



SOFT POWER AND THE RISE OF INDIA: GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS OF NARENDRA MODI'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract:

Narendra Modi reoriented the foreign policy of India by foregrounding cultural diplomacy, civilisational heritage, and diaspora outreach as some of the major strategic tools for global influence. Advocating upon Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, this article will try to examine how elements like yoga, vaccine diplomacy, and cultural symbolism have magnified the global visibility of our country, India. The cultivation of soft power in Indian foreign policy, as adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also reflects a significant shift in strategic autonomy and multilateral participation. The article concludes that, to understand India's rise in present-day international relations, we must recognise the significant focus on Modi's sustained emphasis on soft power as a foundational pillar of Indian foreign diplomacy.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Joseph Nye, India, Narendra Modi, soft power, yoga.

Titulo en Español: *El poder blando y el auge de la India: Implicaciones globales de la política exterior de Narendra Modi*

Resumen:

Narendra Modi reorientó la política exterior de la India poniendo en primer plano la diplomacia cultural, el patrimonio civilizatorio y el alcance de la diáspora como algunas de las principales herramientas estratégicas para ejercer influencia global. Basándose en el concepto de poder blando de Joseph Nye, este artículo tratará de examinar cómo elementos como el yoga, la diplomacia de las vacunas y el simbolismo cultural han magnificado la visibilidad global de la India. El cultivo del poder blando en la política exterior india, tal y como lo ha adoptado el primer ministro Narendra Modi, también refleja un cambio significativo en la autonomía estratégica y la participación multilateral. El artículo concluye que, para comprender el auge de la India en las relaciones internacionales actuales, debemos reconocer la importancia que tiene el énfasis sostenido de Modi en el poder blando como pilar fundamental de la diplomacia de la India.

Palabras Clave: *Diplomacia, Joseph Nye, India, Narendra Modi, poder blando, yoga.*

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1. Introduction.

An overwhelming sweeping victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Shri Narendra Modi, in the parliamentary election of lower house (Lok Sabha) in May 2014, practically making the Indian National Congress in an insignificant competitor in the vote-war, having only 44 seats, not even sufficient for consideration as an opposition leader party in the Lok Sabha, where at least 54 seats are required for being such opposition leader from a party in the 545 seats in the Lok Sabha. This was, indeed, the first time in the history of Indian parliamentary democracy and the Congress regime, where this party was in power for nearly 65 years altogether since independence, and once the Prime Ministers from the party were Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, or Rajiv Gandhi in a hundred-year-old political party. So, the opposition, including huge members of pro-congress media (print as well as electronic), have been so baffled and puzzled that they do not know how it was possible and what to do. So, they take the easiest means to start backbiting, without analysing the actual shortfalls in the strategy of Congress, which makes them so unpopular. One thing is, however, destined, i.e., the immeasurable corruptions and malpractices, immortality and bribery, both within the government as well as in the party. In fact, Manmohan's government was hit tremendously by numerous scams and scandals. Those high-profile cases significantly eroded the government's legitimacy and were a major factor in the 2014 electoral defeat. Unfortunately, Dr. Manmohan was concerned, everything was not within his control, as we all know, most of the governance was run from elsewhere. So, it may be said that such defeat on the part of Congress has relieved him from many pains, and he had not to come again in direct politics as the Congress could not come to central power again to date.

As India Today reports under 'UPA report card: Nine years, nine scams' headline, a few of the scams, as reported, may be cited here. (a) Coal Scam (2012): The CAG report on the irregularities in auctioning 194 coal blocks created a massive uproar in political circles, with the government being heavily criticized for causing a loss of Rs. 1.86 lakh crores to the exchequer. (b) 2G Spectrum Scam (2008): Government issues 122 new telecom licences to several domestic companies that had little or no experience in the telecom and at a 2001 rate, leading to a loss of Rs. 1.96 lakh crores to the government. (c) Chopper Scam (2012): Former Indian Air Force Chief Marshal S P Tyagi was allegedly paid bribes to swing a Rs 3600 crore deal for procuring 12 choppers from an Italian Firm. Some more of the scams were IPL Scam (2013), Adarsh Scam (2012), Cash-for-Vote Scam (2011), CWG Scam (2010), Tata Truck Scam (2012), and so on.² But the opposition parties, led by Congress, have made a huge hue and cry in a surprising tone about how a political party, based on a religion, Hinduism, and backed by Rastriya Sevak Sangha (RSS), could win in a national election (2024) in such a sweeping way in a secular democratic country. They take Modi as their principal enemy and question how a provincial leader, having only knowledge and experience of local region and having no knowledge of national politics could be the Prime Ministers of a pluralistic nation (By that time Modi has already sworn in as the Prime Minister of India and leader of the parliamentary party of Bharatiya Janata Party) and administer the country of 125 crore people, more particularly, 30 percent of whom is Muslim? They have more headaches about how such an inexperienced political leader could manage the foreign policy and diplomacy with big powers like the United States of America, Russia, England, France, Germany, and all the Arab countries. Narendra Modi started as a vendor serving tea to the customers at a railway station in Gujarat. He came away from politics after he joined the RSS as a pracharak and later became associated with the BJP. Modi took over the reins from his predecessor Keshubhai Patel in 2001 and, since then, has led his party, the BJP, to score three consecutive electoral victories, almost pushing the

² "UPA Report Card: Nine Years, Nine Scams", *India Today*, 22 May 2013, at <https://www.indiatoday.in>



opposition to the fringe.³ The fact remains that the opponents could not, at all, read and estimate the wit and wisdom. The ambition, tenacity, and ability to reach the highest point and an intense desire to surpass oneself of Narendra Damodar Das Modi, who knows that he has to face such malignant elements nasty attacks and prepared himself from longtime back and has already chalked out his plans and programmes, strategies and techniques and, above all, the method of progress i.e., which one to be done first and which one to be done next. Modi certainly has realised that India is a developing country and to make her developed in a true sense of the term, she must be presented first to the people of all the countries worldwide.

Modi has certainly a clear conception about the glorious past of our country through reading of Hindu epics, scriptures like Veda, Gita, Upanishads etc. and knows the qualities India possesses, derived from our old civilization - the tradition, message of peace, non-violence, love and fraternity, hospitality and humanity, all of which are presently termed as ‘Soft Powers’ (the term used by Joseph Nye, an American political scientist and thinker in his book ‘Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power’⁴) which India has possessed in sufficient quantity, backed by its culture, Ayurveda, Yoga, classical dances, cuisine, etc. So, he decides first to reach the country’s soft power resources to the world masses and tells the tales of the “Prabuddha Bharat” (Awakened India). “He prepared his own foreign policy and diplomacy trenchantly and started his journey ... with the weapon of soft power”.⁵

2. Modi’s Soft Power Approach

Narendra Modi has begun his great journey to all the countries of the world, big or small, major or minor is no matter, from Bhutan to Brazil, Nepal to Japan, USA to Myanmar, Australia to Fiji, Seychelles, Mauritius to Sri Lanka, Singapore, France to Germany, Canada to China, Bangladesh to Uzbekistan, Mongolia to Russia, UAE to Pakistan, Iran, Qatar to Israel and so on. He has set foot on countries where no Indian Prime Minister has ever gone. Whenever gone, he has met not only with his counterparts and the associates but also with the common people at random, pulls them on his breast, has told them about our old civilization like Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, about epics, The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, scriptures like The Gita (Shrimad Bhagavad Gita), about our omnipotent god Krishna, about Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Buddhadeva, Rabindranath, Rishi Aurobindo, and let them know our message ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’. “It forms the basis of UNESCO’s ongoing dialogue between cultures, religions, and civilizations. Today India’s soft power, as represented through her vibrant culture and civilisational heritage and through her diaspora spread worldwide, serves as a powerful reminder that India’s values of secularism, tolerance, inclusiveness and cross fertilization of cultures which are an intrinsic part of our civilization are more relevant than ever before in the uncertain international scenario of today”.⁶ It has not been done in one day or one month, or one year to make the world realize who the new India is, what culture the Indians bear, what tradition they boast of, and what kind of humanity they nurture in their hearts. However, Modi is quite successful in presenting the message of this land that we, the Indians, are friends, not just for everyone on this earth; we reciprocally want friendship from every country, every people thereof. We want peace and fraternity from everyone, and in return, we keep our door open always for everyone who comes to us in need. Modi, in his maiden speech

³ “Narendra Modi to Complete 12 Years as Gujarat CM on Monday”, *The Economic Times*, 2013, at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>.

⁴ Nye, Joseph S., Jr. (2004): *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, PublicAffairs.

⁵ Bhattacharyya, Sohoni: “Soft Power Revisited: A Comparative Study of Diplomatic Approaches Under Singh and Modi”, in Chakraborty Suvasish (ed) (2025): *Decoding the Transition of India’s Foreign Policy: From Manmohan Singh to Narendra Modi*, Chennai, Notion Press.

⁶ Mukherjee, Rudra: “The Modi Government and India’s Projection of Its Soft Power”, *The Round Table*, April 2015, at <https://www.commonwealthroundtable.co.uk>



on the floor of the UN General Assembly (69th session)⁷, has clearly stated, “this is why India, which speaks not just for itself, but also for the dignity, opportunity and prosperity around the world”. This is the true spirit of New India, ‘Vixit Bharat’. In the way, the people all over the world have been magically electrified with the charm of the heart by Modi’s oratory. Modi has gifted the saplings of “Bodhi Brikshya”, the great tree under which Buddhadeva is said to have achieved his ‘enlightenment’ called ‘Bidhignan’. The recipients of such a magical gift of saplings have been overwhelmed and speechless. He delivers, as is pointed out before, his maiden address in the 69th session of UN General Assembly meeting in 2014 before the mega presence of representatives from 192 member countries of the world in which he says that India, with its 1.25 billion people, constituting one-sixth of humanity is experiencing comprehensive economic and social transformation on a scale which is rare to be seen in history of the world. Every nation’s worldview is shaped by its civilization and philosophical tradition. India’s ancient wisdom sees the entire world as one family. India, right from its Vedic times, has followed that tradition of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’, as explained by Bhaswati Mukherjee, as cited earlier. He mentioned that India is a country that speaks not just for itself, but also for the cause of justice, dignity, opportunity, and prosperity around the world.⁸ The historical impact that Modi creates in the UNGA conference is that he proposes the international audiences present there to dedicate one day to the practice and celebration of ‘Yoga’, and very astonishingly, and being a matter of pride as Indians, the proposal has been unanimously accepted a spontaneous. As we all know, the UNO has declared 21 June as the International Day of Yoga.⁹ Next year, in May 2015, PM Modi set out for a visit to East Asia, including a visit to China, Mongolia, and South Korea. Being a veteran politician and champion of commerce, Modi realises that India can advance only by selectively engaging foreign powers that hold the key to its future. Since holding power, he completely visualised that India cannot grow without acquiring the requisite raw materials and energy resources that are not very easily available for their high demand by other fast-growing economies, such as neighbouring China, as well as other BRICS countries. His foreign trips are absolutely meant for securing access to those crucial sources of energy and raw materials, simultaneously making long-ignored diplomatic and political ties within the region and beyond. As Asley J. Yellow opines that Modi seeks for India a “leading role”, rather than as just a balancing force globally¹⁰ (Tellis). As the trip to China is important, so, according to Tandon, Modi’s Mongolia visit, at the periphery of China, is equally important and of historic significance since no predecessor Prime Minister of India has ever set foot in the territory. Moreover, PM Modi announced there (Mongolia) a one-billion-dollar assistance package to Mongolia, along with reiterating the spiritual and democratic connection between the two states. He reminds us that Mongolia is an integral part of India’s Look East Policy. Both Countries signed 13 agreements on betterment of issues like air services, cyber security, and long-pending transfer of sentenced prisoners.¹¹ In South Korea trip also, PM Modi continues to emphasize the ‘democratic allies’ message, which he usually says in dialogue with the United States. However, as Tandon notes, Modi does not use this language on his visit to China. In addition to shared democratic values, South Korea already

⁷ “English Rendering of the Prime Minister’s Statement at the General Debate of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly”, 27 September 2014, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, at <https://www.mea.gov.in>

⁸ Mukherjee, Rohan: “India’s Soft Power and Public Diplomacy under Modi”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, n° 2 (2018), pp. 341–361.

⁹ Ramchandra, Vinay: “International Day of Yoga: India’s Soft Power Triumph”, *The New Indian Express*, 21 June 2015.

¹⁰ Tellis, Ashley J.: “India as a Leading Power”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 4 April 2016, at <https://carnegieendowment.org>

¹¹ “India-Mongolia to Sign Pact on Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners”, *The Economic Times*, 18 May 2015, at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>



has a successful investment track record in India in the form of multinational conglomerates such as LG, Hyundai, Samsung, etc.¹² Another tour of his in 2015 to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also focused on the cultural links between India and the UAE. He thanks the Crown Prince for dedicating land towards building a Hindu Temple in the UAE, a monumental achievement in an Arab State. Tandon also notes that Modi addresses the expatriate community (diaspora) almost always in Hindi, and history speeches are well received by a very diverse community. His warm embrace of the Crown Prince has been a trending topic in the social media, which suggests a close friendship has been struck between them.¹³ Thus, hundreds of visits Modi has made to countries worldwide and preached India's soft power avenues, ranging from its recognition as the World's largest democracy to the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, the proponent of Ahimsa, India's non-violent struggle for freedom from the British Empire. India's ancient treasures, such as Ayurveda and the widely practiced Yoga, are examples of soft power. Contemporary examples also include the mass appeal of Bollywood movies and musicals, as well as Indian soap operas that are viewed from Shanghai to Seattle. In addition to this, there is a huge Indian expatriate community in several countries around the world that has helped disseminate and popularize Indian culture, tradition and cuisine. Modi has done that work, what he wanted, to exploiting this existing network to pursue a better status for India globally. If India is lacking in hard power with China, it can certainly give China a run for its money as far as soft power is concerned.¹⁴ Hence, Modi's visit to countries and cultivation of soft power, as discussed in the foregoing pages, are just illustrative, not at all exhaustive. For these multiple numbers of trips worldwide in 11 years, the opposition often called him "globe-trotter", right from the year he initiated his soft power diplomatic journey. In India TV, Mr. Ajeet Kumar has published (August 22, 2024) an update of Modi's foreign trips since 2014, which shows that Modi has made an "extensive diplomatic journey, engaging with global leaders and participating in numerous summits". As reported by India TV on August 22, 2024, Modi has made 79 foreign trips with the principal motive of engaging himself with world leaders, besides reaching out to the general public and lakhs of the Indian diaspora. "Besides bilateral meetings, he embarked on multiple state visits, including last year's (2023) trip to America, where he received a grand welcome from US President Joe Biden. Also, he participated in numerous international summits, including the one he addressed in the United Nations, at a time when the whole world was facing global polarisation. His foreign trips have been characterized by a blend of personal (soft power) and a focus on enhancing India's global stature".¹⁵

In this context of opposition arrows towards PM Modi, marking him as 'globe-totting' Prime Minister, we need to give a brief compare between the foreign tours conducted by Modi and his predecessor, Dr. Manmohan during their 10 year tenure each as Prime Minister, though such compare seems unfair, undesirable and indecent as well, but a little discussion is needed for the kind perusal of the opponent critic.¹⁶ Since Modi's maiden foreign visit to Bhutan on June, 2013, which marked the beginning of a transformative process that has seen New Delhi redefine the contours of its foreign policy, the PM has now completed 74 foreign visits, commencing with his first trip to Thailand to attend the BIMSTEC Summit on July 29, 2004, and conducted his final visit to Malaysia on March 23, 2014, also for participation in the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)

¹² Maini, Tridivesh Singh: "The Significance of Modi's South Korea Visit", *The Diplomat*, 22 May 2015, at <https://thediplomat.com/2015/05/the-significance-of-modis-south-korea-visit/>

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Kumar, Ajeet: "PM Modi Has Long List of Foreign Trips Since 2014", *India TV*, 22 August 2024, at <https://www.indiatvnews.com>

¹⁶ Mohan, Archis: "With 74 Foreign Visits Since 2014, PM Modi Breaks Manmohan Singh's Record", *Business Standard*, 7 September 2023, at <https://www.business-standard.com>



Summit, which highlights the increasing importance of multilateral engagements, especially in the Indian Ocean region, during his tenure. Data suggest that while Modi has spent fewer days abroad than his predecessor (270 days versus Singh's 306 days), Modi has travelled more extensively and actively than any other Indian PM. Modi has increased India's engagement at the highest diplomatic level with India's immediate neighbours in South Asia and its extended ones in central and West Asia. Dr. Singh undertook 35 visits abroad in his first term and 38 overseas visits in his second, while Modi embarked on 49 overseas visits in his first term. However, two years of the COVID-19 Pandemic meant that the PM did not undertake a single foreign visit in 2020 and only three in 2021, attending at least 16 bilateral and multilateral virtual summits in 2020 and at least 9 in 2021.¹⁷ Something more to say regarding foreign tours of Dr. Manmohan and Narendra Modi in the matter of attitudes of foreign policy of the two Prime Ministers, under some different situations, to be felt by the two. Former Ambassador Yogesh Gupta, in this context, identifies three key departments from the past in Modi's foreign policy, apart from the outreach to the Indian Diaspora. He says that while Manmohan could not go out of the boundary line, as marked by the other parties (Leftist) of UPA in India-US relations and does everything through the prism of Chinese concerns and assesses any progress on India-US relations with the 'caviat' so that it does not offend China in anyway, whereas Modi realises fully that whatever investments, technology and military support India needs, could be available only from US, not from China. Secondly, India has been trying to strengthen and provide support for its South-Asian neighbours more strongly for the last nine years to counter growing Chinese Influence, signing crucial agreements with those countries, which the UPA government during Manmohan's regime has fallen victim to kinds of pressures of coalition politics, the former diplomat comments. Modi has visited Nepal five times, while Singh has not visited Kathmandu for a single time. Thirdly, Modi's Foreign diplomacy towards West Asian countries is quite independent, treating each case on its own merit, Gupta adds. Most interestingly, PM Modi establishes relations with both Israel and Palestine, visiting Tel Aviv in July 2017, the first ever Indian Prime Minister to visit there, and Palestine a year later. In 2015, Modi was the first PM in 34 years to visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and he has gone to that country on more than four occasions. We now, under the present geopolitical situation, can easily understand the exceptional foresight of Narendra Modi regarding foreign diplomacy, about which some ignorant people dare to comment on how Narendra Modi would be able to tackle the Indian Foreign Policy, a complex and sensitive subject.

The *Times of India* reports that, if judging the popularity of a personality based on social media, Modi is one of the most popular leaders in the world today. He has a combined social media following (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) of nearly 200 million. Indonesian President Joko Widodo is a distant second on the list with the follower member of 76.5million. Even if compared with US President Barack Obama, who also had an outstanding social media following, Modi remains the second most followed global leader on social media. At 223.4 million, only Obama had more combined followers than Modi.¹⁸

Modi, as part of the measures under his soft power utilisation techniques, in January 2013, hosted Barack Obama, as the chief guest of India's Republic Day parade; it was the first time an Indian PM hosted a US President for such a glorious national event of India. In 2021, PM Modi was the first Indian PM to preside over a UN Security Council meeting. He has also been awarded numerous international honours due to his leadership and Oratory excellence.¹⁹ In 2019, Russia awarded its highest honour, 'Order of St. Andrew and Aposite' to Modi, while the UAE also honoured him with the 'Order of Zayed', in the same year, being the UAE's

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ "Most Followed World Leaders on Social Media", *The Times of India*, 4 May 2022.

¹⁹ "List of international awards received by PM Modi", *The Times of India*, 25 June 2023.



highest civilian award. In 2020, PM Modi was awarded the Legion of Merit, a top American military honour.

Bhaswati Mukherjee (distinguished lecturer) has rightly said that cultural diplomacy, which Modi chose as his indispensable weapon of soft power diplomacy, is an important dimension of Indian soft power capability. Modi reoriented Indian diplomacy by combining new elements of soft power. “The five pillars of this soft power, used in a strategic sense, are Samman (dignity), Samvaad (dialogue), Samriddhi (shared prosperity), Suraksha (regional and global security), and Sanskriti evam Sabhyata (cultural and civilisational links). These are interlinked with India’s broader political and economic goals of the country”.²⁰

At the same point in time, Modi’s soft power diplomacy episode as Prime Minister, as we have been discussing for so long, cannot be concluded without saying some words on the vaccine diplomacy during the COVID-19 Pandemic, which shook the whole world. People have been tormented with pain and panic and found no way of relief, but to succumb to death and severe suffering. Business worldwide was about to be shut down; the economy was in grave distress throughout the globe. Modi, the magician had engaged the scientists, virologists, researchers to invent vaccines and with the year made it possible to manufacture of vaccines like Covishield, Covovax, and COVI-VAC by famous Indian pharmaceuticals like Bharat Biotech, Sr Reddy’s Laboratories, Gennova Biopharmaceuticals, etc., however also by some developed countries like Russia, though much costly and beyond the reach of the people of developing and underdeveloped countries. In India, Covaxin, manufactured by Bharat Biotech become very popular and useful. Modi’s India has initiated a countryside vaccination program in early 2021 and has vaccinated free of cost 87.1 million people as of April 8, 2021. India has also taken the initiative ‘Vaccine Maitri’, a diplomatic mission to supply vaccines (Covaxin and Covishield) to many needy countries of the world like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Maldives, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bhutan, Mongolia, Mauritius, Bahrain, Oman, Xeny, Uganda, Paraguay, Fizi, and Mozambique. The Caribbean community countries, like Barbados, Dominica, Antigua, Jamaica, Guyana, etc., have also received vaccines as a grant from India. Modi has also donated 0.2 million doses of Covishield vaccine for the United Nations peacekeepers and hugs vaccines to the WHO for distribution to the needy countries. Thus, India has been regarded as the vaccine manufacturing hub of the world; it is certainly not a matter of joke, considering India’s leading initiative (an element of soft power) to fight against the ever-unforgettable COVID pandemic horror by supplying 60% of the global vaccine requirement. The country has achieved the capacity to manufacture well over 3 billion such vaccine doses annually.

The last but not least element of soft power, viz, yoga, to show how a man could make the world famous by his charisma, activity, and oratory. As Prasanta Jha of Hindustan Times from New York reported, “in a grand display of India’s soft power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the International Day of Yoga celebrations at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Wednesday and described Yoga as a “truly universal” and unifying force across ethnicities, faiths and cultures”.²¹ Modi said, “yoga comes from India. It is a very old tradition. But it is living and dynamic. Yoga is free from copyright, from patents, and from royalty payments. Yoga is adaptable to your age, gender, and fitness level. Yoga is portable - you can do it at home or work, or in transit. Yoga is flexible - you can practice it alone or in a group, learn from somewhere or be self-taught. It is unifying for all ethnicities, faiths, and cultures. Yoga is truly universal. When we do yoga, we feel physically fit, mentally calm and emotionally content”. The exercises were led by Annelies Richmond, a yoga trainer and the

²⁰ Mukherjee, *op.cit.*

²¹ Jha, Prasanta: “Yoga’s Soft Power Reigns at UN during Modi’s US Visit”, *Hindustan Times*, 22 June 2023, at <https://www.hindustantimes.com>



Director of Art of Living, US. Among others present at the event were UN's deputy secretary general Amina Mohammed, Actor Richard Gere, award-winning chef Vikas Khanna, Grammy winner Ricky Kej, and a host of US Corporate leaders, military veterans, television personalities and teachers, and members of the Indian Diaspora. Modi reminded the audience, as did the UNGA President, that India had proposed marking June 21 as the International Day of Yoga nine years ago. It was wonderful to see the entire world come together to support the idea, he said back then. Even going back to his mission of soft power diplomacy, Modi urged everyone to use the power of yoga to be kind to oneself, to each other, and to nature, to build bridges of friendship and peace; to build a cleaner and more sustainable future - the last is the theme of India's G29 Presidency. What else could be a more fruitful way to win the hearts of not only the audience present, the people of America, but also the whole world? This is the Modi magic the whole of the globe has been witnessing for a decadelong and will see, at least till the end of the kind of third decade of the twenty-first century.

3. Conclusion

Within a short period of time, after assuming charge of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has been able to world populace that his travel from country to country throughout the entire globe was not only for the mere signing of a few bilateral agreements and giving a joint statement on the eve of departure, but it is much more than that. His role is as a real ambassador and representative of India to make the people of the world understand who and what our country are and let them know that India has passed through ancient civilization of 5000 years past and has achieved the great culture, tradition and bears the great message of peace, non-violence, love and fraternity, friendship and faith, mysticism and passion. Narendra Modi very cleverly but honestly tries to mould the hearts of people with the preaching of those qualities, which is now known as soft power, and has been quite successful in his soft power diplomacy mission. In no time, Modi has been recognised as the knowledge giver to the whole world, like in Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, Russia, and, of course, in the United States. Very recently in 2025 in the G-7 summit held on Canada, where India is not even the member of the group has been invited by the host, as a special guest. The CNBC TV 18 reports that PM Narendra Modi is attending the G7 Summit in Canada, underscoring India's rising influence on global issues such as energy, trade, and climate, etc. The Indian Express says that the Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, has pointed to India's status as the fifth-largest economy as a reason for the invite. Suhasini Haidar says, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will represent India at the upcoming G-7 Summit in Canada next week, he confirmed on Friday (June 6, 2025), after he was invited by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney during a telephone call".²² It is certainly the victory of Narendra Modi and his soft power diplomacy that the most powerful countries also give proper importance to India as a fast-growing, powerful country of the globe, in terms of economy and global influence, which was unexpected. Apart from the aforesaid influence and recognition of India, Modi also had a vivid perception right from his assuming charge that the message of soft power in the sphere of a huge international periphery is not sufficient without much advancement in military power and achievement of a most modern arsenal in the country's store. Nearly a hundred years earlier, our great poet Rabindranath, in his Anthology 'Prantik' wrote '*naginira pheliteche charidike bishakta nishwas, Shantir lalita bani shunaibe barthya parihas*' (The snakes are dropping their poisonous breath, the message of sweet words of peace will appear to be a failed joke). So, Modi has been preparing India to be well advanced with the huge war-arsenals with the assistance of indigenous companies like DRDO, ISRO, HAL, BEL, BDL, Gardenreach Shipbuilders, Hindustan Shipbuilders Ltd., etc., and the grateful assistance and active help of our most trusted friend, Russia. Now, India is

²² Bhelari, Amit and Haidar, Suhasini: "Modi Accepts Canadian PM's G-7 Invitation", *The Hindu*, 7 June 2025.



sufficiently powerful in war-weapons in all three wings of our military force and has placed itself at the 4th position in the global military ranks as of 2025. Not only this, in the last few years, India has shifted from a major arms importer (buyer) to a defence exporter, and by 2024, the Indian govt. has a target of exporting defence items worth \$5 billion. However, to achieve such a huge export goal, India will have to develop indigenous advanced weapon technology.

Hence, we have kept Modi prepared just to say that Modi's present India in 2025 is not at all dependent on soft power only, but, as Joseph Nye told, on the 'Smart Power' as well. This influence and recognition of India, as Canadian Premier Mark Carney indicated, is not perhaps for India's soft power diplomacy only because the whole world has witnessed the valor, prowess, bravery of New India, just a few months ago, while she teaches a good lesson to the treacher, terrorist country Pakistan for their dirty game they played on the soul of Pahelgam, Kashmir. But India never tells in that language to any country, until it plays such a nasty game. Thus, standing at the end of 2025, India's power and position in the global political scenario, without any doubt, have reached such a high extent that the global countries holding major, medium, or small powers have no way but to recognize the great potential and to pay special importance, dignity, status, and rank in the geo-political authority. And if it is so, Modi's role as Prime Minister of India and an icon of soft power diplomacy in foreign policy cannot be ignored in any way and will make him a larger-than-life figure in the future world. If India attains the feat of leading/major power anytime in the near or distant future, as aspired by Modi, India will never forget his contribution as the master of soft power diplomacy in the global arena. But what he has done, that is not through any muscle power but through the eternal message of peace and friendship "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

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