, New Delhi), Dr. Uttam Sinha(Senior Fellow, IDSA)and Dr. Ashok Malik(Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation). A panel discussion on the Book ‘The Modi Doctrine’ co-authored by Anirban Ganguly and Uttam Sinha also took place.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Uttam Sinha underlined how PM Modi has heralded a new era in the realms of India’s foreign policy in which we are scaling new heights, exploring strategically crucial terrains, making formidable allies, cementing new ties while retaining old friends.He opined that there was some kind of ‘policy paralysis’ when the previous dispensation ruled at the helm of affairs. Dr. Sinha highlighted how a fresh lease of energy and direction has been infused in Indian diplomacy for which PM Modi should be duly credited. Dr. Sinha struck a chord with the audience when he emphasized that internal strength and coherence holds the key to a robust foreign policy for which it is imperative for ‘we the people’ to stand behind our leadership with all solidarity. A unified India would always present a better picture before the world than a disoriented and discordant India. While talking about intricacies and objectives of forming foreign policy, he pointed out that Governments primarily seek to secure strategic interests, national security and resources.

Shri Shakti Sinha, stated that foreign policies are generally formulated keeping domestic needs of a country in mind. He said,“USA, China, and Russia are some really important countries in Indian context”. Echoing Vajpayee’s words “friends can be changed, neighbor’s cannot be changed.”Shri Sinha underscored the importance of engaging with Pakistan despite serious issues of contention. On a lighter note, he analogously termed India-Pakistan relation as ‘*Bikram-Baital*’ bonhomie. He sounded alarmed over China’s ambitious CPEC with Pakistan which may seriously impair India’s security interests if not dealt with strong will. Speaking at length on India’s ‘Act-East’ Policy, Shri Sinha lauded PM Modi for his visionary approach and out-of-box thinking. He declared PM Modi as the first ‘Internationalist’ PM of the post-Nehruvian era. Ruing about ‘Strategic ambiguity’ which jeopardized our Foreign Policy during UPA 2, ShriSinha explained how now we have a ‘sharp’, ‘decisive’ and ‘dynamic’ leadership which is proactive and situation based.

Dr. Anirban Ganguly spoke about his book, ‘The Modi Doctrine’. He drew parallels between Nehru’s ‘*PANCHSHEEL*’ and Modi’s ‘*PANCHAAMRIT*’ whose salient features are :*Samvaad, Sambridhi, Suraksha, Sanskriti and Sabhyata*. He conceived that India is going through it’s renaissance phase in which we are rediscovering our self-esteem by

invoking lost glories. Dr. Ganguly concluded by saying that 'Civilizational Connect' is the base on which edifice of anenduring foreign policy is laid.

Dr. Ashok Ganguly was the last distinguished speaker. His speech mainly focused on Indo-Pak relations and the possible way forward. He underlined the vulnerabilities while dealing with a nuclear-armed Pakistan. He spoke on Pakistan's nuclear bluff and India's nuclear deterrence.

Addressesof the distinguished guests were followed by interactive session in which students were encouraged to ask their Questions. Rakesh Shukla from B.A voiced his concern about the flip-flop on India's foreign policy, Bhumika Shukla from MCPR raised the issue ofstudent exchange and VISA complications, Rohan Kumar's question was based on Vajpayee's foreign policy.

All the distinguished guests were welcomed by Associate Professor Manoj Mishra in the esteemed presence of Prof Ajay Pratap, Prof Keshav Mishra, Prof TP Singh, Fulbright visting scholar Eric Maring, Dr. Ajay Yadav, Dr. Prashant Kumar, Dr Sunita Kumari and other teaching and research scholars. Dr Uttam Sinha thanked UNESCO Chair and Coordinator, MCPR- Prof Priyankar Upadhyaya, for organizing such a fruitful Seminar. Acting Dean Prof J. K. Tiwari presided over the Seminar.

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