

## Foreign Policy of India with Special Reference to India's Africa Policy

On November 21<sup>st</sup> at Institute of International Politics and Economics Professor **Ajay Kumar Dubey**, *Jawaharlal Nehru University*, New Delhi, delivered a lecture on India's foreign policy with special reference to its initiatives in Africa. In the first part of his lecture, Professor Dubey spoke of the priorities of the Indian foreign policy and a basis for their implementation, while in the second he discussed the Indian initiatives in Africa and their place in the implementation of the defined foreign policy priorities.

At the beginning of his lecture, professor Dubey pointed to two Indian foreign policy priorities. The first one refers to the reform process of the institutions of global governance, such as the Organization of United Nations, or international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. From India's point of view, these institutions were established in conformity with the influence and interests of developed countries, while developing countries, to which India belongs, do not have their adequate representation. Taking account its population, the constantly growing economy and the economic and political influence in the world, India demands changing of these institutions so as to get better representation in them. The second Indian foreign policy priority is the preservation of its strategic autonomy, this referring to the creation of conditions for the Indian development out of the sphere of influence of any world or regional power. In accordance with this priority, which has been present since it gained its independence, India was one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose members did not want to be a part of the world bloc division, but wanted to build their own way, the *Third World Way*. Today, the implementation of this priority implies the promotion of co-operation with developing countries, being known as the *South-South Co-operation*.

The basis for the implementation of the defined foreign policy priorities India sees in its strong and growing economy as well as in close relations with its numerous Diaspora.

The Indian economy has been growing by 7% annually in the last few years, so its GDP has already reached a trillion dollars. One third of the Indian economy is based on foreign direct investments, outsourcing both exports of goods and capital. During 2007 and in the first nine months in 2008, foreign companies invested in India around 35 billion dollars, while the Indian investments abroad were twice as much bigger in the same period. The Indian exports brings large income, this especially including IT products exports, which brought around 50 billion dollars in 2007. According to Professor Dubey, the world economic crisis would not slow down the Indian economic growth, because two thirds of its economic capacities were internally directed and based on small and medium enterprises. Maintaining of a high rate of economic growth brings about the increase in the Indian energy needs, and professor Dubey presented an estimate that these needs would be doubled every 5 years for the period of next 25 years. Thus, the immensely important direction in the Indian foreign policy will involve efforts to find stable energy sources, especially in developing countries.

In its foreign policy, India makes special efforts to strengthen the relations with its Diaspora with 25 million people in 105 countries all around the world. The Indian Diaspora includes various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, thus reflecting the cultural diversity of this country. Only one third of people of the Indian origin abroad have Indian passports, and most of them left to developed countries of Europe and North America after the independence had been proclaimed. But, a major part of the Indian Diaspora lives in developing countries where they settled during the colonial period. For almost half a century India neglected its Diaspora, what Professor Dubey described as the policy of active dissociation. The essence of that policy was that the Diaspora belonged to countries where they had been settled and to which it should be loyal. After the Cold War, in the new era of globalization, the situation has changed, so the Diaspora became a very important factor of India's economic growth and a useful link between India and other countries. The economic co-operation between India and a great number of countries has developed thanks to the Indian Diaspora. On the other hand, every year the Diaspora sends to India around 28 billion dollars of remittances and in that way contributes to economic growth of their mother-country. These were the main reasons why in the mid-1990s India radically changed its policy towards the Diaspora, attempting to establish closer relations with it.

The search for new markets and energy sources for its growing economy and efforts towards establishing closer relations with its Diaspora inspired India to look for new co-operation partners outside of the South Asian region, where the co-operation is impeded by the Indian-Pakistani conflict. South-East and Central Asia, and, of course, Africa are the new regions India is trying to promote its cooperation with.

The relations between India and Africa were the subject of the second part of Professor Dubey's lecture. He spoke of the unbreakable historical relations between India and Africa that were established by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi's experience as a young barrister in South Africa had a decisive influence on his later ideas concerning the struggle for the Indian independence. These relations became closer for the Indian support to the fight of African peoples for independence and against apartheid, this also including their co-operation in the Non-Aligned Movement.

Nowadays, a very important place in the promotion of co-operation between India and Africa has the Indian Diaspora in Africa with approximately 2 million people in the Anglophone countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. Till the mid-1990s the Indian Diaspora in Africa was neglected to a large measure, what was in conformity with the official policy of India, so that India, for example, did not even react when Idi Amin expelled all people of the Indian origin from Uganda in 1971. The newly adopted Indian policy of strengthening relations with its Diaspora gives the best results in the Republic of South Africa, where around a million people of the Indian origin lives, and they are the most responsible for the promotion of cooperation between these two countries. Considering other African states, the relations between India and its Diaspora are not at a satisfying level, but some progress has been made.

Africa is especially important for the energy security of India for its resources, and that is why India wants to establish a partnership with Africa and invest in the production capacities of the African states. Companies from India have already invested a few billion dollars in the Republic of South Africa, Ivory Coast and Sudan, attempting to invest elsewhere in Africa. Besides that, the capital from India is present in Africa

through the credit lines that have been launched by the Indian government. In the last five years, the Indian government has launched more than 2 billion dollars of credit lines to the African states and is planning to increase them up to \$5 billion. A very successful trading co-operation has also been established between India and Africa. The share of African countries in the total foreign trade of India is 8%, tending to increase it since India has brought down the tariffs by 92% for African exportable commodities.

Professor Dubey pointed to the development programmes in Africa that are supported by India. The most important among them is the food security promotion programme, which India supports financially and by providing its technology. The other important programme is the development of the *Pan-African Network* that provides the integration of African companies, health and education institutions by the Internet and other connections with companies and institutions in India. India is investing a huge amount of money in capacity building of the local self-government and the supply systems in African states.

The most important step towards the promotion of the partnership between India and Africa, which Professor Dubey marked as the greatest diplomatic success of India since it had gained independence was made at the *African Union – India Forum* summit in April 2008. On that occasion, the Indian and African leaders signed an agreement on strategic partnership, which would be based on mutual respect and benefit for the peoples both in India and Africa.

Professor Dubey pointed to China as the main competitor of India in Africa, since China is also trying to find solutions for its energy problems in Africa. At the same time, both India and China help Africa in diversifying its market, technology and capital dependence on developed European and North American countries.

At the end of his lecture professor Dubey mentioned a new initiative for co-operation led by India, Brazil and the Republic of South Africa – *IBSA Initiative*. These three countries are attempting to be the hubs through which all countries from South Asia, Latin America and Africa should make a cooperation network. This initiative will directly contribute to the promotion of the South-South Co-operation, and indirectly help India materialise its foreign policy priorities.